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# THE FREQUENCY OF USE OF MEDIA SERVICES BY POLES IN LEISURE TIME

## Introduction

One of the most popular forms of spending leisure time and means of entertainment is the use of mass media. Additionally, mass media also allow to arrange other forms of spending free time. They primarily include the press, radio, television and the Internet. The role that they play can be informational, phatic and escapist. Media services help people fulfil the need for knowledge about their closer and wider environment, the need for learning and the need for interests. Media are perceived as a substitute of company and closeness (the phatic function), they also enable the escape from our own life and problems, provide entertainment and relaxation, give a sense of emotional relief (the escapist function)<sup>1</sup>. Pursuant to the Act of 27 November 2012 amending Law on Broadcasting, a media service is a service provided as a programme or an on-demand audiovisual media service which is under the editorial responsibility of its provider and the principal purpose of which is the provision of programmes in order to inform, entertain or educate, to the general public by electronic communications networks<sup>2</sup>.

For many years, one of the most popular forms of spending free time has been television<sup>3</sup>. During the project “The leisure-time services market in Poland towards 2025”, financed by the National Science Centre based on the decision no. N N112 257239 allocating funds to the author, the question was raised how fre-

<sup>1</sup> <http://pentor-arch.tnsglobal.pl/17570.xml> (viewed on 30.01.2013).

<sup>2</sup> Act of 27 November 2012 amending Law on Broadcasting item. 1315.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Budżet czasu ludności 1996*, Departament Warunków Życia, GUS, Warszawa 1998. *Budżet czasu ludności 1996-2004*, Departament Statystyki Społecznej, GUS, Warszawa 2005; *Co Polacy robią w czasie wolnym*. Survey report, CBOS, Warszawa, August 2006; *Czas wolny Polaków*. Survey report, CBOS, Warszawa, October 2010.

quently the Poles, apart from watching television, also listen to the radio, read the press or use the Internet, so, generally speaking, use media services. In an attempt to answer this question, a nationwide survey was conducted, using the interview technique, among 600 adult consumers. The survey was carried out in 6 provinces (Dolnośląskie, Małopolskie, Mazowieckie, Śląskie, Wielkopolskie, Zachodniopomorskie) in 2012. The sample comprised women and men in equal number and 120 respondents in each age group (20-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-55 and more than 55 years of age). The main aim of the paper is to describe the frequency of use of media services in leisure time by Poles.

## 1. Preferred forms of spending leisure time

The introduction to the survey contained questions on the forms of spending free time. Most frequently, respondents answered that they watched television or used the Internet. The first five choices also included reading the press and books. Accordingly, without giving in-depth consideration to the frequency of use, it was established that the respondents used media services in leisure time. More than 64% (men slightly more often) declared that they watched television programmes in their leisure time. More than 57% of the respondents used the Internet. The difference between men and women who declared this form of spending free time was 6 percentage points. Leisure time was also the time when respondents met their family and friends. This form was chosen by almost the half of respondents (47.5%) – women significantly more often than men. As for other forms of spending leisure time, women declared more often than men that they read the press and books, took walks, worked in the garden, went out to restaurants or cafes (Table 1).

Table 1

The most frequent forms of spending leisure time (in %)

Specification	Sample total	Respondents according to the gender	
		women	men
1	2	3	4
Watching television	64.3	63.3	65.3
Using the Internet	57.2	54.0	60.3
Meeting family and friends	47.5	51.7	43.3
Reading books	39.5	48.3	30.7
Reading the press	32.3	37.3	27.3
Taking a walk	29.2	34.3	24.0
Working in a garden/on a plot	21.8	22.7	21.0

Table 1 contd.

