



THE ARMENIAN MEDIA IN THE EPOCH OF SOCIAL NETWORKS – 2022

***The Results
of 100 Media
Managers'
Survey***

Yerevan 2022

This report is part of the study “The Armenian Media and Social Networks – 2022”, conducted in the framework of the project “New Media Environment – New Problems – New Regulations for Pluralistic, Quality and Transparent Media in Armenia”.

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See the project materials at **Mediametrics** - <https://www.regioncenter.info/en/media-metrics>



“Region” research center



European Endowment for Democracy (EED)

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The Armenian Media in the Epoch of Social Networks – 2022

The Results of 100 Media Managers' Survey

What Problems and Who?

We conducted a survey in the period of December 2021 - January 2022 amongst the managers of 100 diverse media outlets in Armenia. Responses to our survey were received from the chief editors, deputy editors, directors, founders and managers of the news services of the media outlets from 74 online, 26 broadcast TV and radio, including 11 regional TV outlets. The list of the media managers is presented in the Appendix¹:

There are media outlets among the regional television companies that at present impart their products via online platforms only, acting as online television. The media outlets having participated in our survey have a history of 1-30 years of professional experience, diverse political allegiances and sometimes polar views on the role and practices of the media in the circumstances of the day.

With this representative sample of the media landscape from the above prisms our attempt was to find out:

- The problems faced at present by the mass media outlets and what these problems are overwhelmingly connected with;
- What are the criteria defined by media managers to differentiate quality media from diverse information platforms;
- How social networks affect the media and what are the reasons for making use of several social networks at the same time;
- What it means to say social network restraint. Is it needed? Is it possible to achieve?

There are also additional questions. The survey was conducted by the methods of in-depth interviews.

¹ The answers of the SMM specialist of the news service of *Public Television* were confirmed by the management of the *Public Television of Armenia*. Online media outlet *Tert.am* and TV company *ArmNews* also took part in the survey. They and the third media outlet belonging to the *Quartet Media* company *ArmNews FM* radio ceased their activity since February 10, 2022, by the decision of that company.

I. The Media as Users of Social Networks

Which Social Networks and as What Tool?

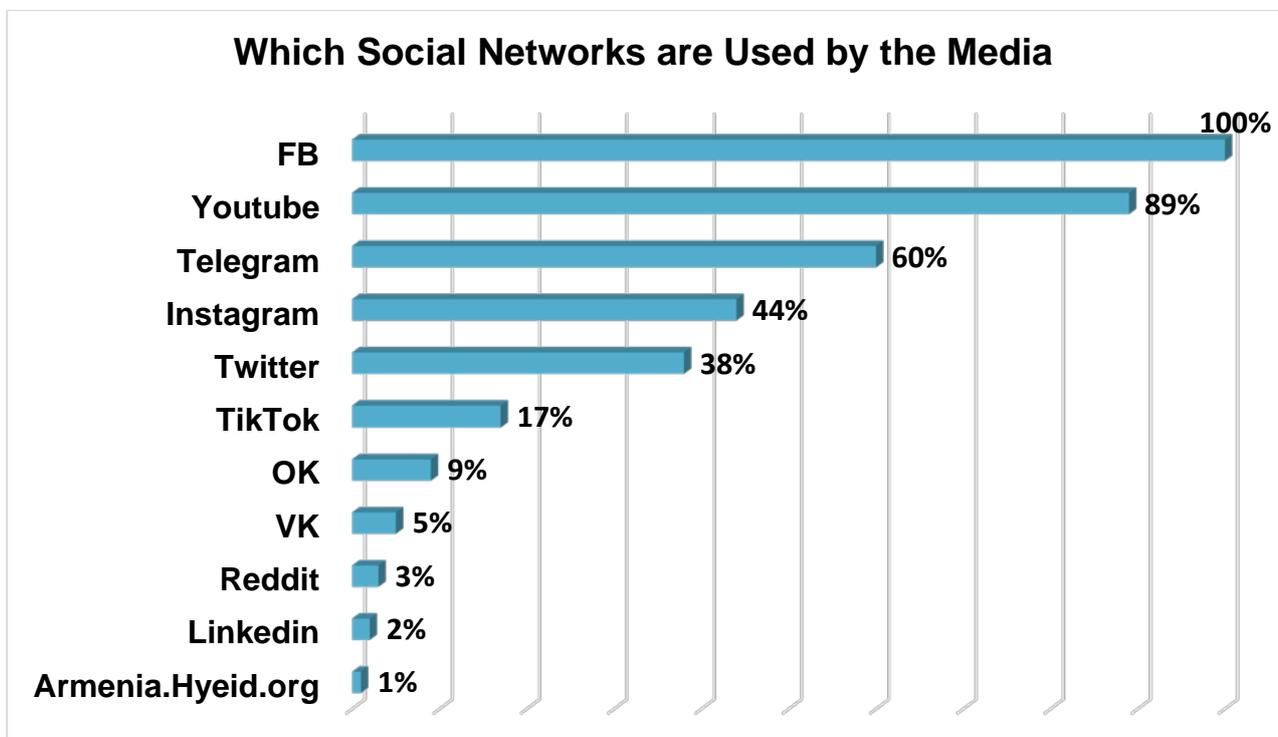
Like other segments of the Armenian social network community, media use Facebook the most. There is not a single media outlet in our list, which does not use this network. As stated by the media managers, the main reason for this is that Facebook is actively used by political forces, diverse social groups, and the largest Armenian language social network audience is here. It generates speedy and at times exclusive information.

Included among the most widespread social networks for the media are the Youtube (89%), Telegram (60%), Instagram (44%) and Twitter (38%).

The media have also been using TikTok (17%) as according to the respondents:

- ‘ ... information is digested faster here, and the important news of the day are capable of garnering larger audience here’ (*Past.am*),
- ‘it is the social network that better attracts the youth and the one developed fastest today’ (*Yerevan.Today*).

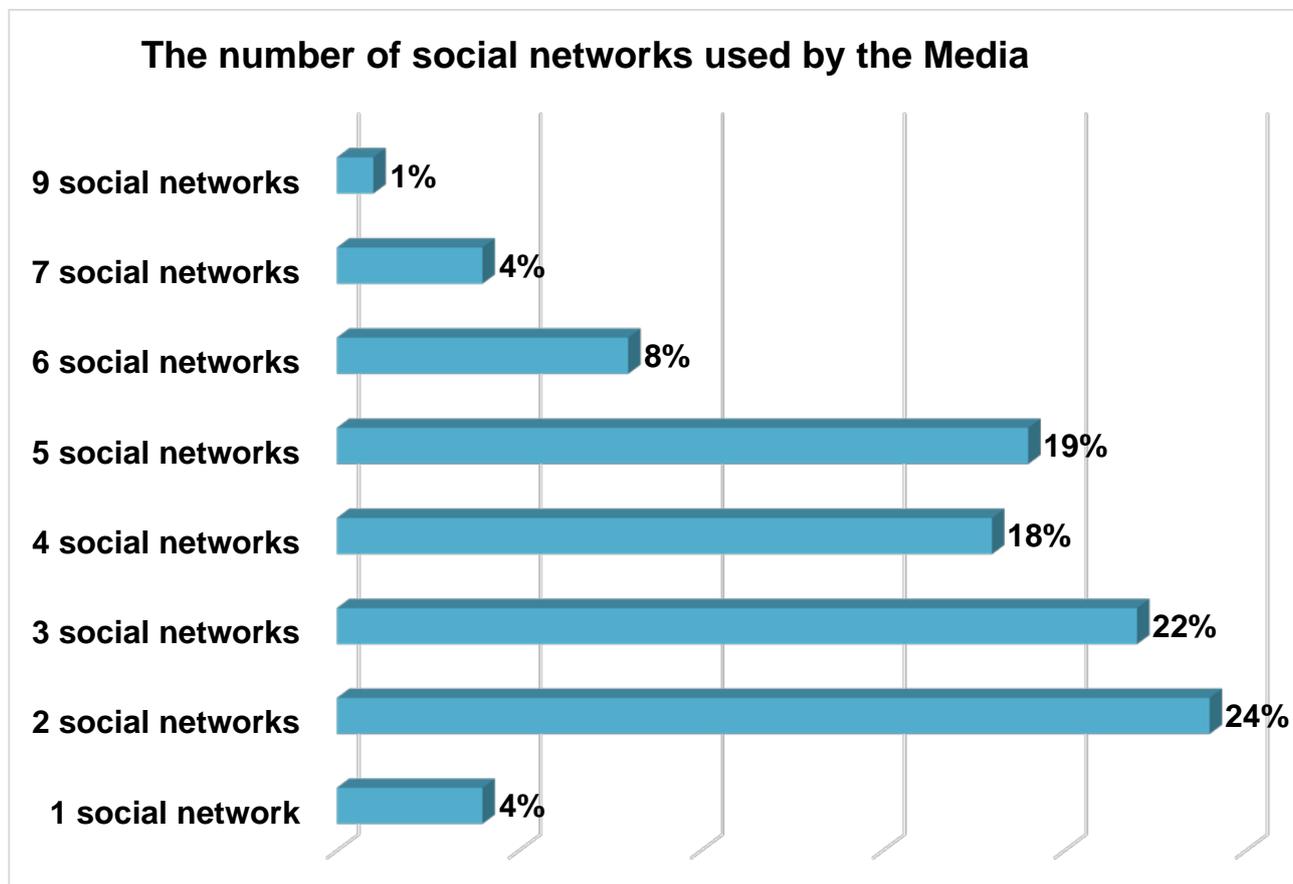
See the chart below.



