THE 11TH EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES

Educating Integral Innovators in a European Academic Network

New Horizons for Innovation in European Higher Education Institutions

Gabriela Marchis[1]

Abstract: In today's European society, the first signs of economic recovery is facing difficulties in recruiting *qualified staff* with *a high level of skills* that *can adapt quickly* to changes that appear, in order to meet our European ambitions: to create a ***Union of Innovation***. The transition to a *green*, *smart* and *innovative* economy, in line with the objectives of "Europe 2020" strategy can only be achieved by ***decisive actions*** oriented to labor factor development. Thus, one of the vectors of labor reconstruction starts from the principle of "*lifelong learning*" and envisages the **validation** of *non-formal and informal education*, the **orientation** towards *learning outcomes* and last but not the least, it aims to **integrate** *learning* and *career guidance* systems. This paper intends to guide and inspire those people that have the *responsibility for management and coordination of HEIs*, as well as those engaged in academic activities like *professors*, *students*, *alumni* or other *stakeholders*, by searching the answers to a simple question: ***What global society needs and/or desire from HEIs***?

Keywords: quality assurance; life-long learning; education; ITC; competences

1. Introduction

Education, this "universal art to teach everyone everything" (Comenius, 1970) is not a very easy task in this dynamic millennium, characterized by *globalization*, *innovation* and *transfer of technology*.

Within the European Union, the balance between *socio-economic cohesion* and *global competitiveness* can only be achieved by shifting European societies towards **development** based on ***knowledge***, ***research*** and ***innovation***, which requires that higher education institutions (HEIs), through their *educational offer*, be ready to respond to the society's needs.

In this context, it is increasingly clear that HEIs must diversify their *manner of providing education*, focus on *digital learning* and stimulate student participation in projects of *international cooperation*. Through this approach, **students**, along with *qualifications*, will acquire, in the academic environment, the *experience* to activate and face the competition on the global market. This dynamic of academia includes, naturally, in a globalized world, new directions concerning the development of *cross-border* and *transnational* higher education.

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These transformations that shape the evolution of the academic universe, give a new dimension to the **professor**'s role in this system. Withal, in this process of reform and adaptation to globalization, the professor's role is dictated by *the role in the society of the HEI* they are representing.

Moreover, in the context of harmonization of European educational system, enhance of **quality assurance** both on *institutional* level and on the level of the *study programme* is mandatory for a *forward-looking* and an *open-mind society*.

Finally, this work intends to be *informative* and *inspirational* for those involved in designing the development process of Romanian higher education system in accordance with the European tendencies in this field.

2. What Global Society Needs and/or Desire from HEIS?

From the very beginning, the universities have played a major role in community development, but lately, their role has definitely changed, from higher education institutions specializing in the *creation and transfer of knowledge*, into institutions whose strategic plan aims at *catalyzing all stakeholders in development process of the community*, bringing together various forms of knowledge and dissemination of knowledge models locally. The position of universities in local development process is influenced back and forth by *microeconomic* (companies, local legislation, the state of our local community, etc.) and *macroeconomic* (government policies, the national legislation, international agreements, etc.), along with the *environment* in which these factors are manifested.

When aiming to improve the socio-economic development level of a community, it is imperative to create a framework for collaboration on several levels between the *university* (as an institution promoting knowledge), *business* and *government authorities*. (Davidson & Lockwood, 2008).

By their specific work, HEIs are **key-players** in local economic development, playing the role of *a network node* in this global production system focused on innovation. (Chaminade & Vang-Lauridsen, 2008)

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that universities are operating in a socio-economic context defined at national level, being legislative "fenced off" to respond primarily to national development model. (Kwiek, 2008) Therefore, the pace of adjustment of universities to global market demand is often dictated by the pace of development of the society they come from. The challenge for HEIs is ***to prepare after national "patterns" labor force for the international market***.

In this context, a new question emerges.

2.1. Are Traditional Academic Universities Ready to Cope With The Challenges That Are Generated By *Globalisation* and *Internationalisation* and Accelerated by *Global Economic And Financial Crisis*?

In Europe there are "almost 4000 higher education institutions in Europe, of all shapes and sizes, from new universities of technology and arts colleges to ancient seats of learning and research; from metropolitan universities to small institutions in far-flung parts catering for specific local needs." (European Commission, 2013).

The diversity of educational, linguistic and socio-cultural traditions that characterizes the EU-28 society, combined with the multitude aspirations and expectations generated by the need to adapt to

international competition resulting from globalization, determines the University, on a general level, to assume *multiple purposes*. (Figure 1.)

Figure 1. The role of HEIs in contemporary society

Hence, education and training systems must provide an appropriate range of *knowledge*, *skills* and *competences*, necessary for European citizens to succeed in the labor market.

