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Regional media platforms: Status, problems, prospects

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Abstract. *The purpose of the article* is to analyse the current state of regional media platforms, identify development problems and justify solutions. *Methodology.* General scientific methods are used in the research. Among them are generalizations, comparisons, statistical analysis – to analyse views of the scientists on the current state of providing regional media platforms, identify development problems and justify solutions. *Results.* In the process of analysing the current state of regional media platforms development, an increase in the number of business entities in Ukraine that provide information and telecommunications services (in 2010–2018 from 55,977 to 174,622 units) was revealed. In general, the increase was due to an increase in the number of information services and computer programming, consulting and related activities. Considering the field of publishing, film production, radio broadcasting and television broadcasting, it is necessary to state the fact that during the study period, the number of subjects decreased significantly. This trend is observed due to the reform implemented in these areas. The leaders of the reform process are Kirovohrad region, where 25 out of 28 print media and editorial offices have been reformed, Zhytomyr (24 out of 28), Khmelnytsky (23 out of 27), Mykolaiv (22 out of 26), Poltava (26 out of 31), Ternopil (16 out of 21) regions. Outsiders of the reform process are Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Transcarpathian regions and the city of Kyiv. In particular, in Kyiv, according to the monitoring data, none of the 4 communal mass media was reformed, and in the Transcarpathian region, 3 out of 31 editions were reformed. The volume of sold products by enterprises of the type of economic activity "information and telecommunications" increased 3.8 times or by 200,727.1 million UAH. A significant increase in sales is observed in all areas, except for magazines and periodicals. This once again confirms our opinion that the majority of the population gets information from the Internet but not from print media. Therefore, the volume of sold products has decreased significantly. The main problems hindering the development of regional media platforms are presented. The main problems include: inadequate provision of the Internet access; low quality of traffic, content (no advertising market, no paid subscription) and fact-checking; the influence of the media founders on editorial policy; the dominance of hidden advertising. *Practical meaning.* These problems of media platforms will allow to form their development strategy. *Prospects for further research.* The study will substantiate the prospects for the development of regional media platforms in Ukraine.

Keywords: regional media platforms, web portals, Internet portals, information and telecommunications, traffic, media sphere.

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Регіональні медіа платформи: стан, проблеми, перспективи

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Анотація. Метою статті є аналіз сучасного стану забезпечення регіональними медіа платформи, виявлення проблем розвитку та обґрунтування шляхів вирішення. *Методологія.* У дослідженні застосовані загальнонаукові методи, зокрема узагальнення, порівняння, статистичного аналізу – для аналізу поглядів науковців щодо сучасного стану забезпечення регіональними медіа платформи, виявлення проблем розвитку та обґрунтування шляхів вирішення. *Результати.* В процесі аналізу сучасного стану розвитку регіональних медіа платформ, виявлено збільшення чисельності суб'єктів господарювання в Україні, які надають послуги інформації та телекомунікації за 2010–2018 роки з 55 977 до 174 622 одиниць, або на 118 645 одиниць. В цілому збільшення відбулося за рахунок збільшення кількості за напрямом надання інформаційних та послуг комп'ютерного програмування, консультування та пов'язаних з ними діяльність. Якщо розглядати сферу видавничої діяльності, виробництва кіно, радіомовлення та телевізійного мовлення необхідно констатувати той факт, що за дослідований період кількість суб'єктів значно скоротилась. Така тенденція спостерігається завдяки реформі, що впроваджується за цими напрямками. Лідерами процесу реформування є Кіровоградська область, де з 28 друкованих ЗМІ та редакцій реформовано 25, Житомирська (з 28–24), Хмельницька (з 27–23), Миколаївська (з 26–22), Полтавська (з 31–26), Тернопільська (з 21–16) області. Аутсайдерами процесу реформування є Київська, Львівська, Одеська, Дніпропетровська, Івано-Франківська, Закарпатська області та місто Київ. Зокрема, у Києві, за даними моніторингу, не реформовано жодного з 4 комунальних ЗМІ, а в Закарпатській області з 31 видання реформовано 3. Обсяг реалізованої продукції підприємств за видом економічної діяльності інформація та телекомунікація збільшився у 3,8 разів або на 200 727,1 млн грн. Суттєве збільшення обсягу реалізованої продукції спостерігаємо за всіма напрямками, окрім видань журналів і періодичних. Це ще раз підтверджує нашу думку, що більшість населення черпають інформацію з інтернету, а не з друкованих видань, відповідно обсяг реалізованої продукції значно зменшився. Наведено основні проблеми, що стримують розвиток регіональних медіа платформ, серед основних: неналежне забезпечення доступу до інтернету, низька якість надання послуги трафіку, контенту (відсутність ринку реклами, відсутність платної підписки) та фактчекінгу, впливання засновків медіа на редакційну політику; засилля джінси. *Практичне значення.* Наведені проблеми діяльності медіа платформ довозлять сформулювати їх стратегію розвитку. *Перспективи подальших досліджень.* Проведене дослідження дозволить обґрунтувати перспективи розвитку регіональних медіа платформ в Україні.

