



Election Monitoring of Online Media

September 18 - October 26, 2013

In connection to the Presidential elections of 2013, the Civic Development Institute (CDI) has continued its media monitoring within the frameworks of the EU-UNDP funded project “Professional Media for Elections”. The monitoring is taking place from June 15, 2013 until November 15, 2013 and covers 12 most highly rated Georgian websites that are of a news portal type: netgazeti.ge, droni.ge, politico.ge (up to September 18), liberali.ge, news.ge, presa.ge, civil.ge, tabula.ge, garbonline.tv, for.ge, dfwatch.net, palitratv.ge (from September 18). The report contains the media monitoring results from September 18 until October 26, inclusive.

The following key findings have been identified during the monitoring of online media:

- Compared to previous periods of monitoring online media has been far more active in covering pre-election campaign of presidential candidates.
- Majority of the websites have been more or less balanced and impartial in covering activities of presidential candidates.
- Journalism standards and ethical norms have still been regularly violated on the websites presa.ge, droni.ge and for.ge.
- Quantity of extensive, analytical articles has increased on English language websites dfwatch.net and civil.ge (*civil.ge publishes articles in English, Georgian and Russian languages*) over the given period of monitoring.
- Shallow attitude towards the issues, lack of critical analysis and shortage of sources of information in certain articles still remain the main challenge of online media during the last period of monitoring.

netgazeti.ge

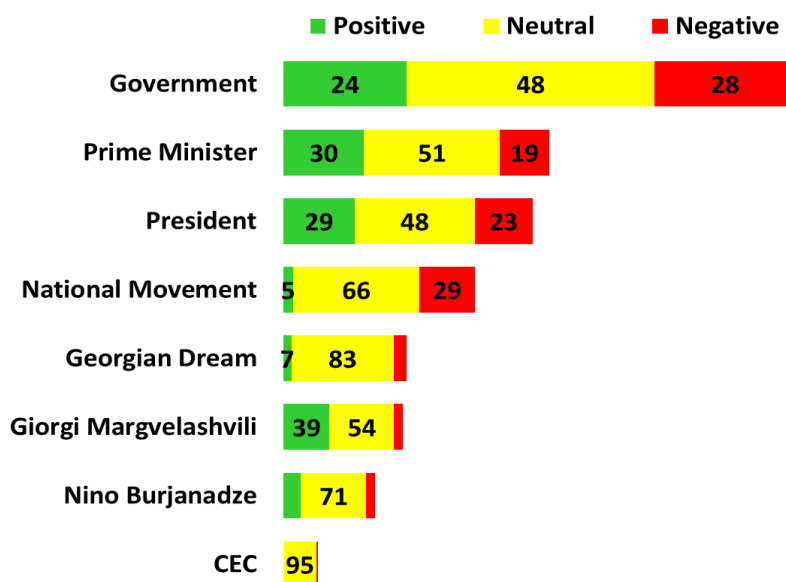
Within the fourth period of monitoring the frequency of covering presidential candidates on netgazeti.ge has relatively increased. Alike the previous periods of monitoring, the given period has also been characterized by articles with pretty critical content published on the website. It shall be noted that despite critical approach towards the issues, the website manages to keep a relevant balance among political forces and generally ensures pretty impartial coverage of events taking place in the country. Journalism standards and ethical norms have been followed with a high level

of performance. The balance of information sources has been well kept and one could frequently come across diverse and controversial opinions.

Among the monitoring subjects, the activities of the Government (30%), the President (14%) and the Prime Minister (14%) have been covered most intensively. Among the Presidential candidates Giorgi Margvelashvili (7%), Nino Burjanadze (5%) and Giorgi Targamadze (2%) have been covered most intensively. Especially high rates of positive or negative tone applied to a certain subject have never been observed on the website.

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that netgazeti.ge has been pretty impartial in covering ongoing events of the country. Ethical norms of journalism are strictly followed. It is noteworthy that the website is distinguished by an in-depth analysis of issues and critical approach towards them.

