

THE PHENOMENON OF MEDIA MULTITASKING IN THE DIGITAL MEDIA ERA

UDC 004.451.46; 37.018-057.85:004

Ivana Stamenković, Tatjana Đukić, Dušan Aleksić

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, Niš, Serbia

Abstract. *The trend of simultaneous use of media device, more and more apparent among media users, draws the attention of socio-humanist oriented researchers who find positive, but also highly negative effects of this phenomenon. In the academic and everyday discourse, this phenomenon is called media multitasking or divided attention phenomenon. In this paper a small scale explorative research conducted among students on their usage of media and multitasking habits was presented. The research sample is made of 123 examinees, mainly Communicology and journalism department students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš. The research was conducted by using the data collected through the questioner created for the purpose of this analysis. The questioner consisted of 6 statements, and the task for the participants was to select ones that describe their behavior connected to the media usage. One of the major findings is that the main motive for simultaneous use of media is the desire to find out and achieve the most in as little time as possible. Also, students are motivated by the very fact they own multiple medias as well as habit and boredom. Usage of more than one media at the same time is most present during the day, and media content that evokes it the most are commercials.*

Key words: *media, multitasking, new media technologies, students*

1. INTRODUCTION

Constant development of communicational platforms, more and more interactive ecology and different uses of media users have changed the everyday practice of media product users at the beginning of the 21st century. Digital signal replaced the analogue one which caused media content and services to become available on a larger number of devices. The audience, which participated by acclamation in public discussion up to that point, started looking for more information from different sources and in that way expressed the need for freedom of forming the meaning of social phenomenon. With the

Received February 26, 2018/Accepted June 22, 2018

Corresponding author: Ivana Stamenković

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš, Ćirila i Metodija 2, 18000 Niš, Serbia

Phone: +381 18 514 312 • E-mail: ivana.stamenkovic@filfak.ni.ac.rs

growth of media producers' ambition to attract the attention of as much audience as possible, grew the ambitions of the audience who now had the possibility to position themselves better in comparison to media fabrication of reality and offer alternate views and interpretation. By being involved in forum discussions, blogs and traditional media websites, the audience broadened their horizons of social reality interpretation. The needs and expectations of the auditorium reflect an ever-growing hunger for media information, as well as the existence of an obsessive tendency of the modern man to be included in the media process. The trend of simultaneous use of media device, more apparent among media users, grabs the attention socio-humanist oriented researches who find the positive, but also highly negative effects of this phenomenon. In the academic and everyday discourse, this phenomenon is called media multitasking or divided attention phenomenon. „Smart“-phones, whose original use was meant for free time (e.g. while traveling) and so called „snacking culture“ (Szekely, 2015) soon became an inevitable companion for other activities. Turkle (2011) warns of a devastating fact that technology is given a dominant role in building intimacy, where enjoyment, pleasure and compensation of needs in the virtual world are getting a pathological feature. The growing access to media content through various platforms has made the modern man a prisoner of media world of show. Motives for simultaneous consultation with different sources and means of communication are a matter of individual preference and can vary. While some check the social media while watching television out of boredom or habit, others can look for additional information about the people appearing on TV shows and events which are not talked about in detail on traditional media. In terms of that, Smith and Boyles (2012) make a difference between „linked viewing“, which is based on the connection between the contents followed on television and the activity on your smartphone, and „distracted viewing“, when the contents on the mobile device occupy the attention of users uninterested in television program. While some theorists bring into connection the habit of parallel multitasking with the fast life pace which leaves little time for important life activities (Wajcman & Rose, 2011), others recognize multitasking as a crucial ability, namely the ability favored in digital culture, according to Turkle (2011). That approach can be seen in Jenkins and his allies (Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton, & Robison Alice, 2009, 106), who, considering the challenges of participative culture recognize multitasking as „the ability to scan the environment and shift focus onto salient details“. They consider media multitasking and the users' attention not to be greatly conflicted in the process, in other words, media multitasking does not condition the appearance of the distraction, but it represents a method of viewing and the ability to answer the multitude of information.