Ключові слова: регіональні медіаплатформи, веб-портали, інтернет-портали, інформація та телекомунікація, трафік, медіа-сфера.

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1. Introduction.

Today it is believed that “who owns the information, owns the world”. The constant development of society requires significant transformational changes in the provision of information. Every day, the majority of the population refuses the print publications and prefers electronic, for various reasons (wood preservation, speed and availability of information). However, the media space may not always respond to today’s needs due to financial, technical and organizational problems. It should be noted that the change and improvement of the legal and regulatory framework lead to increased opportunities for cooperation between the state and business through the media. Therefore, special attention is paid to the study of the analysis of the regional media platforms current state, development problems identification and justification of ways to solve them.

2. Literature review.

Ukrainian and foreign scientists have paid considerable attention to the study of the current state of regional media platforms development. In particular, O. Skiban (2019), S. Koval (2017), V. Kovalevskyy (2009), O. Sytnyk (2018), O. Gryshchenko and A. Niesheva (2013) and others. However, the constant reform processes and changes in the legal framework, the construction of strategically important documents for the state require additional research to determine the peculiarities of the regional media platforms development in such conditions.

3. Methodology.

The theoretical and methodological bases of the study are scientific works in the media sphere. The following research methods are used to achieve the purpose of the work: theoretical generalization – to determine the theoretical foundations and trends of the content and components of the regional media platforms; statistical analysis – to study the

development of economic entities by type of economic activity “information and telecommunications”; methods of positive and normative analysis – to make recommendations for improving the development of regional media platforms.

4. Research objectives.

The purpose of the article is to analyse the current state of regional media platforms, identify development problems and justify solutions.

5. Results and discussions.

O. Skiban notes that “Increasingly, new ways of communication, designed for the format of social networking, are transformed into interesting PR-campaigns, strategies, communication of modern publishers. This provides a much wider range of channels and means of promotion. On the one hand, it adds interesting and unexpected opportunities for use in PR strategies, and on the other hand, it helps to attract new audience. At a time when the brain is filtering messages recognized as “advertising”, new ways of promoting are becoming increasingly important. As a result, new media are becoming one of the most efficient and popular channels for informing about “novelty” and literature news. Internet activity, where information appears on publishers’ websites, most quickly on Facebook and Instagram pages, where new photos, videos, event streams, etc. are posted, is common to the mass audience” (Skiban, 2019).

S. Koval considers that “There are tendencies to visualize information in all types of media. However, this trend is most fully traced in the online environment. Network users avoid texts that are too long, preferring images. Nowadays, visual content generated by users can be seen on social networks or on special platforms. Some of them are known to almost everyone, for example, such social networks as “Facebook”, “VKontakte”, “Instagram”. However, there are many specialized

services for the visual content distribution, such as photo social networks “Dburn”, “PhotoGeek”, etc. Most often, users use photo banks, or, as they are called, photo hosting services, to post their own photos or created infographics. Photo hosting is a website, or online community, that allows to publish any image. In this category there are not only such unique sites as “Flickr”, “Picasa”, but also general sites, hosting sites where people can post photos and videos. For example, on the Photobucket site (photobucket.com) each photo is assigned a unique address. The author of the photo can easily share the hyperlink leading to the photo with anyone who has access to the Internet, as well as post the photo on their website. There are both free and paid photobanks, for example: “Flickr”, “Firestock”, “Pixabay”, “Dreamstime”, “FreeImages”, “Freerange”, “Fotolia”, etc.” (Koval, 2017).

