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Convergence Journalism and the Public Interest: The Case of Croatian Public Radio Television (HRT)

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Summary

This text deals with the transformation of Croatia's public service, Croatian Radio Television in the context of the integrated media and building a converged newsroom. I compare the newsroom workflow at HRT with the daily routines of its strongest commercial competitor – Nova TV and the good practices of selected public service companies. At the end of 2012 the public service media provider, Croatian Radio Television (HRT) published a new set of rules and regulations and announced its reorganisation. The new HRT is primarily looking for a new approach to the media and wishes to show that a public service is no longer just radio and television, but a joint effort which acts as new media. According to the new restructuring plan, the greatest challenge is to establish the convergent integrated newsroom and consequently the establishment of a single news media service. In view of its resources: technical, human and financial, but also in view of the modes of financing (TV licence fees and advertisements), it is naturally expected for Croatian Radio Television not only to become a role model media that provides accurate, authentic information in the public interest, but also to endorse innovation and the use of new technologies. An enormous effort has to be undertaken to prove that the convergence is not only about the quantity of journalistic content, but also could bring quality. HRT is at the beginning of the changing process, yet its goals and vision have not been communicated effectively. Most of the HRT staff has not embraced the new vision, nor the professional, economic, and logic argumentation that stands behind it. Most of them are sceptical and this can slow down the speed of integration. It seems that for HRT, it is not enough just to have a restructuring plan in place, but also a well thought out plan of how to break down the resistance of its employees and motivate them to abandon old habits. There is a lot to be done to create a working environment that could fulfil the proclaimed mission to produce high-quality, trusted and varied journalism (media content) that serves the society and democracy.

Keywords: Convergence, Public Interest, News Values, Technology, Croatian Radio Television

Introduction

This paper deals with the transformation of Croatian Radio Television (HRT) and its attempts to build a multimedia organisation and converged news production, not just to become more efficient and cheaper, but to become the most trusted source of information for Croatian citizens. HRT as a public service defines its role as an “indivisible part of European public service media tradition established to serve the society, create the public value and guarantee the development of a democratic society” (HRT, 2012). Accordingly, the new organisation aims to bring the use of all the platforms and media to produce a high-quality, authentic and varied programme. The high quality trusted news and current affairs content on all the platforms is one of the first goals.

In Croatia, just as everywhere else in the world, huge changes are happening in the newsrooms. The general expectation is that the media companies, especially public service, use technology and newsroom convergence for the sake of better informing their citizens. Not only are today’s TV broadcasting companies having to battle other TV competition, but they have serious competition in internet portals, which also publish video content (Krajina and Perišin, 2008). In most cases the main news show airs news stories that have already been published on news portals several hours earlier and have often been accompanied by multimedia elements (text, photos, video). The public is demanding quick and accurate information, television is changing and adjusting, but needs to become even faster. The requirement to be first and faster in publishing a piece of information is often the cause of professional mistakes, which can be inaccuracies or lack of ethics (Barnett, 2011: 146).

For a long time, HRT was the main source of information for citizens of Croatia. Croatian audiences had to wait until 7:30 p.m., when the main public television newscast titled *Dnevnik* was scheduled, in order to learn about the main events of the day. There used to be a saying, still mentioned among the news professionals, which claimed that “What has not been broadcast in *Dnevnik* has not happened!” (Perišin, 2010). Nowadays, we get most of our news from other devices. All three national televisions in Croatia post their content on the internet and the social media. In that field, the biggest HRT competitors are Nova TV and RTL, commercial TV stations both holding a concession on the national level, but also some other internet portals. Nova TV has, over the past few years, made a huge leap forward. It has managed to capture the highest viewing figures for its news programme, its news portal is among the most visited portals and has also introduced a smartphone application.

For most of the big media companies convergence became the magic word. The media companies try to introduce convergence journalism and build integrated newsrooms. The reasons for the changes can be different – reducing the number of

staff, becoming more efficient and faster, but for the public service the main goal should be more quality content on all the available platforms.