This paper considers the results of former researches of this phenomenon in the world, with a special emphasis on its positive and negative effects, as well as the motives and situational factors which can encourage or inhibit parallel use of media. Also, a small scale explorative research had been done among the students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, in order to check which reasons or circumstances can stimulate them to start media multitasking.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH

Upgrade of technological and communication means has created new communication channels, which offer an abundance of information sources to the modern man, as well as platforms for their transfer and placement. New media systems¹ completely redefine the access to media and their perception with one of the fundamental characteristics – interactivity. The ability of new media content user to create and send information, select and filter it, in other words have an active role has influenced forming new behavior patterns. In order for the new technologies to serve the users' goals, the citizens need to possess adequate knowledge and skills of handling new communication tools (Jenkins et al., 2009). The need for interactivity which is imposed by new communication channels, omnipresence of a large number of different media, but also social networks which demand a constant „involvement“, as well as other associated phenomenon of communicative technology expansion, have influenced the phenomenon of media multitasking, which is becoming a dominant way of accessing media.

The precondition for creation of media multitasking is surely systematic convergency, which occurs not only in the media sphere, but also pervades other areas of modern society, which is under threat of being labeled as *corporate*. The term convergency, in the context of technology and media, refers to merger of various media technologies, mostly based on the digitalization process. This merger does not only include devices, content, market and networks, but also media use itself (Diehl & Karmasin, 2013). Therefore, different functions merger of present traditional media, production of audio, video, photo and textual content causes a different approach, mainly the use of new convergent content, which includes the need for a bigger presence on the network, as well as a simultaneous media use.

Analyzing the preconditions for media multitasking, Ana Martinoli (2013) says that the leading factors of this modern phenomenon should be looked for in digitalization and convergency of media content, interactivity, transmediality and development of participative culture. The author emphasizes that media multitasking is brought in connection with, foremost, the use of media information on different platforms. That, it seems, blurs the complete image of media public's new behavioral patterns, that does not only wish to get informed, but also participate in production and dissemination of information and data.

By taking the above mention into consideration, the information that media multitasking represents a dominant way of using media content in the 21st century, is no surprise. Mainly, 76% of Europe's population uses at least two medias, mostly combining the internet with some other media (Media multitasking report, 2009), while one third of all internet activity in households is done while watching television (Rohm, Sultan, & Bardhi, 2009).

2.1. Media multitasking – life in a golden cage of media information

Etymologically, the term *multitasking* was made of the Latin prefix *multi* meaning *many* or *more*, and the English noun *task*. The term *multitask* was first used in 1965, in the IBM's description of their computer IBM System/360, in order to describe the ability

¹ New media represent communication and production forms, mediated by computers and internet, and their main characteristic is virtual space. This term is also used to describe types of digitalized media content, such as digital pictures and photographs, graphics, audio and video files, texts and such. The term is constituted as an antonym for the term of traditional media, which includes press, radio and television.

of the operational system to do multiple operations simultaneously. Apart from the above mentioned, the basic meaning of the term, the word “multitask” gets a broader meaning, mainly it is used for a person’s ability to simultaneously do multiple independent actions. Therefore, the syntagm *media multitasking*, which stands for the skill of simultaneous use of two or more media, includes traditional and online media, social networks and fun devices (Bardhi, Rom, & Sultan, 2010).

Media multitasking brings the user into a state of constant stimuli by various content, and as the interactivity is one of the basic characteristics of new media, which are most often the part of media multitasking process, the user is expected to have a constant active role. As Diehl and Karmasin (2013) state, the general opinion that the control which the audience has over the content contributes not only to a positive attitude towards the sites, but also helps users to lower or eliminate unwanted information. However, they also point out that literature (also) states negative indirect effects caused by interactivity, referring to authors like Gerpott and Wanke (2004) and Sundar (2004). They remind that an abundance of interactive characteristics can lead to overstimulation of users and negative evaluation due to a large number of options which “overcome” the user, since the capacity of the recipient can be endangered due to a great effort while choosing information. Therefore, it is exactly that active role of the user, which can never be completely fulfilled, that actually promotes the recipient into a passive consumer of media content.

