



The Civil Society Facility, Media Freedom and Accountability Programme,
EuropeAid/134613/C/ACT/MULTI

**SOCIAL NETWORKS VS.
TRADITIONAL MEDIA IN MONTENEGRO:
THE BATTLE HAS STARTED**



This project is funded by
The European Union



A project implemented by
Center for Independent Journalism

South-East European Partnership for Media Development

SEE Partnership for Media Development is implemented by a consortium of media organizations from **Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania**. Media professionals from Kosovo and Turkey will also be involved.

The Project is co-financed by the European Commission, the Civil Society Facility, Media Freedom and Accountability Programme, Europe Aid/134613/C/ACT/MULTI

The SEENPM members that are part of the project: Albanian Media Institute (Albania), Mediacenter for Media and Civil Society Development (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Media Initiatives – Association for Media Development and Promotion of Professional Journalism (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Macedonian Institute for Media (FYROM), Montenegro Media Institute (Montenegro), Media Center (Serbia), Media and Reform Centre Nis (Serbia), Media Development Center (Bulgaria).

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By the Center for Independent
Journalism

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SOCIAL NETWORKS VS. TRADITIONAL MEDIA IN MONTENEGRO: THE BATTLE HAS STARTED

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PODGORICA, September 2017

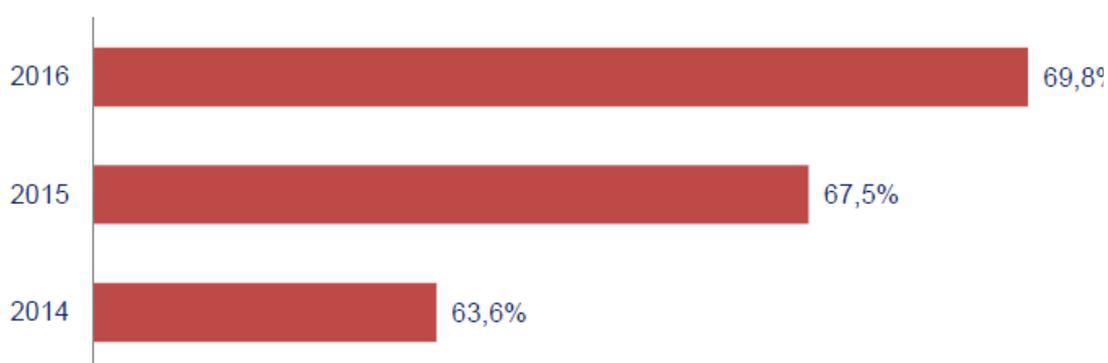


**Institut za medije Crne Gore
Montenegro Media Institute**

INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing number of people using social networks as an information source in Montenegro, but also as a media channel. Individuals and groups who do not have access to traditional media use social networks, especially Facebook, for sending messages to the general public. More and more politicians and government critics use social networks as a means for expressing their opinions.

According to the Ministry of Information Society and Technology of Montenegro¹, the number of people and households who have Internet access increased by 2,3 % in 2016, compared to 2015 (69,8% in 2016 compared to only 67,5% in 2015), while in 2014 the figure reached only 63,6%

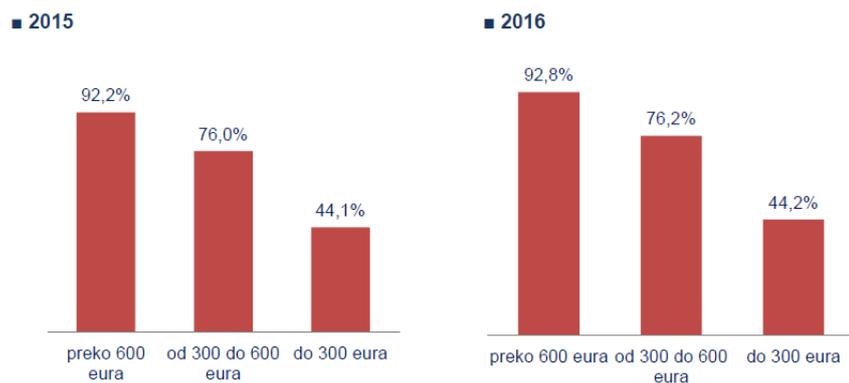


Noteworthy that more and more people use mobile phones to access the Internet. Compared to 2014, the number of households that access the Internet via mobile devices has increased by 16,7% in 2016.