Although as stated by the media managers, there is need for resources to be more active in the social networks and to attract audiences: among the 100 media outlets there are 13 that

use 6-9 different social networks at the same time.² Only 4 of the 100 media outlets use 1 social network.³ And this is Facebook. Thus, the majority of the media (83%), including the regional television companies have user platforms in 2-5 social networks.

See the chart below.

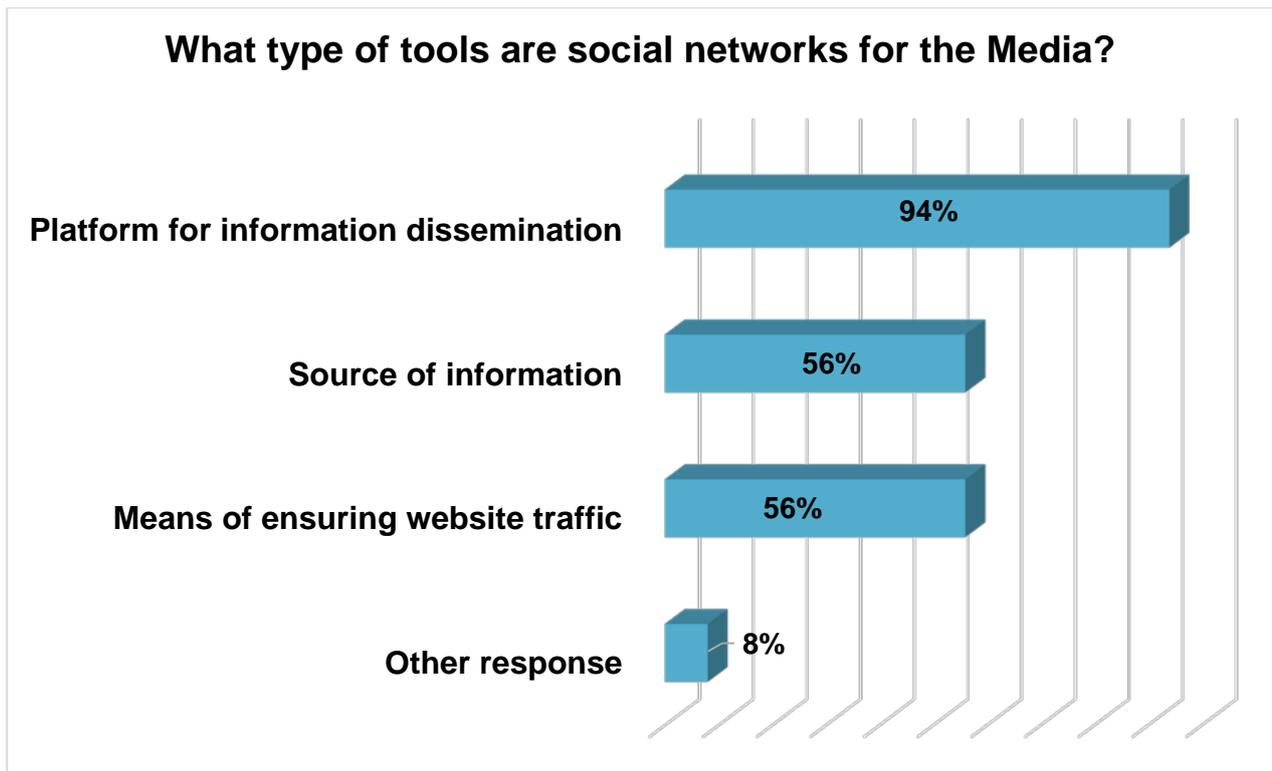


According to the managers of the 94% of the media outlets, social networks serve primarily as a platform for the dissemination of information, as a source of information (56%) and a means to ensure website traffic (56%). The managers of 8 media outlets (*Hetq.am*, *Lragir.am*, *Iravaban.net*, *168.am*, *Razm.info*, *Photolure.am*, *Panarmenian.net*, television company *Tsayg*) indicated in addition to the above three main functions that social networks serve as a tool to ensure direct contact with the audience, to examine the attitudes and comments of the readers, age and other peculiarities of the audience and to build a community around the media outlet.

² These are the television companies *5th Channel*, *Armnews*, *Fortuna*, the online media outlets *Armlur.am*, *B24.am*, *Epress.am*, *Hetq.am*, *Infocom.am*, *Newsarmenia.am*, *Newsmedia.am*, *Civilnet.am*, *Past.am*, the newspaper *Respublica Armenia*.

³ These are the online media outlets *Banber.am*, *Ilur.am*, *NorLur.am*, and the newspaper *Novoye Vremya*.

See the chart below.



II. Social Networks as a Source of Information of Public Importance for the Media

In response to the question ‘Do you believe that social networks are a source of information of public importance?’ the managers of 80% of the media outlets responded unequivocally positively, reasoning that:

- ‘A significant part of the people receive a large amount of information from social networks’ (*Mediamax.am*).
- ‘The members of the ruling administration, as well as governmental institutions very often post official information on their social networks, particularly Facebook and only after on their official websites (often with significant delays). Meanwhile the country’s Prime Minister informs the public of issues of primary importance via social networks’ (*Factor.am*):
- ‘Social networks have paramount influence not only on diverse public groups but also on decision makers’ (*Boon.am*):
- ‘Very often information in social networks helps to obtain the necessary data’ (*Golosarmenii.am*).

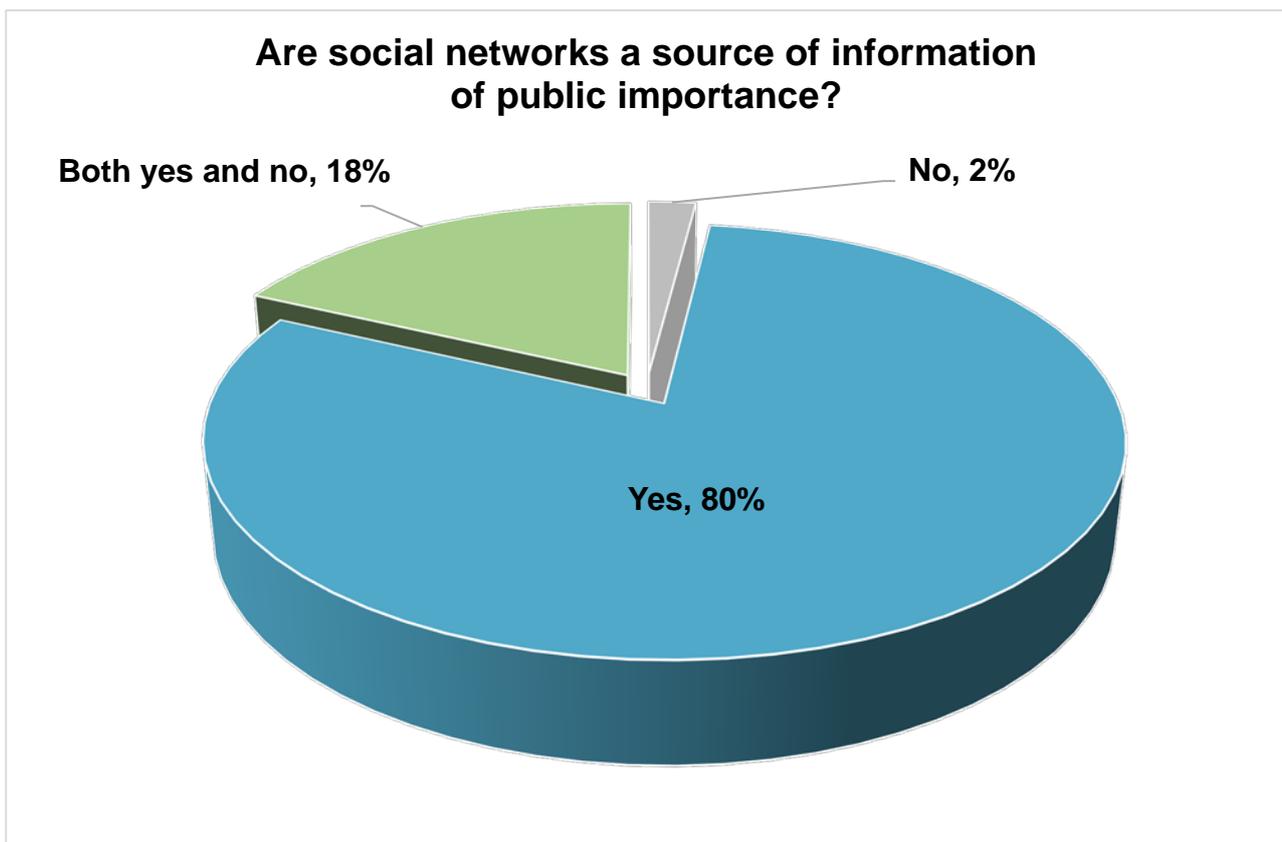
- ‘A large number of citizens are active on social networks, and a large amount of information is generated here’ (*Arka.am*):
- ‘For a significant segment of the population if not the majority, social networks have become a primary source of information’ (*Razm.info*).

