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Model of effective fight against hate speech

Report on combating hate speech on the
internet



Bielsko-Biała 2015

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REPORT

Model of effective fight against hate speech

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1) Introduction

Some say that there is a thin line between love and hate. Although the two phenomenon have similarities as brain activities show¹, the results of the expression of those feelings are total opposites. One is an expression of something beautiful and joyful and the other an expression of fear and anger, which can easily lead to harmful events. In the worst scenarios, even wars or genocide.

This publication is the product of a co-operation named „Volunteerism – together we can do more“, realized within the „Citizens for Democracy“ program and financed by EEA Grants.² The project was launched to train volunteers at the Bielsko Artistic Association Grodzki Theatre to analyse polish websites for online hate speech and to raise awareness of online hate speech in Poland.

This publication will serve as an effort to combat and limit online hate speech.

Hate speech and prejudice is a worrisome fact that must be dealt with in a responsible way, by raising awareness and educating everyone about rights and respect for the lives of others. Children have a right to be brought up in a caring environment, as it is their right to live and develop in the best possible circumstances.³ It is in our responsibility as citizens to make their surroundings as caring and supporting as we can so they can lead a healthy life. We the grown-ups are the role-models.

„All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.“⁴ Therefore we have to stand up together against hate-speech on the internet and join hands in sowing seeds of love, care, understanding and tolerance towards multiplicity in the world.

¹ „Neural Correlates of Hate“, a study by Semir Zeki and John Paul Romaya. The study showed a similar brain activity when people in the study experienced a feeling of hate vs. brain activity known to occur in areas of the brain where romantic love is activated. See the article:

<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0003556>. Opened 22nd of June 2015. See also „Thin line between love and hate? - science knows why“, Pub. Reuters, 28th of October 2008.

² Partners are: The Bielsko Artistic Association „Grodzki Theatre“, The Tadeusz Kosciuszko Youth Sociotherapy Centre and Barnaheill – Save the Children Iceland.

³ The Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 6.

⁴ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 1. See also the forewords to the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems.

2) Freedom of expression a human right - expressing hate against others is not a human right

Freedom of expression is a human right, protected in many human rights instruments.⁵ Freedom of expression and speech is a basis for democracy and justice.⁶ Without the guarantee of freedom of speech democracy would not thrive, as the public could not freely participate in society and express their views and criticise how the state is run without interference from officials. So the importance of this freedom cannot be emphasized enough. But all freedom comes with a limitation, as a one person's freedom ends where other's freedom starts. One can practice his or her freedom as long as they do not breach other people's rights.⁷ The problem of abuse of the freedom of expression is the cause of this publication. Hate speech is an abuse of the freedom of expression and is not protected by law.⁸

3) Hate-speech, viral hate, cyber hate – definition

No universal definition on Hate speech exists so far, despite its common use.⁹ According to a definition formed by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers¹⁰, hate speech (also viral hate, cyber hate) shall be understood as covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin. According to the Manual on hate speech, published by the Council of Europe,¹¹ it encompasses a multiplicity of situations:

- a) incitement of racial hatred or in other words, hatred directed against persons or groups of persons on the grounds of belonging to a race;
- b) incitement to hatred on religious grounds, to which may be equated incitement to hatred on the basis of a distinction between believers and non-believers;
- c) incitement to other forms of hatred based on intolerance "expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism".¹²

⁵ The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Art. 19, par. 2., The European Convention on Human Rights, Art. 10., The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 13., The Lisbon Treaty, Art. 11.

⁶ Manual on hate speech, Anne Weber, Council of Europe publishing, 2009, page 19.

⁷ See for example Art. 10, par. 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

⁸ Manual on hate speech, Anne Weber, Council of Europe publishing, 2009, page 4.

⁹ Manual on hate speech, Anne Weber, Council of Europe publishing, 2009, page 3.

¹⁰ Recommendation 97(20) on "hate speech".

¹¹ http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/hrpolicy/Publications/Hate_Speech_EN.pdf - viewed on august 5th. 2015.

¹² Manual on hate speech, Anne Weber, Council of Europe publishing, 2009, pages 3-4.

“Although the [European] Court [of Human Rights] has not yet dealt with this aspect, homophobic speech also falls into what can be considered as a category of “hate speech”.”¹³

The concept is accordingly understood and interpreted quite broadly and can encompass other groups or situations.

4) Law – International and national

Several European and United Nation’s treaties and other legal non-binding instruments apply to hate-speech, whether online or in real life.¹⁴ This means that State Parties to those instruments shall enact law and effectively enforce them in their national legal systems.¹⁵ In most states hate-speech is already established as a criminal offence by law. That alone is not enough to eliminate hate-speech from society. For law to be effective they must be enforced, by the reaction of the relevant responsible officials that must enjoy enough financial and human resources for reacting against and combating hate-speech. The general public must be informed about how they can help to reduce hate and prejudice in society, they can be introduced to ways to report hate-speech to the appropriate party, whether it would be to the police or to a website company or a server hosting company. Investigation on hate-speech has to take place and the ones responsible for the have to be held accountable. The public needs to be informed properly, educated about the borders between normal or protected expression and hate-speech, for instance by awareness raising campaigns and education about Human Rights and non-discrimination.

In 2003 the Council of Europe made a protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime from 2001, to criminalize Hate-speech online, of racist and xenophobic nature.¹⁶ In the protocol the member states agree to adopt legislation and other measures that

¹³ Manual on hate speech, Anne Weber, Council of Europe publishing, 2009, page 4.

¹⁴ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, esp. Art. 4., The European Convention of Human Rights, Art. 14 (Non-discrimination) and 10, par. 2 (limits to the freedom of expression, a.o. in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary), general prohibitions of discrimination in Human Rights conventions, i.a. the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 2.