2.2. Effects of simultaneous media use

We are aware of the fact that it is almost impossible to exclude media from modern life. The modern man is conditioned to use media devices both privately and for work, since he wouldn’t be able to function without them nowadays. As media channels multiply, so do the information that lower man’s ability to select and process them well. Considering the influence of media on psycho-somatic reactions of the audience, Jovanović observes: „Therefore, if the information is intensive, numerous and sudden, even when the viewer really wants it, he won’t be able to absorb it” (Jovanović, 2015, 140). By explaining how the human organism goes through everything it hears or sees in the media, the same author warns about the damaging effect of mass produced information: „every hyper-production of information is capable of creating acute fatigue and stress, and in long-term chronic personality disorders, culminating as a loss of ability to orient in the outer world” (Jovanović, 2015, 140). If we take into consideration the new practice of media users to simultaneously follow a multitude of information via various devices, the situation becomes more serious, and the consequences on audience’s mental health can be devastating.

There are opposite conceptions of media multitasking effects and their consequences, in the academic circles. There is a division in opinion in relation to the interactive behavior of media users, too. Media multitasking can contribute to a combination of various media functions and give the user a specific type of media satisfaction. However, the accompanying aspects of doing two or more actions, when concerning media, as in other situations, can lead to a cursory performance of a certain action, divided attention, losing the focus of attention and other consequences. By systemizing the effects of media multitasking, Rohm still concludes that there is a larger number of negative than positive effects. Positive ones include: control which users have over media content, efficiency in message use, bigger involvement in the process of communication, connecting, and

negative ones are: distraction, stalling, reducing concentration, divided attention, harder to divide important message from unimportant one, more time to decode the message, general lack of interest for media content (Rohm et al., 2009).

Apart from the negative consequences, which can be short term, or last as much as the process of simultaneous use of media, there are long term consequences of media multitasking. Rohm points out that many users become *media addicts*, and therefore media multitasking addicts as well, in their desire to know more, see more and not miss anything. That way, chronic attention disorders, lack of attention and fatigues caused by endless stimuli from various sources of communication can occur (Rohm et al., 2009). Also, this way decreases the critical thinking ability², since the recipient is not in condition to process all the information that he constantly receives from multiple media.

Among *media addicts* long term consequences can occur because of the unsatisfied need for media, or in other words, internet. If the user is denied access to media technologies, he feels tension, nervousness, stress and anxiety, and one of the researches confirmed a positive correlation between media multitasking and symptoms of depression and social anxiety (Becker, Alzahabi, & Hopwood, 2013). The same research concluded that excessive, but not simultaneous use of media is not correlated with social anxiety. Authors of this research also point out that it is important to determine whether media multitasking causes symptoms of depression and social anxiety, or if multitasking is (also) a consequence of those symptoms.

2.3. Situational factors of media multitasking

In their effort to systemize factors which can encourage parallel use of media, some theorists state that this phenomenon is connected to two categories of factors: media factors (possession of media devices and their availability) and audience factors (need for sensations) (Jeong & Fishbein, 2007). The context of such user practice is very important and that is why it deserves special attention. The conditions which shape and encourage the aspiration for simultaneous access to various information sources, give a full insight into the complex structure of the phenomenon. Some theorists tried to identify situational factors of media multitasking. That is how Voorveld and Viswenathan (2015) studied the relationship between three relevant situational factors and media multitasking: television genres, part of day and presence of other people. By observing the examinees, authors came to a conclusion that sports TV shows and „surfing” through channels show a larger connection to media multitasking, compared to fun and informative TV shows, and even commercial breaks. Morning and afternoon terms are stimulative periods for accessing a larger number of media, whereas the night term is reserved for more directed and intentional following of television content. If we bring into connection the demographic structure of the audience with program conception, we can make a conclusion that the audience that spends time watching television in the morning is different from the one that watches television program in the evening. Thereby, the program is qualitatively different and more adapted to fluctuations in the audience configuration, so a more heterogenic television scheme can be expected in the time period after 6 pm. When an individual watches television alone, he simultaneously accesses various media more often. If he watches a TV program in company, the media user will simultaneously focus

² Critical thinking is the main component of media literacy, which represents the ability of critical approach to media content and discourses, mainly their understanding in a concrete society context.

his attention to another medium only if there is a sports event on (Voorveld & Viswenathan, 2015). An interesting result which was reached by these authors shows that television genres can enhance or reduce media multitasking depending on the part of day. Random watching (commercials, browsing through channels) or intentional watching of television program (news, entertainment, sport) influence parallel use of media differently, and the differences between these categories are reduced during the night time when viewers do not include other media activity regardless of the content (Voorveld & Viswenathan, 2015, 19).