The managers of only 2 media outlets believe that social networks do not perform such a function for them:

- ‘for absolute lack of accuracy’ (*Hraparak.am*),
- ‘since they are a bridge to diverse sources rather than sources themselves’ (*Ampop.am*).

For 18% of the mass media outlets, social networks are a partial source of information of public importance insofar as we are speaking about ‘genuine, verified pages.’

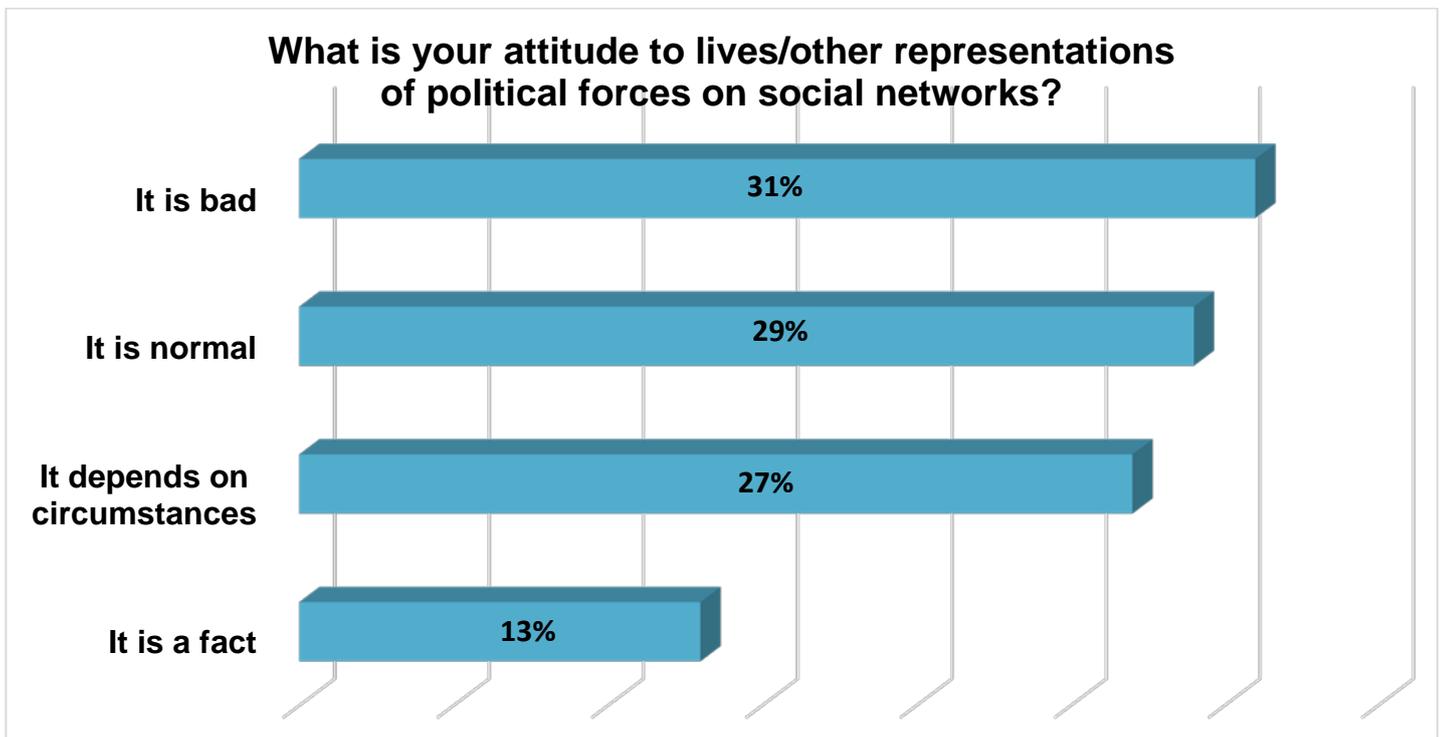
See the chart below.



‘What is your attitude to the social network activeness of the RA authorities and the opposition, their live broadcasts and other social network representations?’ In response to this question:

- approximately 1/3 of the media outlets' managers gave an unequivocally negative assessment. 31% of the respondents indicated that their attitude to this is negative.
- the responses of 13% can be treated as philosophical. They stated that they take the social network activeness of the authorities and other political forces as a fact, a reality.
- 29% were unequivocally positive as a means of contact with the public, and an inextricable constituent of the political activity.
- The attitude of the 27% of the respondents to the social network activeness of the political forces depended on circumstances. On the one hand, it is normal for reasons indicated above, on the other hand – no, in view of the one-sided flow of information, which oftentimes substitutes work with the press.⁴

See the chart below.



⁴ 'I believe that all this is a manipulation of public dispositions, very often distracting from the reality, presentation of distorted information' (*Arminfo.am*), 'Everybody is free to choose how to communicate with the public. If in the last three years (the authorities and the political forces) decided to circumvent the media and communicate with citizens directly, it is their decision' (*Armenia TV company*), 'On the one hand our attitude is positive, on the other hand, is such activeness is excessive, it's bad. For example, I ask myself, why did the Prime Minister needed a press secretary if he went live so often. Although at present this is not happening very often' (*365news.am*), 'The social activeness of the RA authorities and opposition forces, their lives and speeches in other formats are positive in general, they allow a speedier communication with the public. But this format should not be abused' (*Kotayk TV company*).

