Media Coverage of Digital Inequality: Case Study Croatia

Mario Plenković (Alma Mater Europaea)

Ivan Balabanić (Catholic University of Croatia)

Slobodan Hadžić (Alma Mater Europaea)

Digital inequality or digital divide

Digital divide or digital inequality is the inequality between those who have access to information and communications technologies and those who do not. This divide can be viewed from the perspective of an individual, of social groups, or countries (OECD, 2018).

> > the participation of citizens and enterprises in the information society depends on **access to information and communication technology** (ICT), i.e. the presence of electronic devices, such as computers, and internet connections. The term explicitly **includes access to ICTs, as well as the related skills that are needed to take part in the information society**.

E-Skills

The term E-skills is defined as covering three main Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) categories:

- **ICT practitioner skills** are the capabilities required for researching, developing, designing, strategic planning, managing, producing, consulting, marketing, selling, integrating, installing, administering, maintaining, supporting and servicing ICT systems.
- **ICT user skills** are the capabilities required for the effective application of ICT systems and devices by the individual. ICT users apply systems as tools in support of their own work. User skills cover the use of common software tools and of specialised tools supporting business functions within industry. At the general level, they cover **"digital literacy".**
- **e-Business skills** correspond to the capabilities needed to exploit opportunities provided by ICT, notably the internet; to ensure more efficient and effective performance of different types of organisations; to explore possibilities for new ways of conducting business/administrative and organisational processes; and/or to establish new businesses.

Problem in modern society

Individuals and social groups in a contemporary society are at great risk of being excluded from relevant social activities and of being less competitive on the labour market due to their limited access to and lack of knowledge about information and communications technologies. This fact makes digital inequality one of contemporary society's key problems.

With the development of technology and its growing presence in everyday life, digital inequality is expanding. As a form of existing social inequality, digital inequality manifests in two aspects. The first relates to the possibility of physical access to the Internet and the other concerns the disparities in how individuals are using the possibilities of the Internet and the communication technology, which is related to education, the development of digital competences, social bonds, etc. (Rubeša, 2018)

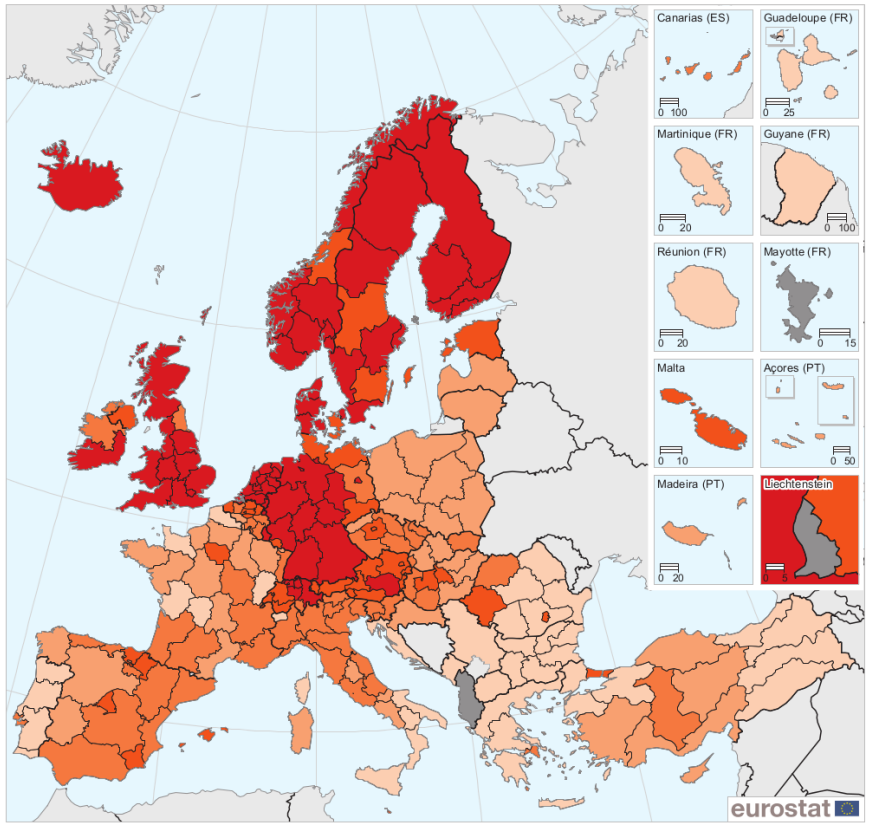
We focus on the role of digital technologies in relation to people’s ability to participate in society. Considering the differences in digital skills among individuals, many are at risk of social exclusion.

