

LEGAL REGULATION OF ONLINE PUBLICATIONS IN UKRAINE: CHALLENGES AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

Kateryna Tiazhkorob

Department of Publishing and Editing
Institute of Publishing and Printing
National Technical University of Ukraine
“Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”
03056, 37 Beresteiskyi Ave., Kyiv,
Ukraine
e-mail: katushkajordison98@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-7215-0951>

Abstract

This article is dedicated to examining the legal regulation of online publications in Ukraine. With the rapid advancement of digital technologies and the growing role of online media, there is a pressing need to enhance the legislative framework governing their activities. The paper analyses the normative and legal framework in Ukraine concerning the regulation of online publications, identifies the main challenges faced by Ukrainian online media, such as issues related to copyright protection, liability for the dissemination of false information, and the safeguarding of freedom of speech. Additionally, it explores the prospects for the development of legal regulation in this sphere, including potential legislative changes and the impact of international experience on shaping national norms.

Keywords: legal regulation; online publications; online journalism; normative-legal framework

1. Introduction

Online publications, as a part of the contemporary media landscape, have become an integral component of the rapidly evolving information society in Ukraine. The increase in the number of internet users and the impact of digital technologies on communication processes are significantly altering the traditional media landscape, creating new challenges for the legal regulation of this sector. Currently, nearly 4.1 billion people worldwide use the Internet. According to a Factum Group (2019) study conducted for the Internet Association of Ukraine for the third quarter of 2019, the number of internet users in Ukraine stands at 22.9 million, with this figure increasing daily by 4–5% (notably, this is the highest growth rate globally) (Kotsarev, 2006). Since the early 1990s, the Ukrainian segment of the global network has been developing. In December 1992, the domain UA was registered.

Today, the unprecedented opportunities of the internet—such as rapid access to information and exchange across space and time, as well as the capacity for instant publication of various texts beyond governmental control and censorship—have led to the emergence of online journalism and online publications as a new media variant. At present, online publications play a crucial role in disseminating information, providing society with broad access to current news and analysis. Concurrently, there is an increasing need for legal regulation of online media, necessitating a new interpretation of the emergence and key milestones of online journalism in Ukraine.

Moreover, the shift in Ukraine's socio-political direction heightens the focus on addressing previously unresolved aspects of the general issue of legal regulation and the development prospects of online journalism in Ukraine (Getman et al., 2016). Despite

significant research into online journalism, the legal aspects of online publications remain underexplored, highlighting the relevance of this article.

Research indicates that societal needs for up-to-date information are effectively met by internet media resources. According to a study by the sociological company InMind commissioned by the international public organisation Internews, television media remain the primary source of media consumption in Ukraine. However, the audience of online media has significantly increased recently: 61% of respondents trust television, and 58% trust online media (the study was conducted from June to September 2019 and covered 4,000 respondents across 12 regions of Ukraine). This trend towards growing internet audience reach and the influence of online media is also evident in other countries.

Therefore, the socio-cultural significance of internet media, the need for systematic study in the context of their establishment and development in Ukraine, the need for scientific generalisation of operational specifics, and the relevance of analysing the dynamics of development and impact on Ukrainian society necessitate an examination of the main challenges faced by Ukrainian online publications concerning legal regulation, as well as the prospects for developing the normative-legal framework that governs their activities. Particular attention is given to the influence of international experience on shaping national norms regulating online media and potential legislative changes in Ukraine in this field.

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

To identify and characterise the main normative-legal acts in Ukraine regulating online publications, including laws, subordinate legislation, and regulatory documents. To assess their adequacy to the current needs of the digital media space.

To identify the main legal challenges and issues faced by online publications in Ukraine.

To conduct a comparative analysis of the legal regulation of online publications in Ukraine with relevant international practices and standards. To identify successful practices from other countries that could be adapted to improve the national legal system.

To develop recommendations for improving the legal regulation of online publications in Ukraine. To propose potential legislative changes that could enhance the legal environment for the functioning of online media.

The scientific novelty of the article lies in its comprehensive analysis of the legal regulation of online publications in Ukraine, considering contemporary challenges and trends in the digital media environment. The work systematically addresses issues arising in the legal provision of Ukrainian online publications and proposes solutions based on comparative analysis with international practices. The research also contributes to understanding the prospects for developing the national normative-legal framework regulating online media, considering the growing role of digital media in society and their impact on Ukraine's information security.

