

Analysis of the SRG's online service in 2020

Summary

The main objective of the analysis is to examine how SRG SSR implements the **instruction of the licence** with its online offers srf.ch, rts.ch and rsi.ch. The analysis was done based on an on-going **full survey** of all online contributions published by SRG in 2020. The results show that the criterion of **length restriction** is adhered to in **98 percent** of text contributions in the three news portals. The **75% criterion** for audio/video links is **clearly exceeded** by all three online offers throughout the entire year. The external links investigated all satisfy the licensing requirements and no indications of commercial motives were found.

Methodological information	
Online offer examined:	srf.ch (German-speaking Switzerland), rts.ch (French-speaking Switzerland), rsi.ch (Italian-speaking Switzerland)
Approach, survey period:	On-going full survey of all online contributions and external links in the main content area, published between 1 January and 31 December 2020
Basis for analysis:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online contributions: N= 238,238 - Relationships to a transmission: N= 128,104 - External links: N= 53,454
Methodology:	Computer-aided form of quantitative content analysis A) Editorial analysis (units: online contributions, relationships to a transmission) B) Link analysis (unit: external links)

Problem

In accordance with Art. 18 Para. 2 of the licence, SRG may only broadcast online offers under certain conditions. The main objective of the **analysis of the SRG online offer** in 2020 is to examine how SRG implements the **instruction** of the licence with its quadrilingual online offers. The study also gives an insight into the **offer structure** of the SRG online presences.

The examination essentially answers how SRF, RTS and RSI create the thematic and chronological **relationship to a transmission** in 2020 (Art. 18 Para. 2 Let. b), how the **length restriction** of the texts is adhered to in the case of non-transmission-related contributions (Art. 18 Para. 2 Let. c) and how the criteria for **A/AV links** is adhered to (Art. 18 Para. 2 Let. d). It also explains to what

extent **external links** are set for journalistic and not for commercial reasons (Art. 18 Para. 2 Let. f).

Methodology

The methodological approach of Publicom is structured as an **on-going full survey** of all online content of the three SRG offers from 2020 and therefore provides a maximally representative database for examining licence conformity. The required indicators are determined with the aid of a semi-automated research system with specific analysis algorithms and systematic quality assurance measures. The extent of licence conformity is assessed in accordance with the **interpretation practice of BAKOM** [Federal Office of Communications]. Publicom reveals the results in accordance with the client's guidelines and does not have any power to interpret fulfilment of the instruction by SRG.

In terms of methodology, the investigation is based on a **content analysis** (editorial analysis) and a **link analysis**. Publicom has provided a project-specific software package for data acquisition, collection and quality assurance, consisting of a **web crawler**, which extracts the content that is newly published or changed in the online offers of SRG on an hourly basis and indexes it in accordance with the guidelines of the code book, a **proofreading tool** (for manual coding) and a quality assurance dashboard (primarily on-going reliability tests).

Length restriction in the news portal (Art. 18 Para. 2 Let. c)

The editorial analysis encompasses more than **228,000 online contributions** and a good 128,000 transmission relationships that are examined for fulfilment of the licence instruction. SRG online offers are revealed to **almost always adhere** to the criterion of length restriction in the news portal: A total of **98%** of all text contributions from the areas of news, sport and regional/local comply with the licensing requirements Art. 18 Para. 2 Let. c). Only a good **2%** of the text contributions in the three SRG news portals have more than 1,000 characters and simultaneously do not fulfil all licensing requirements and are therefore not considered to be compliant. At 97% each, the proportion of compliant news portal text contributions at RTS and RSI is only slightly lower than at SRF with 98%.

A violation of the **chronological relationship** was found in just under half of the few non-compliant online contributions, seen across all three portals. The majority of these are text contributions with over 1,000 characters that were published more than 35 minutes before the related

transmission was broadcast. In a further just under a third of all non-compliant news portal contributions, the licence violation is based on **insufficient mention of the transmission**. And finally **no (sufficient) relationship to a transmission** was found for a good fifth of all contributions at issue.

Audio/video link (Art. 18 Para. 2 Let. d)

The criterion of an **A/AV link** in 75% of all text contributions that are no older than 30 days (Art. 18 Para. 2 Let. d) is **clearly exceeded** in SRG's three online offers with an average of 91%. SRF (average 94%), RTS (91%) and RSI (86%) fulfil the licensing requirements over all 12 months of 2020.

In the German-speaking presence, the proportion of text contributions that are linked to A/AV content is constant from January to December 2020. Ranging from 92% (May) to 96% (January, February) **SRF** is around **20% over the licensing requirements**. After a strong start to the year, **RTS** increases to a very high 97% into July. In August there is a noticeable **drop** to 84%. Nevertheless, the proportion of A/AV text contributions remains a good 10% over the required mark until the end of the year. The online offer of Italian-speaking Switzerland also has constant proportion of text contributions with A/AV integration over the year. At **RSI** this is slightly behind the other two portals at between 84% (September) and 87% (February, March, May, July), but clearly and constantly in excess of the licensing requirements.

Link analysis (Art. 18 Para. 2 Let. f)

In order to examine the **commercialisation potential** for the link analysis, Publicom identified a good **53,000 external links** from **1,243 domains** in the SRG presences. These electronic links were classified according to their frequency of connection and five functional categories: **No** links to third-party providers with a **direct advertising link** (e.g. ad server) were found. These would have exceptionally high commercialisation potential and would be sanctioned by SRG's blanket ban on advertising and sponsoring.

The second critical category contained external links to **e-shops**, of which Publicom identified a good 2,000 across 37 domains. The majority are allotted to exlibris.ch, the operator of the SRF shop. Since SRG is expressly permitted to sell its own transmissions and products, these links are unobjectionable.

A clear indicator of commercialisation potential is the involvement of SRG in the **partner systems** of third-party providers, as soon as they are recognisable with an “affiliate ID” in the URL of the link. There were no indications of this kind of partner system in any of the three SRG online offers investigated in 2020. The other three link categories, technical services with and without content and links to third-party content have a much lower commercialisation potential. They do not give any cause for discussion regarding license conformity in 2020.