¹⁵ See for example in General Recommendation XV of the UN Committee of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, paragraph 2.

¹⁶ For the purpose of this publication, both Poland and Iceland are parties to the convention as well as the protocol. See the full text of the Protocol: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/189.htm>. In the preamble to the protocol the member states stress the importance of a full and effective implementation of all human rights without any discrimination, as enshrined in European and other international instruments. They express their confidence that acts of a racist and xenophobic nature constitute a violation of human rights and a threat to the rule of law and democratic stability and they consider that national and international law need to provide adequate legal responses to propaganda of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems.

establish as criminal offences the following conduct, when committed intentionally and without right:

distributing, or otherwise making available, racist and xenophobic material to the public through a computer system.

The definition for racist and xenophobic material according to the protocol is: any written material, any image or any other representation of ideas or theories, which advocates, promotes or incites hatred, discrimination or violence, against any individual or group of individuals, based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, as well as religion if used as a pretext for any of these factors.

In Iceland there are laws that make hate-speech in several context a criminal offence. Prosecution for committed hate-speech is nearly unknown and even more seldom that hate-speech cases go to courts. There is only one known case of hate-speech propaganda from the supreme court of Iceland. In that case a man was convicted for expressing his negative views about a group of Africans in a newspaper.

In Poland hate-speech laws are regulated both at the constitutional level and in the criminal code.¹⁷ It seems as the authorities have the tools necessary for prosecution and convictions but rather few are punished for committing hate crimes in Poland.¹⁸

According to a recent analysis made by Project: Polska,¹⁹ there are a few likely reasons for why there are so few cases on hate-speech before the justice systems in Poland:

- They are considered as low priority by prosecution authorities
- No specialists to combat internet-related issues
- Social acceptance of discriminatory speech (language issue)
- Limited scope of legal regulations (sexual orientation, political convictions)
- At local level prosecutors friends with perpetrators
- No reaction from society
- Little engagement of Internet Intermediaries/Internet Service Providers

The Analysis indicates that

¹⁷ Hate speech: European Union – Central Europe – Poland. <http://4liberty.eu/hate-speech-european-union-central-europe-poland/> and „Liberal agenda against online hate speech“, policy proposals. http://www.liberalforum.eu/tl_files/userdata/downloads/publications/2014/Online_hate_speech_EN.pdf.

¹⁸ ¹⁸ Hate speech: European Union – Central Europe – Poland. <http://4liberty.eu/hate-speech-european-union-central-europe-poland/> and „Liberal agenda against online hate speech“, policy proposals. http://www.liberalforum.eu/tl_files/userdata/downloads/publications/2014/Online_hate_speech_EN.pdf.

¹⁹ ¹⁹ Hate speech: European Union – Central Europe – Poland. <http://4liberty.eu/hate-speech-european-union-central-europe-poland/> and „Liberal agenda against online hate speech“, policy proposals. http://www.liberalforum.eu/tl_files/userdata/downloads/publications/2014/Online_hate_speech_EN.pdf.

“[a]ll these reasons are intertwined. The society continues to be passive and does not see hate speech and hate crimes as important issues to be combated by the state authorities. This is transplanted onto the state organs. The definition of hate speech is not broad enough. The law-givers have not covered some important parts of hate speech, like gender-based hate speech, since there is not much public support for penalizing this kind of speech.

Moreover, the police and the prosecution do not treat these kinds of crimes with priority and victims are often convinced about the insignificance of their case.

Another issue is connected with the fact that lots of hate speech crimes “take place” online and the police is not trained properly and does not have enough manpower to take account of all the online hate speech cases.

On the other hand, some hate speech cases become very famous since they bring lots of media attention. It is connected with the fact that hate speech is a very delicate part of the legal system, and this involves regulating sensitive matters that interfere in the sphere of private feelings and sentiments. What is more, it often happens that they involve famous people or celebrities who are infamous for their controversial behavior. For example in 2010, the police charged the Polish singer Doda (Dorota Rabczewska) with violating the Criminal Code for saying in 2009 that the **Bible** was “unbelievable” and written by people “drunk on wine and smoking some kind of herbs”. The same year, the police charged the lead singer and guitarist of the Polish **death metal** band **Behemoth**, Adam Darski, with violating the Criminal Code. The charge dated back to a performance by Behemoth in September 2007 during which Darski allegedly called the **Catholic Church** “the most murderous cult on the planet”, and he tore up a copy of the Bible on stage. In 2006, the **Jan Karcki** Association complained that a broadcast on a catholic radio station defamed the Jewish people and violated Article 257 of the Criminal Code. Prosecutors refused to pursue the matter.”²⁰

5) Hate speech online in Iceland – examples and status

The population of Iceland is about 330.000 people.²¹ Well-being in Iceland is rather good²² and according to the World happiness report of 2015, Icelanders are the second-happiest nation of all.²³ Civic participation is high and a strong sense of community thrives in Iceland.²⁴ Access to the internet is wide-spread whereas a great

²⁰ ²⁰ Hate speech: European Union – Central Europe – Poland. <http://4liberty.eu/hate-speech-european-union-central-europe-poland/> and „Liberal agenda against online hate speech“, policy proposals. http://www.liberalforum.eu/tl_files/userdata/downloads/publications/2014/Online_hate_speech_EN.pdf.

²¹ Statistics Iceland. <http://www.statice.is/Pages/444?NewsID=11796>.

²² OECH Better life index. <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/iceland/>.

²³ World happiness report 2015. Figure 2.2. Ranking of happiness 2012-2014. Page 26.

