TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA MARKETS IN LOCAL ENVIRONMENTS

TRANSFORMACIJA TRADICIONALNIH MEDIJSKIH TRŽIŠTA U LOKALNOM OKRUŽENJU

Suzana Žilič Fišer

Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, University of Maribor, Maribor, Slovenia
Fakultet elektrotehnike i računalstva, Sveučilište u Mariboru, Maribor, Slovenija

Abstract

New media platforms have impacted the practices of traditional media in local environments. New media has created new opportunities for news organizations to participate in unique storytelling experiences and novel practices of audience engagement in global, national, regional and local environments. Many developments have raised questions, such as: Will new media platforms replace traditional media? This paper is based on a survey of students in Slovenia regarding the role of new media and the survey on usage of new media in local election campaign in 2010. An empirical analysis which is divided in two parts is the basis for the conclusions. In first part we analyzed the consumption of different media from younger generation. The second part of the analysis gives us the information about consumption of new media from the candidates in local election campaign in municipality of Maribor. The empirical data supports the hypotheses of the paper. First, traditional media requires main transformation but can not be substituted completely by new media. The paper will discuss the role of media, particularly television as the main traditional media. Second, media audience value medium according to the credibility and quality of information. According to the results of the survey among the young generation and according to the short overview of the local election campaign the paper will open the discussion about impact of traditional and new media.

A survey of today's websites and digital initiatives demonstrates that traditional television practices are now built into various web and digital media initiatives of local media industry. The future mandates the incorporation of traditional media into new platforms, but the chief paradigm for following professional standards should remain the same. The future of traditional and new platforms depends on their capacity to meet credibility and ethical standards!

Sažetak

Nove medijske platforme su utjecale na praksu tradicionalnih medija u lokalnim sredinama. Novi mediji su stvorili nove mogućnosti za novinske organizacije da sudjeluju u jedinstvenom pripovijedanju iskustava i novoj praksi angažmana publike u globalnoj, nacionalnoj, regionalnoj i lokalnim sredinama. Mnoga zbivanja su izazvala pitanja, kao što su: Hoće li nove medijske platforme zamijeniti tradicionalne medije? Ovaj rad temelji se na anketi studenata u Sloveniji o ulozi novih medija i istraživanju o korištenju novih medija u lokalnoj izbornoj kampanji u 2010. Empirijska analiza koja je podijeljena u dva dijela je temelj za zaključke. U prvom dijelu smo analizirali korištenje različitih medija kod mlađe generacije. U drugom dijelu analize dobivamo informacije o korištenju novih medija u kampanji kandidata na lokalnim izborima u općini Maribor. Empirijski podaci podržavaju hipotezu rada. Prvo, tradicionalni mediji zahtijevaju velike transformacije, ali ne mogu se zamijeniti potpuno novim medijima. U radu će se raspravljati o ulozi medija, osobito televizije kao glavnog tradicionalnog medija. Drugo, medijska publika vrednuje medije prema vjerodostojnosti i kvaliteti informacija. Prema rezultatima istraživanja među mladom generacijom i prema kratkim pregledom kampanje lokalnih izbora u radu se otvara rasprava o utjecaju tradicionalnih i novih medija.

Istraživanje današnjih web stranica i digitalne inicijative pokazuje da je tradicionalna televizijska praksa danas ugrađena u razne web i digitalne medijske inicijative lokalne medijske industrije. Budućnost zahtijeva uključivanje tradicionalnih medija u nove platforme, no glavna paradigma za profesionalne standarde treba ostati ista. Budućnost tradicionalnih i novih platformi ovisi o njihovoj sposobnosti da zadovolje vjerodostojnost i etičke standarde!

1. Introduction

Technological, economic, regulatory, global, and social changes have had a tremendous influence on the media industry. New media platforms have impacted the practices of traditional media in local environments and local elections. New media has created new opportunities for news organizations to participate in unique storytelling experiences and novel practices of audience engagement in global, national, regional and local environments.

Accordingly, such presentation and consumption patterns have had consequences for newsrooms in the digital environment. The political implications of the media and technological changes are evident in election campaign. It has been necessary to shift toward a convergence model that governs the production, distribution, and consumption processes. New business models reflect changing consumer realities. The media space is now controlled increasingly by consumers. The increase in media content opportunities has led to audience fragmentation, and it is unreasonable to expect that media will attract the large audiences of previous periods /1/.

The growing use of the internet, however, has raised concerns about the quality and credibility of its content /2/, /3/. In fact, credibility is particularly important for new media, because people tend to avoid using sources that they do not trust /4/. Despite the rapid growth in the use of online information sources, some critics have decried the credibility of the internet due to its easy access and lack of standards for publishing /5/, /6/.