Thus, today's conditions require businesses to rethink the introduction of their activities in the direction of digitalization. It is believed that if a company is not online, accordingly, it does not work.

Analyzing the tendencies of the media in Ukraine, V. Kovalevsky gives grounds to claim that “This area operates according to a logic that differs significantly from that which exists in developed countries. Even today, with 18 years of experience in Ukraine's independent existence, the main deterrent and main problem of media development is that we do not have a strategic document – Strategy, Concept or Basic Principles of Information Space. The drafts of the relevant documents are more like a conjunctural or temporary statement of the state of affairs and dreams for the future, rather than real political and economic models of the media sector functioning. This causes the chaotic development of this area, which depends only on the will of political and power entities. In addition, the legal insecurity of the

Ukrainian media sphere makes it dependent on external (often anti-Ukrainian) influences. In general, media trends are somehow related to economic efficiency, to profit. Like any other business, the media in a recession will try to save money by reducing prices for advertising, production and dissemination of information, which threatens to reduce the quality of information products and eliminate small players for whom the media is the only source of income. In this context, despite the lost time, the state can still have a positive impact on the functioning of the entire media sphere. To do this, it is necessary to improve information legislation, develop a strategy for the information sphere development, strengthen the requirements for the information product quality, support programs aimed at improving the consolidation of society and maintaining its values” (Kovalevskyy, 2009).

Reformation changes have greatly changed national views on the field of information and telecommunications. As a result, the number of entities that started working through the Internet portals has increased. Due to this, the volume of sold products in the field of information and telecommunications increased.

Thus, according to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the number of business entities providing information and telecommunications services in 2010–2018 increased significantly from 55,977 to 174,622 units (Figure 1). In general, the growth was due to an increase in the number of information and computer programming services, consulting and related activities. Considering the field of publishing, film production, radio and television broadcasting, it is necessary to state the fact that during the study period the number of subjects has decreased significantly. This trend is observed due to the reform implemented in these areas.