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on netgazeti.ge according to the tone (%)



droni.ge

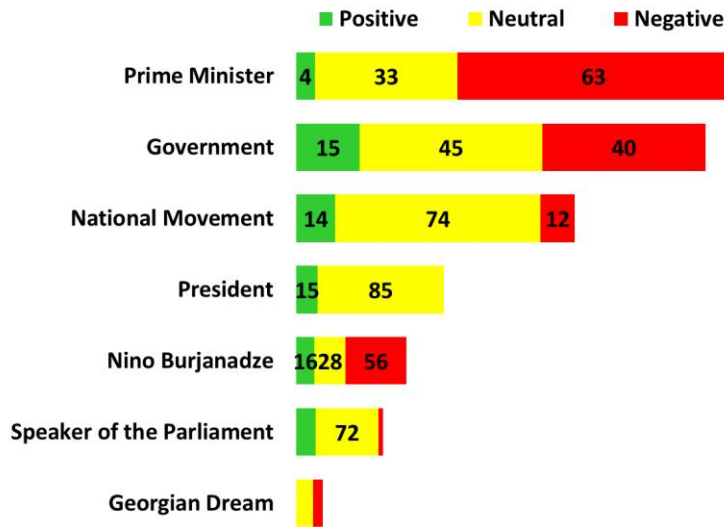
Within the fourth period of monitoring positive attitude of droni.ge towards the President and “National Movement” on one side and negative attitude towards the Prime Minister and the coalition “Georgian Dream” on the other side has still been quite clear. Journalistic standards and ethical norms have been violated on the website quite frequently.

Among the monitoring subjects, the activities of the the Prime Minister (28%), the Government (26%) and the “National Movement” (18%) have been covered most intensively. High rate of negative tone while covering the Prime Minister (63%) and the Government (40%) has been observed. Among the Presidential candidates activities of Nino Burjanadze (7%) have been covered most intensively; percentage rate of her coverage in a negative tone is quite high as well (56%).

Similarly, coverage of the Presidential candidate from “Georgian Dream”, Giorgi Margvelashvili, has proved high rate of negative tone (61%).

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that droni.ge is quite biased while covering the ongoing political events of the country. Journalistic standards and ethical norms are pretty often violated on the website. Certain articles do not follow information source balance. The website clearly tends to discredit the coalition “Georgian Dream” and its Presidential Candidate.

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on droni.ge according to the tone (%)



pirveliradio.ge

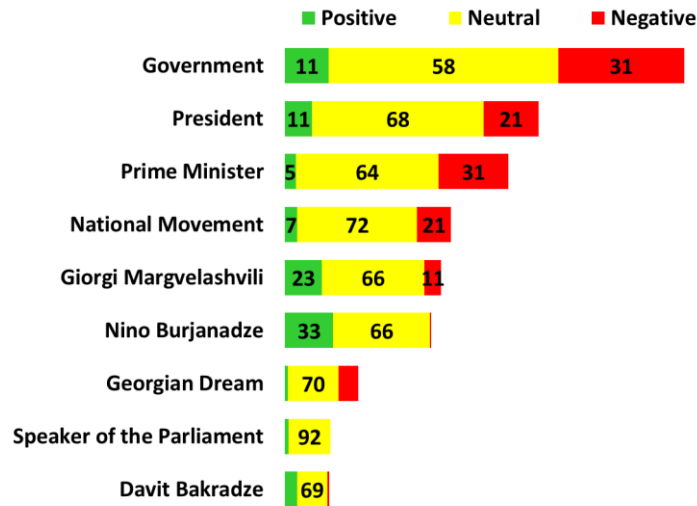
(The website monitoring has been carried out since September 18, 2013)

Within the given period of monitoring pirveliradio.ge has been covering almost all important vents taking place in the country quite actively. Mainly short, informative articles are being published on the website. The website is quite impartial in covering activities of Presidential candidates and representatives of various political forces. Within the given period of monitoring cases of rough violation of journalistic standards and ethical norms have not been registered on pirveliradio.ge. Different opinions are rarely provided in articles, however, in cases of serious accusations put forward on the website against a certain subject, a position of a second party is represented in following articles during the day.