Many developments have raised questions, such as: Will new media platforms replace traditional media? What is the role of new platforms in media environment? What are the opportunities of traditional media in an unpredictable future? As media management changes its organization, we are convinced that media should remain in the modern era. The media's mission has been to contribute to the development of our society, which is achieved through the primary functions that the media fulfils: to inform, express, and control (watchdog function). New media can replace traditional media institutions when they contribute to the national welfare through these chief functions. The research is based on two hypotheses:
1. Media audience value the medium according to the credibility of the media platform.
2. Traditional media will be transformed but not substituted by new media.

Verification of the hypotheses will open the empirical and the theoretical arguments about the role of new media in Slovenia.

This paper is based on a survey of Slovenian students regarding the role of new media and the usage on new media in local election campaign in municipality of Maribor in 2010. An empirical analysis which is divided in two parts is the basis for the conclusions and verification of the hypotheses. In first part we analyzed the usage of different media from younger generation. The second part analyse the information about usage of new media from the candidates in local election campaign. Very important questions are being asked: Who is a journalist and what counts as journalism in an interactive world? In recent periods, questions on ethical and professional standards are raised frequently. Thus, the standards of professional journalism will be extremely important. They are the standards that make journalism professional and ethical - they are the sine qua non of modern media.

The principal argument that paper would like to stress is the importance of new tools and new infrastructure in local media - but only to support creative, ethical, and professional media content. In the present - more important than they have been in the past - public interest and professional standards are the chief goals of media activities.

We can distinguish three main functions the media: to inform, to express, and to control. Are these functions the basis for new media? Journalism started with print media, in which the standard of what is "newsworthy" began, meaning that already in the early stages of journalism, a key question arose: What was relevant for the media and for the audience? /7/. The inverted pyramid remains a common standard for news writing.

2. Empirical study

2.1. Young generation and Media

This survey of users collected data regarding the perception of media users and the difference between traditional media and new media. The study helped us understand the role of social networks for the younger generation and the difference between new and traditional media. We assumed that the younger generation and those aged under 40 years are the most frequent users of the internet. We wanted to determine whether there was any conflict between new and traditional media.

Most respondents answered that they devoted most of their time to Facebook, Netlog, and other blogs. Most responses stressed three principal reasons for using the internet: searching for information, emailing, and entertainment. Regarding traditional media (radio, television, and print), the most frequently used medium was television. Respondents used the television 103 minutes daily, print 59 minutes, and radio 40 minutes. According to the question on the use of traditional media, 49% used it to inform, 18% to entertain, and the remainder to fill free time.

Use of internet	replies
To inform	24%
Enterntainment	16%
Searching for useful information	26%
Email	22%
Social networking	10%
remainder	2%

Table 1: Usage of internet

Traditional media	Time (min)
Radio	40
Television	103
Print	59
rest	0

Table 2: The most important traditional media

Media	
Radio	3
Television	1
Print	2
Blog	5
Social networks	4
rest	6

**Table 3: Influence on Public Opinion. 1=the highest level of influence,
6=the lowest level of influence.**

Sixty-five percent agreed completely that traditional media are more useful to users, and 29% agree only partially with that statement. Most respondents explained that traditional media are more useful and simpler to use.

Part of the survey focused on the role of media in public opinion. Of the suggested media, most respondents agreed that television best reflects public opinion, followed by print and radio. Blogs and social networks do not reflect public opinion at all. Regarding the question on the credibility of media, 75% of respondents relied more on information from traditional media compared with online media. Accordingly, more than 30% of respondents had their own blog. Less than 30%, however, believed that blogs influence public opinion.

According to the analysis of 1250 students in Slovenia, it is evident that they received most of their information on the outside world from television and the internet. They regarded Žurnal 24 (a free newspaper) an important print source of information. They claimed that the most important factor in deciding between media was quality. Nearly 40% (females and males) selected a medium according to its credibility and impartiality; 29% decided based on price (therefore, regular print was not relevant to them). More than half of all students created or edited web content.

Overall, the students answered that media are very important to them, but 61.7% responded that they do not trust the media due to political bias. Most students agreed with the statement that the media promotes consumerism. The importance of the media and its credibility and quality underscore the standards that it should follow. A case of the Slovenian media calls for important changes in media organizations.