²⁴ OECH Better life index. <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/iceland/>.

majority of Icelanders use the internet daily (93% in 2011²⁵). Despite the high level of happiness and well-being, hate-speech is rather easily found on Icelandic websites, especially on websites where it is possible for the public to leave comments on news and articles in the media. Hate-speech in Iceland is not unlike hate-speech in other countries. It involves amongst others xenophobia, sexism and misogyny, especially towards feminists, homophobia and prejudice against religions, especially Muslims.

Examples:

Xenophobia/Racism: A good example of how xenophobia appears in Icelandic society is when it is especially mentioned in news about crimes that the „perpetrator“ was a foreigner. Often the public leaves a lot of negative comments about foreigners in the comment system beneath such news.

Sexism/Misogyny: Misogyny appears in the media through comments from the public on news articles regarding women in most contexts. Especially around news where women have had a role in politics or administration or where women have accused respected men in society of sexual harassment or violence.

A very recent example of xenophobia, racism and sexism is a case where an asylum seeker was accused of infecting Icelandic women of HIV. The newspapers and websites describe the man as a foreigner or name his nationality. Hateful, racist, xenophobic and misogynist comments from the public appear below the news.²⁶

Homophobia: In the spring of 2015 there was a discussion in the media about an educational program the organization of LGBT people in Iceland (The national queer organization) offers in primary and secondary schools. People hostile towards LGBT people were very loud in the media and held that it was a matter of child protection not to offer this kind of education in schools, even alluded to that it could be of danger to children to be in the presence of homosexuals.²⁷

The good news is that there are many people in the Icelandic society that stand up against hate-speech in the comment system of the media so it is very common that long threads of discussion back and forth about the topic in question emerge. On top of that there are strong NGOs that are very active in defending minority rights, such

²⁵ Statistical Series. Tourism, transport and IT. Sept. 6th 2011. (<https://www.hagstofa.is/lisalib/getfile.aspx?ItemID=12638>).

²⁶ A news coverage of this case and the hate-speech around it: <http://stundin.is/frett/rasisk-umraeda-eftir-handtoku-haelisleitanda/>.

²⁷ A news coverage of the case: <http://stundin.is/frett/ottaslegnir-andstaedingar-hinsegin-fraedslu-tengja/>

as the National Queer Organization, various organisations guarding womens rights such as the The Icelandic women's movement and more. It is of great importance that as many as possible in society participate in combating hate-speech, prejudice and discrimination.

In Iceland hate-culture isn't as deep-rooted as seems to be the case in many other countries where extremist groups exist and have gained much support and adherence in the recent years²⁸. Those extremist groups that exist are rather small and do not get much positive attention in society and haven't got any representatives elected to parliament for example. The main reason for this is that Icelanders are rather homogeneous, and migration to Iceland only recently began, in a historical sense.²⁹

In Iceland there seems to be a larger degree of acceptance of LGBT people compared to other states. For instance at the yearly Gay Pride parade hundreds of thousands of people take part by showing up at the event to show support to gay rights. Gay pride has become a public family celebration. Iceland was the first state in the world to elect a gay prime-minister and LGBT people in Iceland now enjoy all the same legal rights as other people.³⁰ So in general Icelanders are favorable towards LGBT people.³¹ But that hasn't been the case for a very long time. It wasn't until around the year 2000 that there was a strong shift in society as regards views towards LGBT's. No single reason can be attached to the development of positive thinking towards LGBT's, but there are several factors that can be thanked. The strong and ongoing work of the National Queer Organization, gay people became more visible in society, gay artists became popular and were really active in advocating for human rights, legal rights improved rather fast when gay people had gained the right to have their relationship legally recognised in similar way, but not just the same, as the marriage of a woman and a man. Today gay people are allowed to marry in churches just like anyone else, they can start families, they can adopt children, even from abroad, given that the foreign state allows for adoptions of gay couples, and lesbians

²⁸ Hate speech: European Union – Central Europe – Poland. <http://4liberty.eu/hate-speech-european-union-central-europe-poland/> and „Liberal agenda against online hate speech“, policy proposals. http://www.liberalforum.eu/tl_files/userdata/downloads/publications/2014/Online_hate_speech_EN.pdf.

²⁹ „Immigration and multiculturalism in Iceland – the opportunity.“ by Anna Lára Steindal. Published on <http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profiles/blogs/>.

³⁰ Discriminating gay men has been accepted as regards their right to give their blood on grounds of fear of HIV infections, in line with an international rule of health authorities. News coverage on the subject: <http://www.visir.is/blodgjafir-samkynhneigdra-karla--flokid-vidfangsefni-/article/2014140809674>.

³¹ A news peace from Reykjavik pride 2015: <http://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-news-from-elsewhere-33803260?sthisFB>.

have the right to go through an artificial insemination.³² Most people agree that it is good to be gay in Iceland.³³

Unfortunately the case seems a bit different as regards views towards foreigners in Iceland. Many immigrants in Iceland seem to experience quite a lot of prejudice in their everyday lives. In a recent study only 5 out of 72 non-Icelandic participants did not experience any behaviour towards them that would fall under hidden prejudice and discrimination during the two weeks study period.³⁴

6) The battle against Hate speech on the internet

The Internet has changed the world in our times. It has its great qualities as it makes it so much easier for the citizens of the world to communicate with each other, commerce and participate in development and society. The openness and possibilities of the Internet seem endless and if used in a positive way it can help us make the world a better place, so much faster than ever before. It can serve as a tool to spread information in a split second through continents and people all over the world can participate in an online event at the same time. While hate-speech online seems to be a rather difficult misuse of the internet, the fact that it exists and is spread over the internet makes it so much easier to combat and to reach the ones using and spreading hate-speech online. Therefore the internet is a great platform for campaigning against hate-speech and campaigning for Human Rights and respect for all. Advocacy has never been easier and faster to reach the ones it is aimed at on grounds of the internet's existence.

