Social Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Zvezdan Stojanović[1]*

[1]*Associate Professor, Department for Information Technology, European University, Bosnia and Herzegovina*
*Email: zvezdan.stojanovic070@gmail.com

Abstract

The use of social media has a wide range of applications in different areas of life. Accordingly, the impact of social networks in everyday life is growing. Bosnia and Herzegovina has a solid telecommunication infrastructure, which is of great importance for the development of social networks. This paper will show the application of social networks in areas such as tourism, education, marketing, politics and local and state administration bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: *ICT indicators, ICT infrastructure, social media*

1. Introduction

The development of information and communication technologies (ICT) has great impact on our daily life. Many people, especially the youth, use ICT on a daily basis for various purposes. People use computers (desktop, laptop, tablet and notebook), cellphones and smartphones to study, to search for information on the internet, to play games, for communications, for social networking and etc, [1].

Key ICT indicators for developed and developing countries are: penetration rates for fixed, mobile and Internet subscribers, [2].
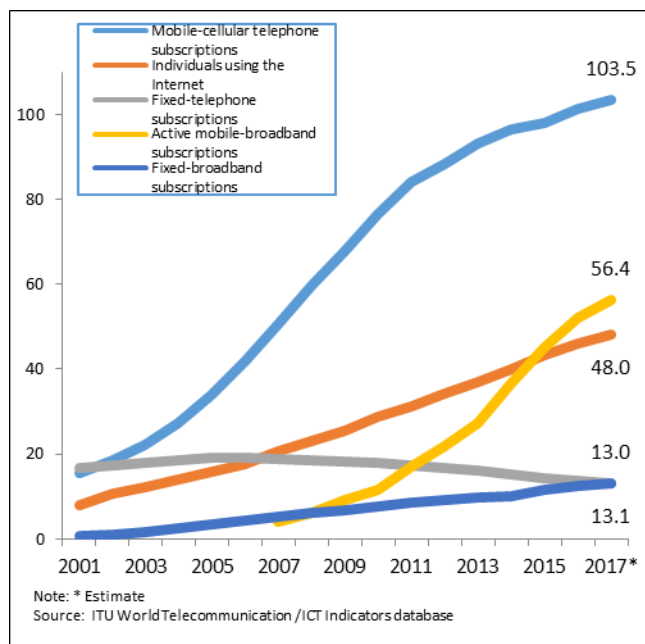

Fig. 1: ICT development 2001-2017

New services, like IPTV, video on demand, live streaming, have huge demand for the bandwidth. This is reason why both mobile and fixed access networks must be broadband. It can be seen from Fig. 1 that number of mobile and fixed broadband subscriptions increased.

There is a dilemma how to define the term social media. This term is used interchangeably with term Web 2.0. Social media, a term coined in 2005 after the term Web 2.0, is defined more specifically as "a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" [3].

Social media simple refers to communication/publication platforms which are generated and sustained by the interpersonal interaction of individuals through the specific medium or tool. Social media can take many different forms, including Internet forums, message boards, weblogs, wikis, podcast, pictures and video. The popularity of social media is increasing year after year, [4].

We can see from the Fig.2, nearly 2,8 billion people around the world use social media at least once a month, with more than 91% of them doing so via mobile devices (2 549000000), [5].

From [5], we can see that social media use has grown 21% year-on year with 482 million new users, but mobile social media users grew by 30% (581 million in 2016).
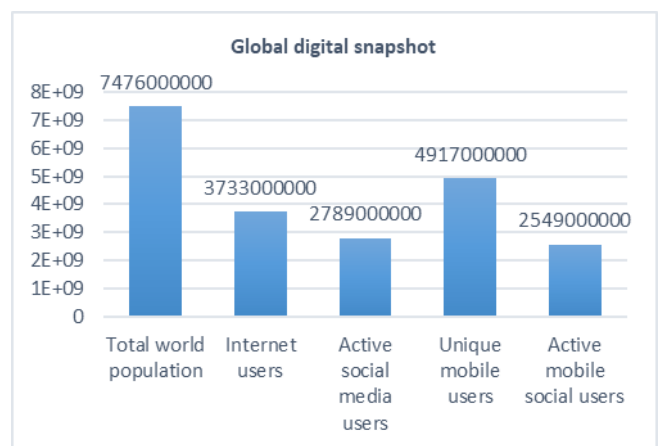