Uređaji u domaćinstvu	2014	2015	2016
Personalni računar (PC)	75,1	74,1	68,9
Laptop	57,6	56,4	58,4
Mobilni uređaji	38,5	46,9	55,2

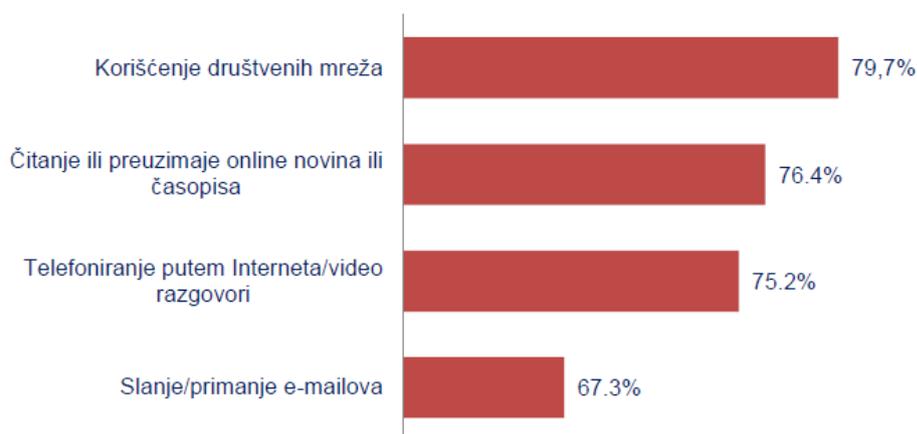
¹ <http://www.mid.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rId=257306&rType=2>

According to official state statistics, there is a connection between the Internet usage and the level of income. For example, in 2016, 92,2% of the households with monthly earnings over 600 euros had Internet access, compared to only 44,2% of the households with an income under 300 euros per month.



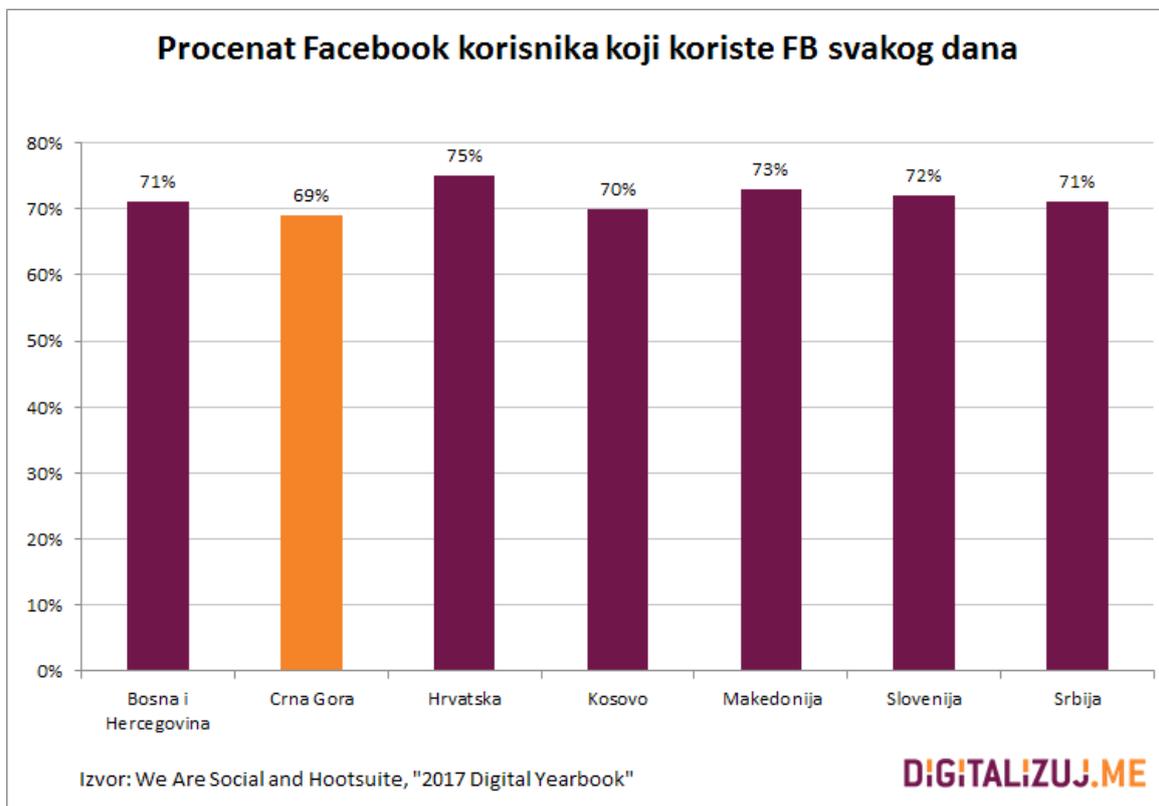
Official data for 2016 also show that it is mostly young people that use the Internet daily and more men (87,2%) than women (84%) use the Internet daily.

