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CULINARY PRESS IN THE TIMES OF POPULARITY OF BLOGS AND CULINARY SERVICE

Introduction

The culinary media offer enjoyed unfailing popularity in the years 1994–2016¹. Recipients could choose newspapers, blogs and culinary websites which published recipes and advice on widely understood nutrition, and they mainly performed the counseling function. They also had culinary series and reality shows at their disposal where “cooking on the screen” and the rivalry associated with it became the main characters². Above all providing the viewer with entertainment and excitement was their goal³.

Rich and varied culinary offer makes narrowing down the research field necessary. This is why the article focuses on the issues related to the press, blogs and culinary services. It is an attempt to answer the questions: what were the most important magazines, websites and culinary blogs on the Polish media market, who owned

¹ The first time landmark (1994), it was the year in which the first issue of the independent culinary periodical magazine “Moje Gotowanie” appeared on the market. The second date (2016) is the end of the research.

² Food and culinary were the protagonists of two TV series, “Przepis na Życie” and “Na Noże”, which TVN introduced to its schedule.

³ According to the Nielsen Audience Measurement research, the fifth edition of “Top Chef” saw watched by an average of 1.8 million people, and the fourth edition of “Hell’s Kitchen. Piekielna Kuchnia” was watched by 1.63 million people. “Master Chef” – the leader of these programs has an average of 2 million viewers. Programs are commented on in social media and their show hosts are more popular with Internet users than the program participants. Magda Gessler has primacy and on average about 3,200 references appears about her.

them, what was the state of the culinary magazines in the culture of participation, how did the food preparation press cope with the expansion of websites and blogs on the same subject matter⁴.

Popularity of culinary topics

Food is inseparably connected with human existence. It accompanies man from birth to death. It conditions survival. In scientific literature it is defined as a necessity, but also a source of fear, fright and joy⁵, the most primitive of human needs⁶, extremely boring and mundane⁷. The food is also described as “a mediator in building families, religious communities, ethnic boundaries and historical awareness⁸”. Inness adds, “Food is the heart of human experience”⁹. “Cooking and/or eating meals creates bonds and a sense of community. Eating out becomes a source of pleasure, satisfaction and entertainment. They testify of social status”¹⁰. Małgorzata Bogunia-Borowska claims: “culinary culture is closely connected with social and cultural life and cooking is one of the structuring factors”¹¹. Roland Barthes attempted to convince us that the researcher should treat “food as culture and culture as food”¹². An example illustrating such views may be the growing requirements for married women in the nineteenth century, which most likely evoked demand for culinary guides. Among the numerous cookery books containing not only recipes but also advice tips there was a bestseller: “356 dinners for five zlotys” by Lucyna Ćwierczakiewicz. The author met the expectations of the contemporary society and culture. She answered such questions as: “how can one keep one’s everyday cuisine

⁴ The author consciously gave up the research of reality shows and television series. In her opinion, the press, blogs and culinary services more frequently implement a counseling function in the area of widely understood culinary topics.

⁵ R. Wilk, *Home Cooking in the Global Village: Caribbean Food from Buccaneers to Ecotourists*, Berg 2006, p. 5.

⁶ R. Foster, O. Ranum, *Introduction*, in: *Food and Drink in History*, ed. R. Foster, O. Ranum, Baltimore 1979, p. vii.

⁷ E. Probyn, *Carnal Appetites. FoodSexInentities*, London 2000, p. 1–2.

⁸ S.A. Inness, *Thinking Food/Thinking Gender. In Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender and Race*, Philadelphia 2001, p. 5.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

¹⁰ More on this topic, see: A. Warde, L. Martenes, *The Enjoyment of Meal Events*, in: *Eating Out. Social Differentiation, Consumption and Pleasure*, ed. A. Warde, L. Martenes, Cambridge 2000, p. 191–211.

¹¹ M. Bogunia-Borowska, *Obraz nowej klasy średniej w telewizyjnych programach kulinarnych*, “Studia Socjologiczne” 2015, No. 1, p. 119.

