

Nlog, Prawda.org, Blog.art.pl The First Non-profit Blogging Platforms in Poland and Their Influence on the Network of Blogs' Development

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ABSTRACT

The paper concerns a first stage of the Polish language blogging platforms development. **Scientific objective:** The aim of this paper is to introduce the history of non-commercial blogging platforms in Poland and to define their influence on the growth of the blogosphere. **Research methods:** The analysis covers the years 2000-2001 and the source material is (among others) previous versions of Web pages available in the Internet Archive. **Results and conclusions:** The presented paper contains a characteristic of the blogging platforms: Nlog, Prawda.org, Blog.art.pl and sets out their impact on the evolution of the blogosphere in such aspects as removing the technological barrier making blogging impossible for people without programming skills or setting the structure of the blog. **Cognitive value:** The paper fills a research gap in studies on Polish language blogosphere and is the answer on experts' voices emphasize the need for research on the past shape of the Internet.

KEYWORDS

blog, blogging platform, blogosphere, history of the Internet, Internet, new media



Marcin Wilkowski (2015) writes that for years in the thinking about the network, the “eternal now” illusion dominated, while when considering the nature of the Internet, the awareness of its historicity is important. The author adds that digital culture is in danger of oblivion, which is caused by the problem of reading old file formats or linking to non-existent websites. Wilkowski draws attention to the need (and even the necessity) of archiving activities related to securing and sharing broken websites or old versions of still functioning websites. He writes: “(...) we went to the stage of feverish efforts to secure as many historic web collections as possible, and the archives and memory have become definitely positive in the context of digital communication.” The Internet, perceived as an all-encompassing medium (Szpunar, 2014, p. 698), is at the same time extremely ephemeral, elusive. This awareness prompts us to undertake research on the history of a medium that is being forgotten, although it is relatively short. It is important to preserve the memory of the old shape of the network by archiving web pages, which Wilkowski postulates, but also by writing down and analysing the history of the Internet. This task is becoming more and more important in the face of the increasing popularity of flow-based applications, and not based on the permanent presentation of data, and thus in line with the concept of “erasable Internet” (Carroll, 2014; Manjoo, 2013; Gillette, 2013). In scientific studies and journalistic texts on the development of the Internet, there are many gaps resulting not only from the above-described specificity of the medium, but also from the fact that certain events related to the development of the network in their duration seem to be of little or no interest. They are perceived as obvious and we are under the impression that the context of the present fully explains them. Meanwhile, their role is visible only from a certain time perspective. That is why it is worth to agree with Wilkowski and emphasise the need to study the past of the web.

This article concerns a fragment of the history of the Internet in Poland. The inspiration to take up this topic was, among others, observation of an attempt to describe the development of Polish blogs in the formula of a social activity. Blogger Maciej Budzich founded a Facebook group “History of the Polish blogosphere” (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/historiapolskiej-blogsosfery/about>) and, together with Internet users who joined this initiative, he intended to create a timeline on which he would mark the most important events related to the history of blogs in Poland. The initiative quickly collapsed, but there are still records of conversations containing residual data and showing how difficult it is to reconstruct even a small part of the history of the web. In the information provided by Internet users there are many discrepancies and errors mainly related to factography – they were not always corrected in the course of the discussion.

The history of blogging in Poland consists of many facts quite well known, repeatedly described, but even more events whose significance has not been appreciated so far. The aim of this study is to fill one of the gaps in the research on the blogosphere by characterising the first Polish non-commercial blog platforms and to indicate the importance of these websites for the development of the blogosphere. Early development period of Polish non-commercial blog platforms, i.e. 2000–2001, was analysed. In 2000, the first Polish blog platform *Nlog* was created; in the same year *Prawda.org* service was founded. The time scope of the research ends in 2001, i.e. the year of creation of *Blog.art.pl* platform. In the same year, *Blog.pl* was created, but it will not be discussed in this article, because it was separate from the above-mentioned websites and the direction of its development indicates a departure from the “gift economy” and the concept of “common good” (Castells, 2003; Hofmokl, 2009) and the transition to a new stage in the history of the blogosphere, which can be described by terms such as massification, commercialisation and professionalisation.