Among the monitoring subjects, the activities of the Government (25%), the President (16%) and the Prime Minister (14%) have been covered most intensively. It shall be noted that especially high indicators of positive or negative tone applied to a certain subject have never been observed on the website. Among the Presidential candidates Giorgi Margvelashvili (10%), Nino Burjanadze (9%) and David Bakradze (3%) have been covered most intensively. While covering Presidential candidates percentage rate of positive tone is quite high that is conditioned by the fact that the website has been actively covering pre-election meetings of candidates, their promises etc.

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that pirveliradio.ge is quite active in covering ongoing political events of the country. No clear bias towards any political force has been observed on the website. Journalistic standards and ethical norms are followed. Nevertheless, given the style of the website operation, certain articles do not provide for diversity of information sources and in-depth analysis of ongoing events.

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on pirveliradio.ge according to the tone (%)



liberali.ge

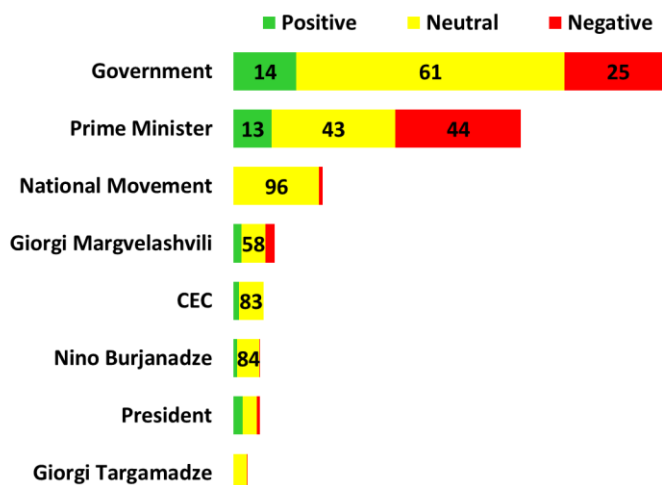
Within the fourth period of monitoring, alike the previous periods, liberali.ge has been quite impartial in covering ongoing political events of the country. Explicitly positive or negative attitude towards any political force have not been observed on the website. Journalistic standards and ethical norms are followed with a high level of performance.

Among the monitoring subjects, the activities of the Government (44%) and the Prime Minister (29%) have been covered most intensively. Pretty high rate of negative tone has been observed while covering the coalition “Georgian Dream” (51%) and the Prime Minister (44%), while high rate of positive tone – while covering the activities of the President (34%). It shall be noted that positive and negative tone was mainly observed among respondents and not journalists.

Within the given period of monitoring the frequency of covering Presidential candidates on the website has relatively decreased. The activities of Giorgi Margvelashvili (4%) and Nino Burjanadze (3%) have been covered most intensively. No type of bias towards any of the candidates has been observed on the website within the given period of monitoring.

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that liberali.ge has been pretty impartial in covering ongoing events in the country. Journalistic standards and ethical norms are strictly followed.

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on liberali.ge according to the tone (%)