The wave of globalization has extended the forms of cooperation among universities, thus the transition from *collaborations between universities from the same state*, to the *transnational*, *cross-border*, and *interregional cooperation* was done fairly quickly and has generated redefinitions in how to address the direction of concentrating efforts in order to promote the development of the society as a whole.

Therefore, *building mutual trust* among HEIs is essential and European higher education systems must operate in a more transparent manner in order to demonstrate the ***quality of the educational services*** that they provide.

2.2. Is There a Proper Manner to Define Quality Assurance Among Heis?

One of the most remarkable tendencies in European HEIs evolution is to *enhance the quality* of their programmes and qualifications, in order to attract more students.

Being a cultural phenomenon and thus contextual, the concept of quality assurance among HEIs has not standardized definition. Nevertheless, a set of criteria that reflects common-sense aspects of quality in education, are spread among European HEIs (Bollaert, 2014):

- quality as *excellence* – exceeding high standards (Nadea Comaneci);
- quality as *perfection* – doing things right, from the beginning;
- quality as *fitness for purpose* – meeting the mission statement and strategy of the institutions;
- quality as *value for money* – high standard specification at reduced costs;

- quality as *transformation* – the student is not regards as a customer or a number for statistical purposes, but an active participant in the educational and learning processes.

Confidence in the performance of HEI can be built and strengthen over time if there is implemented *a system of quality assurance* that provides information regarding *learning and teaching* activities to all "stakeholders", both those within the institution (students, teachers, staff-support) and the external ones (employers, employees, partners). In this respect, since 2005, **a set of standards and guidelines for quality assurance** has been established at European level, and it was valid for the entire European Higher Education Area. In 2015, this set of standards was revised and the current edition (*ESG 2015*) is based on the following *principles* (ENQA; ESU; EUA; EURASHE, 2015):

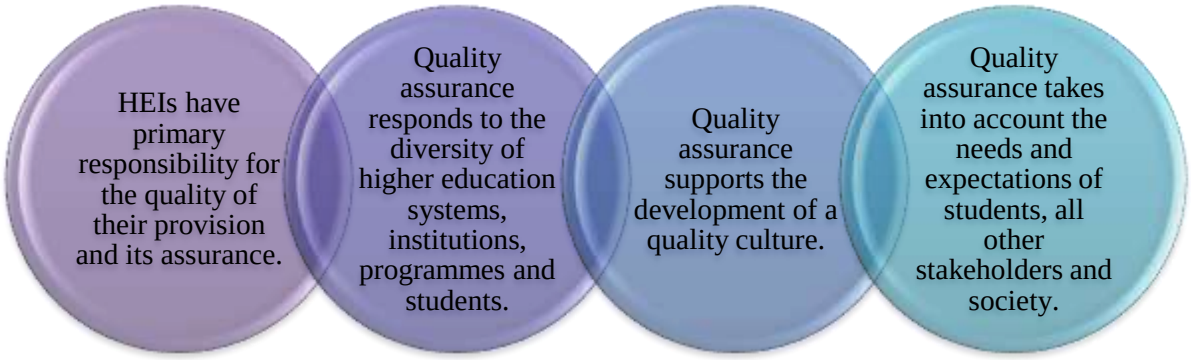

Figure 2. Principles of quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

As a conclusion remark, the most well-known ***proofs of progress among traditional academic universities*** in the field of *quality assurance*, refers to "formulating minimum [of] competences and striving towards creating the most added value between input and output through the process of teaching and learning". (Bollaert, 2014)

2.3. Is There a Right Profile of Experience and Expertise for Nowadays Professors?

The main actors of education, responsible for the success of this ambitious endeavor of transforming European society, are the professors. But, the high quality academic staff is build up over time, following a **complex process** of *initial* and *continuing professional development* at the highest possible level, both in *specific fields* and in *didactics*, *pedagogy* and *methodology*. The mismatch between these two dimensions, generates either ***researchers*** or ***trainers***.

Current guidelines of "open education", which consists mainly in offering courses globally via the web for all those interested (e.g.: Massive Open Online Courses – the MOOC model), has an important influence on the international prestige of HEIs. In these circumstances, the efforts of teaching staff involved in this kind of open-courses, should be rewarded in an adequate way, and legislation should be updated in order to protect the copyrights. On the other hand, providing open educational resources entails **the need to develop digital skills among teachers**. Therefore, nowadays professors should follow the *digital pedagogy courses*, in order to learn about new methods of *digital-assisted teaching*.

Withal, specific for academic didactics is the *heterogeneity of students*, both in terms of age and level of preparedness, some coming directly from high-school, while others being considered elite in a

particular field of study. The challenges for university teaching derived from this context, that professors has to face, refers primarily to adapting the teaching so that it can respond closely to the needs of each student. ***Student-centered education*** requires more *customization* and a close relationship between *formal* and *informal learning*, digital assisted learning providing optimal solutions for the ongoing educational process.