If we look back at the type of media content, we notice that most of the attention is directed to studying the relationship between media multitasking and commercials. Commercial industry, entertainment industry and media content producers are faced with serious challenges put in front of the by media multitasking, namely, the audience's change of habits. Technologically enriched media environment includes mobile communication devices (smart-phones, tablet and such) which are used parallel with other, traditional media devices, most often television. Commercial content which is synchronously shown on television and mobile devices internet, has a bigger chance of being perceived, showed an advertising campaign done by Nissan in 2015. Campaign which skillfully used the advantages of approaching media users via multiple screens, showed that in the situation of simultaneous appearance of the commercial for the new Nissan car on internet and television, the audience awareness of the product rose 26% compared to advertising directed only towards television (Wywy, 2015, cited in Garaus, Wagner, & Back, 2017). Considering different advertising options and their effects in the era of digital medias, two theories stand out in explaining the functioning of media multitasking. They are: the theory of limited capacity (Lang, 2000) and the theory of multiple sources (Garaus et al., 2017, 141). According to the first theory, every man has a limited cognitive capacity for processing of a certain task at his disposal. Three cognitive subprocesses are included in processing information: coding, storing (keeping) and searching, that is recalling stored mental notions (Lang, 2000). Applied to the situation of media multitasking, this theory reveals that parallel processing of information from several media channels brings to division of attention and inability of adequate task completion, in other words, a disruption may occur in processing of media information (Zhang, Jeong, & Fishbein, 2010). Multiple sources theory starts from the basic assumption that man's cognitive capacities are limited, but the ability of parallel processing of information is not discarded. That possibility implies that modalities of information are different. Cognitive system consists of different types of mental means which are included in performance of a certain task or tasks, during which those types of mental means are connected to specific information characteristics (Basil, 1994 cited in Wang, Irwin, Cooper, & Srivastava, 2015). If it is about a simultaneous processing of information coming from an auditive and visual media, then different cognitive means will be engaged, which won't come into conflict while processing that information. Therefore, visual and auditive information invoke different means of mental processing. If media information demand engaging the same sense receptor (e.g. simultaneous exposure to television picture and picture on the internet) that can reflect on the quality of information processing, considering same cognitive resources are activated. Lang (2000) apostrophizes that resources of mental processing can sometimes be automatically assigned (even completely unconsciously), and sometimes completely consciously, with intention. That depends on lure characteristics as well as the individual's motivation.

2.4. Motivational factors of multitasking

Determining a motivational profile of media multitaskers can sometimes end with an endless list of reasons which individuals state. Tokan (2011) separates the media multitasking drivers into two groups: internal motivators and external factors. The first group includes: evading boredom, fighting loneliness, a habit, routine and addiction, upgrading media experience, an increase in tolerance towards other non-media activity, performance upgrade, storing or killing the time and visibility upgrade as well as reach possibility. In motivational self-evaluation, examines mostly focus attention onto personal needs and inner impulse towards media multitasking. Tokan includes the following into external motivational factors of media multitasking: the appearance and technological development of new communicational devices, availability of a large number of different media channels, job demands, changes of social norms and room layout at work or home.

The benefits and satisfactions theory present a theoretical frame, which, in order to explain the phenomenon, consults the biggest number of media multitasking researchers. According to that model, audience chooses media content which satisfy certain needs and create pleasure. Among the pleasures discussed by media multitaskers, we include, among others: access to communication and informing, entertainment, connecting and social interaction. Digital media have completely transformed the way of accessing media content, and in accordance with that, audience's media experience is radically different today. Content convergence to communication platforms enabled users not only to get informed on social situations, but also simultaneously be networked, connected to others and exchange data and impressions. By checking the presence of utilitarian (coordination) and affective (connectivity) motivation among examinees, whose division was pointed out by theorists who studied functions and use of mobile phones (Ling, 2014, cited in Dias, 2016), Patricia Dias (2016) had interesting observations. In the younger examinee group, largest number states affective reasons for simultaneous use of mobile phones with some other media channel. Favoring portable media devices is present among the young whose attention is focused on multiple screens due to the need to always be in contact. Social capital and cultivating the feeling of belonging to a community motivate young people to constantly follow what is happening on social networks and answer calls. Contrary to affective motivation for media multitasking is the utilitarian which dominates in older examinees. The phenomenon of divided attention is explained by the older examinees as the intention to use their time better and do simple everyday tasks with more media channels. Mobile phones, in that case, are a great substitute for desktop computers, and they are accessed as a way of better managing the time, or in other words, perform tasks which can be done on foot (Dias, 2016).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Subject of research