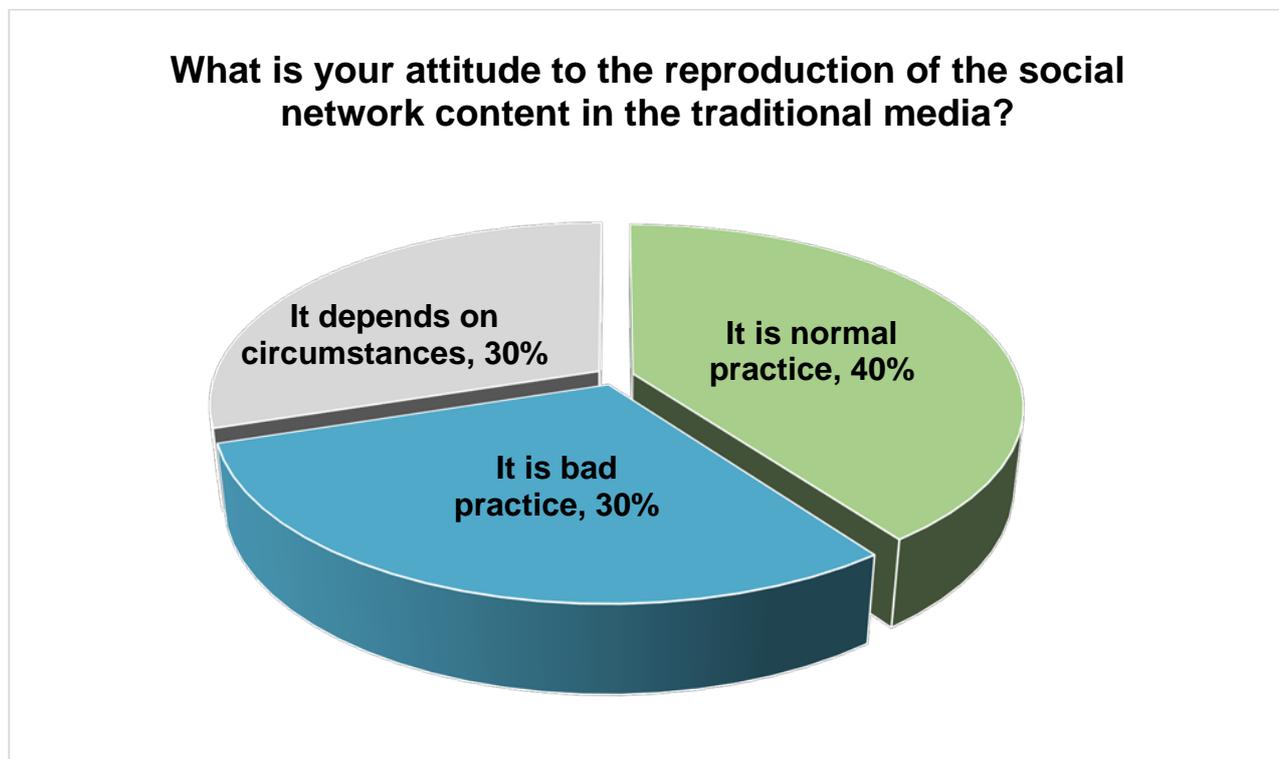
Opinions on the reproduction of the social network content by the media broke into three groups.

- 40% of the media managers believe that reproduction of social network content by the media is normal practice.
- 30% believe that this is bad practice.
- And the same number of respondents (30%) stated that their attitude depended on circumstances. They believe reproduction is normal if the social network content is interesting, exclusive and topical, if it comes from the pages of identifiable figures, analytics and rather than fake users, if it does not contain swear words and personal insults.

On the other hand, the number of the respondents that believe reproduction is bad practice constitutes 1/3 of all respondents,

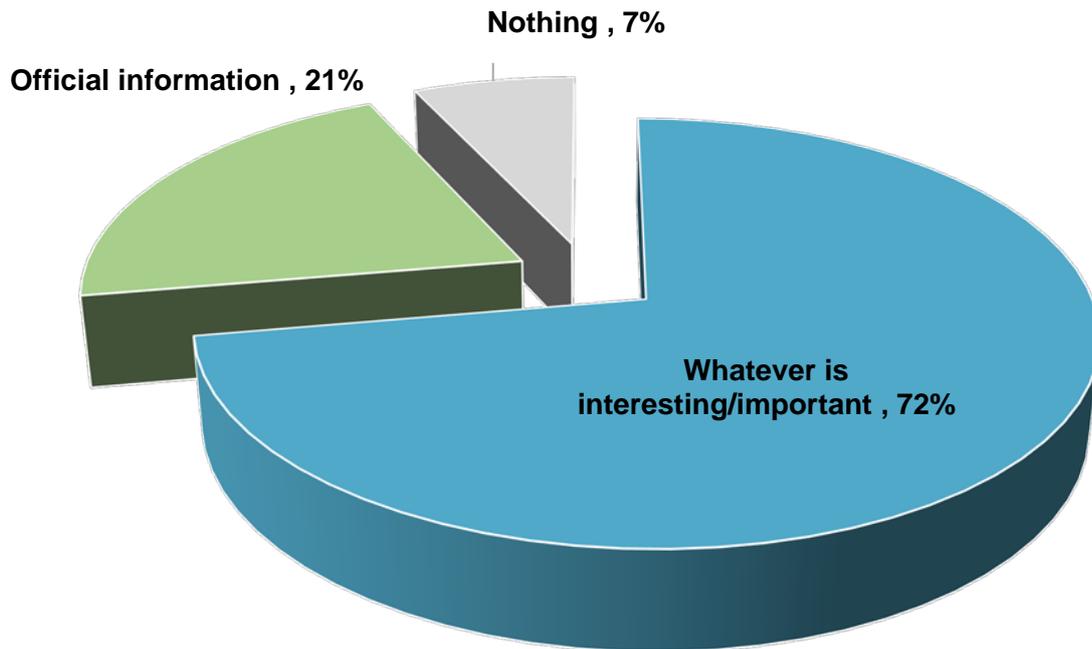
- Of the 100 media outlets only 7⁵ reported non-reproduction of social network content;
- 21 media outlets reproduce only official information posted on social networks;
- while 72 media outlets apart from official information reproduce also whatever they deem interesting/important.

See the chart below.



⁵ These are *Photolure.am*, *Boon.am*, *Alttv.am*, *Radio VEM*, TV companies *Armenia* and *Zangezur*, the newspaper *Hayastani Hanrapetutyun*.

What do they reproduce from social networks?



III. The Media Problems According to the Managers of the 100 Media Outlets

Is media work easy in an environment of social networks, current velocity of information dissemination, multitude of sources of information?

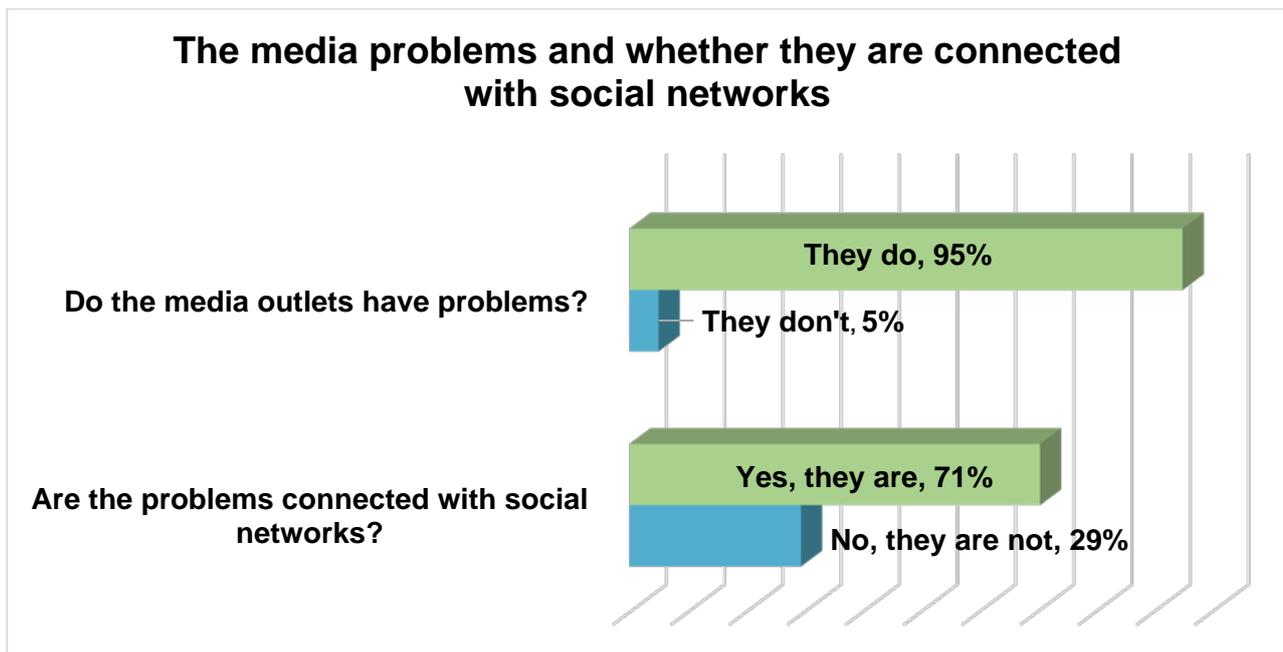
- Of the 100 media outlets, the managers of only 5 stated that as media outlets they do not have problems or that they resolve the problems in a daily working regime.⁶
- The managers of the remaining 95 media outlets indicated the problems of their media outlets and the current media sector of the country.

The answers to the question ‘**Are these challenges connected with social networks?**’ made it possible to reveal that:

- From the point of view of the majority of the mass media outlets (71%), yes, the media challenges of today are also connected with social networks.
- 29% indicated that no, the problems have nothing to do with social networks.