Broadband access

ICTs are credited with delivering greater flexibility in work environments (for example, permitting people to work from home or from other remote locations), while offering a broad range of options for staying in contact with colleagues, family and friends. These developments have created new dimensions of not only economic, but also social and political participation, which allow completely new ways of working, socialising and sharing information, irrespective of geographical location. (Eurostat, 2019)

Broadband access

Proportion of households with broadband access at home, by NUTS 2 regions, 2017
(% share of all private households)



(% share of all private households)

EU-28 = 85

- < 75
- 75 - < 80
- 80 - < 85
- 85 - < 90
- ≥ 90
- Data not available

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat
Cartography: Eurostat — GISCO, 04/2018

0 200 400 600 800 km

Note: Germany, Greece, Poland, the United Kingdom and Turkey: NUTS level 1. Serbia: national data. Corse (FR83) and Mellersta Norrland (SE32): low reliability.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: isoc_r_broad_h and isoc_ci_it_h)

Broadband access in Croatia:

Adriatic Croatia < 75

Continental Croatia 75 < 80

Internet use and activities

Frequency of internet access: once a week (including every day) -Percentage of individuals

GEO/TIME	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Croatia	65	66	71	65	73
Adriatic Croatia	66	70	70	61	76
Continental Croatia	65	64	71	66	71

Frequency of internet access: daily - Percentage of individuals

GEO/TIME	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Hrvatska	56	60	63	58	66
Jadranska Hrvatska	56	64	63	56	72
Kontinentalna Hrvatska	55	57	64	58	64

Data source: Eurostat 2018.

Internet use and activities

Internet use: participating in social networks (creating user profile, posting messages or other contributions to facebook, twitter, etc.)

GEO/TIME	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Hrvatska	40	45	50	47	54
Jadranska Hrvatska	41	45	47	44	57
Kontinentalna Hrvatska	40	44	52	49	53

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT PER CAPITA

Adriatic Croatia = 10.747 euro

Continental Croatia = 11.402 euro

Data source: Croatian bureau of statistics, 2019

Internet use: Internet banking

GEO/TIME	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Hrvatska	19	33	38	33	41
Jadranska Hrvatska	16	34	38	28	42
Kontinentalna Hrvatska	21	33	39	36	40

Internet use: selling goods or services

GEO/TIME	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Hrvatska	21	35	28	25	25
Jadranska Hrvatska	18	32	23	18	21
Kontinentalna Hrvatska	23	36	30	28	27

Data source: Eurostat 2018.

Internet use and activities

Internet use: participating in social networks (creating user profile, posting messages or other contributions to facebook, twitter, etc.)

GEO/TIME	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Hrvatska	40	45	50	47	54
Jadranska Hrvatska	41	45	47	44	57
Kontinentalna Hrvatska	40	44	52	49	53

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT PER CAPITA

Adriatic Croatia = 10.747 euro

Continental Croatia = 11.402 euro

Data source: Croatian bureau of statistics, 2019

Internet use: Internet banking

GEO/TIME	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Hrvatska	19	33	38	33	41
Jadranska Hrvatska	16	34	38	28	42
Kontinentalna Hrvatska	21	33	39	36	40