Consequently, innovation in pedagogical approach would materialize in:

- *personalized learning activities* (whereby students learn in ways relevant to their own training, experience and area of interest);
- *individualized learning activities* (through which teachers adapt their teaching to individual students' ability and their training needs, and facilitates educational activities at their own pace);
- *collaborative learning activities*, which facilitates acceptance and integration of all students in the community (teamwork), regardless of age, gender, socio-economic environment, ethnicity or disability.

Figure 3. Innovative pedagogical approaches.

Professor's mission in this context translates into providing a good *quality education* in an *inclusive environment*.

Developing a favorable environment within HEIs, that enables the achievement of an *individual development* (through the accumulation of knowledge and useful skills for both social and professional integration and also for cultural life in the community) as well as the provision of opportunities and conditions for *lifelong learning* at different levels of education can be achieved either by appealing to technology and the multiple (re)sources of information, and by applying the traditional method of 'learning by doing'. In this context, professors can provide ***high quality educational services*** through their *continuous training* and *permanent adjustment* to new skills requirements generated by the evolution of the European society.

3. Final Remarks

The 'ESG 2015' provides some benchmarks of quality assurance in the European Union universities in terms of learning and teaching at communitarian, national and institutional levels, the ultimate goal being that of getting recognized the qualifications in the European area by removing the barriers caused by the diversity of educational systems and also by educational traditions that are characterizing the EU28. Under the aegis of the European dictum 'unity in diversity', it is necessary that the entire higher education system of the European Union permanently redefine itself under the auspices of the **common framework** that allows to enhance quality assurance in the European HEIs.

Consequently, the current concerns of universities should *focus*, in a *balanced* manner, on the following issues:

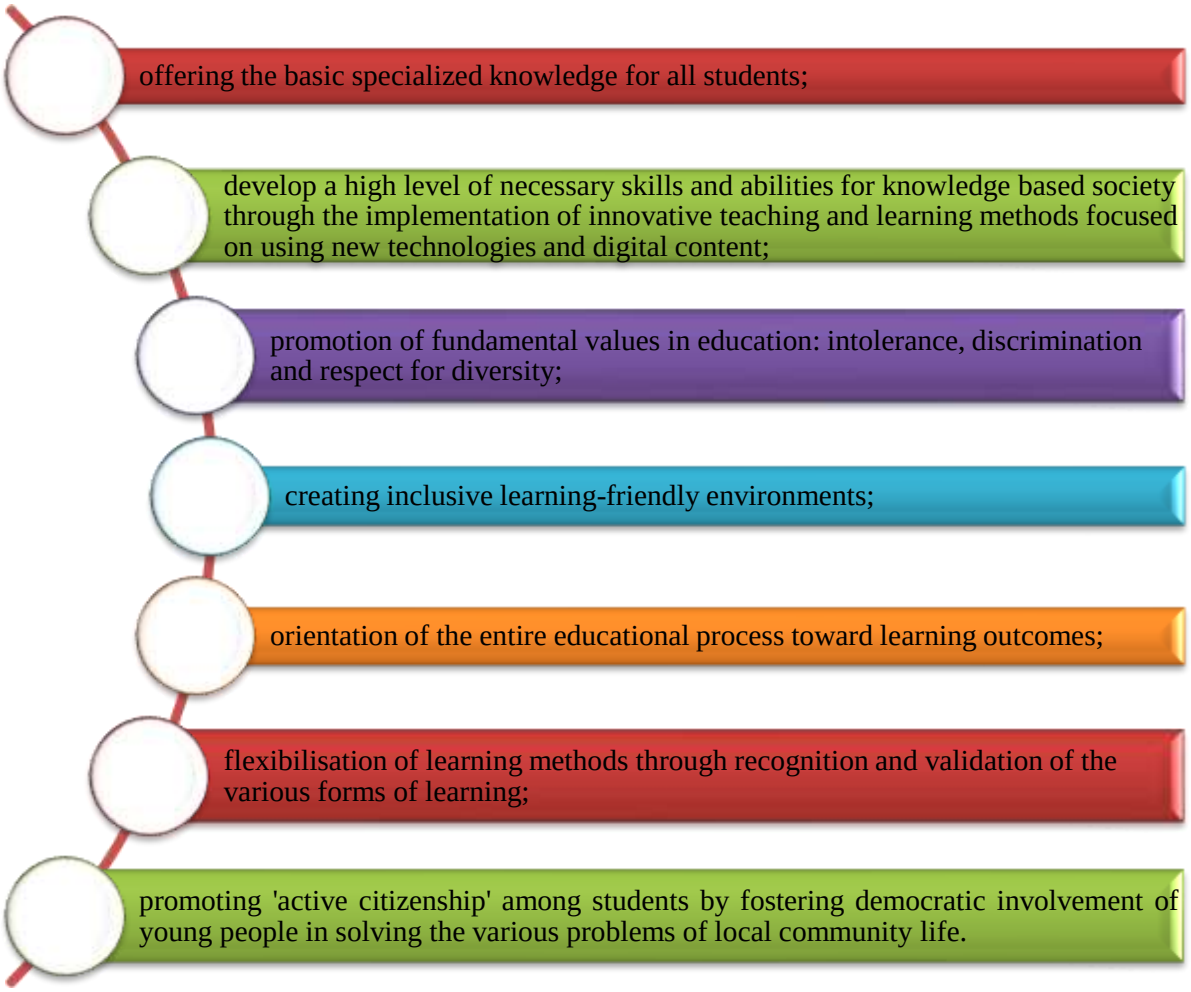

Figure 4. Orientations of HEIs, as a need to revise nowadays society

Undoubtedly, modernization of European society can only occur by **investing in education**. The European higher education institutions (HEIs) require professionals and, in order to attract and retain the high quality academic staff, which European society needs so much, the University should focus its attention on *recognizing and rewarding* **excellence in teaching and research**.

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Digital Media – a University Specialization Imposed by the New Communicational Realities

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Abstract: In 2015 the Department of Journalism / FSPAC / Babes Bolyai proposed the introducing of the Digital Media specialization in the Classification of Occupations in Romania (COR), in total agreement with the European Qualifications Framework. The specialization was nationally certified in line with the provisions of the European university education. The Digital Media specialist qualification was imposed as academic preparation necessary to correlate with the actual communicative environment.

Keywords: digital media; university specialization; new communicational realities

1. Introduction

In 2015, Babes-Bolyai University, through the Department of Journalism FSPAC, proposed introducing a specialization in Digital Media in the National Framework of Qualifications in the Romanian Higher Education in total agreement with the European Qualifications Framework. The specialization has been certified nationally in agreement with the European provisions in the field of higher education. The qualification of Digital Media specialist was imposed as a necessity in order to correlate academic background with the current specifics of communicational environment in the labor market. Developing Bachelor performance would generate a real contribution to the local, regional and national development from a social, economic, cultural, and political point of view, by involving in reality, according to community needs. Compatibilization with European programs aimed at aligning to the latest directions at a European and global level – this being the first program of this kind in Romania. The number of new programs in this communicational sphere has increased in recent years (Link University, Rome, Leuphana / Hamburg University, Luneburg, Cardinal Herrera University, Valencia, University of Stirling, Scotland, Dublin Business School), due to the growing demand for specialists in communication and media production adapted to the digital / Web environment.

2. Labor Market Needs

The conclusions of the DESI reports (Digital Society and Economy Index)[2] and "Cloud computing for business yet to go mainstream in the EU" published by the European Commission, respectively EUROSTAT in 2016, show that Romania occupies the last position in the ranking of European Union

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[2] http://ittrends.ro/2016/03/sigur-ca-avem-nevoie-de-alfabetizare-digitala/.

countries, although we are praised for having made progress and we are included in the peloton of Catching-Up countries, with growth above the European average.

Romania's digital value registers an overall score of 0.35 and it ranks #28 of the 28 EU Member States. Looking at the 5 Directorates analyzed by DESI, we can identify Romania's position in relation to the average of the countries from the Catching-Up cluster and to the EU average: *Connectivity* – with a score of 0.5 (position 23 on the EU whole) is approximately equal to that of the cluster average (0.51), but it is still below the EU average (0.6). Human capital / digital skills – only 52% of Romanians regularly access the Internet, compared to an average of 76% in the EU. Almost a third of Romanians have never opened an Internet browser, thus being last in the EU ranking, with only 26% of digital skills. From the perspective of labor, we are not in a better situation either, for only 46% of the working population possesses digital skills, which can represent a barrier in the economic development of the country.

Regarding IT specialists, we stand at #21 among EU countries, with only 2.7% IT-ists from the total labor market. STEM graduates (Science, Technology and Mathematics) are slightly better positioned because, with a Romanian population of 1.7% aged between 20 and 29 years, we are ranked #15 among EU countries. According to DESI, 67% of Romanians read the news online, 46% listen to music or watch movies online, 36% download movies online, and 42% communicate on the Internet. The best positioning is recorded in using social networks, where for a sector of the population between 16 and 74 (?!) we are on the 3rd place in the EU, with an index of 78% compared to the European average of 63%.

But although we like to waste much time in social media, 9.6% of us regularly use online banking and 18% buy from the Internet, which disqualifies us again and takes us down to positions 27 and 28 in the EU. The integration of digital technologies is another DESI way of evaluating which does not favor us. The average of 0.2 brings us again in the last position, far from the EU average (0.36) and from the average of the cluster countries (0.31).