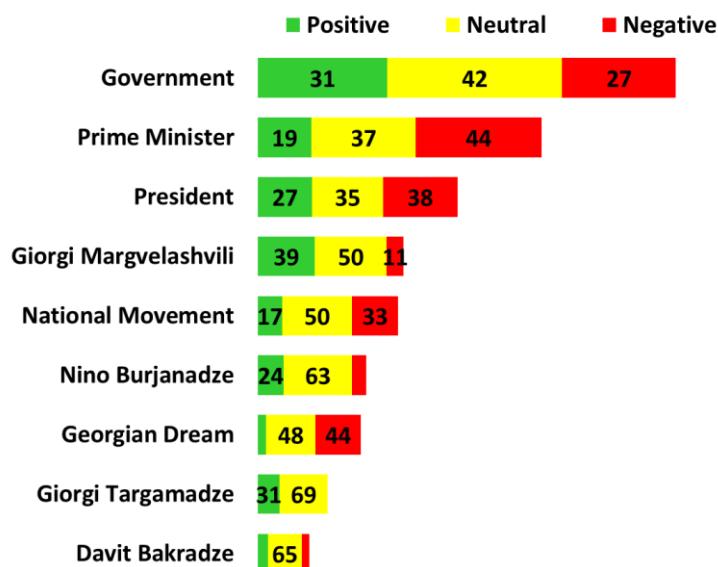
news.ge

Frequency of Presidential candidates' coverage on news.ge has increased within the monitoring period. Within pre-monitoring and present periods the website has covered practically all important ongoing events of the country. Among the monitoring subjects, the activities of the Government (25%), the Prime Minister (17%) and the President (12%) have been covered most intensively. Especially high rates of positive or negative tone applied to a certain subject have never been observed on the website. Among the Presidential candidates activities of Giorgi Margvelashvili (9%), Nino Burjanadze (6%), Giorgi Targamadze (4%) and David Bakradze (3%) have been covered most intensively.

It shall be noted that while covering Presidential candidates, percentage rate of positive tone is quite high that is conditioned by the fact that the website has been actively covering pre-election meetings of candidates, hence, a significant space is allocated to the pre-election promises of the candidates.

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that news.ge has been more or less impartial in covering ongoing events in the country. The website is pretty active and tries to cover all important events taking place in the country. Nevertheless, certain articles fail to keep information source balance. Majority of articles are prepared on the basis of one source of information.

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on news.ge according to the tone (%)



presa.ge

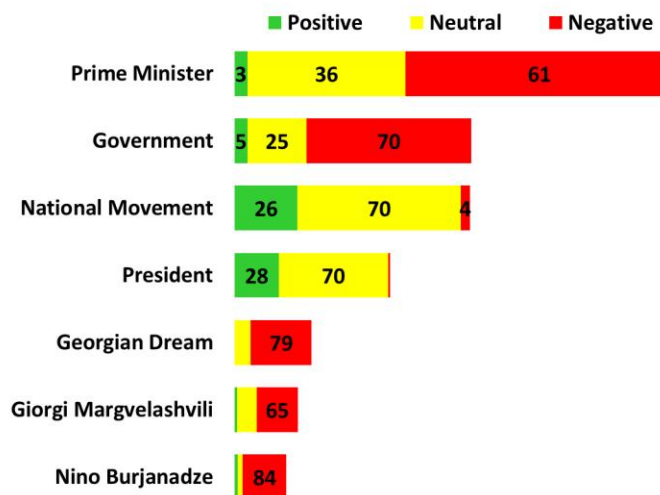
Within the fourth period of monitoring, alike the previous ones, journalistic standards and ethical norms have been systematically violated in presa.ge articles. Source balance is rarely followed in separate articles; the information is frequently unverified and source of information is unknown. Also there are rare occasions, when a journalist makes a conclusion on the basis of his/her own opinion. Journalists often use abusive terminology, mainly towards the Government, the Prime Minister and members of the coalition “Georgian Dream”.

Among the monitoring subjects, the activities of the Prime Minister (34%), the Government (18%) and the “National Movement” (18%) have been covered most intensively. Especially high rates of negative tone have been applied while covering the coalition “Georgian Dream” (79%), the Government (70%) and the Prime Minister (61%). On the other hand, high rates of positive tone have been observed while covering the President (28%) and the “National Movement”. Among the Presidential candidates activities of Giorgi Margvelashvili (5%) and Nino Burjanadze (4%) have been covered most intensively. Activities of Giorgi Margvelashvili have been covered in negative tone in 65% of cases, while those of Nino Burjanadze – in 84% of cases.

Almost all articles published on the website are critical towards governmental forces. Negative headlines towards the Government, the Prime Minister or “Georgian Dream” have been observed on frequent occasions (For instance “One year of the dream and vanished promises”, October 1; “Sharks in the Prime Minister’s palace and frustrated people”, October 23).