⁶ This is the response of *Araratnews.am*, *B24.am*, *NT.am*, *Mediahub.am*, the TV company *Second Armenian TV Channel*.

See the chart below.



Grouping the challenges indicated by the managers of the media, we summed up an assortment of 11 categories of problems affecting the work of the Armenian media today.

Part of them are connected with the developments of recent years.

Thus, the two traditional problems for the Armenian media sector – financial stability (35%) and problems of advertisements (25%) have surrendered to the **problems of communication with state institutions** (39%) by their number. Indicated in this category of problems is the fact that ‘state institutions fail to act transparently/speedily’, that there is a new custom among ‘officials, which is social networks first’ and that information disseminated by various official institutions is contradictory.

Included among the problems of advertisements the traditional formulation that ‘the advertising market is limited’ has gone to the background, and the circumstances of the day related to this sphere have come to the fore:

- a/ the recent amendments to the law on advertising reduces the opportunities for the media to earn money through advertising;
- b/ there is a flow of advertisements to social networks, which also affected financial stability of the media.

Part of the managers of the media in opposition to the authorities indicated also the **problem of targetting the media/journalists (23%)**. The fact that the attitude of the authorities to the representatives of the opposition media is denialistic, that fake attacks are organised against the media, that the media are persecuted via judicial complaints were also indicated among problems.

Included among the newest problems are large-scale **disinformation (21%)** and **downfall of the reputation of journalists/the media (11%)**. The fact that due to multitude and incontrollability of information sources, very often audiences do not distinguish between the professional media platforms and fake social network platforms, which oftentimes disseminate disinformation and manipulative publications. And this is also another reason why there is reduced level of trust in respect of media products.

Included among the challenges as indicated by the managers of the media are also **the lack of professional human resources (10%)**, **violations of copyright/plagiarisms in the media (5%)**, **violations of media ethics (4%)**.

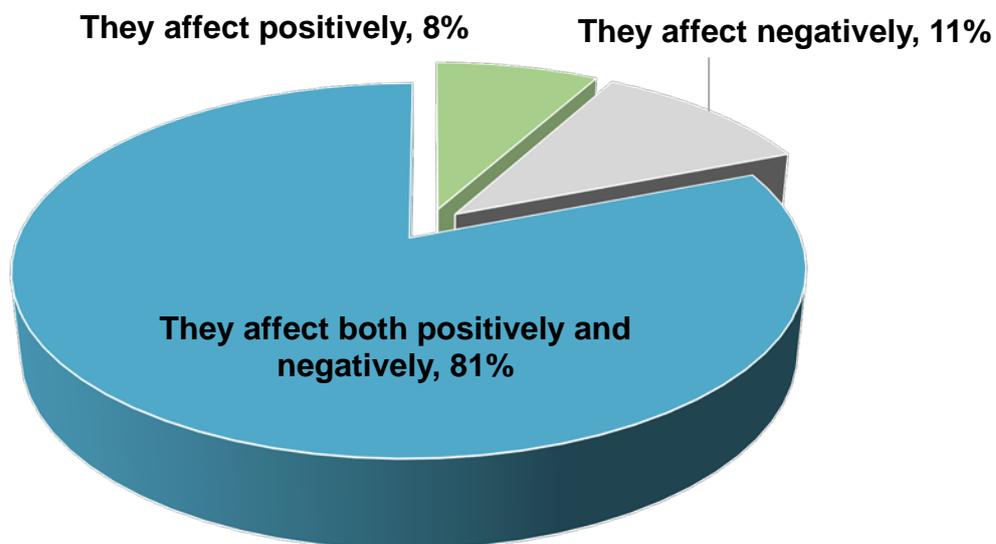
How do social networks affect media work?

As we have already seen, many of the media managers attach the problems of their media outlets to the existence of social networks, although diverse Armenian media outlets have significant presence in social networks and are active users of such,

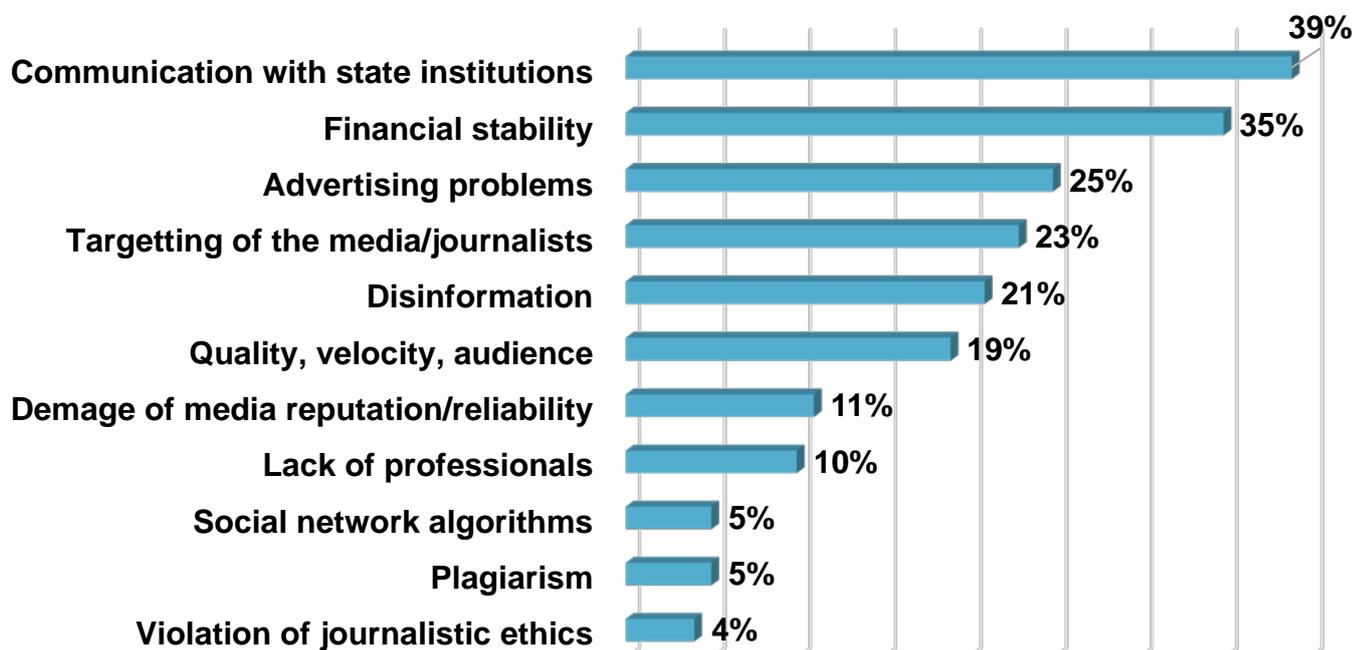
- only 8% of the respondents state that social networks clearly contribute to media work.
- according to a significant number of media managers (81%), in regard to some issues social networks contribute to their work, while in others – they are obstructive, like for example in case of social network algorithms, disinformation circulated here, the difficult problem of keeping the media platforms and the fields of comments ‘clean and without swear words.’

See the charts below. See also [‘The Media Problems according to the 100 Media Managers – 2022.’](#) This includes the categorisation of problems and media outlets that pointed them out.

How do social networks affect professional media/journalism?



Media problems - 2022



IV. Ethics, Quality and Restraint in the Social Network Environment

Restraint in Social Networks

Unfettered social network behaviour is often pointed out in the context of the polarization of public discourse in the country.