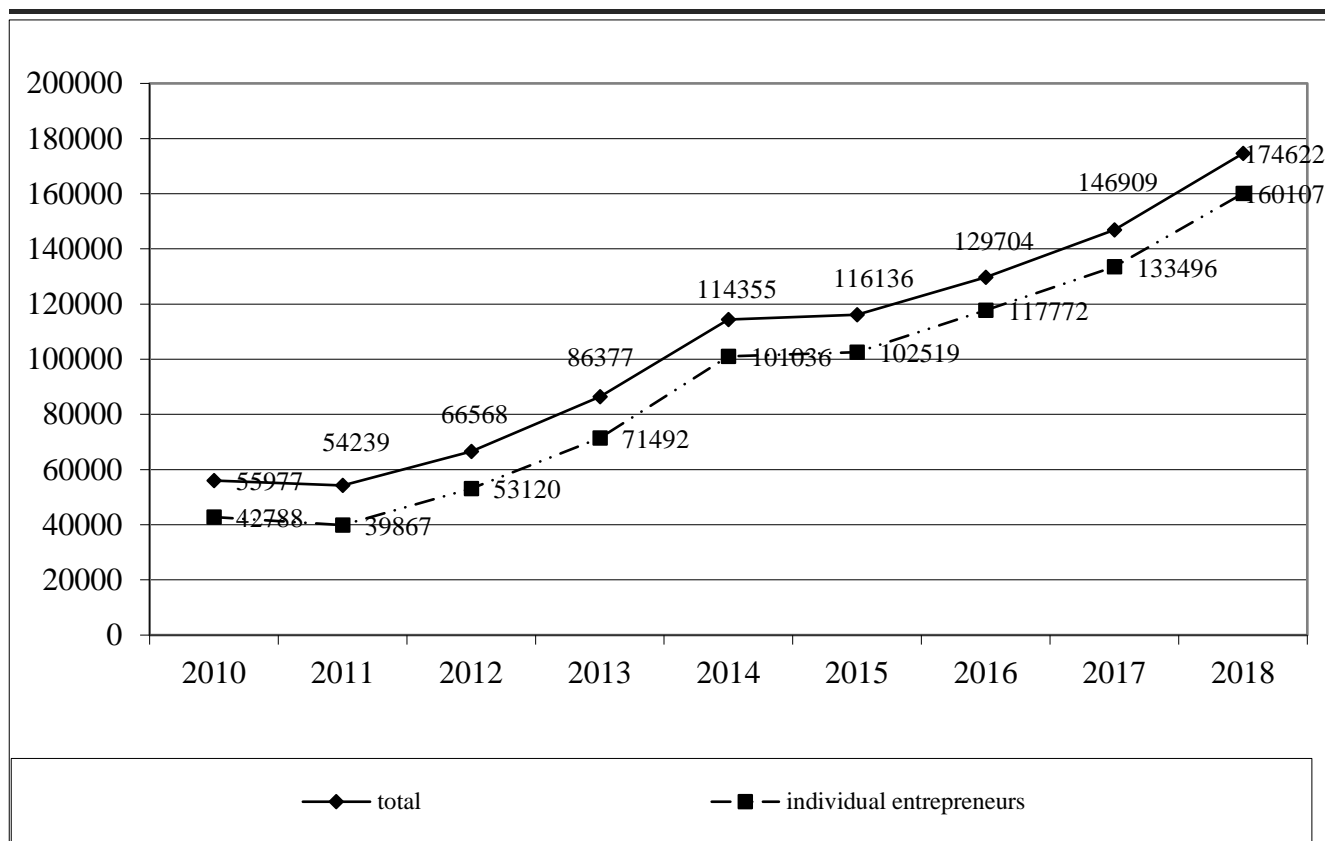


Fig. 1. Dynamics of enterprises with the type of economic activity “information and telecommunications” for the period 2010–2018, units

Source: Compiled according to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2020).

Thus, the State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine published the results of monitoring the process of reforming state and municipal print media. Accordingly, 760 state and municipal print media (662 municipal and 98 state-owned) were included in the Consolidated List of Reform Objects. 72 editions are not published at the moment. As of December 28, 2018, 425 print media and editorial offices were reformed, namely: 402 – municipal (which is more than 60% of the total number of publications actually published), 23 – state (which is more than 25% of the total number of publications actually published). The leaders of the reform process are Kirovohrad region, where 25 out of 28 print media and editorial offices have been reformed, Zhytomyr (24 out of 28), Khmelnytsky (23 out of 27), Mykolaiv (22 out of 26), Poltava (26 out of 31), Ternopil (16 out of 21) regions. Outsiders of the reform process are Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, Transcarpathian regions and the

city of Kyiv. In particular, in Kyiv, according to the monitoring data, none of the 4 communal mass media was reformed, and in the Transcarpathian region, 3 out of 31 editions were reformed (*State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine, 2019*).

In general, considering the volume of sales of enterprises with the type of economic activity “information and telecommunications”, we can see a significant increase (*Figure 2*).

During the study period, the volume of sold products of enterprises with the type of economic activity “information and telecommunications” increased 3.8 times or by 200727146.5 thousand UAH. A significant increase in sales is observed in all areas, except for magazines and periodicals. This once again confirms our opinion that the majority of the population gets information from the Internet but not from print media. Therefore, the volume of sold products has decreased significantly.