1	2	3	4
Cycling	20.7	18.7	22.7
Sleeping	17.5	16.7	18.3
Going out to the cinema / theatre / etc.	16.8	17.0	16.7
Going out to a restaurant / cafe / etc.	13.3	14.0	12.7
Going to a swimming pool/fitness club/etc	12.3	11.0	13.7
Going away for trips	11.8	11.3	12.3
Hobby	4.8	3.0	6.7
Attending sports competitions	3.3	1.3	5.3
Other	2.7	2.7	2.7

The analysis of the most frequent forms of spending leisure time according to the age of respondents shows that the respondents aged more than 45 watched television more frequently than the younger ones. The younger respondents chose the Internet. More than 88% of those less than 24 years of age used the Internet in their leisure time compared with 18.3% in the group of 55+. The respondents aged 20 to 24 declared more often than the older ones that their preferred forms of spending leisure time were meeting friends, cycling, sleeping, using cultural services, eating out, and going away for trips.

Apart from watching television, the respondents who were 50 or more years of age liked reading the press and books, taking walks and working in the garden. It was observed that an increase in the age corresponded to a decreasing activity of the respondents relating to the use of the Internet, meeting friends, using cultural services and going away for trips. A reverse situation – an increase in a number of the respondents declaring a preference for a particular form of spending free time corresponding with an increase in their age – was reported with regard to reading the press, taking walks and working in the garden (Table 2).

Table 2

The most frequent forms of spending leisure time (in %)

Specification	Respondents according to age				
	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and more
1	2	3	4	5	6
Watching television	44.2	58.3	61.7	80.0	77.5
Using the Internet	88.3	74.2	57.5	47.5	18.3
Meeting family and friends	67.5	55.0	50.0	36.7	28.3
Reading books	37.5	40.8	36.7	37.5	45.0
Reading the press	16.7	25.0	30.0	39.2	50.8

Table 2 contd.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Taking a walk	25.0	25.0	25.0	32.5	38.3
Working in a garden/on a plot	4.2	11.7	29.2	30.8	33.3
Cycling	25.8	21.7	23.3	18.3	14.2
Sleeping	25.8	13.3	15.0	17.5	15.8
Going out to the cinema / theatre / etc.	27.5	22.5	17.5	9.2	7.5
Going out to a restaurant / cafe / etc.	19.2	13.3	18.3	14.2	1.7
Going to a swimming pool / fitness club	15.8	15.0	15.8	10.0	5.0
Going away for trips	14.2	14.2	13.3	11.7	5.8
Hobby	5.8	5.0	3.3	5.0	5.0
Attending sports competitions	3.3	6.7	4.2	0.8	1.7
Other	2.5	3.3	4.2	1.7	1.7

## 2. The frequency of use of media services

As already established, watching television is the most frequent form of spending leisure time. The figures showed that more than 70% of the respondents watched television everyday. Listening to the radio or using the Internet was declared by 62% of the respondents. Printed press was read by the respondents a few times in a week most frequently (36.2%). About 28% of the respondents declared that they read printed press everyday. The sample also included respondents who did not use media services in their leisure time. The study showed that almost 15% did not use the Internet, 4.5% did not watch television, 7.7% did not listen to the radio and 8.5% did not read printed press in their leisure time (Table 3). The basic reason for not using media services was given as not having the need for those services. It was declared by 60% of the respondents who did not use the Internet, 37% of those who did not watch television, almost 70% of those not listening to the radio and almost 72% of those not reading printed press.

Table 3

The frequency of use of media services in leisure time (%)

Specification	Internet	Television	Radio	Printed press
Everyday	62.2	70.5	62.5	27.8
A few times a week	16.0	17.5	19.5	36.2
Once a week	4.2	3.3	5.3	18.5
Once a month	1.5	2.2	1.7	5.7
More seldom	1.5	2.0	3.3	3.3
I do not use	14.7	4.5	7.7	8.5

Men more often than women used the Internet everyday (64.3% compared with 60%), whereas women tended to choose television (71.7% to 69.3%), the radio (68% to 57%) and printed press (31.3% to 24.3%). It was also women who most often declared that they did not use the Internet at all (16% to 13.3%), whereas men most often declared not to watch television (5.3% to 3.7%), listen to the radio (9.3% to 6%) or read printed press (10.3% to 6.7%) at all – Table 4.