¹² R. Barthes, *Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption*, in: *Food and Drink in History*, ed. R. Foster, O. Ranum, Baltimore 1979, p. 167.

on the good level despite declining financial resources”¹³. Referring to Barthes’s deliberations it should be emphasized that the researcher treated food as a communication system.

When we take the above-mentioned views into account we may state that the culinary media offer, also the one distributing recipes, whether in electronic or paper form, is a communication channel between members of the community. The formation of the interest groups that make this media offer more popular is possible because of the exchange of information and advice tips on the one hand and on the other hand, because of the opportunity to interact, to contact the author of the recipe or the author of the blog. The culinary offer is also a source of knowledge about the society, its habits, ways of eating, etiquette, etc.

Culinary magazines

According to the research conducted by Ryszard Filas, culinary magazines are the press segment which was in crisis in the period of 2001–2006. This fact was confirmed by the decline in the circulation and sales¹⁴. It seems well-based to emphasize that in the years 1998–2006 no new, self-existent periodical on this subject appeared on the market.

In the years 1994–1998, six magazines came out. In 1994, Gruner + Jahr Polska offered “Moje Gotowanie”. In 2013 this magazine, similarly to other titles, was taken over by Burda International. In 1995 Prószyński introduced “Kuchnia. Magazyn dla Smakoszy”. In 1998 this publisher, expanded its portfolio adding another culinary magazine, “Lubię Gotować”. Both titles were owned by Agora in 2012. In 1996, two companies with German capital, Burda International and Bauer Media Polska, joined the rivalry. The first introduced “Sól i Pieprz” magazine to the market and the other one started editing “Smaczno”. The last magazine coming out in the recent four-year time was “Smaki i Aromaty” which belonged to the Polish Publishing House. Out of six monthly magazines contending on the market four survived. After three years of being in action “Smaczno” disappeared, and after four years “Smaki i Aromaty” was closed down.

From 1999 to 2006, no independent culinary magazine appeared. The situation changed in 2007. Then the dynamic process of expanding the offer began. Burda International, Phoenix Press and Bauer Media Polska became especially active¹⁵.

¹³ *Obyczaje w Polsce. Od średniowiecza do czasów współczesnych*, ed. A. Chwalba, Warszawa 2004, p. 266.

¹⁴ R. Filas, *Polskie czasopisma w XXI wieku – rozwój czy kryzys?*, “Zeszyty Prasoznawcze” 2007, No. 1–2, p. 45.

¹⁵ In 2009, Bauer Media Polska bought 79% of Phoenix Press. Consequently, the competition for customers and advertisers was de facto between two publishers: Burda and Bauer.

In the years 2007–2016 the market got fifteen new titles. The most of them, namely nine were offered to the audience by Burda International. Phoenix Press introduced five new periodicals. One magazine was included in the offer of the Bauer Media Polska.

Classifying the culinary press on the basis of the criterion of appearance, it is clear that the years 1994–1998 were dominated by monthly magazines (6). In the years 2007–2016 the majority of magazines were bimonthlies (6) and 4 were monthlies. There were also quarterlies (3) and some irregular periodic titles (2). The details are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Culinary magazines on the Polish press market in the years 1990–2016

	Title, subtitle	Frequency	Year		Editor	Publisher
			rising	suspension		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Moje Gotowanie	monthly	1994 2013	continue	A. Jankowska A. Nastulanka M. Hennig J. Orłowska R. Chodorowska R. Bany E. Kaczak E. Pawlak-Kozyra	G + J Polska Burda International
2.	Kuchnia. Magazyn dla Smakoszy	monthly	1995 2002	continue	J. Nowicka A. Wrońska E. Wagner	Prószyński Agora S.A.
3.	Sól i Pieprz	monthly bimonthly	1996	continue	J. Kaduczak I. Ziętkowska J. Namięta A. Sokołowska	Burda International
4.	Smacznego	monthly	1996	1999	E. Augustyniak	Bauer Media Polska
5.	Lubię Gotować	monthly	1998 2002	continue	H. Grykałowska J. Orłowska D. Zabrodzka A. Nalikowska	Prószyński Agora S.A.
6.	Smaki i Aromaty	monthly	1998	2002	J. Młynarczyk	Polski Dom Wydawniczy
7.	Prześlij Przepis	monthly	2007	continue	A. Sokołowska	Burda International