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that presa.ge cover the ongoing events of the country in an extremely unbalanced and biased manner. The website clearly demonstrates efforts to discredit the Presidential candidate from ruling party Giorgi Margvelashvili and the Prime Minister of Georgia. Practically all journalistic standards are being violated systematically.

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on presa.ge according to the tone (%)



civil.ge

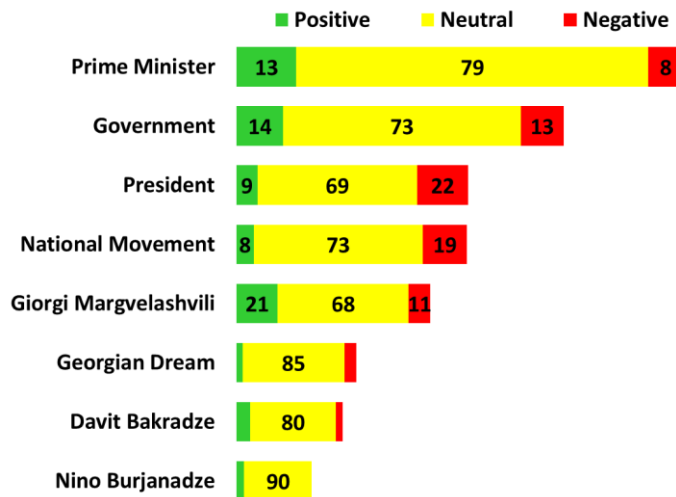
Within the fourth period of monitoring frequency of coverage of Presidential candidates, namely Giorgi Margvelashvili (10%), David Bakradze (6%) and Nino Burjanadze (4%) has relatively increased on civil.ge. Similarly to the monitoring carried out in previous period, the given period have not revealed any bias towards particular political forces. Journalistic standards and ethical norms are perfectly followed on the website.

Within the given period of monitoring the quantity of analytical articles published on the website has increased. It shall be noted that the articles are prepared following journalistic standards and no rough violations have been observed within the given period of monitoring.

Among the monitoring subjects, the activities of the Prime Minister (23%), the Government (17%), the President (12%) and the “National Movement” (12%) have been covered most intensively. The given period of monitoring has not revealed specifically high rates of positive or negative tone towards any Presidential candidate.

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that civil.ge provides pretty balanced and impartial coverage of the ongoing political events. Journalistic ethical norms are being followed. It is also noteworthy that the number of analytical stories has increased on the website over the given period of monitoring.

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on civil.ge according to the tone (%)



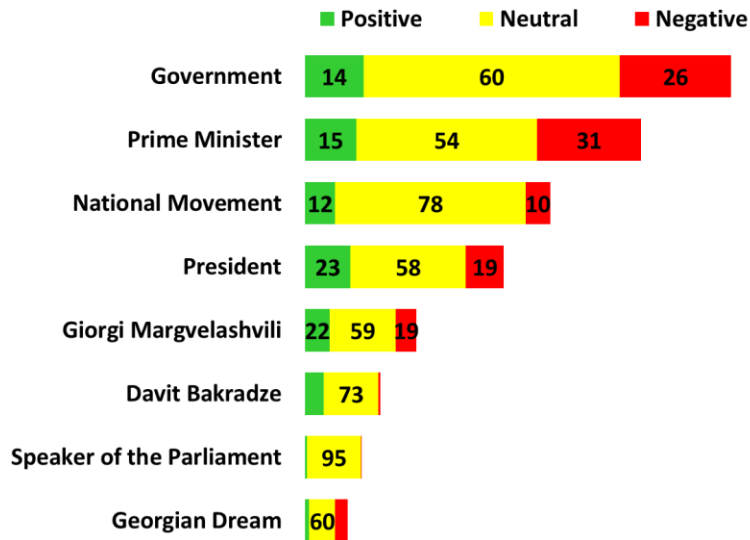
tabula.ge

Within the fourth period of monitoring, alike in previous periods, tabula.ge has been quite active in covering ongoing political events of the country. The website is distinguished by its thematic diversity and critical approach towards the issues. Journalistic ethical norms are more or less followed on the webpage, although a long-term observation of tabula.ge has revealed less critical approach towards “National Movement” and to the opposite, a pretty critical attitude towards the Government and the Prime Minister. Nevertheless, it shall be mentioned that tabula.ge is not clearly biased and certain articles published on the website are in most cases prepared following high journalistic standards.