The scope of research covers Polish blog platforms, and that means making certain exclusions. This study will not analyse: 1) blog platforms created abroad, and 2) CMS (Content Management

System) systems. In the analysed period, Polish Internet users used e.g. American Blogger platform, and also created blogs using a script called niByLog. There were some problems and limitations with the use of these tools. Many Polish internet users tried to use Blogger, but this was difficult due to limitations in the use of Polish characters, technical problems of the site (e.g. with comments) and difficulties in contacting the website administration (Key, b.d.). On the other hand, niByLog, created by Marek Matulka, was a software written in PHP, allowing the creation of own online journal. As Robert Drózd (2014) mentions, niByLog has gained some popularity due to the relatively simple operation, the ease of expansion and the fact that the content was stored in text files, so no database was needed to operate them. The difficulty was, among others, the fact that niByLog blog was ran on own server.

The source material used in the presented article consists mainly of old versions of blog platforms stored in the Internet Archive and information available in still functioning blog platforms. Supplementing these sources are press and Internet publications. Valuable data is also provided by the memories of the creators or users of the first Polish blog platforms published on the web, e.g. on social networking sites. It should be noted, however, that especially journalistic materials and information unsupported by sources provided by Internet users contain many inaccuracies and errors, so they should be verified extremely carefully. Publications about the first period of development of the Polish blogosphere are characterised by emotions, often extreme ones, which should also be considered (admiration of new possibilities is interwoven with excessive criticism of incomprehensible phenomena). Presented content on the blog platforms varies in their degree of detail, which results, among others, from the availability of source materials. Some blog platforms are still functioning and archival information is kept on them, while other are closed, and the only trace of their functioning are few random entries in the Internet Archive. Blog platforms will be discussed in the order, in which they were created.

The following terminological assumptions have been adopted in the presented study: blog platforms will be defined as online platforms for setting up and running online journals, and their essential feature is integrating the blogs; blog will be understood as a website where the author presents entries in order reverse to the chronological order, and the element common for various entries in terms of content and form is a subjective view of reality presented by the author, who interacts with readers and other bloggers (Więckiewicz, 2012, pp. 64–65).

Polish non-commercial blog platforms in 2000–2001

Nlog

The first Polish blog platform, Nlog, was created in June 2000 and it is still functioning. The platform was created by the Internet user with the pseudonym Warp. The first blog entry on the platform was created by the user Daileidia and, among others, at her request, the blog platform was developed (A few words about nlog.org ..., b.d.). Initially, Nlog operated at <http://nea.pl/nlog>, later at <http://nlog.pl>, and currently – at <http://nlog.org>. Running a blog on this platform was and still is free. A few months after the creation of the platform (in August 2000), 76 users had accounts there, and after about a year, according to the data saved in the Internet Archive, the number of bloggers increased to 421.

Initially, Nlog facilitated keeping an online journal, but users still had to learn the basics of HTML. Activities such as underlining the text, bolding, highlighting in italics required bloggers to use the HTML code themselves. In addition, users who did not want to stop at the basic look of the online journal, were able to develop and install their own graphics, but then not all the options offered by the service were available to them or it required the use of more advanced solutions (FAQ, b.d.). It was significant that the platform offered users the domain and place

on the server and the ability to create a blog in an automated manner without the need for programming competences.

Nlog has never been commercial, which in the opinion of users was both an advantage and a disadvantage. Internet users valued the platform for the lack of advertising and not sharing information about users with third parties. Lack of profits meant, however, insufficient funds to ensure the smooth operation of the platform. Users reported problems with many website functions. There were breaks in the operation of the platform, mainly caused by server or connection problems. Administrators took care of the platform as a hobby and from time to time, so users could not count on constant and quick support. While in the beginnings of the platform Internet users were patient in terms of the technical problems, for example related to server operation, a few years later these difficulties were more and more onerous, especially as competitive websites worked more efficiently. Nlog's developers expanded it and added new features to facilitate the online journal, but the pace of work could not keep up with the web development, including other blog platforms (Acknowledgement, 2002).