New media have caused irreversible changes in media users' behavior. Students are an important social group which is most often analyzed regarding practice of simultaneous use of media. Main goal of this research is to examine the presence of external and internal factors of media multitasking, but also the situational factors as stimulators or inhibitors of this phenomenon. Specific goals are:

1. Examine which motivational factors mostly affect multitasking in students.
2. Examine how the time of day affects multitasking in students.
3. Examine whether presence of other people affects multitasking in students.
4. Examine which media activity is parallel with use of television.
5. Examine whether the type of media (television) content affects the phenomenon of media multitasking.

3.2. Data collecting method

The research was conducted by using the data collected through the questioner created for the purpose of this analysis. The questioner consisted of 6 statements, and the task for the participants was to select ones that describe their behavior connected to the media usage. It was distributed in two weeks period to the students of Faculty of Philosophy in Nis.

3.3. Research sample

The research sample is made of 123 examinees, mainly Communicology and journalism department students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš. 69,9% of examinees are female and 30,1% are male.

3.4. Plan of statistical data processing

SPSS for Windows, version 15.0, was used to input and analyze data. Statistic procedure applied is descriptive statistics (frequency).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows media multitasking motive structure in examined students.

Table 1 Motives for simultaneous media use

	Examinee no.	Percentage
Because I want to know and achieve as much as possible	57	46,3%
Due to the desire to have control over all important social events	12	9,8%
Out of boredom and habit	26	21,1%
To reduce the feeling of loneliness	1	0,8%
Because I owe a large number of communication media devices (phone, TV, tablet...)	27	22,0%

The largest number of examinees, 46,3% access media sources simultaneously in order to find out and achieve as much as possible in as little time as possible. If we take into account that we are talking about communicology and journalism students, this choice of answer comes as no surprise, since journalism studies and practice consider every serious research of social phenomenon to demand consultation of multiple media sources, as well as being objective and critical in analysis of media content from different sources. Also, the desire to be in touch with important events leads journalism and communicology students to constantly be “involved” in the flow of media information.

Here we can see that internal motivational factors dominate as stimulators for media multitasking in this sample.

Table 2 Media multitasking and time of day

	Examinee no.	Percentage
During morning hours	4	3,3%
During the day	65	52,8%
During night time	39	31,7%
While I am trying to sleep	15	12,2%

Table 2 shows how time of day is connected to media multitasking phenomenon, mainly what period during the day students most often used media simultaneously. Even though some researches (Voorveld & Viswenathan, 2015) showed that this practice is equally represented in morning hours and during the day, here we obtained data that 52,8% of examinees mostly access media sources simultaneously during the day, whereas the smallest percentage of examinees, 3,3%, do it in the morning. The percentage of those who practice this sort of behavior in night time, 31,7% is not insignificant either. This is in contrast with the expectations and results of the above-mentioned research, since it is expected to be possible for students/examinees to find contents which can interest them and draw their attention in a more heterogenic program scheme. The importance of data which talk about the connection between media multitasking and time of day lies, foremost, in the fact that knowing user habits can help media content producers and advertisers in their struggle for drawing the attention of as large an audience as possible. Marketing communication can be quite empowered if it possesses the knowledge of the time of day when users grow a tendency to divided attention towards different media content. If we take into account that our sample is made of students who are a significant, targeted, consumer group, the interest for relation between the time of day and parallel use of media is justified. Moreover, it is not only about the product placement, but the trade of values, ideas and attitudes.