2. Materials and Methods

To achieve the goal of the research and to solve the outlined tasks, a set of methods was used: theoretical: analysis of scientific sources to clarify the state of development of the problem; comparison, generalization in order to systematize the conceptual field of research; descriptive to find out the characteristic features of the Internet media; structural and component analysis for researching the specifics of Internet media within the communicative act; a method of comparative analysis to compare the dynamics of Ukrainian and foreign media; statistical: quantitative analysis to determine the frequency of use of Ukrainian and foreign online media by Ukrainians. The study involves a detailed analysis of the current legal framework of Ukraine, which regulates the activities of online publications. This block includes laws, by-laws, regulatory documents related to information activity, copyright, personal data protection, freedom of speech and

responsibility for information dissemination.

Comparative legal analysis was used to compare the Ukrainian legal regulation of online publications with relevant international norms and practices. This makes it possible to identify the strengths and weaknesses of national legislation, as well as to suggest possible ways to improve it based on successful examples from other countries.

The historical-legal method is used to analyze the evolution of the legal regulation of online publications in Ukraine, which allows us to trace the development trends of this sphere from the beginning of the 1990s to the present day. This helps to better understand the reasons and prerequisites for the emergence of modern challenges.

The research was carried out on the basis of an integrated approach combining theoretical analysis, empirical data and comparative jurisprudence. This allows for a comprehensive assessment of the current state of legal regulation of online publications in Ukraine and to offer recommendations for its improvement.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Transformation of the media environment in Ukraine: Challenges and development of online publications

In the contemporary mass media landscape, there is an intense transformation of Ukrainian media, driven by the advancement of computer and IT technologies that are reshaping media activities in terms of content creation and dissemination, and enhancing their influence across all areas of life (Atamanova, 2014). The digitisation of information and communication processes has catalysed the emergence of the online network as not only a source of information but also a leading medium for the dissemination and professional communication of journalists.

Modern journalists face an expanded range of requirements. They are now expected to possess not only the knowledge and skills for preparing, processing, and disseminating information but also the proficiency to operate within the online environment. Consequently, the training of professional staff, especially skilled journalists for new convergent media, is both justified and necessary. These phenomena are primarily associated with the formation and development of an information-based internet society in Ukraine. This term is predominantly used to describe the current state of societal development, first mentioned in the works of Western scholars and actively used worldwide today (Gol, 2005).

Most researchers note that new types of media are emerging within the information space, influencing changes in the mass communication sector. It is believed that these changes profoundly impact the transformation of contemporary mass communications. The causes of transformations in the media system within the information society are often attributed to various information and communication processes.

Legislation frequently fails to differentiate between traditional media and online resources. Terms such as «internet media,» «online publications,» and «online media» are well-known in society. While these terms are generally understood in social norms, they lack stable definitions in scholarly discourse, and their usage varies significantly across different scientific sources. It is also worth noting that Ukrainian scholarly research on internet media (online publications, online mass media) does not provide a clear definition of these terms—they are used as self-evident concepts. All three terms are used synonymously by authors (Denisenko, 2005).

It should be noted that print media, since the advent of online versions, have copied content from traditional media into the online sphere. Therefore, this group of terms does not entirely reflect the characteristics of publications. For instance, a single page may combine an online newspaper with online television, online radio, and new formats that do not belong to any traditional media category. Thus, it would be prudent to introduce broader terms such as «internet media» and «online publications.»

Scholar O. Kolisnyk, having reviewed definitions provided by various researchers, offers his own definition of an online newspaper: «a type of network publication

distributed in digital format via the Internet, characterised by a high level of interactivity, multimedia, and hypertextuality» (Kolisnyk, 2010).

However, it should be noted that this definition is too broad, encompassing virtually any modern internet resource. In contrast, scholar L. Horodenko proposed her own interpretation of the term «online publication»: it is «a type of mass communication medium that combines characteristics of all traditional media and has specific features—hypertext, multimedia, interactivity; its environment is the global network» (Horodenko, 2004).