The ideal reality is for no Hate-speech to thrive, whether online or not. For that reality to surface we need to build and use programs of prevention. In every institution, schools and kindergardens included, workplace, home or around any gatherings, there should be a plan or a program in place for preventing hate, violence, bullying, prejudice or bigotry to thrive. Programs should be based on and inspired by respect for all human beings, equal rights, free-will, non-discrimination, care, human kindness, tolerance and equal opportunities to everyone. Member states of Human Rights Conventions have taken on many responsibilities to implement prevention programs of this kind, for example by their accession to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is the widest acceded Human Rights

³² An analysis of gay rights in Iceland: <http://www.norden.org/is/analys-norden/eldri-greinar/island-kemur-ut-ur-skapnum>.

³³ See a news coverage in: <http://grapevine.is/news/2015/08/09/most-icelanders-agree-its-good-to-be-gay-in-iceland/>

³⁴ Manifestation of hidden discrimination and everyday prejudice towards immigrants in Iceland. Guðrun Pétursdóttir. 2013. InterCultural Iceland. http://www.ici.is/assets/Everyday_discrimination_in_Iceland.pdf.

Convention of all.³⁵

States should encourage and promote respect for Human Rights in line with the spirit of Human Rights conventions, encourage positivity and courtesy, follow the advice and requirements from advisory and monitoring committees, for example the Committee on the Rights of the Child that monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by its State parties.³⁶

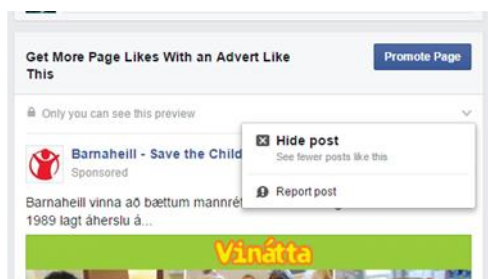
States should encourage and support the co-operation between stakeholders for making campaigns against hate-speech and to run programs for violence prevention. They should apply a multi-stakeholder approach where people from different parts of society were encouraged to work together, for instance governmental institutions, businesses, internet service providers, NGO's etc.

Ways for reporting hate-speech should be introduced and promoted for the general public, for instance to the polish hotline <https://dyzurnet.pl/> or through the reporting options on social media or browsers.³⁷

Here you can find some examples of reporting possibilities:

Facebook: There is an option to report each post that appears in the News feed.

Step 1)

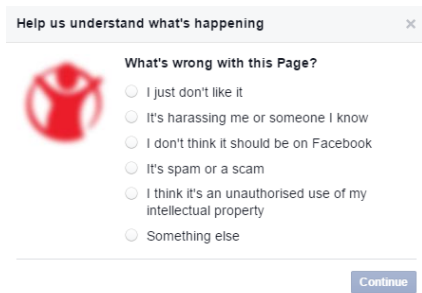


Step 2)

³⁵ See Art. 4 and 19, and also in General Comment no. 13 of the Committee of the Rights of the Child, for example par. 65: „States are required to undertake all possible measures towards the realization of the rights of the child, paying special attention to the most disadvantaged groups“.

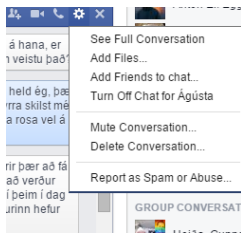
³⁶ Committee on the Rights of the Child, www.ohchr.org, opened on the 28th of July 2015.

³⁷ Barnaheill – Save the Children Iceland, one of the participants in this publication, is a partner of the Safer Internet Center in Iceland (www.saft.is and www.saferinternet.org) and run the Icelandic hotline where it is possible to report illegal online content, hate-speech amongst others.

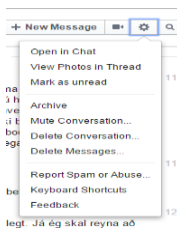


As regards facebook messages, there is a possibility to report Spam or abuse in the top right corner of the message fields:

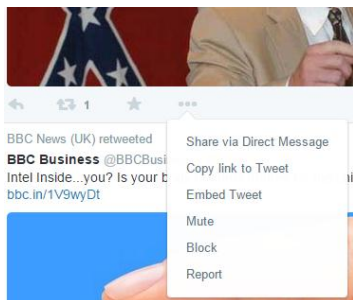
Example 1)



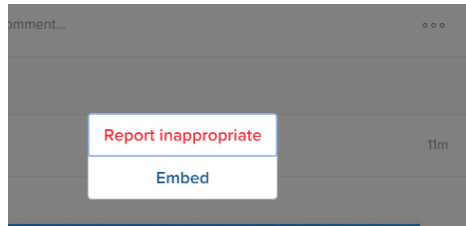
Example 2)



On Twitter there is an opportunity to report every tweet that appears, at the bottom of the tweet:



On Instagram you can report every picture on the right side at the bottom of the picture by hitting the three dots:



The Council of Europe's No Hate-speech Movement is an excellent platform for people to take part in the combat against hate-speech online and should be promoted nationwide. Their website is <http://www.nohatespeechmovement.org/>.

Young people, youth and children should especially be encouraged to take action and a stand against hate-speech. Children have a right to participation in social discourse and should be supported to actively engage in society.

It is important to think broadly and to the future, by prioritising and focusing on teaching children and young people human rights. Human rights education can serve as the soil for a more just and peaceful society where people are not discriminated.

7) Final words

The final words of this publication are a poem by Dorothy Law Nolte, Ph.D., an American writer and family counselor.³⁸ The poem is chosen to remind us about the great responsibility of adults to be good role-models and of their role in shaping society today and in the future. We have to practice what we preach and we need to think before we act or speak out, especially if we are about to express hate-speech.