2.2. *New media in electoral campaign*

The changes in media management and the perception of media influenced the media involvement in election campaign in Slovenia local elections in 2010. We concentrated on the electoral campaign in the municipality of Maribor. The main feature of the electoral campaign in Maribor, that is urban municipality, was the high number of the candidates. There were twelve candidates, together with the actual mayor that went for re-election.

	Youtube	Facebook	Twitter	Official web site	Linkedin	Wikipedia	Gmail
Monika Piberl	X	X		X			
Tomaž Kancler	X	X	X	X			
Tomaž Orešič	X	X	X	X	X		
Gregor Jager	X	X		X			
Franc Kangler	X	X	X	X		X	X
Bojan Horvat	X	X		X			
Zdenko Vinkov	X						
Stojan Auer	X	X		X			
Teodor Lorenčič		X	X	X			
Borut Ambrožič	X	X					
Melita Cimerman	X						
Janez Ujčič	X	X		X			

Table 4: New communication platforms, used by candidates in the local electoral campaign 2010 in the Municipality of Maribor

The election results ended with very tight outcome for the two candidates. Actual Mayor, Franc Kangler got 50.41 percent of all the votes in the municipality of Maribor. According to the results where one of the candidates had to get more that half of the all votes municipality in Maribor re-elected Franc Kangler. In comparison to other candidates Franc Kangler used new media platforms the most. You tube, Face book, Linkedin and Twitter were social networks that were very active earlier that from the first day of electoral campaign. The official website was very interactive and informative. Accordingly, his presence in the traditional media was the highest in comparison to other candidate. This is due to the fact that his role of actual mayor influenced many news reports. The coverage of electoral campaign was very intensive at the regional and local television. The social networks offered the information about the television shows. Particularly, the campaign of Franc Kangler put lots of effort to television presence. Accordingly, he was one of the candidates that were present in all the TV shows. The results of the analysis of media platforms in local elections explain the great potential of new media. The information through new media platform is the necessity when appealing to all the segments of society.

3. Television and new media

According to an empirical study of the young generation and according to different theoretical discussions, we are convinced that television assumes the principal role in society. The situation of the television viewer is paradoxical. The medium is self-evidently private: person watches it in his domestic environment, typically alone or with, at most, two or three others. But, there is also a sense that he is living in two places and, sometimes, two times simultaneously - in the world in which he physically exists and the world that television presents to him. Although he watches privately, he is also aware that he is part of a wider viewing public, especially, perhaps, when television covers a ceremonial or sporting event at which spectators are visibly, or at least audibly, present. Many authors would stress the leading role of television when researching the advertising market /**8**/. Thus, because television domesticates the communal experience and, conversely, makes the private experience communal, it is neither public nor private in the traditional sense. Television is undeniably popular, a finding that is supported by our analysis. But is there fear that new media could replace it? The electoral campaign and the direction of political communication give us the evidence that the internet is important tool in the communication. The internet became one of the main communication tools for the political communication, because websites have the characteristics of traditional media and they add the interactivity /**9**/. The electoral campaign had to implement the communication strategy with the usage of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace /**10**/. The most important elements with regard to the perception of an audience are credibility and value. In the "hypertextual" society, the audience perception is selective. The information is perceived according to the value of the medium. Credibility and value are extremely important in a fragmented society, primarily because the time for production and consumption is limited. The internet allows one to use a great deal of information, but what matters in the "hypertextual" world is the value of information. The value of information is connected to the credibility of a medium. The value medium consists of the fulfilment of basic functions. According to our research, basic functions can not be fulfilled in the same manner by traditional and new media. The issue of credibility is highly connected to the influence of media. However, traditional media, even if high professional standards are met, can not remain at its present position. The evolution of media is growing due to the need to attract audiences through different platforms /**11**/. Broadcasting ecology has changed beyond recognition for audiences, channel providers, and infrastructure operators. Yet, it is often stressed /**12**/ that despite the growth of the multichannel environment, terrestrial broadcasters remain in a strong position. Only they have the critical mass markets of viewers that advertisers require, which builds the market in which a particular piece of content can be exploited.

4. Competition for the same audience, competition for credibility

Accounts of changes in the television industry over the last two decades often describe a steady but slow decline in television audiences. This pattern raises the issue with regard to fragmentation of an audience across the range of available programming - the audience is spread over the available supply /**13**/. The proliferation of news media has influenced changes in news media audiences. Media audiences in national and local market have fragmented. The increase in competition has led some news organizations to distinguish themselves from less responsible outlets. Online versions of newspapers have augmented the news media arena. Now, millions of bloggers, countless websites, and webcasts have become mainstream users. All constitute the body of today's news media, and there is no foreseeable end to this proliferation. The increased competition has affected the quality of news reports. There are two important effects of the changes in these markets:

- Pressure develops to lower ethical standards and sensationalize stories.
- Confusion is created about who is a journalist, when anyone can publish.