In response to our question on whether there are situations, when a regime of restraint in social networks must be established:

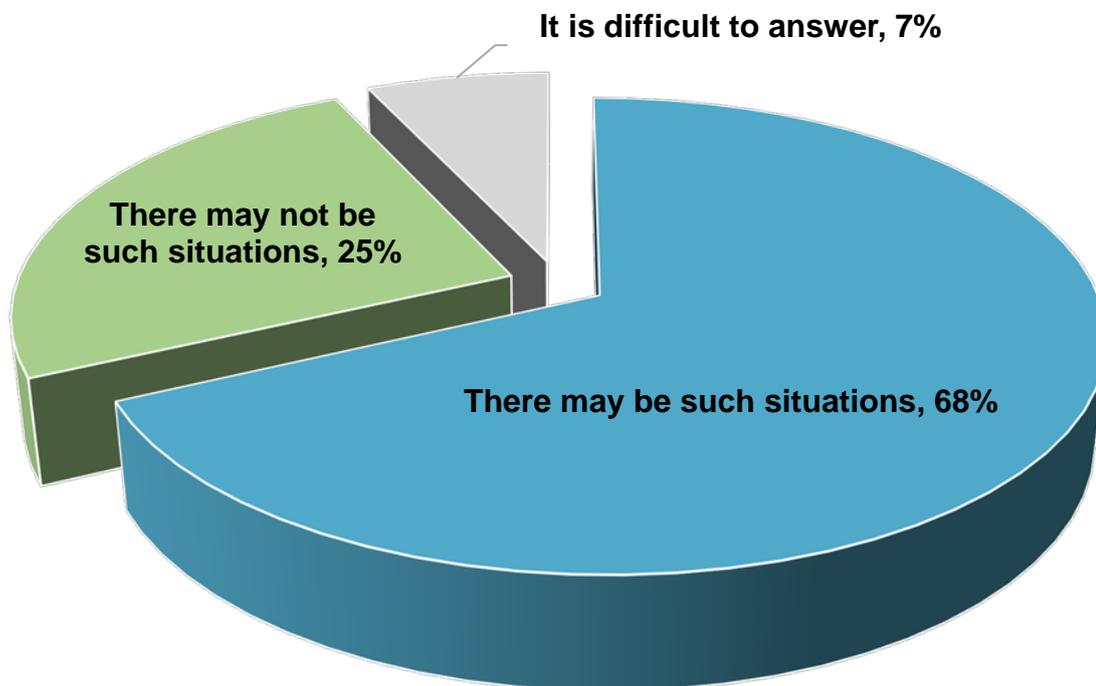
- 68% of media managers indicated yes, there are such situations, including military and emergency situations, developments threatening the country's security. Along with this, they also indicated that the question is who should establish such a regime and whether this will not be politically motivated. The question is quite complicated and requires a balanced approach.
- 25% of the respondents gave a categorical 'no' to the question for the same reason (who should establish and control this regime, and whether any measure of restraint will not be politically motivated. According to part of the media, social networks already have algorithms of restraint, no need to intensify them and such additional regimes will for sure entail restrictions on freedom of speech.

In response to the question '**Who needs to show restraint in the social networks**'

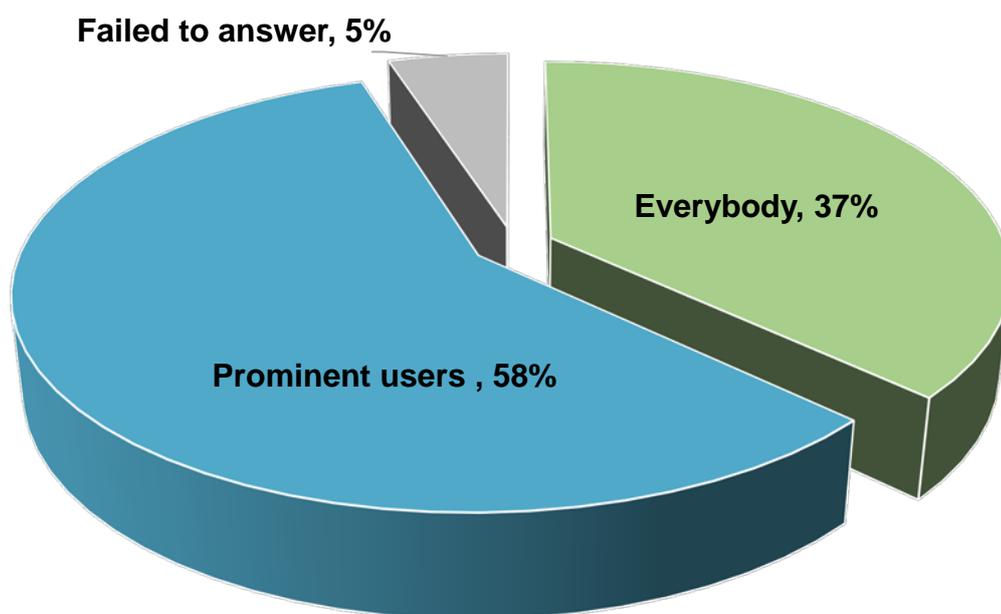
- 58% indicated **prominent users with large audiences** ('public officials, public and political figures, the media/journalists')
- 37% indicated that **everybody** needs to show restraint in social networks, including ordinary citizens.

See the charts below

May there be situations when you consider the establishment of a regime of restrictions in social networks to be right?



Who must be reserved in social networks?



Journalistic ethics

It became clear from our earlier [study](#) on media transparency that only 6% of the 89 online media and 5% of the 44 online platforms of television and radio companies posted their rules of ethics for their audiences.

It became clear in the course of this study that:

- 44% of the media do not have codes of ethics for their professional activity;
- 51% do not have written rules of conduct in social networks for their media workers.

Part of the media gave the following reasons for this:

- that even without such rules their journalists are guided by rules of ethics in social networks and in general in their professional activity, and this is proven by a long-standing history. Or that their editorial office is small and there is no need to draft a written code of ethics. All emerging questions are resolved on a daily basis.
- That social networks are the personal domains of their employees, and that the managements of the media must refrain from interfering with them.

There are also media outlets that stated in the survey that they were going to draft codes of ethics and post them on their websites.⁷