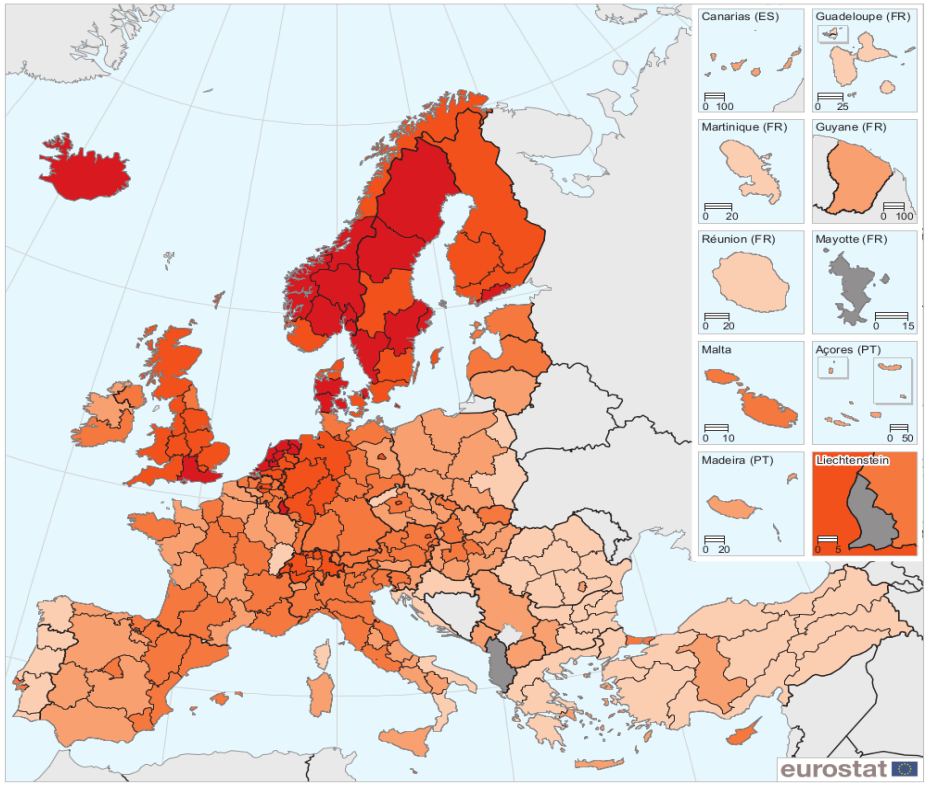
Internet use: selling goods or services

GEO/TIME	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Hrvatska	21	35	28	25	25
Jadranska Hrvatska	18	32	23	18	21
Kontinentalna Hrvatska	23	36	30	28	27

Data source: Eurostat 2018.

Internet use and activities

Proportion of daily internet users, by NUTS 2 regions, 2017
(% share of people aged 16-74; based on frequency of use during the three months prior to the survey)



(% share of people aged 16-74; based on frequency of use during the three months prior to the survey)
EU-28 = 72
- < 60
- 60 - < 70
- 70 - < 80
- 80 - < 90
- ≥ 90
- Data not available

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat
Cartography: Eurostat — GISCO, 04/2018