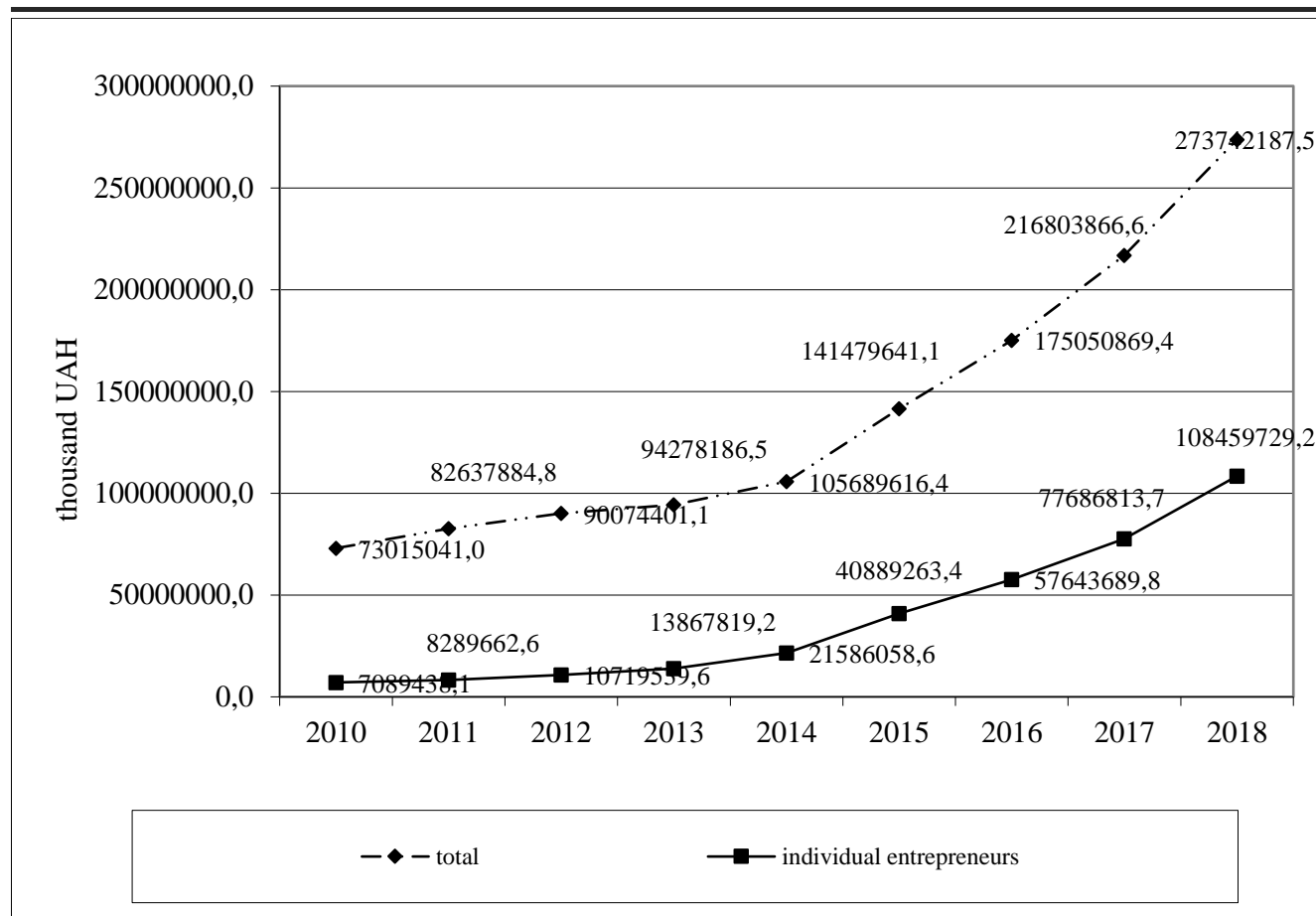


Fig. 2. Dynamics of the volume of sold products of enterprises with the type of economic activity “information and telecommunications” for the period 2010–2018, thousand UAH
 Source: Compiled according to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2020).