In the case of public digital services, the average of our index value is of 0.33 and we stand in 27th place, far from an average value of 0.55 in the EU. The adoption of online technologies in public services is the main source of cuts in public spending. We recorded rates of 8% for the number of eGovernment service users, the index of 5.5 (in a ranking from 0 to 100) and 54 (from the margin of 0-100) for use online forms. We have a surprise here, and not for positioning, but for using as a metric factor of openness to Open Data. Here we are awarded a score of 435, well above the EU average of 351, and in real progress compared to last year (score 270), which propels us to an unexpected 9th place in the European rankings.

3. What Does the Digital Media Specialist Look Like in Employers' Conception?

Because this area is very diverse and constantly changing, there are notable differences influenced by many factors: type of company (agency or client), type of job (entry-level, middle-level or senior), company size and capital, type of project. We can talk, however, of a basic set of skills that is found in all employment ads and which is applicable or transferable in various situations:

Copywriting skills – an employee in social media, even if they are just getting started (especially if they already have relevant experience) should know how to write. And not anyway, but adapted to the profile and to the public of the company, to the organizational culture and, of course, to the promoted product / service.

Mix between creativity and analysis – despite the general opinion that Social Media is only a bohemian and creative environment, Social Media means numbers, statistics and reports too. You have to master several tools which are useful in order to measure the impact of your bohemian and creative messages and to improve your results and future campaigns.

Basic knowledge of Photoshop – you cannot always work with someone specialized in design e.g. for the visual of an Ad for the Facebook page, so it is better to know some of the basic functions of Adobe Creative Suite – Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, etc.

Good understanding of social platforms – this requirement is always in first place and is justified by the fact that social media platforms represent the specific working environment. It is imperative to know what Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Instagram and the rest of platforms in vogue mean. Furthermore, it isn't necessary to know how each interface looks, but only what type of promoting messages are catchier on each of them and who their public is.

Understanding consumer behavior – requires knowledge about the kind of target audience the company has. It is a useful thing to study the behavior of this target audience in detail, both in statistics and in practice.

Tracking the changing algorithm of social networks – this means a daily update on the existing information on the previous day. Social Media is a dynamic environment, where rules are created only to be broken by those who think out of the box and who come up with daring proposals and engagement generating ideas.

4. Jobs and Responsibilities in Social Media

Jobs in Social Media are sought especially by young people, who find these career opportunities attractive for several reasons. One of them is that these jobs are cool. This gives a certain status and is controlled by instruments of the new technologies. This brings us to the second reason, namely the interest of Generation Y (people born after 1990) in everything related to tech, gadgets, applications, platforms and social networks. Another relevant reason would be the possibility of establishing a flexible schedule, which enables working from home on their own laptop / tablet connected to the Internet.

A search on the major portals by the "Social Media" keyword brought more than 400 results, a number that is growing. Why? Because all companies, large or small, from various industries, are moving online and they need people to help them communicate through all tools and social networks. Moreover, it must be taken into account that many jobs in other departments include specific Social Media tasks, so learning this set of tasks can help on several levels.

Search by the "Social Media" keyword takes you to a variety of career opportunities in various fields and in various companies. The top of the most common positions in job ads is: Social Media Manager, Social Media Specialist, Online Manager, Head of Digital, Content Manager, Community Manager, Online PR Consultant, Web Copywriter, Social Media Director, and Social Media Analyst.

Social account management – this involves content monitoring and developing for company or brand sites on social networks like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Pinterest, etc. This is, without exception, the main task of a job in Social Media. An employee in Social Media must constantly meet the process of monitoring, must know their target audience, must evaluate how communication takes place between the company and its client / partner / sponsor. It is best only one

person to handle all accounts for there to be unity in terms of content, addressing or regularity in posting messages.

Posting and reviewing content – after carefully and accurately establishing your target audience, it's time to give green light to communication. And because you know in detail your "interlocutor", messages will necessarily be custom tailored to the company's profile and to the user, of course. You will have to adjust the same message to each of the social networks in part, depending on their needs and on what the user expects to find there (images, videos, smaller-or-larger-sized texts, etc.).

Monitoring the brand and competition – A useful tool for this process is Facebrands.ro - Romanian brands on Facebook, which allows the registration of your Facebook page managed in the system and gives you charts and detailed insights about Facebook pages nationwide. The most important thing is to know at any time how you position yourself in the market. And, of course, to know your company and your products. In order to define a target audience and to be able to edit personalized messages, a specialist in social media needs to know everything about the promoted products / services. Competition also plays an important role in employee's responsibilities in Social Media – you should report yourself correctly to the competition and you should improve your communication quality depending not only on trends, but also on what those in the same field as you do.