Nlog users contacted each other using their online journals, but also talking on the forum or using the IRC channel. It was a relatively small community, and the topics taken up by bloggers additionally favoured building online communities. Nlog users in their online journals published entries mainly on topics related to private life or even intimate matters, they wrote about feelings, emotions, relationships with people. The matters mentioned also appeared in discussions on the online forum. This topic was such a characteristic feature of blog publications on Nlog that the creators of the platform posted a banner redirecting to the site Relacje.net, with articles on loneliness, love, friendship, etc. The possibility to anonymously describe intimate problems, opportunity to receive support from Internet users, provide advice to other participants of the blogosphere – all these factors were conducive to the integration of Nlog bloggers.

Involvement of Nlog's users in the life of the blogging community was also associated with their active involvement in the development of the blog platform in question. The whole process of expanding the platform took place with the participation of the users themselves. Archival data shows that bloggers publishing in Nlog, struggling with technical problems, aware of the non-commercial nature of the platform, offered financial support to the creators and declared that they would create a new version of the platform by adapting the website code to new trends and technical conditions. Even bloggers who do not use Nlog actively anymore, return from time to time, and, hearing about the problems with maintaining the website, they declare financial support or promise to get involved in platform updating (Future of Nlog, 2015).

The community's potential, which has developed around this blog platform, is unused, and the lack of proper involvement of the platform's creators in the development of the website may result in its closing in the near future. Currently, Nlog is maintained thanks to the support of Telewizja Kablowa Koszalin and is a relic of the past (A few words about nlog.org, b.d.). It is not updated according to the needs of the modern Internet and its users, and websites of a similar form can be viewed mainly in the Internet Archive today. However, it should be appreciated that Nlog is present in the network resources (although it does not bring profits to the owners), because it is an important part of the history of the Polish blogosphere.

Prawda.org

The domain of Prawda.org was registered in April 2000, which is not synonymous with the launch of the blog platform (data from <https://who.is>). At the beginning, at this address, blogged Jędrzej Kostecki called “the pioneer of the Polish blog movement” (Lipszyc 2002, p. 32), who then developed and in October 2000 made blogging script called yolog (Lubek, 2000) available

to web users. Thanks to that, other online journals started appearing on Prawda.org – mainly created by close and other friends of the creator of the platform. The blog platform had an ephemeral character and ceased to work after only a few years, as will be discussed later.

The discussed blog platform made it easier to run online logs, however, according to some users, not as much as Nlog. Kostecki did not care about making his platform publicly available, which is why operating the blog on Prawda.org platform was relatively complicated. One of the creators of Nlog mentions Prawda.org as a platform requiring MySQL database to be used as well as knowledge of the PHP programming language (Acknowledgements, 2002). However, in comparison to the independent creation of a blog from scratch – it was easier to use the script for blogging developed by the creator of Prawda.org, as well as the shared space on the server and the domain offered. Kostecki (2001) was convinced that the easier it is to set up blogs, the lower their level, so he did not intend to contribute to excessive popularisation of the blogosphere. About the Nlog platform, where the online journal operation was automated, he wrote that he does not find there any blog worth regular reading. He also expressed criticism about the blogs on his own platform:

“It hurts me that something as wonderful as ‘your’ personal diary, a page where you can write whatever you like, without excuses, without restrictions, in anonymity, that something like this is wasted in such a way. Yes, wasted. I browse, and rather not read, dozens of Polish blogs, from ‘prawda.org’ as well as from blog.pl/nlog.org and they are embarrassing, and most of them is virtually unreadable” (Kostecki, 2001).

Kostecki appealed to Internet users to use online journals with greater care – both for content and form.

In the discussions about the beginnings of blogging in Poland, there is the blog of Kostecki, *r.u.z.c. (the imminent collapse of Western civilization)*, mentioned as legendary, and *They do not know yet* blog, whose author was an Internet user with the pseudonym of Lubek, and the blog of Mikołaj Sznajder (pseudonym Kola) or Agata Lenczewska. Reflections on personal life are intertwined here with comments about music, books or films, but also work or school. Authors of Internet journals often shared links to their friends’ blogs and their online websites, and commented on what was happening on the web. Many bloggers publishing on Prawda.org knew each other personally, hence quite frequent in their blogs comments on the events in which they jointly participated and mutual links to entries about offline meetings. The specific real-virtual relations between bloggers of niche Prawda.org were the reason why this blogging environment was called sarcastically “a circle of mutual adoration” (tubrzoza, 2001).