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	To Jest Pyszne	bimonthly	2007	2015	K. Laskowska	Phoenix Press
9.	Prześlij Przepis. Wyd. Spec.	bimonthly	2008	continue	A. Sokołowska	Burda International
10.	Przepisy Czytelników	monthly	2010	continue	M. Dziekońska	Phoenix Press
11.	Gotuj Krok po Kroku	monthly	2012	continue	K. Laskowska M. Kostecka K. Potrzebka	Bauer Media Polska
12.	Ciasta Czytelników	bimonthly	2012	continue	K. Laskowska	Phoenix Press
13.	Kulinarne Hity	bimonthly	2012	continue	A. Sokołowska	Burda International
14.	Kulinarne Hity. Wyd. Spec.	irregular	2013	continue	A. Sokołowska	Burda International
15.	Gotuj Krok po Kroku. Wyd. Spec.	bimonthly	2014	continue	K. Potrzebka	Phoenix Press
16.	Prześlij Przepis Extra	quarterly	2014	continue	A. Sokołowska	Burda International
17.	Prześlij Przepis Poleca	quarterly	2014	continue	A. Sokołowska	Burda International
18.	Pyszne*	monthly	2015	continue	K. Laskowska	Phoenix Press
19.	Sielska Kuchnia	irregular	2015	continue	M. Szczepańska A. Męślińska	Burda International
20.	Slowly Veggie	bimonthly	2015	continue	K. Gubała	Burda International
21.	Slowly Veggie. Extra	quarterly	2016	continue	K. Gubała	Burda International

* It replaced the magazine "To jest Pyszne".

Source: own research.

The segment of culinary magazines in numbers

Thorough, comparative studies of the total worth of copy sales were impossible. Only 8 out of 21 titles were registered in the Press Distribution Control Association¹⁶. The analysis of the results for the journals registered showed that the definite leader was the monthly “Prześlij Przepis”, which published the recipes sent by the readers¹⁷. Its highest average sales amounted to 1 million 100 thousand copies¹⁸. The second place belonged to Phoenix Press, which edited the magazine “Przepisy Czytelników” basing on the same formula. The highest average paid circulation amounted to 485,000 copies. It should be presumed that publishers based on the good position of these titles and introduced special editions that referred to the original magazines. The remaining four magazines achieved two-digit results. In 2015, “Gotuj. Krok po Kroku” (45,000 copies) was the best. The bimonthly magazine “Sól i Pieprz” (12,000 copies) was the weakest.

The analysis of the copy sales data entitles us to state that the leaders of this press segment were the titles that resembled mini cookery books containing recipes for every occasion. They were specific types of catalogues that are difficult to be called magazines. Periodicals that reach double-digit sales published culinary reportages, famous chefs’ features and numerous tips along with recipes. They took up the subject of healthy diets, various diets, and also created life food styles, etc. They were culinary magazines. The sales figures are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The results of culinary magazines sales in thousand copies

Year	Moje Gotowanie	Sól i Pieprz	Kuchnia. Magazyn dla Smakoszy	Przepisy Czytelników. Wyd. Spec.	Przepisy Czytelników	Prześlij Przepis	Prześlij Przepis. Wyd. Spec.	Gotuj. Krok po Kroku
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2004	41	25	29					
2005	50	23	29					
2006	46	24	25					
2007	46	23	22			451		
2008	40	23	23			897		
2009	33	22	23			1100		

¹⁶ There is a resemblance to the true story segment – large number of titles, but only some of them, statistically speaking every 4 is reported to ZKDP.

¹⁷ At least that is what the Editor claims.

¹⁸ Source: ZKDP.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2010	29	20	24			788		
2011	24	17	25		485	565		
2012	18	19	24		401	457		
2013	18	15	21	146	350	367	317	82
2014	18	15	23	104	274	300	265	63
2015	15	12	21	93	201	215	189	45

Source: own research on the basis of the data from ZKDP.