Conducting and monitoring campaigns – here you need knowledge of Facebook Insights – Tool Monitoring audience provided by Facebook, Facebook Ads Manager – which allows you to perform and monitor ads in which you invest from your Facebook page and Google Analytics – the most complex tool of tracking traffic on your website. Promotion campaigns can be so complex and diverse that, without some precise measurement tools, you could never know their real impact. Monitoring a campaign already takes place beginning with its planning time and ends along with it. It is followed by producing an evaluating material, which necessarily results in a list of key information on which you are going to build the next campaign. This dynamic environment is learned and mastered only through practice and only from mistakes, so do not be afraid to experiment.

Conversion management – for example HootSuite is a complex tool that can help in this direction – it provides a set of results for all the pages which are managed in the same place. Reports, data about the target audience, results – they are all centralized and secured on a single platform. Communication with the public requires a mandatory feedback. After all, this is the main benefit of online environment – the speed with which information circulates. The public can be made loyal if somebody answers and demonstrates that behind the keyboard there is not a soft or a robot, but a person with whom they can identify. Another very useful platform is Zelist Monitor, which monitors blogs, sites of the most popular social networks in Romania, online publications and forums in order to keep up with the main discussions in the online environment of the field of interest.

In terms of the time spent in the office by an employee in Social Media, things are as good as possible. 59% of the time is spent daily in the office by a person with responsibilities related to Social Media. This is influenced by the fact that many of the activities can be performed from the comfort of their own home, in front of a laptop with good Internet connection.

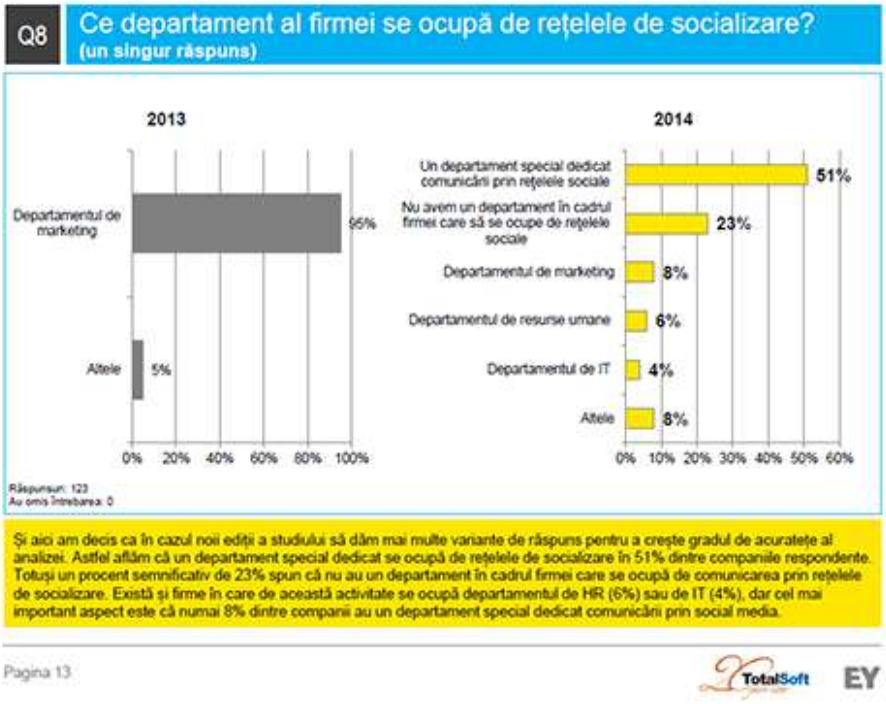
5. Which Companies in Romania Offer Jobs in Social Media?

Because it came to companies, this aspect must be also explained in details: which are the companies that offer jobs in social media? Basically, any company that makes its presence felt in the online environment and which chooses to promote itself using the tools provided by this environment.

Mainly in companies from fields like FMCG, Banking, E-Commerce and Telecom that invest heavily in promoting and in increasing awareness. Here, we can also add the digital firms. Jobs in Social Media are frequently opened in media or advertising agencies, which constantly need creative people to promote their products and services and to bring customers to them.

Another benefit in this field is that it lets you offer your services as a freelancer in Social Media. Of course, this is possible only after you have accumulated the necessary experience, after you have developed a portfolio full of successful campaigns, and after you have received some valuable recommendations. As a freelancer, projects get to you in most of these cases by the above mentioned recommendations, which come from the customers you have previously worked for and who you offered some good results.

Over 70% of the jobs are in Bucharest, followed by cities such as Iasi and Cluj. An interesting aspect is highlighted by dividing according to the number of employees of a company that offers social media jobs: almost half of all jobs of specialists in Social Media are provided by small businesses with up to 10 employees. On the other hand, multinational companies with over 1,000 employees have a rate of 9% of all jobs of specialists in Social Media in Romania.