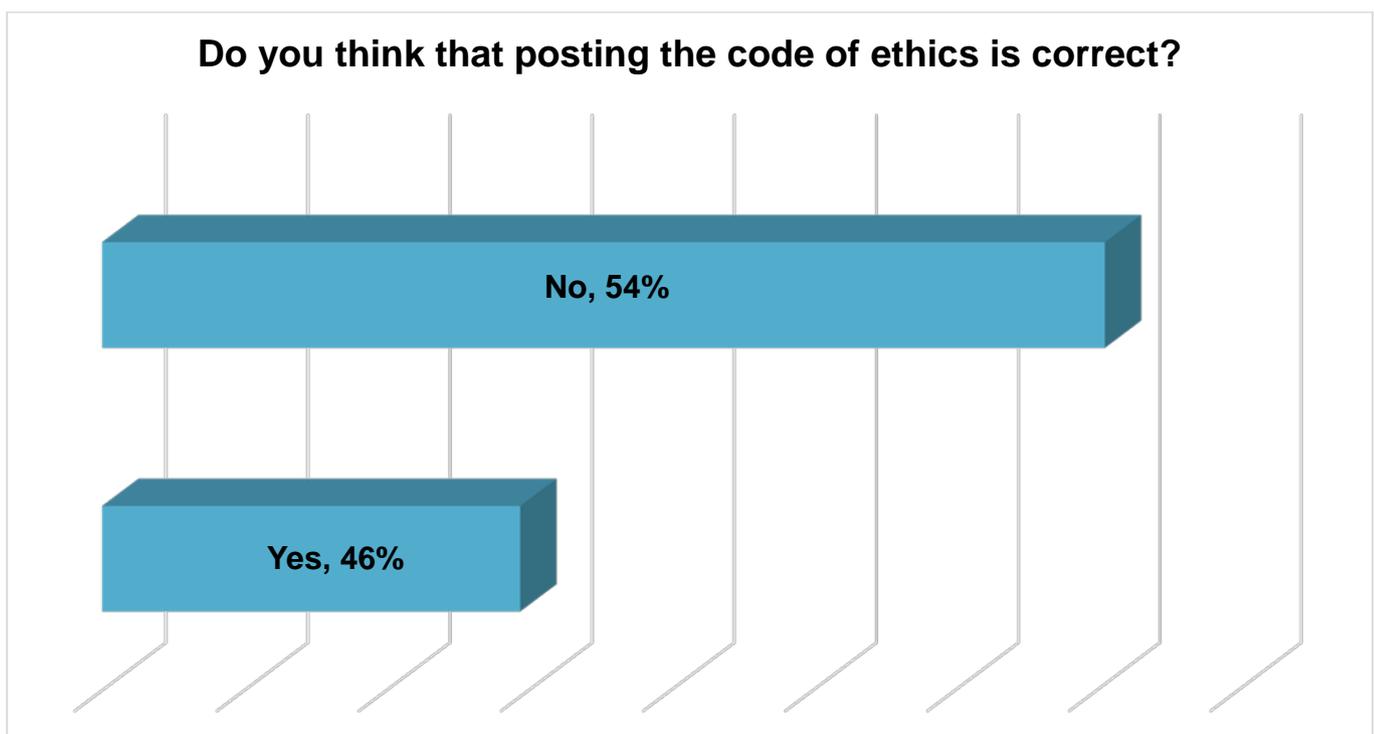
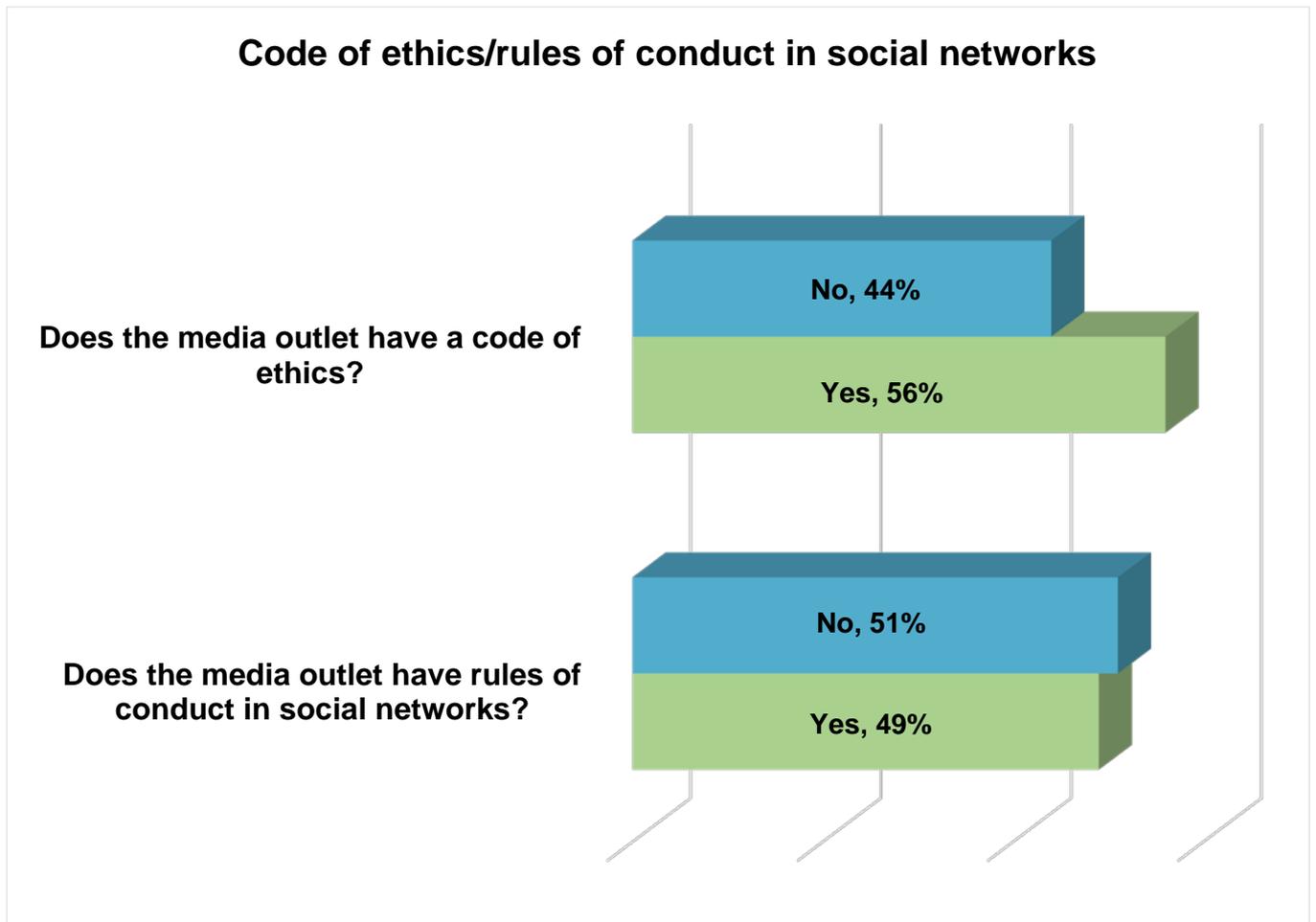
Do they believe that posting codes of ethics of media outlets is correct? The opinions split into approximate halves.

- 54% believe that posting them is not correct/obligatory, since it is up to a particular media outlet to decide whether to have a written code of ethics and whether to have it posted.⁸
- 46% believe that posting is correct since 'publication of (the code of ethics) is an honest manner of communication with one's audience' (Hetq.am), 'it (posting) is correct so that our readers know our red lines... I believe it is good that readers know what we are guided by...' (Aravot.am).

⁷ These are *Aliqmedia.am*, *Slaq.am*, *Ampop.am*, *Factor.am*.

⁸ 'We do not have a code of ethics and what is the sense of posting it? This smells of advertising the media outlet... Why should we post it on hrparak.am? To prove that we are good journalists? Good media outlet? That we work well? That we offer equal conditions? Our reader knows that.' (*Hraparak.am*), 'I believe that this code must be visible in all publications of a particular media outlet. In the rest of cases this is simple showing-off, which is of no value' (*Times.am*), 'We do not have a code. Even if we had, I see no necessity for posting it, this is an internal regulation' (*Public Radio*), 'Our media outlet works within the frames of journalistic and human ethics... To post it (the code) for who?' (*Panorama.am*).

See the charts below.



The Distinctive Features of Quality Media by the Definition of 100 Media Managers

In response to the question on **‘What are the distinctive features of quality media in the epoch of social networks’**, numerous features were indicated by media managers. Having grouped them, we got 12 categories of features of quality media. These in part are affected by the time.

Thus, as a primary feature of quality media and with a significant gap with other features the principle of imparting information verified from at least ‘two sources’ (66%) is mentioned. The fact that this information is imparted by that particular media outlet, is already a sign of accuracy and truthfulness.

Second comes **the feature of covering the events in a comprehensive manner or at least based on ‘two opinions’**. This feature was indicated by 26% of the media managers.

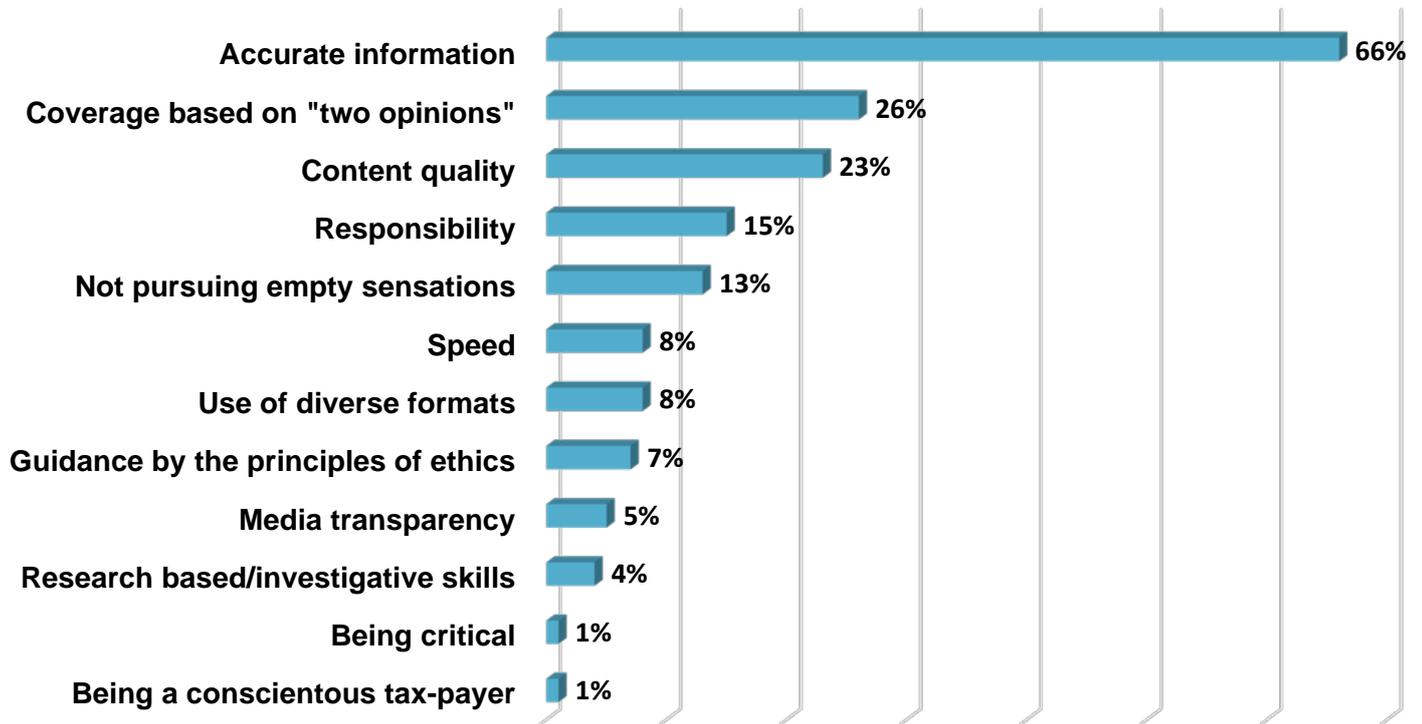
Third comes (21%) **the quality of the media content**. By saying quality of the content, the media managers referred to the value of expert commentary reflected in the publication, plurality of employed formats, the language of the text, the technical level of the products, including video materials, lives.

