

THE ISSUE OF ETHICS AND THE LIABILITY OF AUTHORS IN ONLINE COMMENTS (THE LITHUANIAN CASE)

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Purpose – The report will discuss the specificity of online comments as the textual genre, as well as the problems concerning ethics and the liability of authors of comments and the media outlets. By granting readers an opportunity to freely express their ideas in commentary sections, the media is as if following the main principles of democracy. Often the freedom of speech and expression, one of the primary human rights, is addressed. Meanwhile, the situation when the limits of legality and ethics are undermined, and online comments belittle, defame or discriminate other individuals is rarely analysed. Not only Lithuanian and international organisations that address the law enforcement or human rights protection institutions emphasise the issue of comments, but case law testifies the problem as well. The goal of the report is to review legal regulation of online media, introduce the opinions of the media researchers over the situation in online comments in Lithuania and across the globe, to present the Lithuanian online media case analysis and proposals how the level of culture of online comments could be altered using ethical and legal instruments.

Methodology – Preparing the report the following scientific research methods were used – logical, comparative and comprehensive analysis of sources, critical descriptive and analytical methods, as well as sociological and systematic research methods, content analysis, quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

Keywords: online comments, law, ethics, author, liability.

Research type: case analysis.