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**Tagging in online news articles**

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# Introduction

Social tagging is already well known activity connected to content analysis of text, image, video or any kind of digital or digitized material. In focus of this research are news portals, especially newspaper articles about recent events in Croatia and tags assigned to them from different news portals. The aim of this research is to analyse tags assigned to selected articles in top five web news portals in Croatia in order to show how are news presented and how tags reflect importance of topics within articles. For this research, several current, a bit controversial topics are chosen, and assigned tags were extracted, analysed and categorized in categories important for the news: who, what, where, when and why as well as content tags  in order to determine accuracy, objectivity and universality while covering the topic and presenting the news in different portals. Also, another aim of this research is to examine tags searchability and findability via the Google search engine.

**Theoretical framework**

In modern society Internet has become the main media of communication and information retrieval. Journalism also adapted to the new environment, because majority of the people nowadays search and read the news on the Internet. Regardless of the media, there are some of the moral and professional principles that journalists should honour when gathering, editing an presenting the news to the public. According to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2017) the journalistic responsibility is to transfer reliable information gathered with the professional discipline of assembling and verifying facts. Their approach to work must be objective and unbiased and should represent diverse viewpoints and interests and place them in context. Journalists should refrain themselves from sensationalizing, their work must be transparent and in the service of the public interest. Same principles must be valued when tagging and describing the content of the articles. Keywords, i.e. tags must represent the content and be true to the context. National Library of Australia conducted a research regarding the tagging in digitized Australian Newspapers (Holley, 2010). The experience of the National Library of Australia shows that tagging is a good thing, users want it, and it adds more information to data. It costs little to nothing and is relatively easy to implement – if it is done by the users. Different online platforms realized the importance of tags in information searching and retrieval, as well as user experience. Social networks and services that support tagging usually offer their users a detailed list of advices on how to tag their posts. Unlike them, the criteria for tagging in news articles are not transparent nor do we know who is assigning them, and is there any education provided for journalists in that field.

**Research questions**

This research is answering to following research questions:

1. What are the differences in presentation of the news via tags on different platforms?
2. Do the tags match the content?
3. Do the tags present the content accurately?
4. How do assigned tags affect searchability/findability and information retrieval via search engines?

**Methodology**

Research sample consists of the top five most read news portals in Croatia in 2017, according to Reuters (Newman et al., 2017): Index.hr, Net.hr, Dnevnik.hr, Jutarnji online and 24sata online. In order to determine different approaches in presenting the news, after articles were chosen, firstly, articles were analysed and tagged by three researchers individually. After that, comparative analysis of tags showed level of consensus among those three sets of objective and neutral tags. This is called controlled list of tags. In second stage, tags were extracted from news portals and compared between each news portal and individually against control list of assigned tags by objective researchers. Number of tags assigned to each article is also recorded. Third stage included searching for certain topic from set of tags from news portals by entering them into Google search engine.

**Expected Results**

It is expected that different portals will have different approach to same news as well as they will probably assign different tags regarding the same topic. The potential reasons for variations might be depending on their political stance, work policy, work ethic, ideology etc. The reasons behind this practice are beyond the scope of this research but are interesting for further research.

**Conclusion**

Results emphasize importance of tagging of news articles while they provide access to content via search engines while sending message who and what is most important in the chosen articles. It is not clear who is assigning tags to news but it is obvious that users find news much easier if the tags are clearer and more content-oriented, including names etc. Further study will include survey of users asking them how they choose keywords, i.e. tags for searching articles with actual topic of interest.

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