It is necessary to agree with the opinion of O. Sytnyk that “The most effective platform for posting news content on the Internet today is the portal. It is based on the advanced functions of the web resource, complex structure and the ability to diversify multimedia content, extensive use of multimedia content and interactive web technologies. This involves the development of a specific compositional and graphic model adapted to news content. With convergent processes taking place in the network, news portals not only adapt the content to the new media platform, but transform and universalize it” (Sytnyk, 2018).

The corresponding dynamics in terms of increasing web resources can be seen from the data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (Figure 3).

According to the figure, the number of Web portal units increased from 203 units in 2010 to 817 units in 2018, or 4.01 times. It

should also be noted that more than 80% of them belong to individual entrepreneurs.

According to the analysis, it must be stated that the Ukrainian media space today is in a great state of stagnation. According to the reform, most non-profit publications are closed, so their number has decreased significantly. Instead, we could talk about an increase in the number of electronic media. But we do not see such a trend.

According to a study by Digital New Report 2017, conducted by Reuters Institute, 8 out of 10 people visited Facebook every week for various reasons, while 54% of the sample used it for news. In 2019, the situation has not changed much: for many people, Facebook remains the most important social network for news. At the same time, the popularity of news content on WhatsApp and Instagram is growing, in particular ephemeral content (for example, stories on Instagram).