To present a better picture of the internal division in this press segment, the results from the average copy sales in 2004–2016 are shown in the chart below.

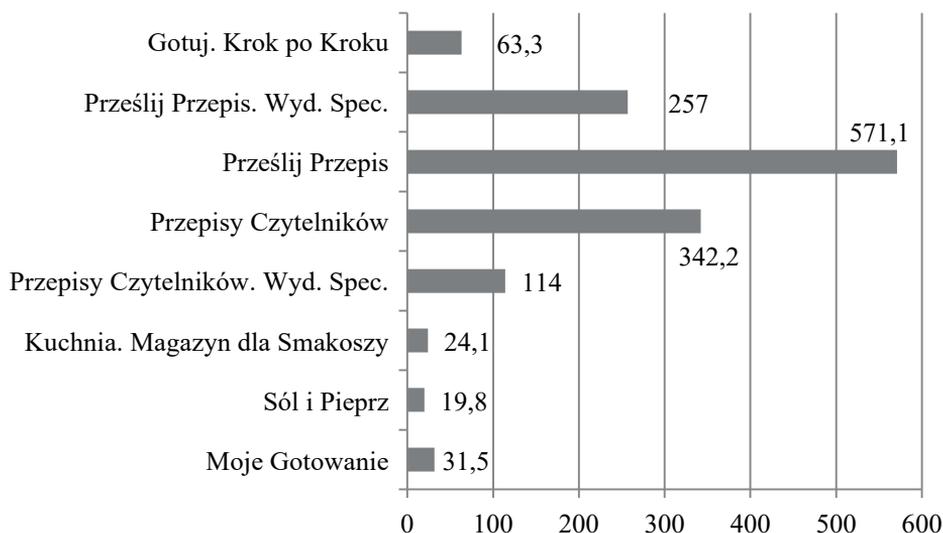


Chart 1. Average copy sales between 2004 and 2016 (in thousands of copies)

Source: own research on the basis of the data from ZKDP.

Culinary websites and blogs

Among the culinary websites that enjoyed the greatest popularity there were both services belonging to media company sites and blogs run by one or two persons. The services were usually made up of several specialists or several teams of specialists. The service was made up of: culinary experts, technical teams and marketing and advertising teams. The goal of their enterprise was to increase the brand's popularity and brand loyalty among the readers, which was to result in expected

revenue from advertising. Culinary blogs were usually hosted by passionate people who treated this activity as a hobby¹⁹.

The popularity of blogs and culinary websites was manifested by various types of rankings, and the podium often belonged to the culinary magazines. They were ahead of blogs and websites about fashion and beauty, technology or travel. It should be assumed that the cause of this is the fact that food accompanies us every day, is one of the basic biological needs. So consequently, the potential audience for culinary content is extremely wide. One can say a mass one. Services and blogs on specialized topics, namely new technologies, business and finance, can count on fewer readers. Another important factor is the type of content being published. It is undoubtedly cheaper to buy the ingredients needed to prepare the chosen dish than to collect appropriate clothes and matching accessories to make up winter clothing style. The practical dimension of blogs and culinary services has a huge impact on their popularity. The user is looking for the content that can help in everyday life and responsibilities connected with housekeeping. That is why the recipe for a simple but tasty dinner will always command a good price. In addition to this, numerous comments, users' tips, instructional videos, colourful photos will make the content provided by the blogger credible²⁰.

It will not be an abuse to state that blogs and culinary websites are a kind of interactive cookery books, and these have always been popular with the public. Table 3 presents the most popular blogs.