Children Learn What They Live

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.
If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.
If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.
If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.
If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.
If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.
If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.
If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.
If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.
If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.
If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.
If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

³⁸ About the author: http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/20/arts/dorothy-nolte-81-author-of-parenting-poem-dies.html?_r=0.

If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.

If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.

If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.

If children live with fairness, they learn justice.

If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.

If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Marta Budnik, Volunteer of the project

„Anonymity and its influence on hate speech on the Internet”

Almost all of us use the Internet every day. We check e-mail, log on to Facebook, use messengers, read the news and look for information...

Each of us is an internet user to a greater or lesser extent, and I think each of us has encountered the phenomenon which is called hate speech. According to its definition, hate speech covers all forms of expression which spread, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred based on intolerance. Browsing through Internet sites, we can meet manifestations of this phenomenon, but what influence does it have on anonymity?

Most of us think that we are anonymous on the net. We can write what we want and who we want about. Borders don't exist. When entering the virtual world, we become braver, as we feel unpunished. Like who could catch us? At the most someone can offend us. We are not afraid to offend others on the Internet, because we feel secure and think that everyone does it. The easiest thing to do is to vent the frustration by offending someone, who doesn't know us and will not find us. Internet users are often unaware of limits and exceed them. They do not realize that the other person in front of her computer feels aggrieved, offended. There are more and more cases of people who have experienced hate speech.

We are only seemingly anonymous, though. When entering the Internet, we leave a trace, which is then recorded. As a result, we are not impune and can be found at any moment. Maybe if we were all aware of it, we would think twice of what we are saying, and hatred and intolerance would not be so widespread on the Internet...

Many people purposely set up false accounts with unreal data just to offend someone. People try to do anything to cheat the system. They are ready to use different methods in order not to be found and held responsible. However, it's enough to have the IP address, which conveys information where we are when entering the Internet. Owners of Internet websites and social media willingly provide such data to prosecution bodies to help them fight instances of hate speech. Nowadays nobody can actually feel anonymous.

Many of the haters on the Internet are not aware that there is a human being on the other side of the offensive comments, who often is sensitive and takes the hateful messages very personally. Some victims don't care about negative opinions, but for a considerable number of individuals such hateful comments mean a ruined life. Experiencing hatred from others on the Internet often results in depression, which can later evolve into suicidal thoughts. There have been numerous cases of suicides resulting from offensive comments and unreal information published on community websites by other users. Hate speech mostly concerns

young people, who are the most frequent Internet and community websites users. These young people are very sensitive to others' opinions, and thus constitute an easy target for haters. The sad fact is that those, who attack others with hate speech find satisfaction in this activity and stopping them is not easy.

Preventing and fighting against hate speech is crucial. This phenomenon is ever increasing and harms many innocent people. That is why it's so important that the media, government and schools join activities and movements against hate speech. Also, it's necessary to create preventive programs and information campaigns which could spread awareness of the problem and help the victims.

Karolina Kozicka, Magdalena Głowacka
Volunteers of the project

Results of research on the knowledge and attitude of young people to the phenomenon of hate speech.

The aim the conducted survey was to verify young people's knowledge and attitude related to the phenomenon of hate speech, as well as their awareness of its threats and possible ways of dealing with its consequences. The results have confirmed that the vast majority of the youth use the Internet for at least 3 hours a day and, although only slightly more than half of them have heard of the notion of hate speech, as much as 81% of respondents admitted to have noticed the phenomenon on Polish websites. What seems quite important is the fact that only half of the respondents think that no reaction is actually equivalent to a consent to using hate speech by other Internet users. The rest of respondents do not have any opinion on that or find their passivity is justified if it's not them who use hate speech towards others. The respondents notice the significance of the problem and most of them spoke out for different means of prevention. From among all the surveyed, only 5% claimed that the best solution was to ignore hate speech manifestations. The fact that 95% of the interviewed young people advocate prevention of hate speech indicates a need for initiatives – both on the part of relevant institutions, and individual internet users, who will soon more and more often react to appearing instances of hate speech.