Key questions remain with regard to news values, newsworthiness, and credibility. Many stories are the result of what the principles of newsworthiness encourage. These principles are taught in news writing classes in journalism schools. Students are taught that there must be conflict or tension, and many times, that tension leads to a negative portrayal of an event or person. The individual journalist operates in the context of institutional, national, and international regimes. In the globalized world, media ethics must be negotiated professionally, institutionally, nationally, and internationally. Former Reuter's editor-in-chief Geert Linnebank stated at a conference in March 2007, "Now everyone can be a reporter, commentator, or a film director—the days of owning and controlling

these processes are over." Journalism challenges news organizations to increase the extent of their direct engagement with audiences as participants in gathering, selecting, editing, producing, and communicating news. /**14**/ Production arrangements and management creativity in the news industry are facilitated by technology. Yet, technology is not an independent factor that influences the work of journalists externally - it must be seen in terms of its implementation and, therefore, how it extends and amplifies previous methods of doing things. /**15**/ The changes in the social, technological, and cultural domains of everyday life are beyond anyone's control; yet, they affect each of us distinctly. In this context, the fundamental role of professional journalism - providing society with some form of social cement (ground), orientation, guidance, and benchmarks - is essential. The professional role and autonomy of reporters and editors remain vital.

5. Conclusion

According to the empirical analysis and the theoretical research the first hypotheses, can be confirmed. *Media audience value the medium according to the credibility of the media platform.* According to the survey among Slovene students the consumption of new media increased but users do not trust the information from new media. The most reliable source remains television. Additionally, in local elections the candidates used the new media platforms but television again played the most important role. The increased collaboration with the citizen-consumer can lead to different journalism, but its role is increasing. Consequently, the values that are defended in the media are even more important than before. It is important for journalists to reconsider and re-evaluate their role in an online landscape, because such interpretations will shape the realities of journalism /**16**/. Traditionally, news has been a top-down, one-way business. Online news has affected a major restructuring of the relationship between the news media and the public. Robert Nelson /**17**/ says that convergence *"is great for television news, great for newspapers marketing and awful for both the marketplace of ideas and the marketability of talented geeks, who, from my experience, are the bedrock of quality print in America."* As Huang said, thinking critically, conducting high-quality reporting, and knowing how to write remain the priorities for news professionals /**18**/. The progressive development of society and the success of media companies require a demanding audience and responsible media. Research of new media open the discussions about new values in society /**19**/ but professional standards are important more

than ever before. Democratic freedoms are basic elements for modern society where questions of multicultural communication is important priority /**20**/. Even as the aesthetic and technological techniques with which television is shot, recorded, acted, edited, and mixed have continued to evolve, many of televisions' chief industrial tendencies have persisted and prospered. In the wake of the high-tech and dotcom collapses of 2000, for example, many surviving new media/old media "synergies" had to justify their value for capitalization and expansion by implementing corporate strategies that were once taught to be archaic remnants of television's analogue era /**21**/. The empirical data support the second hypothesis. *Traditional media will be transformed but not substituted by new media.* Media space is controlled by the consumers which are active creators of media and the interaction in the process of information is very important moment for media production. New media business model appeals to the new platforms which should be incorporated in the traditional media. According to the new managerial perspectives in media industry it is important to build new cross-platform brands to better serve the demands of the audience. Furthermore, the commitment to innovation is a justification for exploring the potential of new platforms in a more effective and imaginative way in comparison to the competitors. Searching for the synergies of traditional and new media is the key pespective in the new media management./**22**/ Many authors open the question of media convergence as an important step to stable financing for public service media /**23**/, but leading role of televison is remarkable.

According to several studies /**24**/, even if enormous changes develop in the lifestyles of media users, online news will not replace traditional news sources; instead, it supplements traditional mass media as an expanded source of news. As expected, the day of local elections was again devoted to television, the audience of television channels increased in Slovenia. At the end of the electoral campaign the citizens started to search for the most reliable source. As it happened in Slovenia, it was a television on national, regional and local level. A survey of today's websites and digital initiatives demonstrates that traditional television practices are now built into various web and digital media initiatives of local media industry. The future mandates the incorporation of traditional media into new platforms, but the chief paradigm for following professional standards should remain the same. The future of traditional and new platforms depends on their capacity to meet credibility and ethical standards!

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