Table 3. The most popular blogs in Poland

2012	2013	2014	2015
Kwestiasmaku.com	Kotlet.TV	Kwestiasmaku.com	Kwestiasmaku.com
Kotlet.TV	Kwestiasmaku.com	Kotlet.TV	Mojewypieki.com
Mojewypieki.com	Mojewypieki.com	Mojewypieki.com	Chleby.info.pl
Pozytywnakuchnia.pl	Pozytywnakuchnia.pl	Domowewypieki.pl	Madameedith.blogspot.com
Olgasmile.com	Gotowanieciesz.pl	Whiteplate.blogspot.com	Kuchniabazylii.pl

Source: own research based on the data: virtualnapolska.pl; *Blogerzy w Polsce 2013. Znajomość – wizerunek – znaczenie*, <http://pbi.org.pl/aktualnosci/Blogerzy/pdf>.

¹⁹ In 2012, according to the research of the Polish culinary blogosphere, there were over 2500 blogs, which were used by 11 million Poles who looked for recipes for various occasions. On average they spent 3 minutes on the magazine page. In 2012, 3.5 million Poles regularly searched for the recipes on blogs.

²⁰ One should also remember that making a short film describing the preparation of a particular dish at home is easier than shooting a fashion movie. To make a short culinary film one should have his own, small, not especially large kitchen and a suitable film camera a camera and light. Many movies are made by the means of smartphones. The topic is simply easier to implement. An example might be Kotlet.TV distributed on the YouTube channel.

Analyzing various rankings of culinary websites over the past five years, it is clearly visible that the first places were occupied by those that belonged to the largest media groups operating on the Polish market. The products of these companies exchanged the first places with one another and attracted the largest number of real users. In 2014, the Durszlak.pl service connected with the Interia Group but also presented on the Phoenix Press website gained the first place. It is known that both Inaria Group and Phoenix Press are owned by Bauer Media Polska. Durszlak.pl debuted at the end of 2012 as an aggregator of recipes from other blogs and websites. In 2014, it had 1.68 million users, so 1.21 million more than in 2013. The second place belonged to Smaker.pl, which in 2014 gained 564.9 thousand Internet users. Altogether 1.34 million people used the service. Its owner was also the Interi Group. Kuchnia.wp.pl, which belonged to the Wirtualna Polska Group, fell to third place. It enjoyed 1.25 million Internet visitors. Gotowanie.onet.pl, which belonged to the Onet-RASP Group, and whose owner was Ringier Axel Springer, reached over 1 million users. Ringier's service gained the result of 1.22 million users. The fifth place belonged to Ugotuj.to.pl, the service which was in Agora's portfolio. It got 1.02 million users. In the top ten, there was only one service directly connected with the press title – Mojegotowanie.pl with the result of 801.9 thousand users. The service belonged to Burda International. In 2014, the culinary blog Kwestiasmaku.com also entered the competition. Due to the constantly increasing number of real users, the reach and scope of the impact was so great that it started competing with culinary services. Chart 2 illustrates the described data.

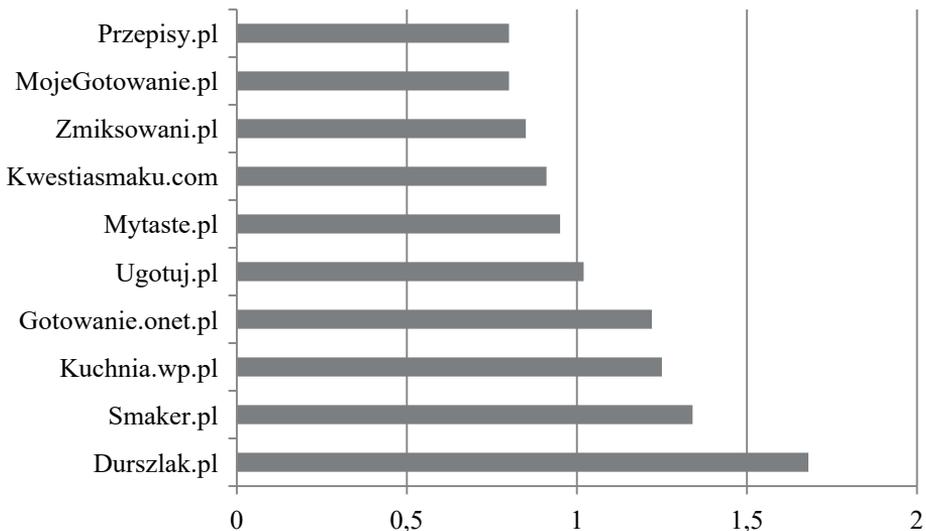


Chart 2. Ranking of the 10 most popular culinary websites in May 2014 (users in millions)

Source: <http://www.press.pl/tresc/37385,najp-services-cosmetics-ma-interia>.