Prawda.org platform has been described as the “Largest Polish blog server” (Godzic & Filiciak, 2001). It is difficult to verify this statement today because the blog lists presented on the homepage were incomplete. There were links to recent entries from several, but not all blogs on this platform. Undoubtedly, Prawda.org was quite well-known after several months of operation, which was caused by press publications in which blogs on this platform were mentioned. It is interesting that the previously discussed Nlog, although it was the first Polish blog platform, moreover easier to handle than Prawda.org, did not arouse interest of the media, and Prawda.org was mentioned in press publications relatively often. This was probably due to the colourful personalities of bloggers associated with Prawda.org, including Kostecki himself, who interpreted the activity of users who set up online journals in a platform that he made as real interest in (his) blogging (Lipszyc, 2002, p. 39). Journalists noticed the great influence of Prawda.org on the development of the blogosphere, and Latek (2001) even stated that Internet

users gathered around this platform started the fashion for blogging. On the other hand, Talko (2001) wrote about the elitism of *Prawda.org* and “plastic taste” of online journals in there. Among the topics taken up by bloggers on *Prawda.org*, Talko noticed mainly such matters as websites design and opinions about computer hardware. Meanwhile, the most popular blogs kept on this platform, most frequently mentioned by the Internet users, were online personal journals. The media image of *Prawda.org* is very positive and in the journalistic texts we can clearly see the positive attitude towards the bloggers’ activities related to this platform.

Kostecki closed his blog in 2001, then reopened it, but soon stopped publishing new content (Lipszyc, 2002, p. 38). Other blogs on *Prawda.org* existed for equally short time (some were closed, authors of others continued to operate under new domains). The data stored in the Internet Archive shows that at the end of 2003, this platform no longer worked. Currently, users entering <http://prawda.org> in the browser are directed to the Kostecki’s website <http://jedrek.tumblr.com>. Therefore, *Prawda.org* had an ephemeral character, and yet it significantly influenced the development of the Polish blogosphere and is today remembered as the space of integration of the bloggers’ avant-garde.

Blog.art.pl

Blog.art.pl platform was created in August 2001 and ceased operations in 2011. Its creator was Marcin Jagodziński using the pseudonym Ash. In an interview published in the book (Sowa, 2003), Jagodziński mentions two reasons for creating this platform. First, he closed his blog on *Blog.pl* before, but he wanted to return to blogging:

“[...] almost everyone who wrote a blog knows this feeling when you are just fed up for various reasons. It is an online equivalent of suicide (I myself deleted my blog for 5 times). But most often you quickly feel like writing again. On the other hand, it is a bit stupid: first you close the blog in front of everyone, and then in two or three days you add an entry as if nothing has happened. Therefore, I decided to find an excuse and moved the blog to my private account. I developed a simple system for adding entries and comments, and then I made it clear that my blog closing on *blog.pl* was rather a kind of moving, not a suicide ;-)” (Sowa, 2003, pp. 167–168).

Secondly, *Blog.pl* had technical problems, in connection with which Jagodziński could not read blogs there, and his blogger friends could not efficiently run their online journals. Therefore, Ash decided to adapt the software he used to new needs and offered his fellow bloggers the opportunity to run an online journal in the domain *blog.art.pl*. Jagodziński chose the address *blog.art.pl*, although he did not intend to create an internet space for artistic blogs. He used this domain because it was free and corresponded well with his conviction about the “creative nature of writing on blogs” (Jagodziński, 2006).