Among the monitoring subjects, the activities of the Government (26%), the Prime Minister (21%), and the “National Movement” have been covered most intensively. Among the Presidential candidates activities of Giorgi Margvelashvili (7%), David Bakradze (5%), Nino Burjanadze (3%) and Giorgi Targamadze (3%) have been covered most intensively. It shall be noted that especially high rates of positive or negative tone towards any subject have not been observed during the reporting period.

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that tabula.ge has been pretty active in covering ongoing pre-election process in the country. Separate articles in most cases follow journalistic standards. As a result of qualitative analysis a relatively positive approach towards “National Movement” has been observed on the website, although, in general, it may be said that the website tries to follow journalistic standards and in most cases it manages to provide readers with balanced and objective information. Also, the website is characterized by thematic diversity and critical attitude towards the issues.

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on tabula.ge according to the tone (%)



garbonline.tv

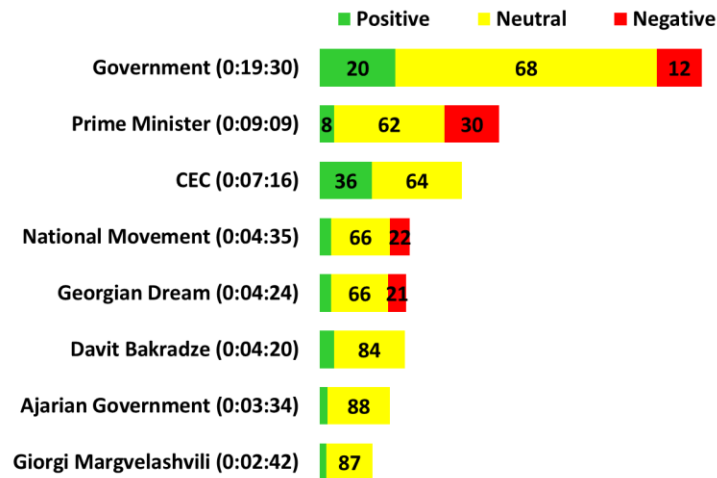
Within the fourth period of monitoring the coverage of Presidential candidates on garbonline.tv has relatively increased. Similar to the previous periods of monitoring, the website has been pretty impartial in covering pre-election activities of Presidential candidates within the reporting period as well. There has been no sign of especially positive or negative attitude towards any political force. The website follows journalistic standards and ethical norms. However, the given period of monitoring has been characterized by scarcity of materials, hence, it fails to explicitly demonstrate ongoing political events of the country.

Among the monitoring subjects, the activities of the Government (30%), the Prime Minister (14%), and the Central Election Commission (11%) have been covered most intensively. It shall be noted that pretty high rate of positive tone has been observed while covering the Central Election Commission (36%) that has been conditioned by opening additional precincts by CEC, simplification of voting procedures for handicapped persons and intensive coverage of similar issues.

Among the Presidential candidates activities of David Bakradze (7%), Giorgi Margvelashvili (4%), Mikheil (Gela) Saluashvili (3%) and Nino Burjanadze (2%) have been covered most intensively. It shall be noted that especially high rates of positive or negative tone towards any subject have not been observed on the website during the reporting period.

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that garbonline.tv has been pretty impartial while covering ongoing political events of the country. Journalistic standards and ethical norms have been strictly followed. Nevertheless, shortage of materials on the website has still been an issue.

**Time allocated to the subjects on garbonline.tv
according to the tone (%)**



for.ge

Within the fourth period of monitoring, alike the previous periods, an extremely negative attitude towards the President and the “National Movement” has been observed on for.ge. We ground that opinion on frequency of interviews taken from respondents, who have been especially critical towards the President and the “National Movement” as well as abusive statements made by the website journalists in relation to the above subjects. At this stage of monitoring we have also encountered a few articles with a photo containing elements insulting the President of Georgia (for instance in the articles: “Saakashvili met Obama accidentally”, September 27; “The minority admired the President; the “Lame Duck” failed to impress the majority”, September 26).