The respondents who were in a relationship tended to watch television (74.6% to 62.8%), listen to the radio (65.4% to 57%) and read printed press (29.5% to 24.6%) more often than the single ones. Single respondents used the Internet everyday more frequently than those in a relationship (72% to 57%).

Table 4

The frequency of use of media services in leisure time according to gender respondents' (in %)

Specification	Internet		Television		Radio		Printed press	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Everyday	60.0	64.3	71.7	69.3	68.0	5.7	31.3	24.3
A few times a week	16.7	15.3	16.7	18.3	16.3	22.7	37.0	35.3
Once a week	4.3	4.0	3.7	3.0	5.0	5.7	19.0	18.0
Once a month	2.0	1.0	1.0	3.3	1.3	2.0	3.3	8.0
More seldom	1.0	2.0	3.3	0.7	3.3	3.3	2.7	4.0
I do not use	16.0	13.3	3.7	5.3	6.0	9.3	6.7	10.3

F – Women  
M – Men

Analysing the number of people who did not use those services, almost the same number of the respondents who were single and remained in a relationship declared not to use the Internet (nearly 15%). The other services that were analysed were not used by single respondents more often (Table 5).

Table 5

The frequency of use of media services in leisure time, according to marital status respondents' (in %)

Specification	Internet		Television		Radio		Printed press	
	R	S	R	S	R	S	R	S
Everyday	57.0	72.0	74.6	62.8	65.4	57.0	29.5	24.6
A few times a week	19.3	9.7	16.8	18.8	19.8	18.8	39.2	30.4
Once a week	4.6	3.4	1.8	6.3	4.1	7.7	16.8	21.7
Once a month	2.3	-	1.5	3.4	1.5	1.9	4.8	7.2
More seldom	2.0	0.5	1.8	2.4	2.3	5.3	2.5	4.8
I do not use	14.8	14.5	3.6	6.3	6.9	9.2	7.1	11.1

R – in a relationship  
S – not in a relationship (single)

The analysis of the respondent participation in the labour market showed that the respondent who were not involved in the labour market used the Internet only marginally more often (63.4% to 61.6%). The respondents participating in the labour market more often declared to watch television (71.9% to 67.2%), listen to the radio (67.6% to 50.8%) and read printed press (30.3% to 22.4%) everyday. Almost one person in four not involved in the labour market (mainly pensioners) did not use the Internet at all. In the group of respondents involved in the labour market, 12% did not listen to the radio at all and almost 11% did not read printed press (Table 6).

Table 6

The frequency of use of media services in leisure time, according to labour market participation respondents' (in %)

Specification	Internet		Television		Radio		Printed press	
	P	N	P	N	P	N	P	N
Everyday	61.6	63.4	71.9	67.2	67.6	50.8	30.2	22.4
A few times a week	19.4	8.2	17.3	18.0	18.0	23.0	36.0	36.6
Once a week	4.8	2.7	2.6	4.9	4.6	7.1	18.2	19.1
Once a month	2.2	-	1.7	3.3	1.2	2.7	4.8	7.7
More seldom	1.7	1.1	2.4	1.1	2.9	4.4	3.4	3.3
I do not use	10.3	24.6	4.1	5.5	5.8	12.0	7.4	10.9

P – participating in the labour market

N – not participating in the labour market

The analysis of the frequency of use of media services according to the age of respondents showed that an increasing age reduced the respondents' activity on the Internet. Based on the respondents' choices, 95.8% of respondents aged 20-24 and only 21.7% of respondents aged 55+ used the Internet everyday. It is also notable that the youngest respondents used the Internet everyday or a few times a week. Moreover, this group did not have respondents who did not use the Internet in their leisure time at all, while one in two respondents in the group 55+ declared that they did not use the Internet (Table 7).

The opposite tendency, i.e. an increase in age corresponding with an increased frequency of a particular activity, was observed with regard to television. Based on the respondents' declarations, 56.7% of respondents in the 20-24 group and 83.3% in the 55+ group watched television everyday. In the same sample, 13.3% watched television a few times a week and only 3.3% did not watch it at all (Table 8).