According to this interpretation, the term «online publication» refers to media on the internet with a wide and varied set of characteristics compared to traditional media. Despite its age, this definition remains relevant as it fully describes the mentioned type of mass media. In Ukraine, there has been ongoing discussion at the legislative level for several years about regulating the operation of online media. It is expected that criteria may be established to distinguish online media from other types of electronic media at the document level (Kashuba, 2004).

In Ukrainian normative acts, terms such as «electronic publication» and «network electronic publication» are used, particularly in DSTU standards. Upon detailed examination, it becomes evident that terms like «electronic publication» or «network electronic publication,» as found in the State Standard of Ukraine 7157:2010, do not pertain to our case, as they are primarily used to refer to book publications (DSTU No ISO 7157:2010., 2011).

Attempts to define criteria for distinguishing journalistic publications on the internet from other resources have been made by scholars O. Husak and M. Chabanenko. In turn, scholar M. Chabanenko does not consider «online publication» and «internet mass media» as synonyms.

Discussions on the definitions and characteristics of terms such as «internet media» or «online publications» continue in journalism studies and at the legislative level. Normative-legal acts in Ukraine do not provide characteristics or definitions of these terms, as media activity online is not regulated by legislation. However, the Independent Media Trade Union of Ukraine (IMTU) in 2012 highlighted the need for a register of internet media and approached leading editorial offices and media organisations with a proposal for voluntary inclusion in such a list. The IMTU provides a list of necessary criteria for internet media (The position of NMPU regarding the registration of Internet media, 2024):

- 1) A unique network address;
- 2) Founders of the internet media (full name, legal entity, and code in the Unified State Register of Enterprises and Organisations of Ukraine);
- 3) Contact details (address, phone numbers, and email addresses of the founders);
- 4) Owners of all types of rights to commercial names and trademarks of the internet media, including logos;
- 5) The full name of the authorised representative of the internet publication (individual or organisation) who has the right to enter into employment contracts and perform organisational and managerial duties for the media's employees.

Considering the above analysis and revision of criteria proposed by M. Chabanenko, we define «internet media» (also used synonymously as «internet mass media» and «online publications») as websites with the primary aim of regularly publishing news content. In other words, these are «mass media on the internet,» regardless of their legal status. For example, the website «Ukrainska Pravda» serves as an online publication with a dedicated discussion page and its primary goal is news publication.

Therefore, in the information society, new types of media are emerging, leading to significant changes in mass communication, often referred to as «internet media,» «online publications,» «online media,» or «internet mass media.» Historically, the first closely related terms were «online newspaper» and «internet newspaper.» There is

no consensus among scholars regarding the definition of «internet media,» but they identify a set of criteria that allow for the identification of an online resource as media, including: virtual nature, openness, decentralisation, accessibility, speed, convenience, measurability, personalisation, interactivity, hypertextuality, multimedia, non-fixed volume, and relative cost-effectiveness. Journalists and media scholars highlight several advantages and disadvantages of internet media. The primary advantages of internet media include unique features such as hypertextuality and multimedia.

3.2. Analysis of Ukrainian legislation regulating online publications

Online publications in Ukraine are currently governed by a range of normative legal acts, which, while covering certain aspects of their operations, do not provide comprehensive legal regulation. The main normative legal acts regulating the activities of online publications include the Law of Ukraine on Information, the Law of Ukraine on Personal Data Protection, the Law of Ukraine on Copyright and Related Rights, as well as the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offenses and the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

The Law of Ukraine on Information (Law of Ukraine No 2657-XII, 1992). This law defines the general principles of information activity, the rights and obligations of information agencies, and the rules for disseminating information. However, it does not provide specific regulation for online publications and often fails to address the particularities of the online environment.

The Law of Ukraine on Print Media (Press) in Ukraine (Law of Ukraine No 2782-XII, 1992). This law regulates issues related to print media, but its provisions are partially applicable to online publications. However, the specifics of online publications are often not considered, leading to gaps in legal regulation.

The Law of Ukraine on Personal Data Protection (Law of Ukraine No 2297-VI, 2010). This law regulates the processing of personal data, which is a crucial aspect of the activities of online publications that collect and process information about their users. The Law on Copyright and Related Rights provides protection for authors' rights, but its provisions often do not align with the rapid changes in digital technology.