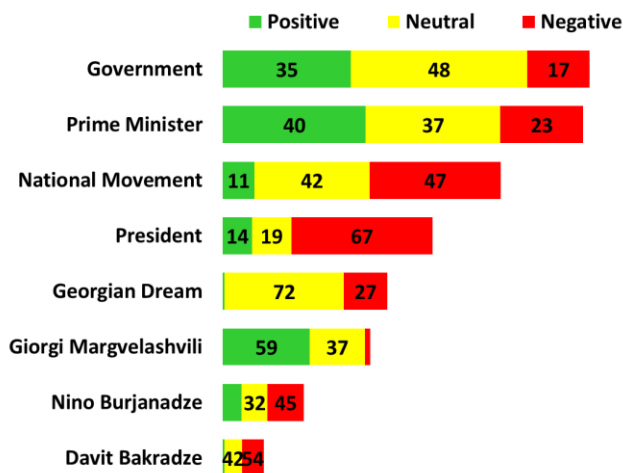
Pretty high rate of negative tone has been registered on the website while covering the activities of the President (67%) and the “National Movement” (47%). The percentage rate of negative tone is also pretty high while covering David Bakradze (54%).

The balance of sources has rarely been kept in articles published on the website. It is also noteworthy that the website addresses the same experts to evaluate ongoing political processes, who usually criticize the President and the “National Movement” despite the issue at stake.

Within the given period of monitoring the activities of the Ministry of Defense and the Minister Alasania have been covered most intensively. Similar interest has not been visible on the website towards any other government agency.

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that for.ge fails to provide balance and is biased while covering ongoing political events of the country. Ethical norms of the journalism are systematically violated on the website.

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on for.ge according to the tone (%)



dfwatch.net

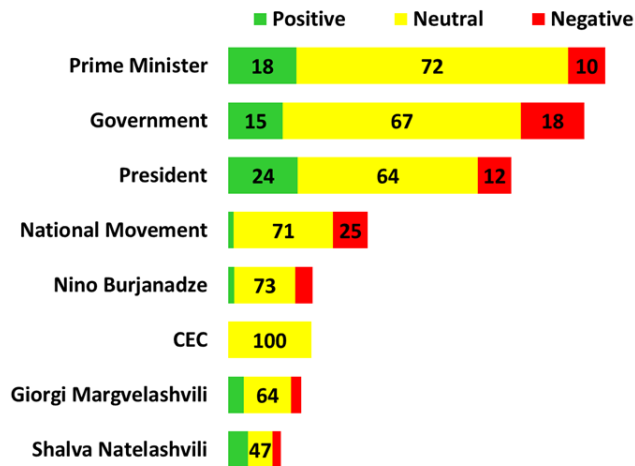
Within the fourth period of monitoring the quantity of analytical articles has relatively increased on the website. Alike the previous periods of monitoring, dfwatch.net has been pretty balanced and impartial in covering activities of politicians or various government agencies. Journalistic standards and ethical norms have been strictly followed. The website covers opinions expressed by various political forces.

Among the monitoring subjects, the activities of the Prime Minister (23%), the Government (22%) and the President (17%) have been covered most intensively. Among the Presidential candidates activities of Nino Burjanadze (5%), Giorgi Margvelashvili (4%), David Bakradze (3%) and Shalva Natelashvili (3%) have been covered most intensively. Within the given period of monitoring no specifically positive or negative attitude towards any subject has ever been registered.

The website has rarely covered daily meetings of the Presidential candidates, however, we have encountered numerous articles within the monitoring period, which comprised information about pre-election activities of the candidates (for instance, “Georgian candidates on the campaign trail”, October 10). We would also stress pretty extensive and in-depth coverage of the Presidential candidates’ television debates (for instance, Georgian candidates confront each other in two TV debates, October 19).

