

DATA JOURNALISM AS A FACTOR OF SUSTAINABLE CITY DEVELOPMENT

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The relevance of the study of the impact of journalistic investigations based on information from open data portals is due to e-government reforms in Ukraine, which oblige the authorities at the national and local levels to publish data on their activities in the open. The aim of the work is to outline the importance of the media, which collect and analyze published data and

thus become a tool for interaction between society and local authorities. Currently, data journalism is just beginning to come into the field of view of journalists: among world experts on the issue of data journalism addressed S. Rogers, J. Schwabish, D. Bowers, S. Chinyard, J. Gray. Ukrainian experts as Y. Bidzilya and D. Kravets, V. Polyuha, A. Lichenko and others mostly study the peculiarities of the interpretation of the definitions of the term «data journalism» and its role in modern media communications, in particular the systematization of views on the importance of data journalism in the information space and its impact on it. However, many aspects remain poorly understood, including the increasing impact of specialized media on society.

The rise of data journalism in Ukraine began with the introduction of the «National Open Data Portal», Data.gov.ua, the adoption of the bill № 2171 «On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on Access to Public Information in the Form of Open Data» and the acquisition validity of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine № 835 of October 21, 2015 «On approval of the Regulation on data sets to be published in the form of open data». In addition, in 2016, Ukraine launched a major development project, including open data TAPAS, with the support of USAID and UKAID. The data made available creates an opportunity for citizens to comment on public sector decisions made or ask questions about spending behaviour, thereby improving transparency and stimulating democracy [1]. However, with the growth of publicly available numerical and textual data, the need for their analysis, interpretation and selection of socially important information increases, and therefore journalistic works based on these data are designed to satisfy the public interest and promote public involvement in the political life of their city and country. Today, we already have a large community of investigative journalists, a nationwide open-competition on investigative journalism based on open data and supported by the government «YE-rozsliduvannya», and activities aimed at promoting open data and improving the quality of investigations and in-depth.

As S. Rachynsky notes, «the data journalism is assigned the role of research and almost intelligence work, when, after processing large amounts of structured information, conclusions are drawn that seriously affect the understanding of a wide audience of economic and social processes and phenomena» [2]. The journalistic community actively influences public policy in the field of public databases, calling for the improvement of the government's regulatory framework and strategy for working with the public by publishing and updating data sets on official government websites, as well as it helps citizens observe direct changes in their living environment and emerge initiatives to control and improve a city's social, economic and environmental performance.

As an example of effective interaction between the city authorities and investigative journalists working with open data, we can cite many projects of domestic media. For example, the problem with the lack of convenient tools on Data.gov.ua for working with open data sets, as well as difficulties with their reading and machine processing, was solved by analysts of the Data Journalism Agency. In the framework of the project “Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration and Services” / TAPAS, journalists developed the first in Ukraine standard of open data collection of regulatory bodies [3]. Another interesting example of the use of open data from local portals is the work of the analytical centre “Texty.org”, where journalists analyzed the data of a single database of citizens in Vinnytsia and showed where and with what problems citizens addressed, and how quickly these problems were solved [5]. The same project advised the Ternopil city authorities on data sets on the use of budget funds during the construction and repair of road infrastructure: with the help of the developed map of repairs, the city authorities were able to see the current needs of city residents and citizens to monitor repairs and use their taxes effectively [6].

Currently in the international ranking of open data The Global Open Data Index (GODI) Ukraine ranks 31st out of 94 [4] and we still have room to grow. But given how open data portals are closely intertwined with the list of sources used by journalists, how materials written on their basis can cause public resonance and encourage the state to continue open information policy, it is impossible not to deny the contribution of domestic data journalism to Ukraine’s socio-political process.

References:

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