In spite of Jagodziński’s position quoted here, the possibility of running an online journal in the *blog.art.pl* domain was mainly interesting for people involved in net art; amateur literary works have also been published here. At the end of 2001, there were 23 entries on the list of blogs run on the discussed platform, among which probably the most attention of Internet users was drawn by a blog signed with the pseudonym *aalli*. It was published in a book form (aalli, 2002). The discussed blog platform has become the space for the development of online comics. *Blog.art.pl* was especially liked by female drawers, for example Raczyńska (Agatka) or Nałęcka, which was described in “Wysokie Obcasy” by Skirgajłło-Krajewska (2003). Other people who established their online journals here were, among others, curator of the online gallery *nnk.art.pl*

Zacharski and graphic artist Felczak (Belle). Also Jagodziński (Ash) had a blog on the platform he created. Some bloggers associated with Blog.art.pl knew each other from outside the web, which was reflected in the artistic initiatives, organised meetings and blog interactions.

Blog.art.pl was to satisfy mainly the needs of the creator and his friends, and this has significantly influenced the initial shape and further development of the platform. Jagodziński did not seek to get as many platform users as possible or to make it commercial. Olcoń-Kubicka (2006) called Blog.art.pl an intimate service. One could also describe this blog platform as author-oriented, because the dominant role of the creator manifested in its functioning, which makes Blog.art.pl similar to Prawda.org. However, it was a service that was more open to outsiders and easier to use.

Jagodziński closed Blog.art.pl in 2011, which he announced on Facebook, at the same time informing about the possibility of obtaining an archive of entries for individual blogs. He justified this with service costs and lack of purpose in maintaining a whole server for a dozen or so blogs, archaic nature and inability to transfer software, technical difficulties related to adapting the platform to current technical requirements. At the time of closing, the platform had several blogs. Some users offered financial support or offered other forms of involvement in maintaining the platform, but Jagodziński stressed that his decision to close Blog.art.pl is irrevocable (Jagodziński, 2011).

First non-commercial blog platforms in Poland and the development of the blogosphere

Network researcher, Klimowicz (2007), stated that “the most important transformation in the blogosphere resulted in the creation of the first free blogging systems”. The blog sites described above have contributed to the increased interest in blogging, but their impact on the development of the blogosphere should not be considered in quantitative terms. This function should be attributed to blog platforms such as Blog.pl, Blox.pl or Blog Onet.pl, connected with the explosion of popularity of online journals. However, the impact of the creation of the first Polish non-commercial blog platforms on the development of the blogosphere can be considered in such categories as: 1) removing the technological barrier preventing the active use of the web by people with no programming competences; 2) determination and consolidation of the blog’s structure; 3) emphasising the importance of blogging in the network of connections, which is associated with the validation of the term “blogosphere”; 4) development of the community of online journals’ authors; 5) development of fashion for blogging, which was expressed by the desire to be in the avant-garde environment of bloggers.

First of all, pioneer blog platforms removed the technological barrier which made it difficult for many people to actively use the web. In the 90s, creating own website (e.g. homepage, blog) required programming competences and investing some funds (buying space on the server, buying a domain). According to Pudełko (2011, p. 239), at that time the website had to be designed independently, which required knowledge of HTML, the ability to use FTP protocol to send content to the server and fluency in the jargon of web pioneers. Of course, to fully use the possibilities of the first blog platforms, users had to know this environment well, but technical facilities were so significant that they allowed people who lacked programming competences but wanted to share their thoughts online to feel comfortable in the blogosphere. The automated systems for blog support and posting were of decisive importance, although the very possibility of receiving server and domain space was highly valued, because it meant an opportunity to start blogging free of charge and check whether it would be interesting for a given user. In addition,

graphically talented people formed and shared templates to make blogs more visually appealing. Gradually, users of the web did not have to care for the technical aspects of the operation of the online journal, which allowed them to focus on creating content and unleashing the creative potential of many Internet users. As the online publishing tools were being automated, the web began to become transparent, that is, it stopped focusing on itself and became a means to achieve different goals (Transparent Technology, 2006; Halloran, 2001).