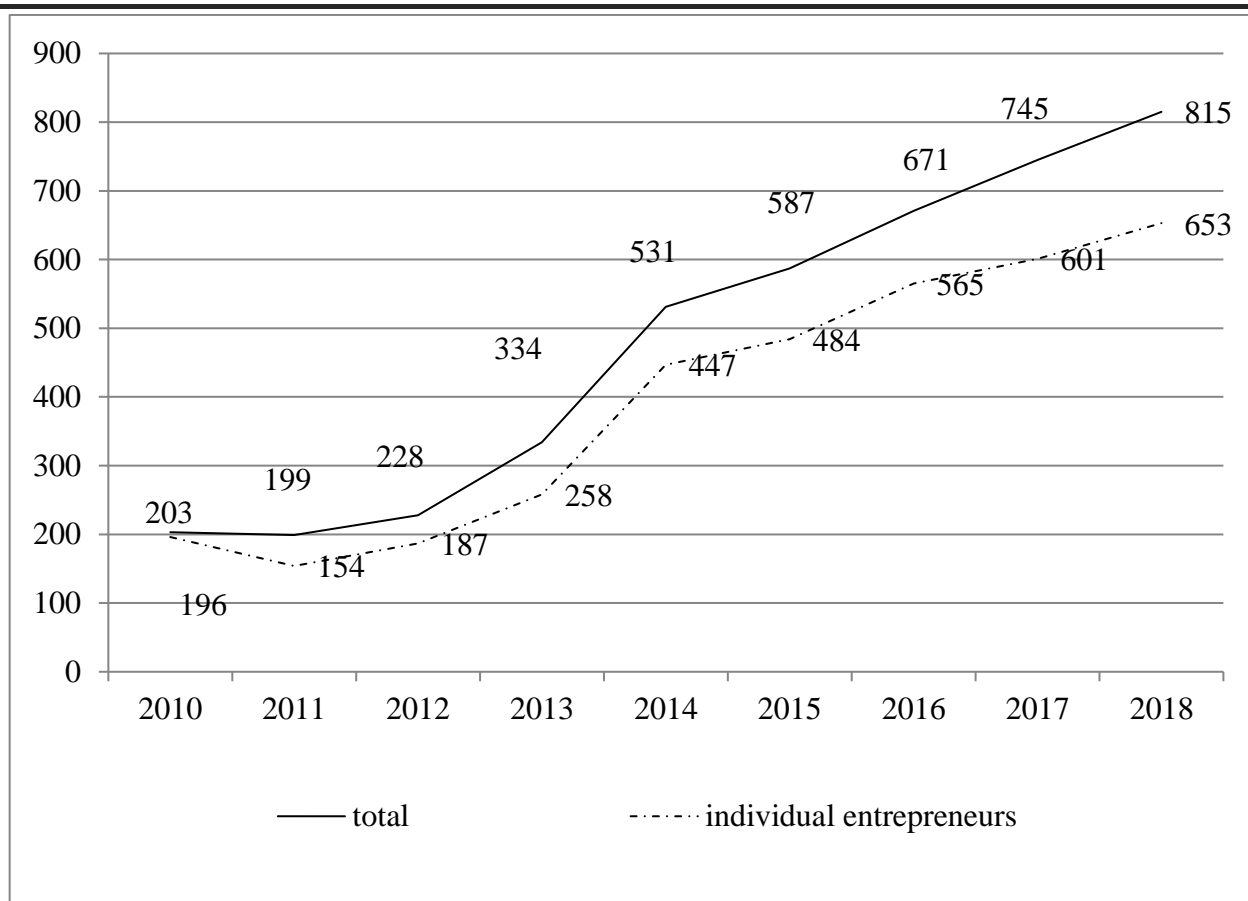


Fig. 3. Dynamics of Web portals in Ukraine for 2010–2018, units

Source: Compiled according to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2020)

The Media Development Foundation notes that 100% of regional media use Facebook for this purpose, YouTube and Telegram – 63% each, Twitter – 50%, GoogleNews – 46%, 42% use RSS feed, 17% of respondents are active in Viber and VKontakte, and only 4% of regional media have their representations on Instagram. “Given the limited resources and staffing problems (92% of the media cannot fill key positions), decisions to work with social platforms have a strong impact on the media. However, 62% of media spend available resources and time on social networks, even if they generate moderate or small amount of traffic”.

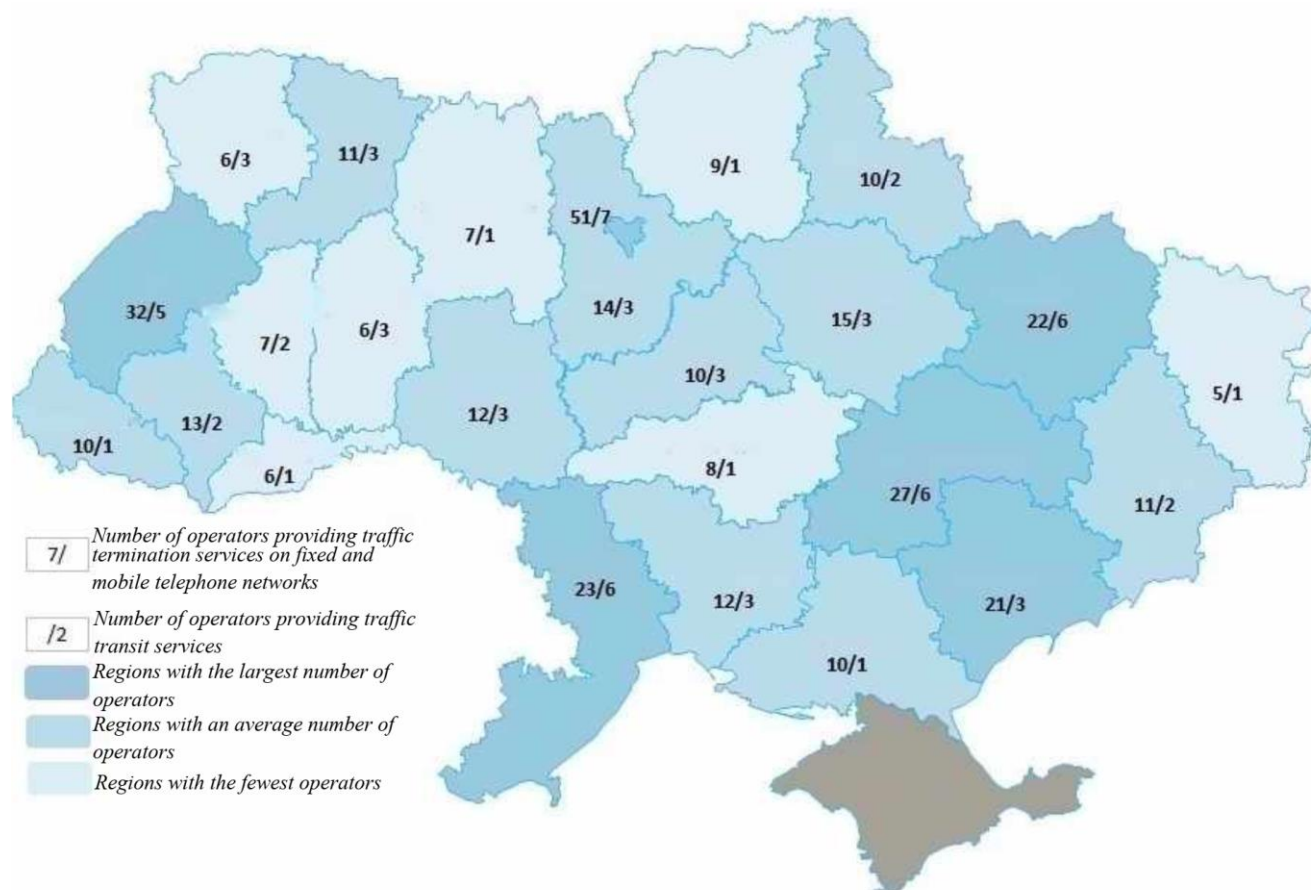
Thus, today regional media platforms are not developing for various reasons. Among the main ones are improper Internet access, low quality of traffic services. As we can see from Figure 4, in general, the assessment of the state of economic competition in the market of traffic transit services in 2018 is low.