Table 7

The frequency of Internet use, according to age respondents' (in %)

Specification	Respondents by age				
	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and more
Everyday	95.8	85.0	63.3	45.0	21.7
A few times a week	4.2	10.0	24.2	28.3	13.3
Once a week	-	3.3	4.2	5.8	7.5
Once a month	-	-	2.5	0.8	4.2
More seldom	-	-	1.7	2.5	3.3
I do not use	-	1.7	4.2	17.5	50.0

Table 8

The frequency of television use, according to age respondents' (in %)

Specification	Respondents by age				
	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and more
Everyday	56.7	60.8	66.7	85.0	83.3
A few times a week	25.0	17.5	20.0	11.7	13.3
Once a week	6.7	6.7	1.7	1.7	-
Once a month	4.2	1.7	5.0	-	-
More seldom	2.5	5.0	2.5	-	-
I do not use	5.0	8.3	4.2	1.7	3.3

In leisure time, respondents also tended to choose to listen to the radio. More than half of all respondents listened to the radio everyday, especially in the 45-54 age group (70%). In the 55+ group, 65% of respondents listened to the radio everyday, but this group also had the highest number of people who did not listen to the radio in their leisure time (14.2%) – Table 9.

Table 9

The frequency of radio use, according to age respondents' (in %)

Specification	Respondents by age				
	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and more
Everyday	50.8	58.3	68.3	70.0	65.0
A few times a week	26.7	25.0	15.8	15.0	15.0
Once a week	8.3	5.0	5.0	5.8	2.5
Once a month	0.8	4.2	2.5	-	0.8
More seldom	6.7	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
I do not use	6.7	5.0	5.8	6.7	14.2

The same tendency was observed for printed press. 13.3% of the youngest respondents and 38.3% of the oldest respondents declared that they read printed press everyday. Based on their choices, we can see that the respondents in the 55+

group read the press everyday, while the remaining respondents read newspapers and magazines a few times a week. The most respondents who declared that they did not read the press at all were up to 24 years of age (Table 10).

Table 10

The frequency of printed press use according to age respondents' (in %)

Specification	Respondents by age				
	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and more
Everyday	13.3	25.0	26.7	35.8	38.3
A few times a week	33.3	32.5	44.2	35.0	35.8
Once a week	26.7	25.0	11.7	19.2	10.0
Once a month	10.8	6.7	5.8	1.7	3.3
More seldom	4.2	5.0	3.3	1.7	2.5
I do not use	11.7	5.8	8.3	6.7	10.0

### 3. Reasons for the use of media services

The survey conducted by the Department of Markets and Consumption, the University of Economics in Katowice, showed that television was watched both for information on political, economic, social, and sports events and for entertainment. Films, including serials, were very popular and TVN was the station which was watched the most frequently. One in two respondents watched the public television (TVP1, TVP2 and TVP Info), while almost one in three – Polsat. The programmes provided by the respondents listed also Discovery, Canal+, Eurosport, National Geographic. Similarly, the radio was listened for information. More than half of the respondents listened to music on the radio. They also declared that they listened to the radio for pleasure or entertainment. The most frequently used station was Radio Zet, followed by Eska, PR3 – Trójka, PR1 – Jedynka, and Planeta. The respondents' choices indicated that the press was read for information, entertainment and education. People looked for curiosities, advice and advertisements. The survey showed that the most popular newspaper was Gazeta Wyborcza. One in four respondents read Dziennik Zachodni, one in five – women magazines such as Twój Styl, Glamour, Życie na Gorąco, Joy, Tina, Cosmopolitan, Pani Domu, Poradnik Domowy, Dobre Rady, Przyjaciółka, Świat Kobiety, Party. Respondents also often read Newsweek and Metro. Nearly one in ten read Rzeczpospolita. Other press titles included Dziennik Gazeta Prawna, Angora, Wprost, Fakt, Polityka, Sport, Forbes, Fokus.

