

# E-mails do not lie



People tell stories on the telephone rather than in an e-mail or in personal interviews. This is what an American communication researcher has discovered.

37 percent of all what people say on the phone is not true. This is the result of a study by Jeff Hancock of Cornell University in the U.S. state of New York. The psychologist and his team interviewed 30 students asking how often they lie on the phone, in e-mails, on mobile phone short messages and in personal talks. Hancock and his team published the result in the British science magazine "New Scientist".

Accordingly to this study, people lie most on phone. There are only about 14 percent of lies in e-mails, and about 21 percent in short messages (SMS). In personal conversations there are 27 percent of untrue statements.

The psychologists have been surprised by this result. They had expected the exact opposite, because in e-mails, there is a bigger distance between the sender and the receiver, what makes the telling of stories easier. In addition, the researchers assumed that people, particularly in the personal interview, don't accurately say the truth, as this is the most common form of communication.

Maybe many people hesitate to tell stories in e-mails because these documents are automatically stored archiving the lies. In addition, e-mail writers have more time to reflect on an answer. Obviously, people lie more often when they have to respond spontaneously – for example, the question "Do you like my dress?"

The psychologist Hancock hopes that companies use his research results for their communication. He believes that the phone is the medium of choice for sale affairs – if "employees are encouraged, to stretch the truth," according to the magazine "New Scientist".