Comparing the results achieved by the blogs and culinary services in 2013 and 2014, it is visible that the three most popular: Durszlak.pl, Mytaste.pl and Smaker.pl increased the number of their real users, thereby strengthening their position. The culinary service websites, which were connected with large information services and functioned as their subpages, lost their users. Ringier Axel Springer's cookery.onet.pl did not exceed one million users – 900.900. The other of Ringier's services – Bistro24.pl recorded only 724.2 thousand real users. What is more in November 2013 following the example of Bauer Media Polska, launched the Targsmaku.pl aggregator, which in December 2014 recorded 165.8 thousand users. Kuchnia.wp.pl, which belonged to the Wirtualna Polska Group, got 15th place in the ranking with the result of 666.8 thousand users.

The position of the culinary blogs rose and made two culinary blogs appear in the ranking. Kwestiasmaku.com recorded over one million real users (1.17 million). Mojewypieki.com has reached the level of 817 thousand users. It is worth adding that in October 2013 Kwestiasmaku.pl, as the first Polish blog, reached over one million real users. Besides the list also included a marketing website – introduced within the campaign of Lidl stores Kuchnialidla.pl website, where the advertising culinary experts associated with the brand: Karol Okrasa and Pascal Brodnicki placed their recipes.

The analysis of the results concerning the amount of time spent on the website showed that the users spent the longest time using the blog Mojewypieki.com (average 11 min and 46 sec). The second place was taken by Gotowanie.onet.pl (9 min and 50 sec), which was owned by Ringier. The podium also included the recipe aggregator owned by Bauer Media – Smaker.pl (9 min and 19 sec). A bit less time (8 min and 2 sec) was spent by the users on the website of another Bauer aggregator – Durszlak.pl. Table 4 contains the analyzed data.

Table 4. Ranking of culinary websites and blogs – comparison between December 2013 and 2014

Name	Real users		Page views		Average time per a user	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Durszlak.pl	1 549 389	1 670 587	–	17 528 971	–	00:08:02
Mytaste.pl	–	1 581 804	–	–	–	–
Smaker.pl	1 075 388	1 506 528	12 891 904	1 786 591	00:09:43	00:09:19
Ugotuj.pl	1 486 959	1 394 082	10 981 256	10 327 011	00:06:11	00:05:23
Mojegotowanie.pl	919 714	1 211 926	7 584 344	9 372 826	00:05:04	00:04:22
Kwestiasmaku.pl	1 059 354	1 175 827	–	–	–	–

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Allrecipes.pl	962 076	1 034 568	–	–	–	–
Onet.pl – gotowanie	1 622 979	900 886	14 310 400	9 482 808	00:09:01	00:09:50
Przepisy.pl	1 075 873	849 166	–	–	–	–
Wielkiezarcie.com	943 750	820 547	7 652 274	6 084 097	00:05:19	00:04:21
Mojewypieki.com	506 785	816 998	–	13 181 798	–	00:11:46
Gotujemy.pl	859 192	793 239	6 253 941	7 323 303	00:04:12	00:06:29
Kuchnialidla.pl	710 010	770 551	–	–	–	–
Bistro.24.pl – gotowanie	–	724 254		3 142 355		00:03:50
Wp.pl – kuchnia	729 859	666 769		4 057 034		00:05:38

Source: Megapanel PBI/Gemius.