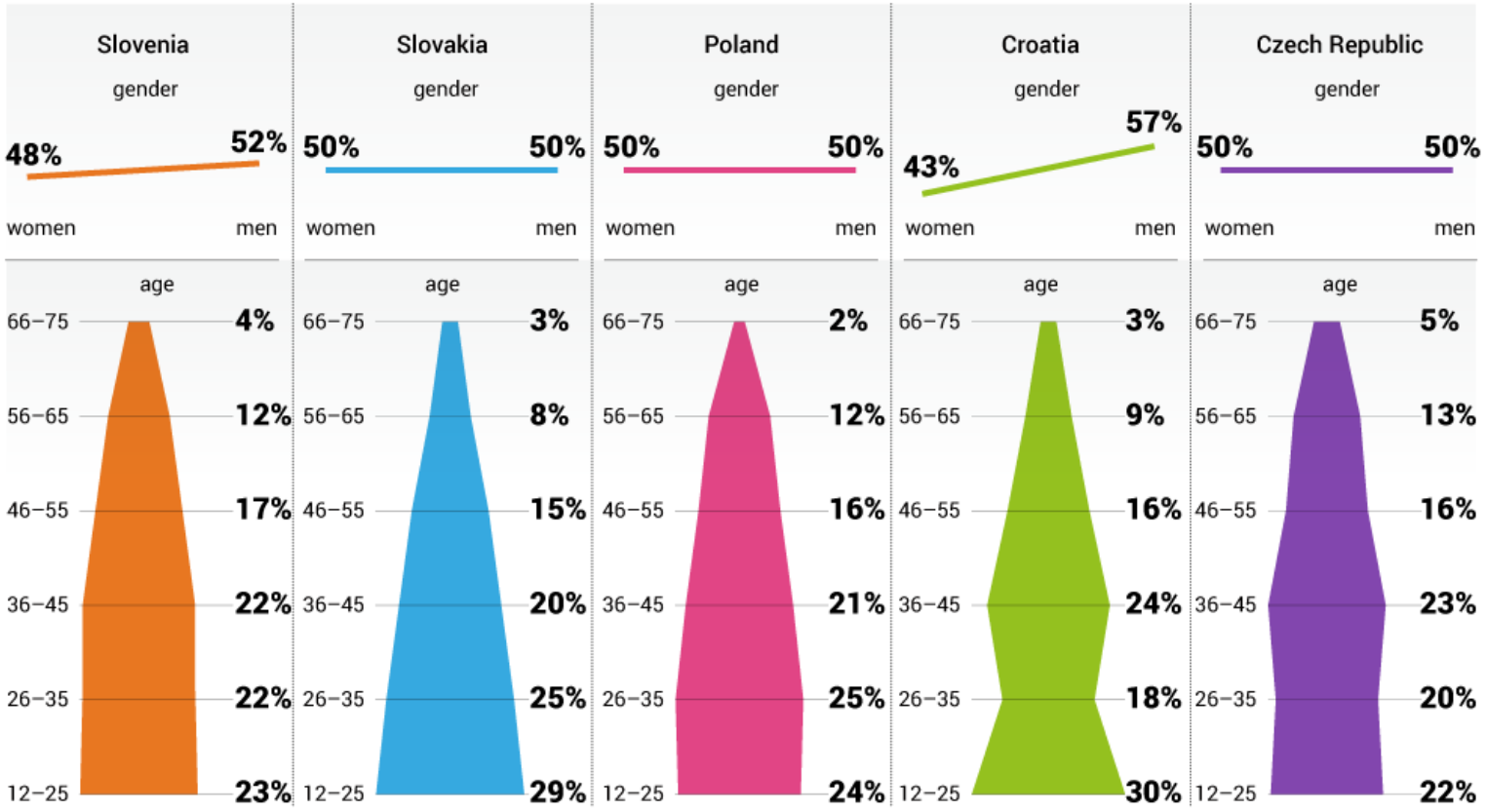
0 200 400 600 800 km

Note: Germany, Greece, Poland, the United Kingdom and Turkey: NUTS level 1. Serbia: national data. Corse (FR83) and Mellersta Norrland (SE32): low reliability.
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: isoc_r_iuse_i and isoc_ci_ifp_fu)

Internet use in Croatia is far less than in economically more developed EU countries

Demographic of internet users

Gemius: Who are the internet users in selected European countries?



source: gemiusAudience (local survey names: Megapanel PBI/Gemius in Poland, NetMonitor in the Czech Republic, AimMonitor Slovakia in Slovakia), internet users aged 12-75, August 2015

GEMIUS

Social exlusion of individual and groups

The European University Institute in Florence performs annual monitoring of media pluralism in European countries, with prominent experts in the field of media assessing the state of media in these countries. Its 2016 Croatia report identifies the social exclusion of individuals and social groups as an issue central to media pluralism in the country (Bilić et al., 2016).

Research Methodology

Our view: digital inequality /divide is one of the major problem in Croatia > both in Croatian and other eu countries, regions within Croatia and among the citizens themselves!

Aim of research: Taking the position that the media play an important role in the perception of social problems (Happer & Philo, 2013), this study **aimed to establish how frequently the media in Croatia make reference to the issue of digital divide**.

Research Methodology

Sample = Population (population analysis): Our analysis included all media coverage in Croatia in the period between 1 January 2016 and 1 November 2018 (Croatian national TV and radio stations, daily newspapers and internet portals).

One media item (text/audio/video clip) was used as the **unit of analysis** and we defined it as media content that functions as a single meaningful unit.

Media content was analysed by running specific keywords through the Croatian media archive held by a media monitoring agency

Results

Total 354 media items were found in the designated period that addressed the issue of digital divide in the sense in which it was defined here.

From these 354, 76 originated in the print media, 13 in television programmes, 11 in radio shows and 254 were published on web portals.

Conclusion

Online media cover the problem of unequal access to computer technology most frequently, as it is evident from the number of online media items, which greatly exceeds the number of items found in other types of media. It is reasonable to assume that online media professionals are inherently more sensitized to social problems caused by digital inequality than their colleagues in the traditional media setting. A general conclusion is that the Croatian media do not inform the public about the problem of digital divide sufficiently.

References

Bilić, P.; Petričušić, A.; Balabanić, I.; Vučković, V. (2016) Media pluralism monitor 2016: monitoring risks for media pluralism in EU and beyond: country report: Croatia. Centre for

Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF), European University Institute (EUI), URL: http://cadmus.eui.eu//handle/1814/46790 (2018-11-14)

Eurostat. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Digital_economy_and_society_statistics_-_households_and_individuals/ (2018-11-14)

Happer, C.; Philo, G. (2013) The Role of the Media in the Construction of Public Belief and Social Change. Journal of Social and Political Psychology, Vol. 1(1), 321–336

Croatian bureau of statistics. URL: https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/Pokazatelji/Bruto%20domaci%20proizvod.xls