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# **RATE OF USE OF SOCIAL NETWORK IN CATHOLIC MEDIA IN SLOVAKIA**

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(Received 8 October 2019, revised 3 November 2019)

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## **Abstract**

Slovak Republic is a small country with low population and traditional Christian habits. According to the 2017 census, 76% of the population are believers. Of this number, 62% report to the Roman Catholic Church, almost 6% to the Evangelical Church and almost 4% to the Greek Catholic Church. Such a strong representation of Christians was also reflected in the Slovak media market, where Catholic media are also represented. In this article we pay attention to selected media as a representative of television and radio broadcasting and the press. Our aim is to characterize individual media and analyse their activity on social networks. It is not news that social networks regularly visit almost all generations, from primary school students to seniors. That is why we want to find out how selected Catholic media reflected on this fact.

*Keywords:* social media, television, radio, press, mobile apps

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## **1. Introduction**

The Internet has become a common part of everyday life in today's society. Mobile penetration in Slovakia is more than 120%. This means that almost every citizen of Slovakia has a cell phone with active SIM card. Some people have two cell phones. For example, one personal cell phone and one business cell phone. Some of them have just one and small group of people doesn't have any. Most mobile phones are smartphones with internet access. Therefore, in addition to the classic desktops and laptops used by Slovaks to surf the Internet, smartphones are the most widely used devices for communication on social networks due to their size and portability. We use the Internet on our computers and smartphones for communication, information, education, entertainment, work and other activities. Traditional media such as the press, radio and television have to contend with the competition on the Internet and keep their viewers. Therefore, traditional media have expanded to social networks and made their content available online. These media strengthen their presence in the media space by activity on the Internet and social networks. By doing this online, they can attract new fans, viewers, and grow their current audience. They use social networks effectively to promote

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news on radio, new formats for television, articles and press releases. They may not only use social networks to advertise or duplicate content, but also to expand it in case that any part of the session does not fit into the broadcast. The possibilities of using social networks are extensive.

## **2. Slovak media dedicated to Christian mission**

We have several types of media in the Slovak Republic. Traditional media include television, radio and print. These media (mainly radio and television) in Slovakia are divided into two groups: public and private media. The public media broadcast by law in the public interest. They are regulated by the Act on Radio and Television of Slovakia 532/2010 [*Zákon o rozhlase a televízii na Slovensku*, <http://cdn.srv.rtvs.sk/a542/file/item/sk/0000/zakon-o-rtvs.56.pdf>]. Together with the private media, they have their rights and obligations under the Broadcasting and Retransmission Act 308/2000 [*Zákon o vysielaní a retransmisii*, <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2000/308/>]. In the next part of the article we will discuss one of the most watched, most listened and most read representatives of Catholic television, radio and print media in Slovakia.

*„In Slovakia, there are three electronic media outlets dedicated to Christian mission. These are Radio LUMEN, Radio 7, and TV LUX. Two of them are Catholic Radio LUMEN and TV LUX, the third one is Lutheran.“ [1]*

LUX is the most watched private television medium with religious content. Among our three types of media, television is the youngest media that also applies to LUX television, which was created 11 years ago, namely 4 May 2008. The television was created as a project of 3 elements - LUX Communication, Conference of Bishops of Slovakia and Don Bosco's Salesian Order in Slovakia. LUX Communication is a community for spreading the values of the Gospel in the media and its official origin dates back to June 28, 1993, when the project was registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs. The initial impulse for the project was the donation of television equipment from the Conference of Bishops of the USA. The aim of the US Bishops' Conference was to create production centres with an evangelistic character in some countries of the former USSR. Since its inception, it has produced more than 190 original documentary films, 11 short feature films, 30 shows, dubbed over 1575 films in Slovak and produced 30 gospel music albums. Until 2008, LUX Communication produced mostly programs for Slovak Television (STV). It currently provides for LUX television dubbing of foreign programs and production of shows [TK KBS, M. Poláček, LUX communication, *Za 25 rokov vyrobilo LUX communication už 190 dokumentárnych filmov*, <https://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cislocianku=20180630002>]. LUX TV is the only Catholic television in Slovakia that offers programs for children, adults and seniors. Television is spreading evangelism, bringing people to know and strengthen oneself in faith, and offering a program that is consistent with Catholic teaching [*Television LUX*, [www.tvlux.sk](http://www.tvlux.sk)].

LUX does not show viewership on its site, nor does it show people who use audience meters. TV coverage is 90% of the territory of the Slovak Republic with a reach of 4 million viewers.