The respondents also indicated such features of quality media in the contemporary environment, as.

- **Media responsibility for disseminated information**, including the practice of retracting the detected inaccuracies prior to being subjected to judicial liability (this feature was indicated by 15 out of 100 media managers, 15%).
- **Use of information filters**, being guided by the ‘the ability/principle of discerning information capable of arousing empty sensationalism from what is important,’ ‘the principle of serving the public interest/not harming’ (13%).
- **Media transparency** (starting from identification, posting of the release data ending with openly presenting the financial and political interests).
- In all professional activity **being guided by the principle of ethics**, keeping the media platform, including the field of comments empty from non-correct formulations, ‘tidiness’ of the media platform.

See the chart below. See also [‘The Distinctive Features of Quality Media by the Definition of 100 Media Managers - 2022’](#) by categories and the relevant media outlets.

What distinguishes quality media in the epoch of social networks?



APPENDIX

The List of the Media Managers Who Took Part in the Survey

1. 168.am – Satik Seyranyan, editor-in-chief, info@168.am
2. 1in.am – Astghik Sapeyan, editor-in-chief
3. 24news.am – Narek Galstyan, director
4. 365news.am – Garik Chilingaryan, editor
5. 4rd.am – Shogher Matevosyan, editor-in-chief
6. A1plus.am – Karine Asatryan, editor-in-chief
7. Aliqmedia.am – Tigran Paskevichyan, editor-in-chief
8. Alttv.am – Angela Stepanyan, editor
9. Ampop.am – Suren Deheryan, editor
10. Analitik.am – Ani Hovhannisyan, editor
11. Ankakh.com – Varduhi Ishkhanyan, editor-in-chief
12. Araratnews.am – Harutyun Makrtchyan, editor
13. Aravot.am – Anna Israelyan, editor
14. Arka.am – Konstantin Petrosov, director
15. ArmDaily.am – Inga Martinyan, editor
16. Armedia.am – Alla Aydinyan, editor-in-chief
17. Armenpress.am – Aram Ananyan, director of "Armenpress" agency while taking part in the survey
18. Arminfo.am – Emmanuil Mkrtychyan, director
19. Armlur.am – Knar Manukyan, editor-in-chief at "Joghovurd" daily newspaper
20. Armpublic.com – Robert Khachatryan, founder
21. Armtimes.com – Gagik Avetisyan, editor
22. Ankyun3news.com – Hrachya Papinyan, director
23. Asekose.am – Aram Harutyunyan, founding director
24. Aysor.am – Hovhannes Kosayan, editor-in-chief
25. B24.am – Samvel Chakhayan, founder at "Buisness 24"
26. Banber.am – Nane Makuchyan, founder and editor-in-chief
27. Bavnews.am - Andranik Boyajyan, director
28. Boon.am – Gemafin Gasparyan, founder
29. Civic.am – Marine Kharatyan, editor
30. Civilnet.am – Karen Harutyunyan, editor-in-chief
31. Epress.am – Yuri Manvelyan, editor
32. Evnmag.am - Artavazd Eghiazaryan, editor-in-chief
33. Factor.am – Vanik Hakobyan, editor-in-chief
34. Galatv.am – Eduard Mkhitaryan, editor

35. Golosarmenii.am – Marina Grigoryan, deputy editor-in-chief
36. Hetq.am - Kristine Barseghyan, executive director
37. Hhpress.am – Artur Gharagozyan, editor-in-chief
38. Hraparak.am – Zaruhi Margaryan, editor
39. ILur.am – Kristine Khanumyan, editor
40. Infocom.am – Sevak Mamyán, editor
41. Infopress.am - Natalya Saghiyan, editor
42. Irakanum.am – Paylak Fahradyan, editor-in-chief
43. Iravaban.net – Alisa Chilingaryan, editor
44. Iravunk.com – Hovhannes Galajyan, editor-in-chief
45. Livenews.am – Zhanna Tsarukyan, editor-in-chief
46. Lragir.am – Naira Hayrumyan, editor of the Russian page of Lragir.am
47. Lratvakan Radio – Davit Khumaryan, editor
48. Lurer.com – Nelli Avetisyan, editor-in-chief
49. Mediahub.am – Tigran Galstyan, editor
50. Medialab.am – Marianna Grigoryan, editor-in-chief
51. Mediamax.am – Davit Alaverdyan, editor
52. Newarmenia.am – Tatevik Karapetyan, producer
53. News.am – Artur Khemchyan, editor of the Armenian section
54. Newsarmenia.am – Galina Davidyan, director
55. Newsline.am – Yeva Adamyán, editor-in-chief
56. Newsmedia.am – Gayane Zargaryan, founder
57. NorLur.am – Artak Navasardyan, director
58. NV.am – Ruben Satyan, editor-in-chief
59. NT.am – Gayane Arakelyan, editor-in-chief
60. Panarmenian.net – Nikolay Torosyan, editor
61. Panorama.am – Anahit Voskanyan, editor-in-chief
62. Para TV – Elizabeth Petrosyan, founder
63. Past.am – Varuzhan Babajanyan, founding director
64. Pastinfo.am – Sona Truzyan, editor
65. Photolure.am – Melik Baghdasaryan, director
66. Politcom.am – Lilit Silanyan, founder
67. Politik.am – Boris Murazi, editor
68. Razm.info – Karen Vrtanesyan, website coordinator
69. Shabat.am – Yeva Grigoryan, editor
70. Slaq.am – Siran Ohanyan, deputy editor-in-chief
71. Tert.am – Arkady Grigoryan, editor-in-chief
72. Times.am – Hrant Melik-Shahnazaryan, director
73. Verelq.am – Lia Khojoyan, deputy editor-in-chief
74. Yerevan.Today – Sevak Hakobyan, editor

75. Yerkir.am – Vahe Sargsyan, editor
76. Zham.am – Beniamin Matevosyan, deputy editor-in-chief
77. “5th Channel” TV company – Harutyun Harutyunyan, executive director
78. “A TV” TV company – Hrach Keshishyan, general director
79. “Armenia” TV company – Artak Aleksanyan, head of the news department
80. “ArmNews” TV company – Narek Nikoghosyan, general director
81. “Geghama” TV company – Suren Barseghyan director
82. “Delta” TV company – Arman Mazmanyanyan, general producer
83. “Yerkir Media” TV company – Lilit Manukyan, coordinator of “The Country Today” news program
84. “Zangezur” TV company – Arman Suleymanyan, producer
85. “Lori” TV company – Narine Avetisyan, editor-in-chief
86. “Kentron” TV company – Mariam Petrosyan, director of “Epikentron” news program
87. “Kotayk” TV company – Seda Avetisyan, head of the news department
88. “Armenian Second Channel” TV company – Shavarsh Gevorgyan, head of “Lraber” news program
89. “Public TV” TV company/First Channel – Zara Israelyan, SMM specialist at the News-analytical programs’ department
90. Public Radio – Liana Eghiazaryan, director of “Radiolur” news-analytical program
91. “New Armenia” TV company – Gagik Mkrtchyan, director
92. Radio Aurora – Anjela Harutyunyan, editor
93. Radio Van – Shushanik Arevshatyan, director
94. Radio Vem – Anna Hovakimyan, programs’ coordinator
95. Respublika Armenia/Ra.am – Ararat Petrosyan, editor-in-chief
96. “Shoghakat” TV company – Anna Sargsyan, deputy director
97. “Tavush” TV company - Nikolay Grigoryan, general producer
98. “Tsayg” TV company – Margarita Minasyan, director
99. “Kyavar” TV company – Anahit Kareyan, editor
100. “Fortuna” TV company – Karen Arshakyan, director