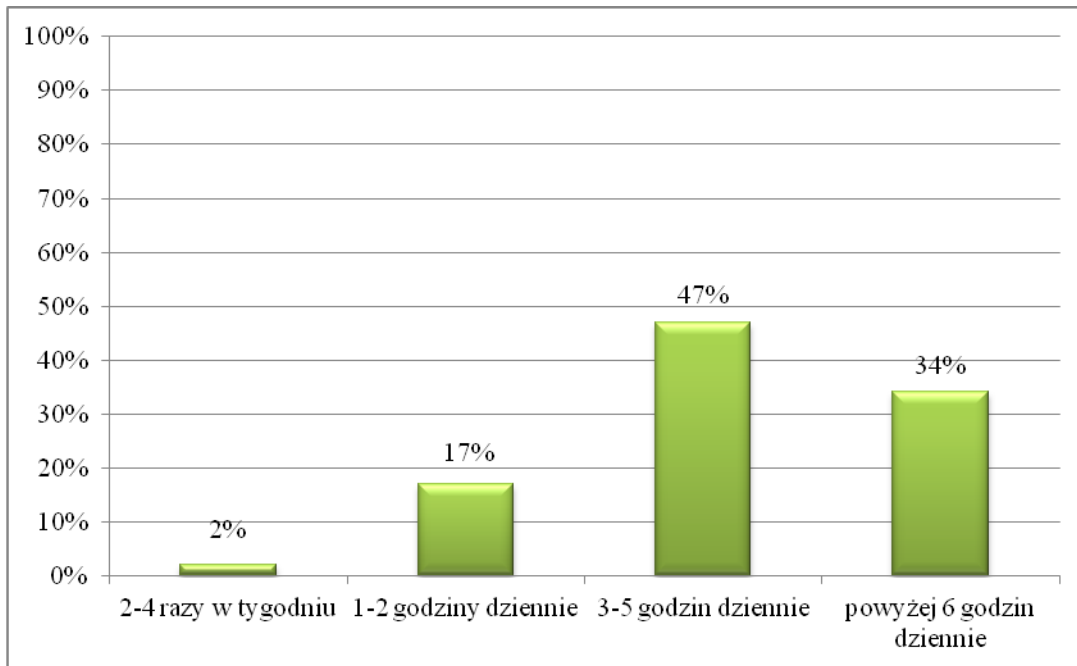
Karolina Kozicka

Elaboration: Magdalena Głowacka

The survey in form of a questionnaire was conducted on a group of 64 residents of the Bielsko-Biala county, among whom 73% were female, 27% were male. All respondents can be divided into four age groups. The oldest and largest of them, aged between 22 and 25, constituted 48% of all respondents. The group of 16-18-year-olds counted 28% of respondents. 17% of them belonged to the group aged 19-21, and the smallest group, with only 6% of all respondents, were teenagers aged 13-15.

Most respondents (47%) spend from 3 up to 5 hours daily using the Internet. A quite large group (34% of all respondents) admit to using the Internet for more than 6 hours per day. A lot fewer respondents (17%) are Internet users for 1 to 2 hours daily. The smallest group are people who use the Internet 2-4 times a week.

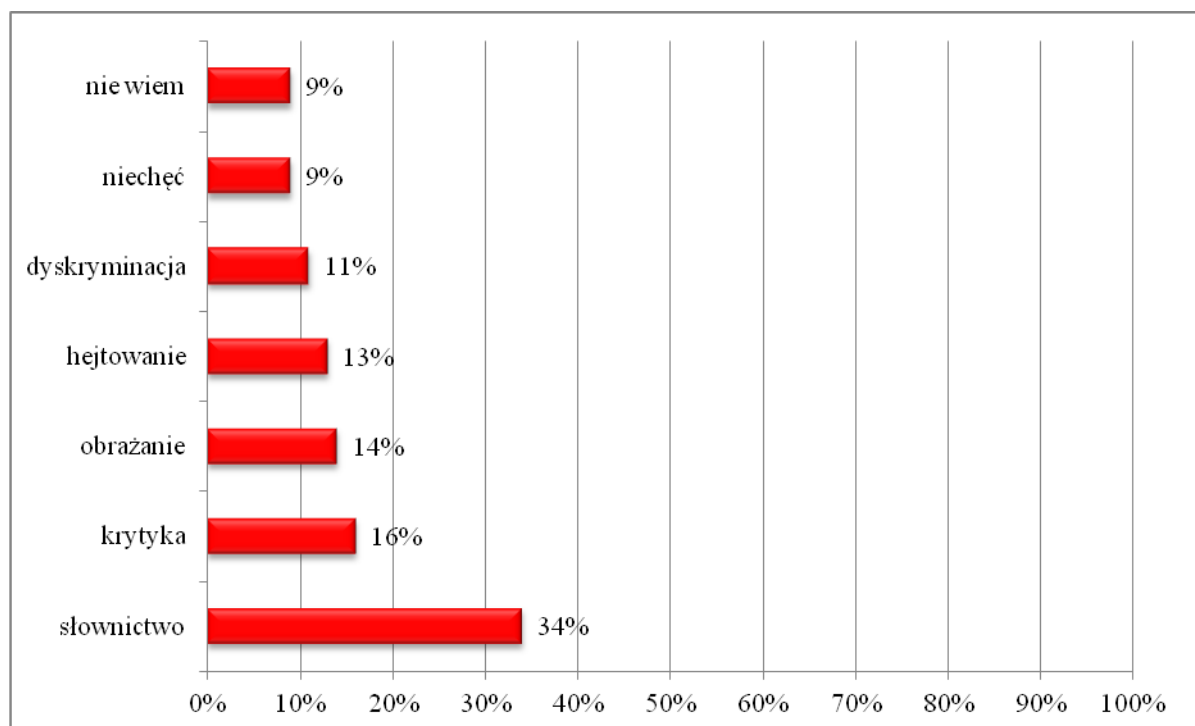
Frequency of using the Internet by the respondents



The vast majority of the surveyed young people are aware that using the Internet is not anonymous. Such knowledge is shared by 66% of respondents. 8% of them think the opposite, whereas 26% of respondents are not able to assess the level of their anonymity on the web.

What is more, 45% of respondents declared not to have met the notion of hate speech before. On the other hand, 55% of them claimed to have encountered its manifestations. Still, most respondents attempted to define the phenomenon of hate speech, and only 9% of them did not indicate how hate speech manifest itself. According to the largest percentage of respondents - 34% - hate speech is characterized by verbal aggression, which means using inappropriate, vulgar words and expressions. A part of respondents claimed that hate speech consists in unfounded criticism by people who are convinced of their anonymity. This belief is shared by 16% of respondents. Not many fewer, namely 14% of respondents, described this phenomenon as offending interlocutors. In turn, 13% of the surveyed people used the term „hating”, which generally determines specific behaviour characterized by hostile attitude towards other Internet users. A conviction that using hate speech means discriminating interlocutors due to their religious beliefs, sexual orientation or ethnical background was shared by 11% of respondents. In turn, 9% of respondents thought that hate speech is related to expressing antipathy to other people in order to diminish their value in the eyes of others.