The second electronic medium examined is the Catholic radio LUMEN. In addition to this radio broadcasts in Slovakia Radio 7, which is Lutheran. Apart from these two radios, there is no radio in Slovakia that is of a religious nature.

In 1992, the first commercial radio with an evangelistic character called Radio Maria was created. It launched its first broadcast in 1993 and changed its name to Radio Lumen a year later. This name is still used today. In its beginnings, it consisted of a daily radio time of 4 hours; in 1994 it was extended to 6 hours and since 1997 broadcasts nonstop. The target group of Radio Lumen are listeners aged 30 to 50 years [J. Hruz, *Rádio Lumen sa chce zbaviť imidžu náboženského rádia*, <https://www.etrend.sk/trend-archiv/rok-/cislo-Apr%C3%AD1/radio-lumen-sa-chce-zbavit-imidzu-nabozenskeho-radia.html>].

*“The LUMEN radio differs from commercial radio stations in that its format is not deployed solely according to the music preferences of the segment. Its priority is not profit, but service to believers and seekers. In its broadcasts, it leaves room for a number of listeners less attractive - minority genres, whether in the field of words or music. Radio management uses in its broadcast structure the fact that listeners of Radio LUMEN listen to this station almost all day and rarely retune. Radio is their life companion. Therefore, they want to find all types of programs from religious to news, music, art or children in the program structure.”* [Rádio Lumen, radiolumen.sk]

In terms of listening, for the year 2018 the radio held ninth in all periods examined. The average listening rate for this year was 2.6%. In the first half of 2019, LUMEN radio listening dropped to 2.21% and dropped to 10<sup>th</sup> in the listener list [Viewership, <https://medialne.etrend.sk/radia-grafy-a-tabulky.html>]. For comparison, the most listened to in Slovakia is approximately 18.6%. There are four smaller Christian radios in Slovakia, some broadcast only via the Internet. Radio LUMEN is among the Christian radios most listened and most successful because of its monopoly position as it is the only Catholic radio in Slovakia.

The last object examined is the print medium Catholic Newspaper. The print media has existed longer than the electronic ones, and therefore Catholic newspapers are the oldest subject in our comparison.

In 1849 in Pest (from 1873 - Budapest) issued the Society of Sts. Stephen's first copy of the Catholic newspaper for the common people. This was the first mention of this newspaper. The activity of newspapers lasted until 1910 when they ceased to exist. The rebirth of the Catholic Newspaper took place in 1940. Nine years later, all printed periodicals were cancelled except for the party press and the Catholic Newspaper. In 1990, they began publishing the Association of Saint Adalbert [Katolícke noviny, [www.katolickenoviny.sk/historia.xhtml](http://www.katolickenoviny.sk/historia.xhtml)].

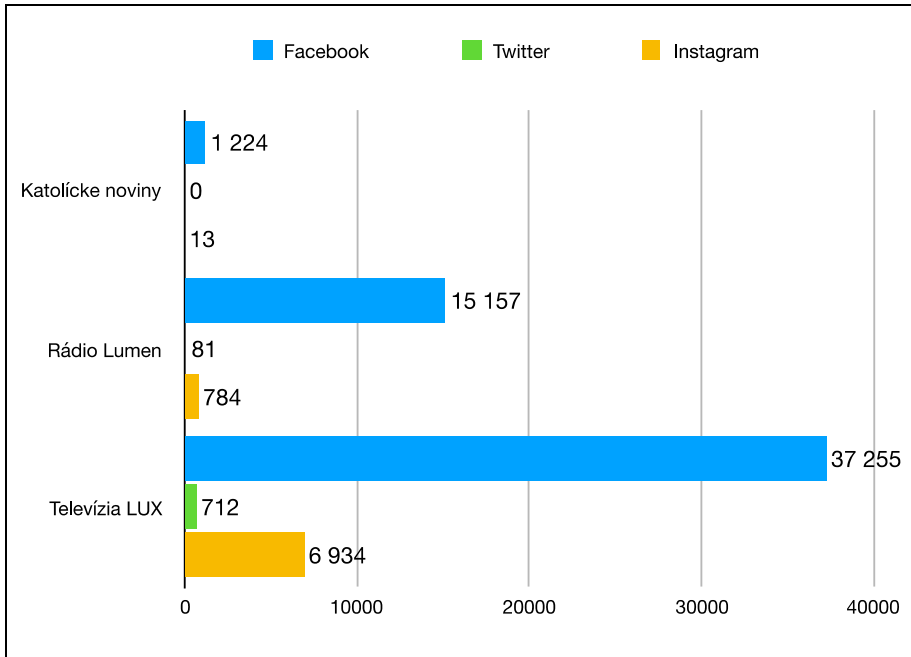
Currently, they are in the sixth place in the sales of weekly newspapers in Slovakia. According to the latest sales figures available for 2018, an average of 60,656 units was sold. In the first half of 2019, the marketability of Catholic newspapers fell to 56,908 units [<https://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cislocianku=>