Table 3 Media activity parallel with use of television

	Examinee no.	Percentage
I do not use a mobile phone	8	6,5%
I often simultaneously surf the internet (onlineshopping, browsing...)	24	19,5%
I often play games on my mobile phone	3	2,4%
I check events on social networks	61	49,6%
I use the phone only if someone contacts me	27	22,0%

While watching television, examinees most often check events on social networks, 49,6%, as shown in table 3. If we take into account that we are talking about younger media users, the obtained data can be explained by the presence of affective motivation, the desire of students to be in continuous contact with others, as well as to follow everything that is happening in their friends' lives. One of the researches determined a difference between older and younger examinees concerning the presence of utilitarian and affective motivation. Dias (2016), as stated in the first part of the paper, found utilitarian tendencies

for simultaneous use of mobile phones with other media channels in the older examinee group, whereas in the younger one, affective tendencies of cultivating the feeling of belonging to a virtual community prevail.

Table 4 Media content which invoke media multitasking

	Examinee no.	Percentage
News and informative shows	25	20,3%
Commercials, before the beginning of films/shows, surfing	85	69,1%
Sports events	8	6,5%
Entertainment program	5	4,1%

During commercials, before the beginning of the movie or show, or during channel browsing, 69,1% of examinees use multiple media simultaneously. Those are media contents which encourage searching for additional media stimulation. However, the fact that news and informative shows invoke a bigger need for parallel use of media than sports and entertainment program can point out to the level of attention paid to these contents and be observed in a lower level criticism context when accessing contents of informative content, unless “linked watching” is in question.

Table 5 Media use in presence of other people

	Examinee no.	Percentage
I often check Facebook and other social networks	18	14,6%
I do not use my mobile phone	35	28,5%
I use the phone when I see my friends do it	12	9,8%
I use the mobile phone only if someone contacts me	50	40,7%
I use the phone to show my friends some content	8	6,5%

Table 5 talks about media use in the presence of other people. The largest number, 40,7% of examinees use their mobile phone in the presence of other people only if someone contacts them. Self-perception can often be distorted and provide a false image about user behavior in the presence of other people. Therefore, socially acceptable answers are possible, in accordance with the proclaimed culture of certain community communicating. However, reality is usually slightly different, especially if the necessary self-criticism of examinees is left out. Bearing that in mind, these results should be observed critically because the data that only 9,8% answered they use the mobile phone when they see their friends do it, can point out to socially acceptable answers.

4. CONCLUSION

Upgrade of technological and communication means has created new communication channels, which offer and abundance of information sources to the modern man, as well as platforms for their transfer and placement. New media systems³ completely redefine

³ New media represent communication and production forms, mediated by computers and internet, and their main characteristic is virtual space. This term is also used to describe types of digitalized media content, such as digital pictures and photographs, graphics, audio and video files, texts and such. The term is constituted as an antonym for the term of traditional media, which includes press, radio and television.

the access to media and their perception with one of the fundamental characteristics – interactivity. The ability of new media content user to create and send information, select and filter it, in other words have and active role has influenced forming new behavior

Everyday use of media testifies on their important role and place in the daily routine of media information users. No activities of modern society citizens can be imagined without media, and simultaneous use of a larger number of media is becoming a normal occurrence, often even an obsessive need of media users eager for new information. Alternated relationship between media and users, based on interactivity of users and their involvement in production and dissemination of information, gives a special contribution to the phenomenon of media multitasking.

Literature points out to opposing opinions of authors regarding media multitasking. However, both those who make a difference between „connected” and „disconnected watching”, and those who do not, both the authors who link the phenomenon of attention dispersion to media multitasking, and those who do not see this connection, can agree about one thing – the modern man lives in a completely mediatized society. The information that 76% of European citizens simultaneously use at least two medias, most often combining internet with something else, shows how widespread this phenomenon is, so analyzing its causes and effects is significant.

Our research results showed that the main motive for simultaneous use of media among examinees is the desire to find out and achieve as possible in as little time as possible. Other than that, students are motivated by the very fact they own multiple medias as well as habit and boredom.