Secondly, the first blogging platforms contributed to the start of standardisation in the blogosphere, i.e. thanks to them, the structure of the blog was established and consolidated. Creators of blog platforms provided users with scripts automating the service of web journals, so Internet users received templates that had to be filled only with content, which significantly facilitated the start of blogging. Templates could then be altered by changing the graphics, adding different functions, but the antichronological layout of entries described with dates remained unchanged. The rule organising the content shared on the blog is time continuity, which dominates the thematic layout of entries typical for vortals or portals. Over time, other elements of the blog were determined, seen as typical for this communication tool, e.g. comments highlighting the interactive nature of blogging or giving titles to the entries and putting links in them. Before the creation of blog platforms, online journals were characterised by a large variety of forms, and therefore there are discussions to this day, which ones can be described as the first online journals, and which constitute a series of entries that are still outside the blog category. It should be added that the structure of a blog allows us to define an online diary in more general terms than literary, communication or psychological, and only limit to indicating what structure creates a blog (Sowa, 2003, p. 159). That is why today's users, looking at the website, say that it looks like a blog because it has a characteristic structure (antichronology, entries with a box for comments, separate section with entries and a menu with a list of recommended blogs, statistics, archives, etc.) (Blog is... blog, 2009).

Thirdly, the emergence of blog platforms highlighted the importance of the functioning of online journals in the network of connections and allowed thinking about blogs in the blogosphere category. It is difficult to refer to the period when online journals were created in a dispersion, before the emergence of integrating platforms. Although, of course, the authors of the first blogs, created in the second half of the 90s used hyperlinks, e.g. they provided links to their favourite websites, the importance of the network of connections between online journals has become noticeable in connection with the development of websites integrating blogging activity. As pointed out by Meinel and other authors (Meinel, Bross, Berger, & Henning, 2015, p. 221), links between blogs and individual entries build the structure of the blogosphere. This is about both hypertext links to other websites provided in the content of entries, as well as, for example, link-based blogrolls (lists of recommended blogs). Some researchers make a distinction between links placed in the blogroll and links used in blog entries, because the latter contribute to the development of discussions between bloggers, while links leading to favourite blogs or other links outside the entries do not build such interactions, at least not directly. On small blog platforms such as *Prawda.org*, links between blogs reflected the relationship between bloggers who knew each other personally, participated together in offline events, but also took part in online discussions. As the blogosphere grew in size, linking to other blogs and obtaining links to own online journal was used to build and show own position in the blogosphere (Zajac & Rakocy, 2007).

Fourthly, the functioning of blog platforms has contributed to the integration and development of the blogger community, which is inextricably linked to the issue already discussed. Jagodziński (Sowa, 2003, p. 167) stated that blog lists displayed on the main page of the blog platform combine

them into one archipelago, while without an integrating platform, online journals would be only separate islands. Undoubtedly, the interactions related to reading and commenting on entries were easier on blogs platforms than on dispersed blogs. Observations of the creator of Blog.art.pl show that in the first period of development of blog platforms, Internet users read mostly blogs available on the platform that they used themselves. This observation is confirmed by the first discussions in the blogosphere, in which bloggers express the fact of identifying themselves with the environment of users of their own platform, and they cut themselves off from the activity of users of other platforms, usually assessing it critically. Relations between bloggers at the beginning of the development of blog platforms were specific, because the blogosphere was used by relatively few people. Often the first users of a given blog platform were people who knew themselves from outside the web or who have previously communicated using other online tools, e.g. Usenet or IRC. Groups of people between which there were already some bonds moved into the blogosphere, which favoured building a community of bloggers, and the relations were of a real-online nature. Integration of participants in the blogosphere was also supported by the fact that people with similar programming competences gathered around blogging precursors, which encouraged learning from each other. Blog platforms were also associated with the functioning of communities supporting users in the event of problems with using the platforms or doubts regarding the rules of moving in a new environment. Interestingly, relations between bloggers who set up their online journals using the first blog platforms survived, despite the fact that many of them gave up blogging for activities in other Internet spaces, and their online friendships sometimes did not go beyond web (Nowakowska, 2014).