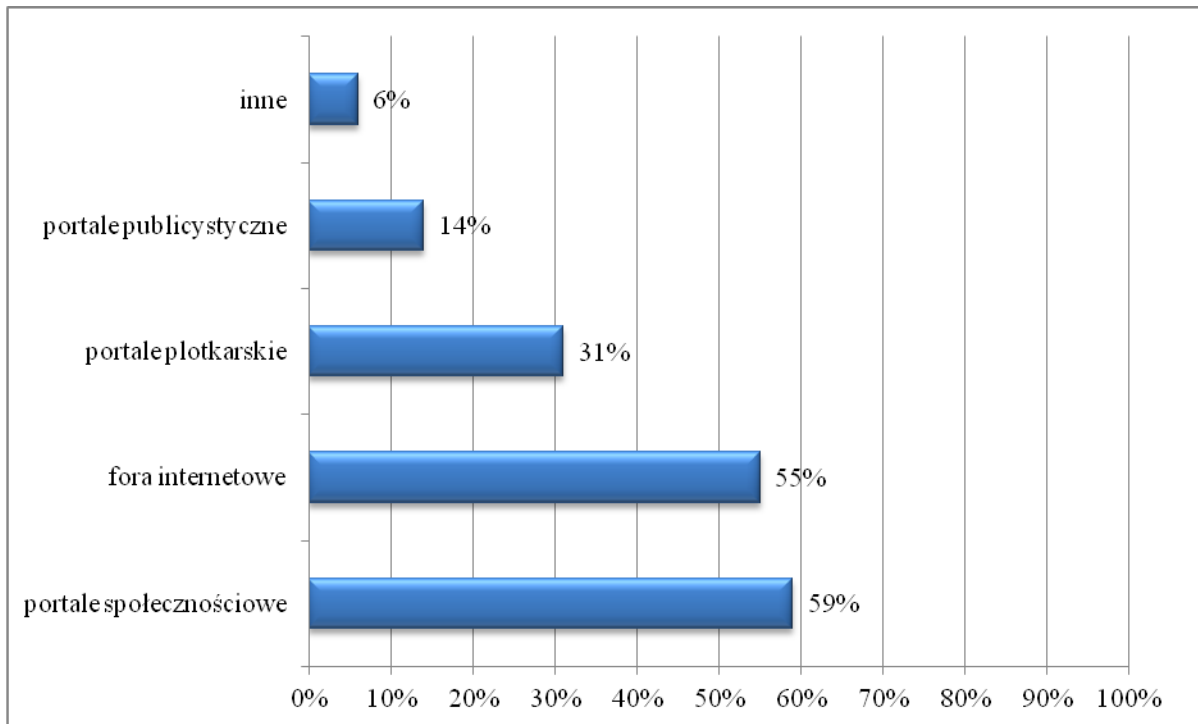
Categories of hate speech definition



The vast majority of respondents (81%) claimed that hate speech can be found on Polish websites. Only 3% of respondents had the opposite opinion. In turn, for 16% of respondents it was difficult to determine if incidents related to hate speech are present on Polish websites. One of the tasks for respondents was to decide on what kind of Internet sites hate speech occurrence is the most probable. Most respondents (59%) pointed to social networking sites. A slightly lower percentage (55%) of respondents thought that Internet forums are under highest threat of hateful comments. One third of respondents indicated gossip sites as most frequently visited by online haters. News websites were pointed by only 14% of the surveyed young people. The remaining 6% of respondents mentioned other types of websites, like political or humoristic websites. Moreover, respondents pointed to Internet games. Also, a comment appeared which stated, that risk of hate speech can also be observed on popular sites dedicated to the general public.

Due to a multiple-choice question, the percentage of the answer category in relation to the number of people was presented.

Kinds of Internet sites which are at highest risk of hate speech



The respondents were then asked to give examples of websites with instances of hate speech, and only 20% of them responded. Among them, 6% pointed to browsers: both google.pl and youtube.pl got 3% respectively. The same number of people pointed to community websites – again both facebook.pl and ask.fm were chosen by 3% of respondents respectively. Other examples included websites with neo-Nazi's, anti-Semitic content, as well as political blogs (2%). Further examples included internet games, a website chamsko.pl, and mowanienawisci.info, all of which were chosen by 2% of respondents respectively.

At the same time, more than half of respondents (56%) denied to have ever been victims to any symptoms of hate speech on the Internet. Moreover, they claimed that their friends had no experience of this type of aggression either. On the other hand, 31% of respondents confirmed to have been attacked by individuals who used hate speech, or to know Internet users with such experience. In turn, 13% of the surveyed people were unable to say if they knew any victim of hatred on the Internet. The vast majority of respondents (81%) had never applied hate speech towards others on the internet, unlike 13% of respondents, who admitted to such behaviour. Some respondents (6%) found it difficult to say if they had used hate speech before.