Fig. 2: Global digital snapshot

Any website which allows user to share their content, opinions, views and encourages interaction and community building can be classified as social media. Facebook is the most popular social media in the world with 24% increase over last year (Fig.3).
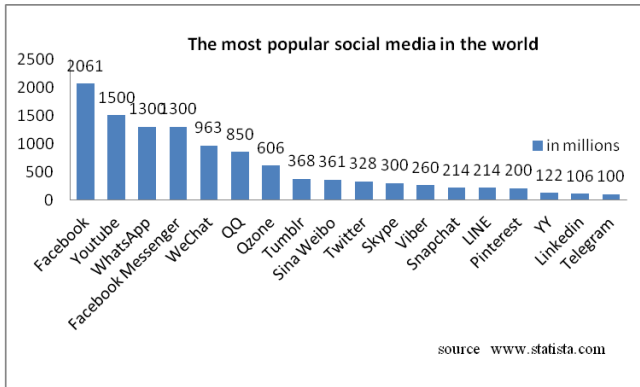

Fig. 3: The most popular social media

In this paper, social media is considered as means for connecting people, as marketing tools, as a way to connecting citizens with the administrative bodies, pupils and students with teaching staff and as good source of information in tourism which can help people to choose better destination for their holiday.

2. ICT Infrastructure in BiH

Communication Regulatory Agency (CRA) in BiH collects data from the all operators in BiH and performs their processing and analysis, [6].

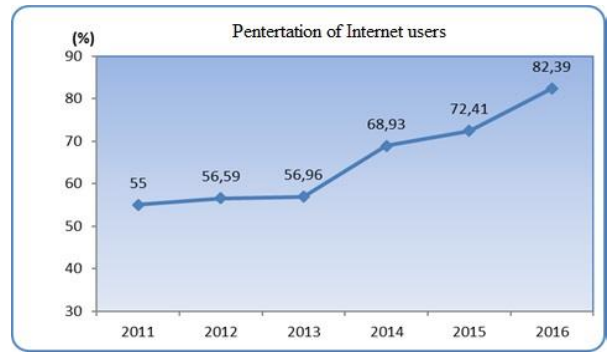ICT indicators for BiH (based on CRA reports) are shown in Fig.4.

Fig. 4: ICT indicators in BiH

New services require high speeds and it is therefore important that access networks are broadband.

The use of broadband Internet access in Bosnia and Herzegovina is constantly on the rise (Fig 5), as evidenced by the fact that the degree of use of broadband access for the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the number of connections compared to the total population) is 18.76%, [6].
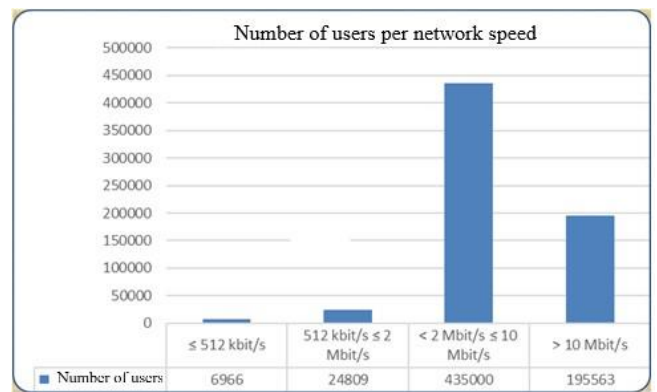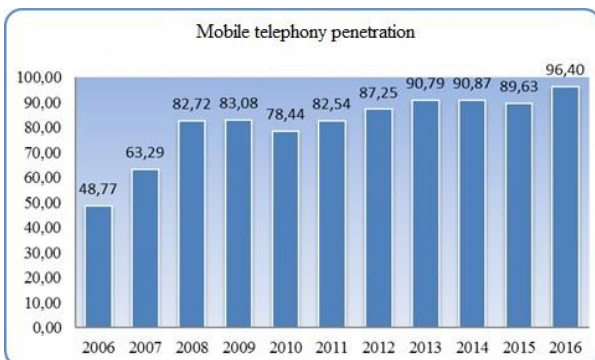

Fig. 5: Number of users per network speed
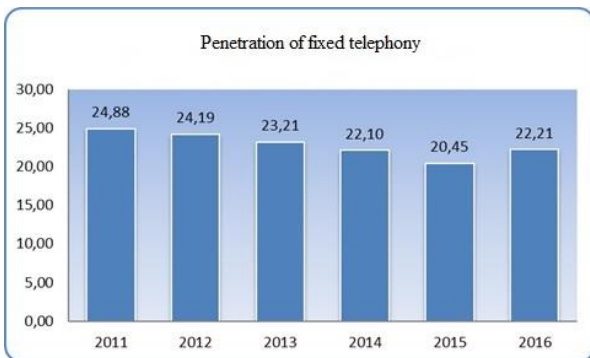
3. Social media in BiH

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is a transitional economy which is pursuing membership in the European Union and the World Trade Organization. From the previous chapter it can be seen that BiH has solid ICT infrastructure. In this paper, we focused on access to social media, and this good ICT infrastructure allows users to access social media, regardless of whether they used fixed or mobile networks

The most popular social media in BiH is shown in Fig 6, [7].