Rapid technological development and constant media adjusting to new technological discoveries leave consequences on communication practice of all media users. While there is no resistance among younger people towards new media-communication ecology, but also it is assumed no necessary criticism towards media contents which are simultaneously followed on different devices, in the older people group, as other researches show (Dias, 2016) things are actually different. Being overwhelmed by affects, the need to belong to a community in a virtual sphere and the desire to keep social capital motivate younger examinees to media multitasking. Utilitarian motives, possibility to use new technologies and mobile devices to perform some task, dominate among older examinees. The examinees in our sample are driven by both motive categories.

Results of the research reveal two sides of media multitasking: one that points out to this phenomenon being in connection to the skill of handling media devices in order to better maneuver through hyper-produced information, and the other which reveals that a constant intake of information does not leave room for adequate selection, absorbing and distance when processing information. In the first case, users are more engaged and active in media sphere, with the possibilities of being better informed. In the other case, Jovanović (Jovanović, 2015, 295) explains: „Information showering” creates a congestion in their reception, and the mind simply is not capable of making a proper „chrestomathy” for itself.

Dragged into the enchanted circle of media production of the image of the world tailored to suit those in positions of power, the audience reacts affectively and instinctively, showing a rapid shift of emotional stages and a weak ability of cognitive processing of media images. While part of the audience which is equipped with the necessary skills of critical and analytic reading of media content can have use of parallel use of media sources, the other part of the audience, denied of these skills gives into media shows which are more

and more spectacular, seductive and attractive. If we take into consideration that media literate citizens are a minority, there is a fear that the mind of media messages recipients can be controlled even more easily nowadays, precisely thanks to the appearance of simultaneous media use, which is more expansive. Namely, media illiterate part of the auditorium, which is denied the capabilities to understand media content and forming a critical attitude towards them, is taking a more inferior position in the society. The inability to decide and participate in the public sphere is additionally burdened by information flow from different, more available, media channels, where seemingly pluralism leads to media totalitarianism.

The link between media, but also digital literacy, and multitasking is significant to revolve, and in relation to age categories with the assumption that digital natives, in other words children and young who do not know a different world from a mediacentric one, perceived and used media and media content differently than the elderly, who still show noticeable difficulty in adapting to new digital channels.

The phenomenon of media multitasking is very complex, intertwined with an abundance of motives, personality factors and strongly saturated with context characteristics. This paper has just opened or at least pointed out many fields affected by media multitasking. A deeper analysis of each one of them can be the subject of some other paper which will contribute to understanding the extent of changes caused by media convergency and user networking.

REFERENCES

- Bardhi, F., Rohm, J.A., & Sultan, F. (2010). Tuning in and tuning out: media multitasking among young consumers. *Journal of Consumer behavior*, (9), 316-332.
- Becker, M., Alzahabi, R., & Hopwood, J. C. (2013). Media Multitasking Is Associated with Symptoms of Depression Social Anxiety. *Cyberpsychology, behavior, and social networking*, 16(2), 132-135. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232926411_Media_Multitasking_Is_Associated_with_Symptoms_of_Depression_and_Social_Anxiety Accessed 22.04.2017.
- Diehl, S., & Karmasin, M. (2013). *Media and convergence management*. Berlin; New York: Spring. Retrieved from: <http://www.worldcat.org/title/media-and-convergence-management/oclc/846572305>.
- Dias, P. (2016). Motivations for multi-screening: An exploratory study of motivations and gratifications. *European Journal of Communication*, 31(6), 678-693.
- Garaus, M., Wagner, U., & Back, A.M. (2017) The Effect of Media Multitasking on Advertising Message Effectiveness. *Psychology & Marketing*, 34(2): 138-156. Retrieved from: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.proxy.kobson.nb.rs:2048/doi/10.1002/mar.20980/full>,
- Gerpott, T. J., & Wanke, H. (2004). Interactivity potentials and usage of German press-title web sites: an empirical investigation. *Journal of Media Economics*, 17(4), 241-260.
- Jenkins, H., Purushotma, R., Weigel, M., Clinton, K. & Robison Alice, J. (2009). *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. MacArthur. Retrieved from: https://mitpress.mit.edu/sites/default/files/titles/free_download/9780262513623_Confronting_the_Challenges.pdf,
- Jeong, M.A., & Fishbein, M. (2007). Predictors of multiple media use and multitasking with media: media factors and audience factors. *Media Psychology*, 10(3), 364-384.
- Jovanović, Z. (2015). *Virtuelna planeta [Virtual planet]*. Niš: Filozofski fakultet.
- Lang, A. (2000). The limited capacity model of mediated message processing. *Journal of Communication*, (50), 46-70.
- Martinoli, A. (2013). Publika i medijski multitasking – podeljena pažnja u eri multiplatformnosti [*Audience and media multitasking – divided attention in multiplatform's era*]. *CM: Communication Management Quarterly: Časopis za upravljanje komuniciranjem*, (28), 41-68.
- Media multitasking report* (2009). Mediascope Europe, IAB Europe, Retrieved from: <http://www.slideshare.net/robertmattar/eiaa-media-multitasking-report>
- Rohm, A.J., Sultan, F., & Bardhi, F. (2009). Multitasking Youth. *Marketing Management*, 20-25.