The Law of Ukraine on Electronic Commerce (Law of Ukraine No 675-VIII, 2015). This law sets out the rules for electronic commerce, which partially concerns online publications, particularly regarding online advertising and commercial agreements.

The Law of Ukraine on Electronic Communications (Law of Ukraine No 1089-IX, 2024) regulates issues related to information security in IT systems, which is pertinent for ensuring the security of data processed by online publications and lays the foundation for the development of electronic communications in Ukraine. However, it does not address all the legal challenges faced by online media. The lack of clear mechanisms for regulating content, as well as insufficient coordination with other laws, creates a certain degree of legal uncertainty that could negatively impact the development and operation of online publications in Ukraine.

The Law of Ukraine on Information Agencies (2019) introduces new rules for providing information services, which include online resources. This law attempts to align the rules for providing services in the online environment with the requirements of traditional information legislation.

The Law of Ukraine on Media (Law of Ukraine No 2849-IX, 2023) represents one of the most significant updates, establishing new rules for media activities in Ukraine, including online publications. The first online media outlets registered at the end of June 2023, and there are currently around 200 online media outlets in the register (Dankova, 2023). For example, «Ukrainian Pravda», «Interfax», NV, IMI, «Zaborona», «Comments», Ukrinform, «Bukvy», «Glavred», and «Espresso» have been registered. Among media groups, the «Inter» group («Podrobnosti») and StarLight Media («Facts») registered their informational sites as separate online publications, as did Suspilne. The National Council for Television and Radio Broadcasting also registered «Detector Media». Currently, the regulator is registering a diverse range of entities: besides traditional websites, this includes video hosting platforms, Facebook and Instagram pages, YouTube and Telegram

channels, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Viber accounts. However, criteria for classifying online resources as media are still to be defined, which is a task for the regulator and co-regulatory bodies in 2024. The law establishes new requirements for transparency, registration, content regulation, and combating misinformation.

The Law of Ukraine on the National Council of Ukraine for Television and Radio Broadcasting (Law of Ukraine No 2849-IX, 2023) designates the National Council of Ukraine for Television and Radio Broadcasting as the state body responsible for regulation and oversight in the field of broadcasting. Although the law primarily focuses on television and radio broadcasting, in the context of media convergence, this body may also impact the regulation of online publications, particularly those with audiovisual elements or that disseminate multimedia content. However, the legislative role of the National Council in relation to online media remains inadequately defined, creating a legal gap in regulating this segment. The law grants the National Council the authority to monitor compliance with broadcasting legislation and impose sanctions for violations. In the case of online publications, this issue remains unregulated, complicating the enforcement of accountability for the dissemination of inappropriate content in the online space.

The Law of Ukraine on the Procedure for Coverage of Activities of State Authorities and Local Self-Government Bodies in Ukraine by Media (Law of Ukraine No 539/97-VR, 2023) regulates the procedures and principles for covering the activities of state authorities and local self-government in the media, including both traditional media and online publications. The importance of this law lies in ensuring transparency and accessibility of information about the activities of government bodies. However, the lack of clear norms regarding online media may complicate their obligation to adhere to standards of objectivity and completeness in reporting. The law imposes a duty on the media to cover the activities of government bodies according to established standards, but its application to online publications is not always clearly defined. This may create a situation where online media, by avoiding these requirements, could provide poor-quality or biased information, which in turn affects the information environment in Ukraine. The law also provides for mechanisms of cooperation between government bodies and the media, including the organisation of press conferences, provision of information, and other forms of interaction. Online publications, as part of the modern media environment, should actively participate in these processes, although deficiencies in legislative regulation may limit their participation or place them at a disadvantage compared to traditional media.

The legislation regulating online publications, including the Law of Ukraine on Information and the Law of Ukraine on the Press, does not always meet the contemporary challenges of the information space. In particular, the absence of clear norms regulating the specifics of online media leads to legal gaps and ambiguities in practice.

The main issue is the lack of specialised legislation that fully addresses the activities of online publications. As noted, online publications are currently regulated mainly by norms developed for print media or general information activity rules, creating legal uncertainty and practical difficulties in applying the laws.