The regions with the largest number of operators providing termination and transit services are: the city of Kyiv (51/7), Lviv (32/5), Odessa (23/6), Kharkiv (22/6), Dnipropetrovsk (22/6), Zaporozhye (21/3)((21/3) regions.

Regions with an average number of operators are: Poltava (15/3), Kyiv (14/3), Ivano-Frankivsk (13/2), Mykolaiv (12/3), Vinnytsia (12/3), Donetsk (11/2), Rivne (11/3), Cherkasy (10/3), Transcarpathian (10/1), Kherson (10/1) regions. All others belong to the regions with the fewest number of operators.

In addition to the technical problems of modern media related to the digital transformation of regions, there are others, namely:

- low quality of content (no advertising market, no paid subscription);
- the influence of the media founders on editorial policy;
- the dominance of hidden advertising;
- low fact-checking quality.



The data are given without taking into account the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the area of the anti-terrorist operation

Fig. 4. Assessment of the state of economic competition in the traffic transit services market in 2018

Source: National Commission for the State Regulation of Communications and Informatization (2020).

O. Gryshchenko and A. Niesheva consider that the main direction of the regional media platforms development can be social media marketing. “Effective social media marketing is an important factor in the successful promotion of a brand, product or company in the market, aimed at attracting more and more followers, expanding the target audience, developing, improving and protecting the company’s reputation through the formation of consumer brand loyalty. The presented theoretical aspects of effective implementation of such marketing activities will allow progressive companies to successfully promote their products in domestic and foreign markets due to the competent use of social media resources, such as information about the wishes of consumers, recommendations and preferences of competitors and partners during the

development, production and sale of a new product or brand” (Gryshchenko and Nyesheva, 2013).

Summarizing the above, it should be noted that the regional media platforms development takes place in difficult transformational conditions (reform processes, digitalization). All of this requires media platform leaders to take an urgent action to ensure their proper development.

6. Conclusions.

In the process of analyzing the current state of regional media platforms development, an increase in the number of business entities in Ukraine that provide information and telecommunications services (in 2010–2018 from 55,977 to 174,622 units) was revealed. In general, the increase was due to an increase in the number of information services and

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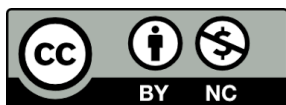
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The main problems hindering the development of regional media platforms are presented. The main problems include: inadequate provision of the Internet access; low quality of traffic, content (no advertising market, no paid subscription) and fact-checking; the influence of the media founders on editorial policy; the dominance of hidden advertising.

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