*The Social Media the Romanian Business environment study made by EY Romania[1]

6. How Did the Department of Journalism FSPAC Come to Meet The Need?

In the context of increasing demand for specialists in creation / design / communication in the digital environment, the Bachelor specialization in *Digital Media* in the field of Communication Sciences offers initial training at university level for online media editors, publishers, multimedia, managers of content in the online environment, internet researchers, audio-video producers, audio-video editors,

[1]http://www.hipo.ro/locuri-de-munca/vizualizareArticol/1579/Job-uri+si+Salarii+in+Social+Media+-+Tot+ce+trebuie+sa+stii+daca+vrei+o+cariera+in+domeniu.

video-journalists, web-page designers, graphic designers of interactive elements, account social media managers, online media monitoring specialists, online digital media consultants. The courses offered by the program aim to prepare graduates for new occupations, previously covered by other programs of study at undergraduate level in the field of Communication Sciences.

The program of study / specialization in *Digital Media* within FSPAC is based on the correlation between the learning results and the academic qualifications. The following subjects were proposed for study:

1st semester: editing techniques in Digital Media, introduction to media studies, media and popular culture, visual culture, editorial design, editing in specialized languages, genres and formats in digital environment.

2nd semester: digital platform, audio-video montage, photo editing, radio journalism, TV journalism, photojournalism for digital.

3rd semester: automatic data collecting, graphic design and interfaces, content management systems, online marketing, new media theory, socio-dynamic communication.

4th semester: communication on mobile devices, data journalism, multimedia, European media legislation, media psychology.

5th semester: entrepreneurship in Digital Media, online communication, media ethics and deontology, alternative media, European journalism, interactive narratives, research methods in digital media.

6th semester: media analysis, animation and visual effects, crowdfunding and crowdsourcing, film criticism, musical illustration, online PR.

The expertise grid has been developed to meet the specificity of posts which require specialist skills in Digital Media. Thus, graduates of this program are able to use fundamental concepts specific to Digital Media by acquiring specific knowledge and skills which enable them to work efficiently in the digital communication space.

In the research activities of the *Digital Media* program, the target is to stimulate the development of multimedia innovative interactive products for the Web by investigating the success of the formats proposed by media producers in the global market, by checking the institutional context, their structure, the technical specifics of production, the promoting methods and the consumer reactions.

7. What About the Negative Effects of Digital Media?

Recent studies demonstrate more and more obviously the occurrence of adverse effects – such as addiction to media – at the moment of excessive use of online media tools.

Dependence on online media is registered in the collection of types of chemical or behavioral addiction. Among the behavioral manifestations the following are registered: restlessness, sadness, lack of sleep and concentration, mood disorder due to banal conversations. One can get very easily to feelings of emptiness and anxiety, tiredness, irritability, and decreased interest in formerly enjoyable activities, such as sex or meeting with friends. In the long term, all these lead to social isolation and even depression.

Among other negative effects impaired human brain damage is also part of this. “And what the Internet seems to do is to end up in pieces my ability of concentration and contemplation. Whether I

am online or not, my mind now expects to receive information as the Internet distributes it: in a rapid stream of particles. Once I used to be a diver in the sea of words. Now I'm floating on the surface as if I was riding a Jet Ski." (Carr, 2011)

Gigi Vorgan along with Gary Small, professor of Psychiatry at UCLA and director of the Memory and Aging Centre of the University, studied the physiological and neurological effects of the Digital Media use, noting that the Internet causes massive changes in the brain: "The current explosion of digital technology does not only change our way of life and communication, but it also quickly and profoundly alter our brain" ... "it stimulates brain cell alteration and the release of neurotransmitters, gradually strengthening new neural pathways in our brains, while weakening the old ones". (Ibrain, 2009)

Another negative aspect is linked to security in the online environment. The risk of exposure in the online environment is high and uncontrollable. Data security can only be done by raising awareness about the reality of these risks.

In this confrontation, the solution proposed by academic specialization is to inform about the risks and educate in order to use organically, rationally, and consciously the opportunities offered by the whole Digital Media system.

8. Let Us Not Forget the Positive Effects

Good news is that the Internet stimulates brain functions. More and more researchers argue that users of digital technology are characterized by a more developed thinking. Contemplation helps us to combat stress and to be more connected with the people around us. Access to information and to lines of communication brings us great benefits.

However, accessibility and practicality are issues for people with disabilities. Bridging the digital divide can help members of disadvantaged social groups to participate on an equal footing in the digital society (including services of direct interest to them such as eLearning, eGovernment, eHealth) and to find a solution for the situation they are in by increasing the chances of getting a job.

Using digital space to its full potential would generate *a clear increase of* the local, national and international *productivity and competitiveness*. Digital competence is one of the eight key competences which are essential to any person in a knowledge-based society.

Digital advocacy involves using digital technology to contact, inform and mobilize a group of people interested in a particular issue or cause. The purpose of digital advocacy is to animate supporters to get involved and act in order to solve problems. Some of the most used digital advocacy tools are: websites, blogs, Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, emails. It integrates the online efforts with offline communication efforts (printed materials, PR, media relations) in order to increase the success of messages.