The author’s research showed that the main reason for using the Internet in leisure time was reading the news (72.5%). One in two respondents used social networking sites. The Internet was also used to listen to music and contact friends. One in three respondents used the Internet to pursue his interests, while one in four – to watch films and YouTube clips. Women, more often than men, tended to use the Internet to stay in touch with friends, pursue their interests, watch serials, visit interesting places around the world and learn online. Men, on the contrary, used the internet more often to listen to music, watch films and YouTube clips and play games online (Table 11).

Respondents in the group below 24 years of age tended to use the Internet more often than older respondents for such purposes as using social networking sites, listening to music, watching films on YouTube, watching serials, playing games online and reading e-books. On the other hand, respondents aged 45 or more used the Internet to pursue their interests, watch interesting places in the world and follow the news (Table 12).

Table 11

Reasons for the Internet use (in %)

Specification	Total sample	Respondents by gender	
		women	men
Reading news/information	72.5	71.2	73.8
Using social networking sites	50.4	50.0	50.8
Listening to music	43.7	40.0	47.3
Staying in touch with friends	37.5	47.6	27.7
Pursuing interests	33.0	34.8	31.2
Watching films	25.9	22.0	29.7
Watching YouTube clips	25.3	17.2	33.2
Visiting interesting places in the world	14.2	15.2	13.3
Watching serials	14.0	17.2	10.9
Playing games online	13.4	10.8	16.0
Watching the news	13.0	12.8	13.3
Learning online	4.3	5.2	3.5
Reading e-books	2.4	2.4	2.3
Watching museum artefacts	0.8	0.4	1.2
Other	7.7	8.8	6.6

Table 12

Reasons for the Internet use in leisure time, according to age respondents' (in %)

Specification	Respondents by age				
	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and more
Reading news/information	55.5	69.8	76.2	85.7	82.8
Using social networking sites	78.2	62.9	44.3	29.6	15.5
Listening to music	77.3	56.9	28.7	24.5	10.3
Staying in touch with friends	43.7	46.6	34.8	31.6	22.4
Pursuing interests	30.3	27.6	27.0	43.9	43.1
Watching films	35.3	37.9	21.7	16.3	6.9
Watching YouTube clips	41.2	37.1	19.1	11.2	5.2
Visiting interesting places in the world	7.6	7.8	14.8	26.5	19.0
Watching serials	30.3	15.5	8.7	7.1	-
Playing games online	16.0	13.8	12.2	13.3	10.3
Watching the news	5.0	9.5	15.7	16.3	25.9
Learning online	4.2	6.9	6.1	1.0	1.7
Reading e-books	4.2	1.7	1.7	3.1	-
Watching museum artefacts	0.8	-	-	1.0	3.4
Other	5.9	6.9	9.6	7.1	10.3

## Conclusion

The use of media services is the most popular form of spending leisure time. For years, watching television has been the first choice for a great number of people. The survey showed that more than 70% of respondents watched television everyday. More than 62% declared that they listened to the radio or used the Internet everyday. Newspapers and magazines were read a few times a week most frequently (36.2%).

During the survey, respondents were also asked which leisure time services were, in their opinion, indispensable in free time. Internet services were ranked first (64.2%), followed by television (62.8%). It is notable, however, that 91.5% of the youngest respondents chose Internet services compared with 26.7% of the older respondents. The latter ones definitely preferred watching television (76.7% compared with 48.7% of the youngest respondents). 36% of respondents considered the radio as an indispensable element of their leisure time, while 33.8% chose the printed press (mainly older respondents).

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### Summary

The paper presents the results of the field research, conducted using the interview technique, among 600 residents of Poland. The study was financed by the National Science Centre based on the decision no. N N112 257239 allocating funds for the project “The leisure-time services market in Poland towards 2025”. The paper discusses the frequency of use of the Internet, television, radio and printed press in leisure time. It also looks into the reasons for using and not using media services in leisure time.

Keywords: leisure time, media services