3.3. Challenges in the legal regulation of online publications in Ukraine

Online publications in Ukraine face a range of legal challenges and issues that complicate their operations and effective functioning, highlighting the need for the adaptation of the legal system to new conditions within the information environment.

In the context of the rapid advancement of digital technologies and the growing popularity of online resources, the issue of defining the legal status of online publications has become increasingly relevant. In Ukraine, the legislative framework governing media activities has largely remained unchanged since the era when the primary media were traditional forms such as television, radio, and print publications. However, with the emergence and development of online publications, there has arisen a pressing need to adapt legislation to these new realities. Many normative documents fail to clearly distinguish between traditional media and online resources, leading to various

difficulties in legal regulation. In particular, the lack of a clear definition of «online publication» complicates the identification of such resources as legal entities, which has important legal consequences, including issues of copyright, content responsibility, and other aspects.

This legal uncertainty creates a legal vacuum that complicates the work of both online publications and regulatory bodies. For example, with traditional media, there is a clear understanding of the legal status, which allows for effective monitoring of compliance with legislation and protection of journalists' and editorial rights. In contrast, the absence of specialized norms for online publications leads to legal ambiguity that can be exploited both to evade responsibility for violations and to exert pressure on publications from state bodies or other entities.

The ambiguity of the «online publication» category also affects self-regulation within the industry. The lack of clear criteria to differentiate online publications from other online resources complicates the work of professional journalists' associations that aim to establish standards of professional ethics and ensure accountability for content quality.

Thus, insufficient legal clarity regarding the «online publication» category is a significant obstacle to effective regulation in this area. Addressing this issue requires updating the legislative framework by developing clear definitions and specific normative acts that account for the unique characteristics of online publications. This would not only contribute to legal clarity but also enhance the protection of the rights of both publications and their audiences.

One of the main problems is the absence of specialized legislation regulating online publications. Existing normative acts, such as the Law of Ukraine «On Information» and the Law of Ukraine «On Printed Mass Media (Press) in Ukraine,» were designed for traditional media and do not fully correspond to the specifics of the online environment. This results in legal uncertainties and gaps that complicate the operations of online publications.

Legislative contradictions create additional complications. For example, there are certain conflicts between the norms of the Law of Ukraine «On Information» and the Law of Ukraine «On Personal Data Protection.» These concerns the regulation of personal data processing and publication, where legal norms are not always harmonized, complicating legal application and potentially creating legal risks for online publications.

The rapid development of technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and content automation creates new legal challenges. Legislation often fails to keep pace with technological changes, complicating the regulation of aspects related to automated content creation, the use of algorithms for moderation, and other innovations. For example, issues related to content monetization, blogging, the use of artificial intelligence in journalism, and other innovations lack clear legal regulations.

In the current information environment, where social networks and digital platforms play a key role in content distribution, the regulation of such content becomes increasingly complex. Traditional media, which were previously the main channels for mass communication, are gradually losing their monopoly status, giving way to new forms of communication that provide faster access to a broad audience. However, despite their numerous advantages, these new forms also present new challenges for legislators.

One of the main issues in regulating content on digital platforms is the lack of clear mechanisms for controlling information disseminated through social networks and other digital media. Legislation designed with traditional media in mind does not always keep up with the development of new technologies. This leads to situations where harmful or false content can spread freely, causing harm to society and individuals.

This issue becomes particularly pertinent in the context of combating disinformation. Social networks and digital platforms, on one hand, are important tools for freedom of expression and democratizing access to information, but on the other hand, they are often used to spread false or manipulative information. The lack of clear legislative norms

regulating responsibility for content disseminated through these platforms complicates the fight against such phenomena. Legislation aimed at combating disinformation can negatively impact freedom of speech and media if its application is excessive or unjustified. This creates risks for democratic principles and human rights.