20180630002]. For comparison, the best-selling weekly has sales of 95,768 units. Catholic newspapers are not the only Christian periodicals, unlike the other two compared media, and therefore have more competition in this area.

### 3. Results and discussion

In this paper we compare Television LUX, Radio Lumen and Catholic newspaper. We monitored their activity on social networks Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. *“The popularity of social networks is given by the character of the categories.”* [2] Social network Facebook is used by all investigated media, but not with the same success. Even when Catholic newspapers belong to the oldest, they failed to gain a large amount of fans on this social network, namely their fan page has 1 224 likes. Radio Lumen has 15 157 and maximum likes has TV Lux, 37 255. We managed to find out how long operates, on the social network since its inception, only TV LUX (the date of the founding of the page on Facebook shows May 4, 2008). The other two media do not have this information published. We can only assume on the basis of adding the first profile pictures, when the page was created. Facebook page of the radio Lumen has added the first profile photo on January 26<sup>th</sup> 2014 and the Roman Catholic newspaper on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017. We can also see differences in the quantity of added photos. It is obvious that TV LUX is the most active in this area also because it creates a number of albums from different events; either organised by, participated to them, or has recorded. Catholic newspapers added for the period of its work on Facebook only 83 photos. Radio Lumen adds especially the pictures with the motivation quotes. The activity on this social network also affects the number of likes that has been obtained. Catholic newspaper with the fewest likes added on average one new post each 10 days. When it comes to TV or Radio it is about 3 posts per day. Usually, these are links to the new articles, sessions, events or reports of their editors. The number of likes for individual posts varies, in both media its average is around 70. Television can, on those more attractive, to get 200-300 likes. The least active are investigated by the media on the social network Twitter, which stems mainly from the low interest about this network of Slovak users. Catholic newspaper doesn't have an account on Twitter. Radio Lumen have an account on Twitter established in January 2014, it has 81 followers and no tweets. TV LUX has 712 followers on Twitter and since February 2012, when it joined to this social network, created 4 590 tweets.

In the framework of the activities on the social network Instagram the differences are more striking. Catholic newspaper has a profile that has 13 followers but does not produce any content. Radio Lumen operates on Instagram from January 16<sup>th</sup> 2019, currently has 784 followers and has now produced 144 papers. TV Lux is on this social network from the November 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 and has 6934 followers and Instagram added 402 posts. Active is in adding photos, as well as in the creation of the so-called Stories, which are published only for 24 hours (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Comparing media activities on the social networks Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.

#### **4. Conclusions**

While monitoring the activities of selected Catholic media in Slovakia, in addition to comparing the activity on the social networks Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, we found that Television Lux and Radio Lumen have their own mobile applications. The Radio Lumen mobile app contains only three categories: Broadcast, Program and Information. This mobile app is not a reflection of the radio website, it is intended only for listening to the radio or searching for sessions in the program. The TV Lux app includes the following categories: Current, Live, Program, Archive, Support, Share, Web and About App. On the home page, it shows you interesting types of sessions, with the broadcast time. Interestingly, the TV can be watched in this way and the number of viewers can grow.

Depending on the nature of mobile apps with religious content, these apps are divided into: Bible, Prayers, Songbooks of religious songs, Contemplations, Informative applications, Theological applications [3]. From the point of view of this classification, both of these apps could be classified as informational because they do not contain directly religious content or texts, but are established by Catholic media.

When summarizing the information on the activities of these three media on social networks and the existence of mobile apps, it is clear that the most active in this area is Television Lux, which was able to get the most publicity, produce the most content and has the longest impact on all social networks. Radio

Lumen is active mainly on Facebook, where its activity is equal to Television Lux. Catholic newspaper are most successful in selling their prints. In the online space are little active, as evidenced by the numbers. They have the least fans on social networks with the lowest number of content produced.

We appreciate the fact that Christian media can attract fans and create content for them in today's popular Internet environment.

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