Fifthly, the impact of the first Polish blog platforms on the development of the blogosphere can also be seen through the prism of development of fashion for blogging. In the period analysed in this paper, i.e. in the years 2000–2001, blogging was not yet a popular activity, but was rather elite. Platforms such as Nlog.org, Prawda.org or Blog.art.pl attracted users who desired to be in the narrow group of blogging pioneers. Creators of the first blogs and bloggers associated with them had an exceptional status of (micro)stars on the web. More and more people wanted to follow the path of bloggers, and on the web we can find a lot of discussions in which Internet users argue about who started the blog first, or who remembers more from the initial period of development of blog platforms. Creation of Blog.pl platform, which democratised blogging, was perceived on the web in two ways. People who wanted to appear in the blogosphere, and who perceived Prawda.org and other precursory blog platforms as spaces for experts, were happy to see a new space available to everyone. Meanwhile, the pioneers of the blogosphere reluctantly observed the exploding popularity of blogging among the masses. Blogging changed from a niche activity to a hobby of Internet users, which resulted in migration typical of the Internet: when the blogosphere was flooded by the masses, *early adopters* were already moving in a new direction (Rogers, 2002; Juza, 2006).

Conclusions

The first Polish non-commercial blog platforms, i.e. Nlog, Prawda.org and Blog.art.pl, were created with a similar intention of creators to develop an independent space for their own blogging activities and facilitate blogging for close and distant friends who did not have programming competences allowing them to create website. The platforms were niche and intimate, and it was supposed to remain so because expansion was not the goal of their founders. The specific feature of the communities around these platforms was the real-online nature of contacts, because the bloggers who wrote here often knew each other outside the web. Especially in the case of Prawda.org and Blog.art.pl platforms, the dominant role of their founders is noteworthy. These

platforms can be called author-oriented, due to the strong position of the creators who built the mentioned platforms, developed them and at some point announced that they close their operation, regardless of the opinions of users. *Prawda.org* had an ephemeral character, but the colourful personalities of bloggers associated with this platform meant that today in the memories of the beginnings of the development of the blogosphere in Poland this platform is described as legendary, which is evidenced not only by comments of Internet users, but also journalistic articles. *Blog.art.pl* also has a special place in the history of the Polish blog – the space of activities of net art creators (despite the fact that the founder was guided by a slightly different idea). The first Polish blog site, *Nlog*, exists to this day, however, it fell into oblivion, as evidenced by the fact that its role is often overlooked, and it even mistakenly lists other platforms as the first Polish blog sites (e.g. Matuzik, 2004).

Although the first non-commercial blog platforms gathered a relatively small number of users, their importance should be noted and appreciated. The process of overcoming the technological barrier started here, and putting aside technical aspects related to the creation and operation of the platform gave internet users who lack programming competence the opportunity to express themselves in the hypertext space. It should be remembered, however, that the first blogging platforms required users to have certain technological skills. The process of increasing the intuitiveness of using online publishing tools led to the fact that today the availability of technologies facilitating online publishing is mentioned as a source of blogs' attractiveness (Siuda & Aftańska, 2018, p. 131). After 2001, mainly due to the success of *Blog.pl*, many blog platforms (*eBlog.pl*, *Blogs*, *Ownlog* and others) were created for commercial purposes and addressed to a wide group of network users, while the size of resources did not correlate with their quality. They were characterised by a large number of non-updated blogs or even instantly abandoned accounts. The blogosphere was becoming more and more fragmented, and in 2004, the period of domination of large blog platforms (e.g. *Blog Onet.pl*, *Blox.pl*) and online journals, found their place in the media mainstream.

The growing popularity of blogs has contributed to the development of the blogosphere's professionalisation. Blogging started to be considered a new profession, which was possible due to the fact that bloggers were noticed by advertisers and publishers. The development of social networking sites, especially Facebook, has become the cause of further evolution of the blogosphere (Facebook was created in 2004 and its Polish version was launched in 2008). Due to the fact that social networking sites took over functions such as transmitting short entries, maintaining contact with friends or conducting discussions, blogs started to publish more extensive posts (Maryl, 2013, p. 90). The closing of the popular *Blog.pl* platform at the beginning of 2018 is a significant symptom of a decreasing interest in blogging due to the popularity of Facebook or Instagram and the constant development of new social applications, such as Snapchat.

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