Additionally, social networks and other online platforms provide users with the ability to create and distribute their own content, often without adherence to professional journalism standards. This results in an increasingly saturated information space with content of varying quality, making it difficult for users to distinguish reliable sources from unreliable ones. In an open information space and a pluralistic environment, platforms become venues for active social and political discussions, where readers can express their own positions and publish their materials (Afanasyeva (Gorska), 2014). For instance, «Ukrainska Pravda» (2024) notes that it does not interfere with the content of blogs and is not responsible for opinions expressed by authors on its portal. However, according to the practice of the European Court of Human Rights (Delphi AS v. Estonia, June 16, 2015 (Decision Council of Europe/European Court of Human Rights No 64569/09..., 2015)), the internet portal, despite its terms of public offer, is responsible for the content published on its pages. Proper editorial work with original content is constrained by professional ethical norms, violations of which can lead to reputational losses for online publications and even initiate legal proceedings against media.

Despite these challenges, effective regulation of content on digital platforms remains essential. Lack of control can lead to situations where harmful content, including violence, hate speech, or disinformation, spreads unchecked. In such conditions, there is a need to develop new legal mechanisms that ensure adequate content control while maintaining a balance between freedom of speech and public safety.

Legislators need to consider the specifics of digital platforms and social networks when developing new normative acts. This may include establishing clear criteria for content responsibility, developing effective moderation and control mechanisms, and creating conditions for self-regulation within the platforms themselves. An important aspect is also international cooperation, as the internet space has no borders, and content regulation requires coordinated global actions.

Ensuring a balance between content control and freedom of speech is indeed one of the key issues in the contemporary legal regulation of online publications. The «Gongadze Case» serves as a stark example of the tragic consequences that can arise from confrontations with power and criticism of state authorities. The murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze in 2000 not only highlighted the dangers journalists can face but also exposed the weaknesses of the legal system in safeguarding their safety and freedom of speech.

This situation underscores that journalism, especially that which operates in the online space, must exercise maximum caution in presenting material. However, excessive control or self-censorship can threaten freedom of speech and undermine fundamental principles of journalism, such as objectivity and independence. It is important to remember that freedom of speech and the right to practice the profession are fundamental rights protected by international conventions and national legislation.

At the same time, objectivity in presenting material should be a priority for every journalist, regardless of political context or pressure from authorities. This entails careful fact-checking, presenting multiple viewpoints, and avoiding manipulation. It is also crucial for journalists to be able to perform their work without fear of reprisals or persecution, which, in turn, requires adequate legal protection and support from the state.

Thus, ensuring a balance between content control and freedom of speech not only contributes to the development of a democratic society but also guarantees that the voices of independent journalists are heard and their work protected. It is important that, in the process of regulating online publications, this balance remains a constant priority, ensuring both public safety and freedom of information. Ukraine currently lacks clear and comprehensive norms regarding content moderation and combating disinformation. Legislation does not provide effective mechanisms for verifying information accuracy

and combating fake news, which creates additional challenges for online publications in maintaining information quality and accountability.

It is noteworthy that the question of actions violating intellectual property rights on the internet almost never arises. Today, the majority of Ukrainian publications have their own blog platforms where experts from various fields and «opinion leaders» post their contributions: economists, investment analysts, diplomats, public figures, party leaders, and writers. Due to the absence of effective and clear mechanisms for handling user-generated content, internet media encounter numerous unresolved issues, including problems with copyright adherence, content verification, and ethical aspects of editing user-generated material. The current state of legal culture in society and active anti-plagiarism campaigns have led to a clear understanding that posting copyrighted material on a website without the author's consent and/or without acknowledging their name constitutes a copyright violation.

However, another related question, which lacks unanimous resolution in various countries and does not have a clear, unequivocal answer in Ukraine, is who is responsible for third-party rights violations on the internet; who should rectify and compensate for the resulting damage. Ensuring compliance with the Law of Ukraine «On Personal Data Protection» is a critical task for online publications. Rules for processing and storing personal data are often complex and demanding, which can lead to legal risks in the event of violations.

Online publications face cybersecurity issues such as protection from cyberattacks and ensuring the security of information systems. Cybersecurity legislation in Ukraine is still underdeveloped, complicating the provision of reliable data and information resource protection.

Adapting Ukrainian legislation to international standards is an important task. Euro-integration processes require harmonization of media legislation with European norms, which can be challenging due to differences in legal systems and political contexts.