Fig.6: The most popular social media in BiH

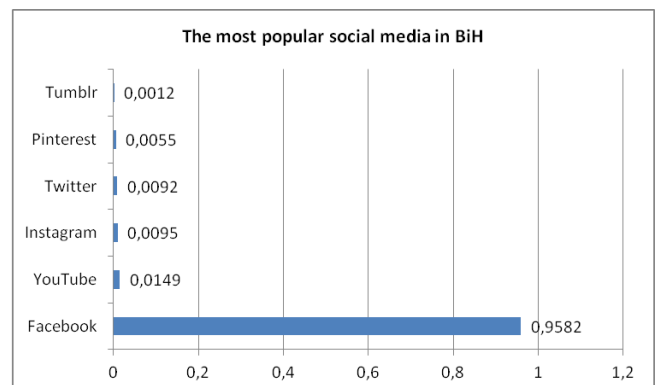Social media can be used from different purposes. The basic is that, social media is used "to sharing and discussing information among human beings", [8]

From the rest of the paper is considered using social media in tourism, in administrative bodies and educations.

3.1 Social media in tourism

Tourism is one of the sectors with a very close relationship with the new information and communication   technologies. Using social media is also changing the way in which tourist planning their trips, [9].

Different technological interfaces, such as search engines, online travel booking sites, and Websites of destination marketing organizations facilitate the   information   exchange between online travelers, [10].

Online reviews provide additional information for travelers to mitigate the uncertainty about the quality of a hotel and about its fit to their needs and preferences on accommodations and destinations, [11].

TripAdvisor is a website based on the idea that travelers rely on other travelers' reviews to plan their trips. Today, TripAdvisor has great impact on the global tourism and marketplace, [12]. Tim of Oxford Economics quantified TripAdvisor's contribution in seven key finding:

1.   Influence on travel planning
2.   More trips and longer trips
3.   Increased spend on travel
4.   Impact on travel on tourism jobs
5.   Driving interest to destination
6.   Improved hospitality standards
7.   Levels the playing field

Tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a fast-growing sector making up an important part in the economy of the country. Current level of development of tourism best illustrates BiH's position in the WEF's (World Economic Forum) annual report for 2016/2017**.** Report for 2016/2017 year covers 136 economies and BiH is on the 113 position in it, [14].

Why is so bad?

Perhaps we will answer on this question if we look at the leading tourist portal in BiH http://www.visitmycountry.net**.** It contains links to 94 sites of travel agencies. Immediately we can see that some links are duplicated, and a simple check has found that as many as 25 links do not work. By further checking, through access to all links of remaining travel agencies, we could draw conclusions about the popularity of certain social networks in the BiH (Fig. 7) in the tourist domain.
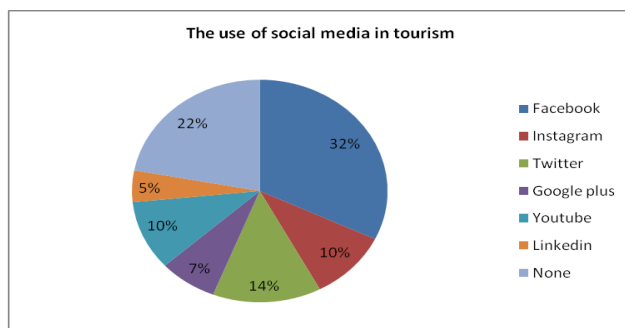

Fig. 7: Popularity of social media in tourism in BiH

It is evident that despite proven advantages of using social media in tourism, still a big part of the travel agencies did not understand this (22%).

3.2. Using social media for connecting citizens with administrative bodies

In accordance with the Dayton Peace Agreement, the state-level government is weak and has limited jurisdiction over the adoption and implementation of public policies. Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of the two entities - the Federation of BiH (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS), and the Brcko District as a separate administrative unit of local self-government. The FBiH is divided in ten cantons and additionally includes 79 units of local self-government. RS has 64 units of local self-government. The state level has no authority over the issues of local self-government, [15].

By creating an interesting and useful content for social networks, state administration and local governments have a chance to attract the attention of Internet users and to include them in the information and communication process. One of the many benefits of social networks is that when you want to submit something to the public and you are not sure how it will react, you can place first your suggestion on social media (such as large investments in local community infrastructure). By means of social media, management promote your work, increase visibility and reputation and builds and strengthens the relationship with the on-line community.