Conclusion

The years 1994–2016 were the time of changes and transformations in the culinary press, undoubtedly connected with the emergence and the dynamic development of blogs and websites dealing with this topic. The research conducted enables us to divide them into three sub-periods. The first one included the years 1994–1998, in which six magazines made their debut, which along with the recipes for various occasions also edited the journalistic material such as: feature articles, reportages, interviews, readers' letters. Magazines were divided into chapters, cross-words, tips and contests. During this period, no dominant publisher emerged. The publishers operating on the Polish market usually had one title each. The second sub-period which was characterized by stagnation, contained the years 1999–2006. No new periodical appeared in the culinary press segment and two monthly magazines disappeared from the market. The third sub-period, 2007–2016, characterized by a dynamic increase in the number of the titles. 15 new periodicals appeared on the market. “Prześlj Przepis”, which belonged to Burda International's and “Przepisy Czytelników” owned by Phoenix Press's dominated. Both magazines published the recipes sent to the editor. The titles formed a kind of cookery books in the episodes. They were often devoted to one of the leading topics such as Easter Cakes, winter soups, etc. The resignation from journalistic content could be due to the growing popularity of blogs and culinary websites, which focused only on the distribution of recipes.

Altogether in the years 1994–2016, 21 periodicals were inaugurated. The analysis conducted entitles us to state that the most important magazines were: “Moje Gotowanie” (Burda International), “Kuchnia. Magazyn dla Smakoszy” (Agora) and “Sól i Pieprz” (Burda International). The most popular catalogues with recipes were “Prześlij Przepis” (Burda International), “Przepisy Czytelników” (Phoenix Press), and special editions based on those titles.

In the years 1994–2016 Burda International was the most important publisher of culinary press, and it owned 52% of the segment. The second place belonged to Phoenix Press with the share of 24%. Bauer Media Polska and Agora possessed 9,5% each. The least, namely 5% belonged to Polish Publishing House which presently does not exist. Website blogs and services were specific types of modern cookery books, or catalogues with recipes. The most important blogs were: Kwestiasmaku.com, Mojewypieki.com, Kotlet.TV, which since 2012 have successfully competed with the services made up by media companies. Among the services, those connected with the large media groups that operated on the Polish market dominated. Bauer Media invested in the content aggregators such as: Durszlak.pl and Smaker.pl. Ringier Axel Springer from the Onet.pl home page referred to the booklet on cooking. Similar solutions were chosen by the Wirtualna Polska Group and Agora. Only Burda International offered its readers the services linked to the title “Mojegotowanie.pl”. Companies involved in the food production and consumption, i.e. Lidl, Prymat, began to make up their own culinary service websites, gaining another advertising channel.

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Summary

On the Polish press market we can observe an increase segmentation. Media companies, despite more and more difficult situation among colourful magazines, have still offered readers new cooking magazines. In the years 1994–2016 there were 21 magazines, which belonged to the biggest media companies: Bauer Media Poland, Burda International, Phoenix Press, Agora. The expansion of new media, food services and blogs among them, caused numerous changes and transformations in the segment of cooking magazines.

The article is an attempt to answer the questions: what were the most important food magazines, food blogs and services on Polish media market; who were their owners, what was cooking magazines situation in participation culture, how did cooking magazines get along at the time of food services and blogs expansion.

PRASA KULINARNA W CZASACH POPULARNOŚCI BLOGÓW I SERWISÓW KULINARNYCH

Streszczenie

Na polskim rynku prasowym obserwujemy pogłębiającą się segmentację. Koncerny medialne, mimo coraz trudniejszej sytuacji wśród kolorowych magazynów, nadal oferowały czytelnikom nowe czasopisma kulinarne. W latach 1994–2016 zadebiutowało 21 tytułów, które należały do największych firm medialnych: Bauer Media Polska, Burda International, Phoenix Press, Agora. Ekspansja nowych mediów, w tym serwisów i blogów kulinarnych, spowodowała liczne zmiany i przeobrażenia w segmencie magazynów o tematyce kulinarnej.

Artykuł stanowi próbę odpowiedzi na pytania: jakie były najważniejsze magazyny, serwisy i blogi kulinarne na polskim rynku medialnym, kto był ich właścicielem, jaka była kondycja magazynów kulinarnych w kulturze partycypacji oraz jak prasa kulinarna radziła sobie w czasach ekspansji serwisów i blogów kulinarnych.