

Judges and social media

Abstract

Asking judges today whether they can be on social media is as useful as thinking about whether they should be allowed to go out in public. Social networks are not the froth of the day, some people's lives are moving into virtual space, and the lives of men and women in gowns are no exception.

This paper analyses the activities of Czech judges and courts on social media, presenting the limits that can be encountered when moving on social media in this context. Social networks can be a means of building trust and dignity, a tool for humanizing and bringing the judiciary closer to the people. However, when they are used unwisely, there is a risk of damage to the dignity and, ultimately, to trust. The text illustrates the outlined boundaries with particular examples and reflects on the situation in the final section summarising twelve semi-standardised interviews with local judges.

Thanks to social networks, judges can enter the public debate more easily than ever before. At the same time, they must protect faith in the judiciary and take care to maintain the dignity of the institution. Virtual space may have many pitfalls. But judges must not hide in an ivory tower and pretend that the networks have not captured us. We are not likely to find our way out. It makes sense to adapt, reorient ourselves and use the new ground to our advantage. Judges included.

Key words: Professional ethics of judges, judges, social media, Czech Republic.