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that dfwatch.net has been pretty impartial in covering ongoing political events of the country; journalistic standards and ethical norms are followed. Balance of sources is well kept in certain articles. The quantity of extensive, analytical articles has increased on the website over the given period of monitoring.

Volume of the text allocated to the subjects on dfwatch.net according to the tone (%)



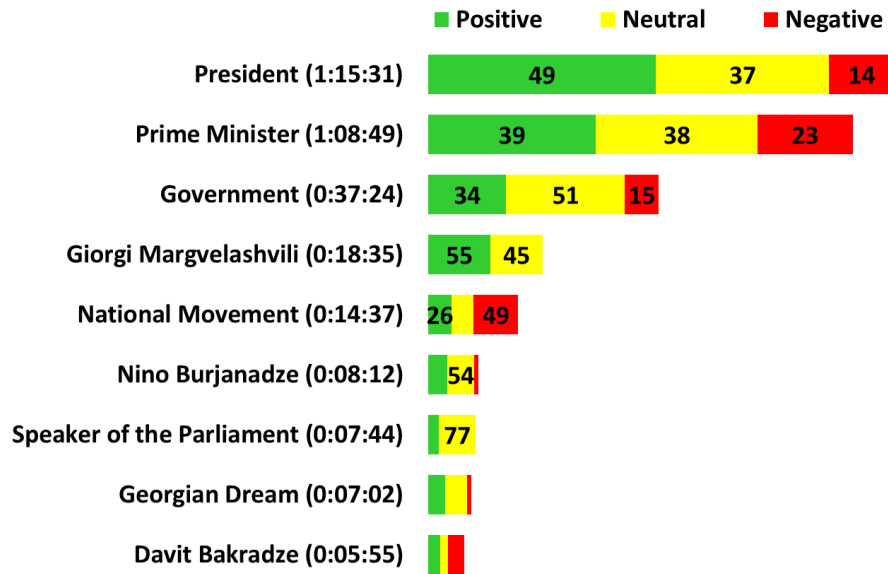
palitratv.ge

Within the fourth period of monitoring the coverage of Presidential candidates on palitratv.ge has relatively increased. Similar to the previous periods of monitoring, the website hardly contained any original stories created by an editorial office. Therefore, there are almost no journalism texts on palitratv.ge, hence, percentage rate of neutral tone is rather low on the website. Despite high rate of positive or negative tone registered towards various subjects, the website, in general, does not seem to be biased towards any political force.

Among the monitoring subjects, the activities of the President (29%), the Prime Minister (27%) and the Government (15%) have been covered most intensively. Among the Presidential candidates activities of Giorgi Margvelashvili (7%), Nino Burjanadze (3%) and David Bakradze (2%) have been covered most intensively. Within the given period of monitoring no specifically positive or negative attitude towards any subject has ever been registered.

As a result of the monitoring we may conclude that palitratv.ge more or less follows ethical norms of journalism, however we encounter video materials on the website containing unrestricted unethical vocabulary.

Time allocated to the subjects on palitratv.ge according to the tone (%)



Conclusion

Within the fourth period of monitoring coverage of Presidential candidates in Georgian online media has become more frequent. Most of the websites have covered them more or less impartially. The websites droni.ge and presa.ge are exceptions; they explicitly try to discredit the Presidential candidate of the coalition „Georgian Dream” Giorgi Margvelashvili.

For.ge is also characterized by one-sided coverage of events that expresses critical attitude towards the President and the “National Movement”. Within the given period of monitoring the criticism of David Bakradze – Presidential candidate from the “National Movement” has significantly increased on the website.

Within the fourth period of monitoring the quantity of analytical articles on the websites civil.ge and dfwatch.net has increased.

The websites presa.ge and for.ge often comprise cases of discriminatory and abusive terminology used by journalists. Compared to previous periods of monitoring, journalistic standards have been violated on the website droni.ge more often.

Shallow coverage of issues, lack of critical analysis and shortage of information sources in certain articles are still among the major problems faced by online media.