It is interesting that most households access the Internet to spend time on social networks (79,7%), read newspapers (76,4%), use viber or skype (75,2%) and send emails (67,3%). It is clear that more people use Internet for social networks than traditional media.



As indicated by *We are social and Hootsuite 2017 Digital Yearbook*, Montenegro has 350.000 users of social networks, which is the biggest social networks penetration rate in the region.²

2 <https://www.slideshare.net/wearesocialsg/2017-digital-yearbook>



Many traditional media in Montenegro have their Facebook profiles, used not only to publish their content, but also to communicate with their audience. In some cases it is the social media (Facebook) that includes a topic or an event on the public agenda, even when it is ignored by the "traditional media".

For example, a group of citizens, called Za nas, has protested in front of the Montenegro Parliament for more than three months now. The traditional media has not shown much interest in covering their activities and protest, so they used Facebook for promoting their ideas and fight.

„Facebook gave us a great opportunity to communicate with the public and present them our ideas“, Velibor Ivanovic, a member of Za nas, declared for this report. „At the same time FB is faster than the traditional media“.

More and more politicians and political parties use their FB or Twitter accounts to express their opinions, especially in when they believe that they do not have enough space in the traditional media.

One of them is Nebojsa Medojevic, the leader of opposition party Pokret za promjene (PzP). For many years he has been using Facebook to express his political opinion; starting this year he has been using Facebook live option to hold weekly online conferences. As one of the opposition leaders and critics of the regime, Nebojsa Medojevic has failed to get any broadcast space on PBC for about two years.

“The Democratic front and PzP are somehow isolated by the pro- governmental media, as well by some other private media outlets in the country. That is why we started to use social networks, especially Facebook to communicate with the citizens. I have used Facebook since 2008; I have 6400 followers on Twitter. The Facebook account of PzP, my party, is followed by 10000 people”³, Medojevic declared for this report. “For two months I have used Facebook live chat weekly, which is followed by 10.000 people. Facebook is the new global media“

“Whistleblowers” have also expressed their accusations on social media. For example, several years ago, Predrag Vucinic, ex police inspector, accused police officials of corruption and connections with mafia bosses on his Facebook. Then the traditional media started to investigate his accusations, and report about his case.

Dragan Lucic⁴, technical editor and administrator of weekly Monitor thinks that social networks are winning battle with the traditional media: more and more people use networks instead of the traditional media to find information. „For example, the statistics of the Monitor Facebook account is better than the website's. People also like the fact that Facebook is more interactive, they can chat about and comment in real time there“.

On the other hand there are opinions that social networks are used only by part of the public in Montenegro: the educated, young people. For example some of the largest media in Montenegro, as daily Dan, do not have a Facebook account and portal, but still have the same audience.

One thing is sure: the battle has started.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The current report is part of a series of similar works produced from February to April 2017.

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On behalf of the Center for Independent Journalism in Bucharest, we would like to thank the following partners for their support and cooperation:

Albanian Media Institute (Albania), Mediacenter for Media and Civil Society Development - (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Media Initiatives – Association for Media Development and Promotion of Professional Journalism (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Macedonian Institute for Media (FYROM), Montenegro Media Institute (Montenegro), Media Center (Serbia), Media and Reform Centre Nis (Serbia), Media Development Center (Bulgaria).

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