These are just some of the positive aspects through which the *Digital Media* program justified its content. At European level, there were proposed investments in the digital environment through European programs. For example Pillar 6 – Improving digital skills[1] through a series of actions. Skill development and digital literacy was proposed through action 57 as a priority in the European Social Fund Regulation. Lack of digital skills and lack of confidence in new technologies led to non-

[1] http://digitalagenda.ro/cadru-de-actiune/pilon-6-imbunatatirea-competentelor-digitale/.

participation to the possibilities offered by modern society (30% of the EU population has never used the Internet). Through action 58, a framework was developed for recognizing the ICT skills on the lack of skilled ICT practitioners and of skill assessment tools. Action 59 has contributed to the introduction of skills and digital literacy through the "New skills for new jobs" program due to the permanent changes in the labor market.

Action 60 aimed to promote a more meaningful participation of young women and of those returning to work in the ICT sector. Women are underrepresented in ICT. Women are underrepresented at all levels in ICT, especially in decision-making. Action 62 referred to the proposal of certain EU-scale indicators on digital literacy and media education in order to prevent the danger of digital illiteracy.

9. Journalism and Media Communication in the Digital Age

Internet and its derived services, along with the huge wave of gadgets, computers and technology in the last centuries have become a threat to traditional media. Whether it's about written press, radio or television, they were forced to adapt to new traversing, to alter the content in accordance with them and to rethink the business model so that it becomes relevant in this new environment. "Any new technology is a biological and evolutionary mutation which opens humanity new ways of perception and new spheres of action." (McLuhan, 2011)

New technologies are changing the way we interact with each other and create platforms which impose another habit of media consumption. The tendencies in extending the usefulness of mobile devices in the media market has put on quality journalism a real pressure because journalism involves not only content, but also design, usability and experience.

More and more people use the computer to watch TV, read news, and listen to the radio. Thus we can say that the audience is not lost; it is only migrating to online. Several studies[1] conducted by Tănase Tasenţe and Nicoleta Ciacu demonstrate that the visibility / audience of the classic media, interacting with the audience through The Social Media, has increased significantly in 2011 compared to 2010.

A revolutionary element was recorded when the public could upload on the Facebook wall of any media video recordings made by themselves, comments, documents, informative images. Thus, the new media have quick access to events to which the reporters themselves could not have reach for reasons of distance or time. This practice is found all over the world, nowadays being encouraged the so-called current of "citizen journalism", in which ordinary people can experience the profession of a journalist.

This technological accessibility generated a network-society (Castells, 2010) once foreseen by Alvin Toffler as the society of the third wave, the informational society. If the printing revolution individualized human existence, and released it from tribalism by generating great changes in the paradigms of thinking, electronic media, through rapidity it brings tribalism back into society globally (global village).

As a result of the emergence of new media, there have also emerged research interests on what the use of these communication systems implies. The right approach was the interdisciplinary one: social and human sciences met the information and technology field. Its areas of interest included electronic

[1] The studies that show these trends were conducted by two PhD students in Communication Sciences, Tanase Tasente and Nicoleta Ciacu. It is entitled "Interferences between New Media and Old Media. The Role of The Social Media in promoting written press" and it was published in "Communication and Marketing Magazine".

literature, the study of the Internet, the interaction between man and computer, communication protocols in networks, techniques of data mining, data visualization, the study of games, the study of geographic information systems (GIS) and others.

"NEW MEDIA represents the convergence of two separate historical trajectories: computing technologies and media technologies. Both started in the 1830s with Babbage's analytical engine and Daguerre's daguerreotype. After a series of developments in the mid-twentieth century, computers capable to perform effectively calculations on numerical data appeared, thus taking over the tasks of many mechanical tabulators and computers already used by companies and governments since the beginning of the century. In parallel, we are witnessing the birth of modern media technologies which allow storing images, sequences of images, sounds and texts using various materials: photographic plate, film, vinyl, etc. The synthesis of these two histories? Translating all existing media into numerical data accessible to computers. The result is new media: graphics, motion pictures, sounds, shapes, spaces and texts which become calculable, simply a sound of binary data." (Manovich, 2001)

In Romania, just as in the whole world, the interferences between "old media" and "new media" (which also involves social networks), lead to a high degree of interaction between readers and between readers and journalists, which gives press institutions greater visibility. Given that Internet users grant greater confidence to subjectivity, their opinions, their subjective views and personal interpretations on different topics become a benchmark in an open environment, which is impossible to control on the basis of value, of truth, of any rules, of the quality of the act of journalism itself.

The solution in educating the prosumer (consumer - producer), via university programs too, comes as a moral obligation of the educational factors in a society.

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