Online publications in Ukraine encounter various legal challenges, including deficiencies in legislation, difficulties adapting to new technologies, content regulation, personal data protection, cybersecurity, and bureaucratic obstacles. Overcoming these challenges requires comprehensive legislative changes, procedural improvements

3.4. Recommendations for improving the legal regulation of internet publications in Ukraine

Currently, Ukraine lacks a unified legal act that comprehensively regulates the activities of internet publications. Given the specifics of digital media and the rapid advancement of technology, there is a need to develop specialised legislation that addresses all aspects of internet publications. This should include clear definitions of terms. Establishing precise definitions for terms such as «internet publication», «online media», and «digital media» is essential to avoid legal ambiguity and uncertainty.

Regulation of content in internet publications remains problematic. At present, internet publications are primarily regulated by norms designed for print media or general information activity rules, leading to legal uncertainty and difficulties in the practical application of laws.

Disinformation and fake news pose significant challenges for internet media. Existing laws often fail to provide clear guidelines for combating disinformation, fake news, and other forms of false information. Mechanisms for controlling and holding accountable violations are still underdeveloped. Regulatory acts should detail rules for content moderation, responsibility for disinformation, and copyright infringements. Supporting independent organisations and platforms that engage in fact-checking and fighting disinformation is recommended.

Although Ukraine has a system for registering internet publications, it is not always clear or practical. The registration process often lacks clarity and may be associated with various bureaucratic hurdles. Establishing registration procedures for internet

publications would ensure transparency of ownership and accountability.

One of the main issues for internet publications is the protection of copyright. To enhance legal protection for authors and content, it is advisable to review and update the provisions of the Law of Ukraine «On Copyright and Related Rights» to better align with the requirements of the digital environment.

Given that internet publications handle large volumes of personal data, it is crucial to ensure their proper protection. This requires updating the norms of the Law of Ukraine «On Protection of Personal Data» in accordance with the latest standards and digital environment requirements. Developing detailed guidelines for internet publications on the processing and storage of personal data is necessary.

In addition to state regulation, implementing self-regulation systems in the sphere of internet publications is important. Establishing professional associations for internet publications that set ethical standards and ensure compliance is essential.

Improving the legal regulation of internet publications in Ukraine requires a comprehensive approach that considers the specifics of the digital environment, technological developments, and changes in the information society. Developing specialised legislation, enhancing mechanisms for copyright and personal data protection, combating disinformation, implementing self-regulation systems, and increasing legal awareness are key areas that will help ensure the effective functioning of internet publications and support their development in the modern information environment.

Judicial practice in the legal regulation of internet publications is still underdeveloped. The lack of precedents and clear judicial decisions in this area creates legal uncertainty and may impact the quality of law enforcement.

Moreover, there is a need for specialised regulatory acts that comprehensively cover issues specific to internet publications, such as content moderation, responsibility for spreading false information, and technical aspects of managing internet resources. The absence of detailed legal regulation leads to legal uncertainty and creates difficulties for media companies in ensuring compliance with the law.

4. Conclusions

The analysis of current legislation and its application to internet publications reveals that there is currently no specialised legal regulation for this category of media. General norms governing traditional media do not fully address the specific needs and challenges of internet publications. Existing models of civil and commercial legal relations do not fully reflect the legal nature of the relationships established within the Internet. Therefore, applying classical legal regulatory mechanisms to these relationships is not feasible. The development of specialised legislation that takes into account the characteristics of digital media is necessary to establish clear legal frameworks that will help avoid legal conflicts and ensure effective oversight of online resources.

The growing popularity of internet publications is accompanied by the issue of disinformation and fake news. The current legal framework does not always effectively address this challenge. Amendments to the legislation are needed to regulate responsibility for disseminating false information. Supporting independent organisations engaged in fact-checking, as well as educational programmes for journalists, can aid in tackling this issue.

Implementing the aforementioned recommendations could significantly improve the legal regulation of internet publications in Ukraine. The development of specialised legislation, enhancement of copyright protection, combating disinformation, protection of personal data, self-regulation systems, and increasing legal awareness will create the necessary conditions for the stable and effective functioning of internet media. Successful implementation of these measures will contribute to the development of a healthy information environment in Ukraine, increase trust in media, and ensure the rights and freedoms of all participants in the media process.

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