- Sundar, S. S. (2004). Theorizing interactivity's effects. *The Information Society*, 20 (5), 385-389.
- Smith A. & Boyles J.L. (2012). The rise of the 'connected viewer' (Pew internet & American life project). *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2012/07/17/the-rise-of-the-connected-viewer/>
- Szekely, L. (2015). The typology of multitasking activity. *European Journal of Communication*, 30 (2), 209-225, Retrieved from: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.915.3317&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Turkle, Š. (2011). *Sami zajedno [Alone together]*. Beograd: Clio.
- Tokan, F. (2011). *Media as multitasking: an exploratory study on capturing audiences media multitasking and multiple media use behaviours* (Master's thesis). School of economics, Aalto University. Retrieved from: https://aaltodoc.aalto.fi/bitstream/handle/123456789/2754/hse_thesis_12739.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Voorveld H., & Viswanathan V. (2015). An observational study on how situational factors influence media multitasking with TV: The role of genres, dayparts, and social viewing. *Media Psychology*, 18 (4), 499-526. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263844540_An_Observational_Study_on_How_Situational_Factors_Influence_Media_Multitasking_With_TV_The_Role_of_Genres_Dayparts_and_Social_Viewing
- Wajcman, J., & Rose, E. (2011). Constant Connectivity: Rethinking Interruptions at Work. *Organization Studies*, 32 (7), 941-961.
- Wang, Z., Irwin, M., Cooper, C., & Srivastava, J. (2015). Multidimensions of Media Multitasking and Adaptive Media Selection. *Human Communication Research* (41), 102-127.
- Zhang, W., Jeong, S.-H., & Fishbein, M. (2010). Situational factors competing for attention. *Journal of Media Psychology* 22(1), 2-13.

FENOMEN MEDIJSKOG MULTITASKINGA U ERI DIGITALNIH MEDIJA

Trend simultane upotrebe medijskih uređaja, koji je sve izraženiji među medijskim korisnicima, zaokuplja pažnju istraživača društveno-humanističke orijentacije, koji pronalaze pozitivne, ali i izrazito negativne posledice ove pojave. U akademskom i svakodnevnom diskursu ova pojava se naziva medijski multitasking, ili fenomen podeljene pažnje. U radu je predstavljeno manje eksplorativno istraživanje sprovedeno među studentima, o njihovoj upotrebi medija i navikama koje se tiču medijskog multitaskinga. Uzorak je činilo 123 studenta uglavnom sa Departmana za komunikologiju i novinarstvo Filozofskog fakulteta u Nišu. Do podataka u istraživanju došlo se upotrebom upitnika konstruisanog za potrebe ove analize. Upitnik se sastojao od šest stavki i zadatak ispitanika je bio da odaberu jednu koja najbolje opisuje njihovo ponašanje u odnosu na upotrebu medija. Jedan od najvažnijih nalaza jeste da je glavni motiv za simultanu upotrebu medija želja da se sazna i postigne što više za najkraći vremenski period. Takođe, motive studenata su sama činjenica da poseduju više medija, kao i navika i dosada. Upotreba više od jednog medija istovremeno najčešća je u toku dana, i medijski sadržaji koji u najvećem broju slučajeva podstiču ovakvo ponašanje jesu reklame.

Ključne reči: *mediji, multitasking, nove medijske tehnologije, studenti*