There are 125 government institutions in BiH. But analysis showed that only 22, i.e. 17.6%, of them use social networks, [16]. By visiting sites of the largest cities in BiH (Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, Zenica, Bijeljina, Prijedor, Mostar), we conclude that only Sarajevo has enabled its citizens access to social media.

3.3. Social media in educations

In Report of United Nation is also considered at those three key indicators and they are compared to different countries of Southeast Europe, but this report looks at more two important indicators which can be used to determine the availability of e-Government services:

- the percentage of government institutions that use some form of networking services;
- the percentage of government institutions that are connected to the Internet, [17].

Number of pupils per computer (in primary and secondary schools) is used also as indicator of the level of a country's investment in ICT infrastructure in this Report.

Today's teens are already collaborating and connecting with other teens via social media, and now some educators are pushing to make this collaboration happen inside school walls too.

Learning Management System (LMS) like Moodle have been envolved in online leraning more then a decade. Now, public and private schools are taking a first step to embrace social media into classroom. Schools try to find creative ways to integrate social media into their schools.

In article [18] is presented a flexible architecture to provide integration between Moodle and Facebook and Twitter.

Edmodo is an educational website that takes the ideas of a social network and refines them and makes it appropriate for a classroom. Using Edmodo, students and teachers can reach out to one another and connect by sharing ideas, problems, and helpful tips. A teacher can assign and grade work on Edmodo; students can get help from the entire class on Edmodo. It is a safe environment. There is no bullying or inappropriate content, because the teacher can see everything that is posted on Edmodo, [19].

Edmodo is somewhat similar to Facebook. The purpose of this is to create a sense of familiarity among the users of Edmodo since the most students have a Facebook account and to ensure that it is user friendly. However the difference between Edmodo and other social media is it that Edmodo is a social learning platform for students, teachers and parents to collaborate, communicate, share content, access homework and view grades, [20].

On Moodle's website [21], it can be seen that Moodle today in BiH uses 12 faculty institutions, two secondary schools and one elementary school and 85 private users. Edmodo is mainly used in elementary and secondary schools, but there are no reliable data on their number.

3.4. Social media in marketing

Social media provides an open platform for two-way communication between businesses and customers. Consumers now have a wide variety of new technologies at their disposal, with ubiquitous access to massive amounts of information, giving them near complete transparency into every company's products, services and pricing data. This is good platform to broadcasting different thoughts and opinions far and wide. As a result, consumers are shifting their trust away from corporate marketers and brands and instead talking and listening to their fellow consumers.

Social media give marketers a forum to build digital rapport on a highly personalized scale — one retweet, like, and comment.

Historically, companies were able to control the information available about them through strategically placed press announcements and good public relations managers. Today, companies must contend with the huge and growing social web, where customer experiences and opinions are shared on a massive scale, and corporate reputations can be ruined almost instantaneously, [22].

Now, companies have neither the knowledge nor the chance or, sometimes, even the right to alter publicly posted comments provided by their customers. Top marketing teams must understand the need for real-time communication and engagement on social channels.

As we can see from previous, the most popular social media is Facebook with more than 2 billion people around the world (Fig. 3) Facebook is also the most popular social media in BiH (Fig. 6).

From page [23], it can be seen that the three most popular brands in BiH are:

1. MBuy-Monika Posredovanje with 261160 fans
2. Deichmann BiH with 259920 fans
3. M:TEL with 243 920 fans.

There is no research about impact of social media for marketing purposes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but by observing some research we can see the trend in the world regarding the use of social media for advertising purposes.

In Report [24] is analyzed nearly 4000 marketing leader worldwide and it is concluded that in 2016 year, "82% of marketers agree that social media marketing is core to their business. Last year, 27% of marketers said social would eventually generate ROI and 28% said it already generated ROI, accounting for 55% of all respondents. This year, 75% of respondent's report that social is currently generating ROI".

3.5. Social media in politics

Barack Obama was the first presidential candidate to effectively use social media as a major campaign strategy.
The use of social networks in the electoral process in BiH is still at the beginning. But political parties have recognized the potential of social networks. On the sites of all main parties in BiH (SNSD, PDP, SDS, SDA SDP, SBB), the possibility of establishing a contact of the citizen with the bodies of the party through the social media was given.

Based on the research conducted by the Center for Education Pro Educa from Banja Luka, the five politicians who are best using social media are: Igor Radojičić (SNSD), Branislav Borenović (PDP), Damir Mašić (SDP), Saša Magazinović (SDP) and Fahrudin Radončić (SBB), [25].

4. Conclusion

Social media have great impact in daily life of human being. Despite satisfactory ICT infrastructure and great number users of social media (Facebook) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, influence of social media in tourism, government, marketing, education and political life is small. However, it could be expected that trend of development and implementation social media will come with some delay in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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