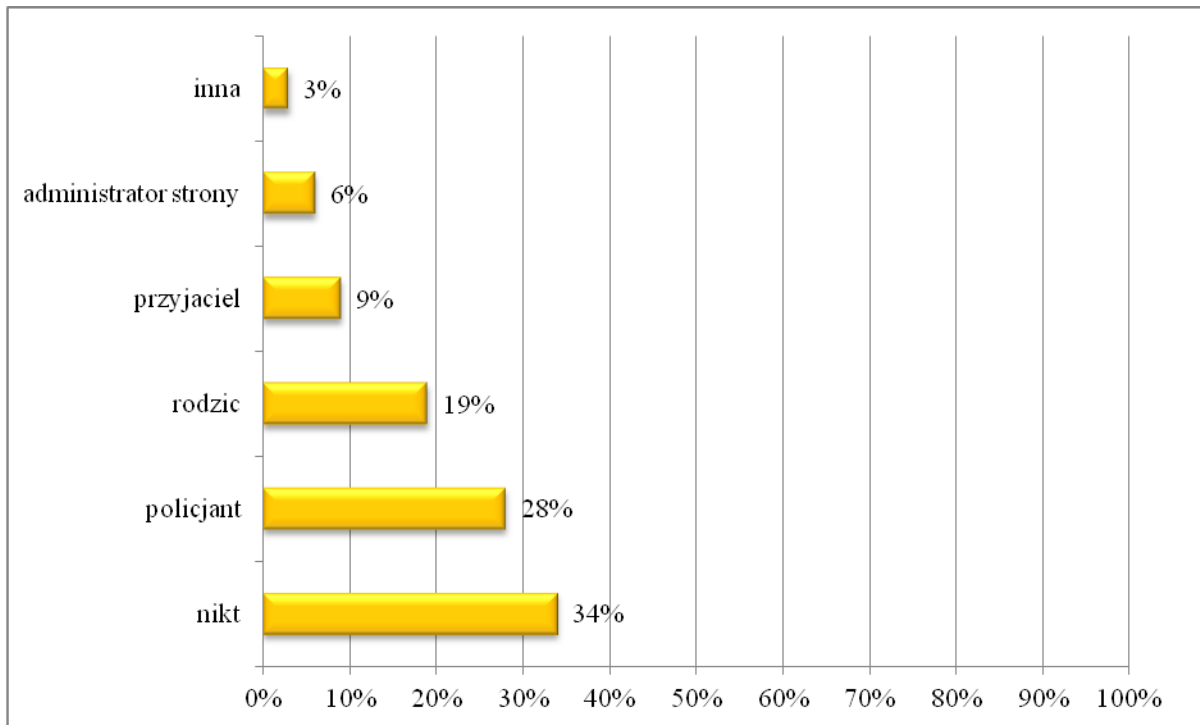
Most respondents don't know any websites they could turn for help in case of noticed hate speech manifestations. Although 11% of respondents gave some examples, the indicated websites didn't refer directly to hate speech prevention, as 3% of respondents mentioned the google.pl browser, whereas youtube.pl and facebook.pl received 2% of indications each. Also, 3% of respondents thought about websites which fight against widely understood discrimination, for example migrant.info.pl. A belief shared by 2% of respondents is that such websites don't exist and that it's not necessary to worry about the phenomenon of hate speech at all.

More than a third of respondents wouldn't inform anyone if they became object of hate speech on the Internet. A bit smaller group, 28%, would contact the police. In turn, 19% of respondents would talk to their parent about the situation, and 9% of them would turn to a friend. A decision to

contact the administrator of the given website would be taken by 6% of respondents, and 3% of the surveyed young people said that their decision who to contact would depend on the specificity of the situation.

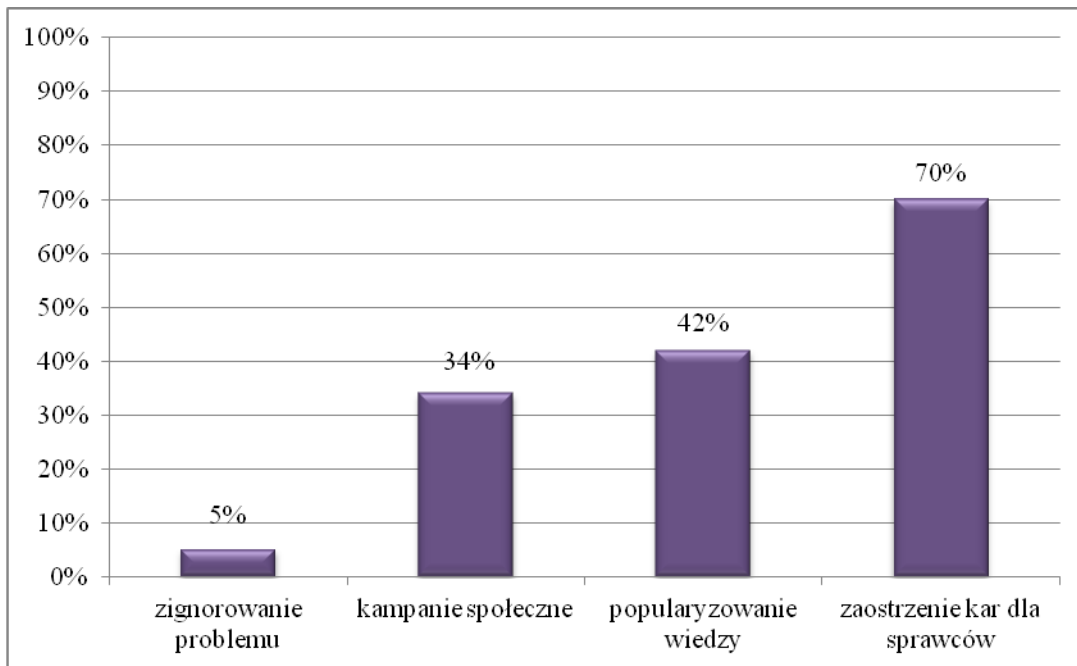
Due to a multiple-choice question, the percentage of the answer category in relation to the number of people was presented.

Who is informed in the first place about hate speech occurrence?



More than a half of respondents (52%) claimed that lack of reaction towards individuals who use hate speech is equivalent to a consent to such behaviour. The opposite opinion was expressed by 28% of respondents, and 20% of them were not able to define their opinion on this subject. What's more, 52% of respondents thought that hate speech users go unpunished. On the other hand, 26% of them stated that haters bear consequences of their deeds. Again, 22% of respondents couldn't clearly define their views on the issue. The vast majority of the questioned people stated that the most effective way of minimizing the phenomenon of hate speech is to toughen penalties for perpetrators - this belief was shared by 70% of respondents. Another idea proposed by 42% of respondents is to spread knowledge about hate speech. In turn, 34% of them decided that social campaigns would serve as an effective solution. Only 5% of respondents stated that the problem should be ignored.

Ways of preventing hate speech on the Internet



Due to a multiple-choice question, the percentage of the answer category in relation to the number of people was presented.