Convergence as Mark Deuze says is not only a buzzword. It is a key identifier of the trends in today's digital culture and it defines also a professional identity of journalists (Deuze, 2008).

“Live” Does Not Necessarily Mean “Better”: The Myth of the Excessive Live Stand-up

In the race for viewer figures, the public interest is often overlooked, while shows are filled with trivial content, filled with the content that has little obvious contribution to the public debate (e.g. showing an MP cough in the middle of their speech, or zooming into their outfit). In situations when portals are quicker than the central news show, TV newsrooms exploit live reporting by their journalists to the very limits (Tuggle and Huffman, 2001).

This is also the field where the 3 main broadcasters in Croatia are trying to beat each other. Having as much live as one can, is regarded as a formula for success. So, even in the HRT main TV news *Dnevnik*, a journalist should be seen reporting live about the temperature of the day standing in one of Zagreb's squares next to a thermometer, as well as, tackling the issue (not the news) of joblessness for a Sunday night show and standing live in front of the Employment Bureau which is normally closed on Sundays and there is nobody in the shot but the journalist by himself. TV news editors are convinced that live reports increase ratings of a TV station. However, existing studies refute this view.

In the United States, where a live report is an integral part of and often makes up most of the news and current affair shows, a study was conducted based on a sample of 2,420 shows. Local TV news incorporating 154 stations in some 50 towns were used to test 10 deep-rooted myths about TV news (Rosenstiel et al., 2007). Research has shown that a journalist reporting live from the very spot of the event is not a factor that will glue the viewers to their seats or attract them during the course of the show. It has not been found that more live reports have a long-term effect on the possible increase of viewing figures. Most of those surveyed know exactly what such a reporting form should be used for and conclude that live reports are often pointless and are incorporated into the news shows because they can be incorporated, rather than due to this being justified. According to the research, the so-called “enterprise stories” are what attract viewers most and those are the reports that bring up topics that are important to a large number of people and are put together in a truthful and analytical way. It is a kind of journalism that involves reports not based on press releases or news conferences, or newspaper headlines. But the stories reporters dig up on their own and go beyond covering events, trying to explore the forces shaping those events (Wenger, 2010).

Media Content and Technological Change

When Galtung and Ruge established a news values system (1965: 64-91), the media scene was much different than the present one. The news values have to be constantly checked and re-checked, not just because of the changes in the media world, but also due to the changes in the relation between those who create the news and the public that consumes and follows it.

The internet, social networks, and user-generated content are establishing new standards. There is more pressure from outside factors, such as spin doctors and PR experts who have become part of the arena, thus blurring the clear distinction between events and pseudo-events, so that often a pseudo-event is passed off as a piece of news, as accurate but unverified information (Bennett, 2011). It is the responsibility of the journalists and editors within the media to retain professional criteria and information values in this new environment. Max Hastings has best defined this when he became *The Daily Telegraph* editor: "Readers have no concept of what they want and what they do not want in the media. This is why there exist editors to decide for them" (Brighton and Foy 2007: 7). Despite a change of the media environment, media companies and the public service in particular, should at least offer its public relevant, credible information, so as to make use of the advantages of each of the particular media or platform. Good organisation of news gathering and the exploitation of the assumed benefits of convergence can help in achieving this requirement. As Cushion says, the reality of a busy newsroom or the economic imperatives shaping journalism should not be divorced from an understanding of the democratic value of news (2012: 51).

The public still expects that public radio and television service continues to fulfil its basic functions which have been closely linked to it since its very beginnings: the provision of information, entertainment and education. The production of news and current affairs gathers the largest number of journalists. In the converged newsroom it is a fully-fledged multimedia effort. The internal organisation and workflow impacts the final product. TV companies attempt to attract their viewers to watch their shows and still try very hard to convince them to choose their news show amid vast competition and to give them the possibility to watch it not only from their homes on their TV sets, but on their way from home to work and vice-versa, on the screens of their mobile computers, mobile phones, tablets etc.

New technological possibilities require able, versatile, equally curious, but at the same time independent and educated journalists, with primarily great technical and journalist skills, which are still very important, but at the same time the need for responsible editing and management is even greater.

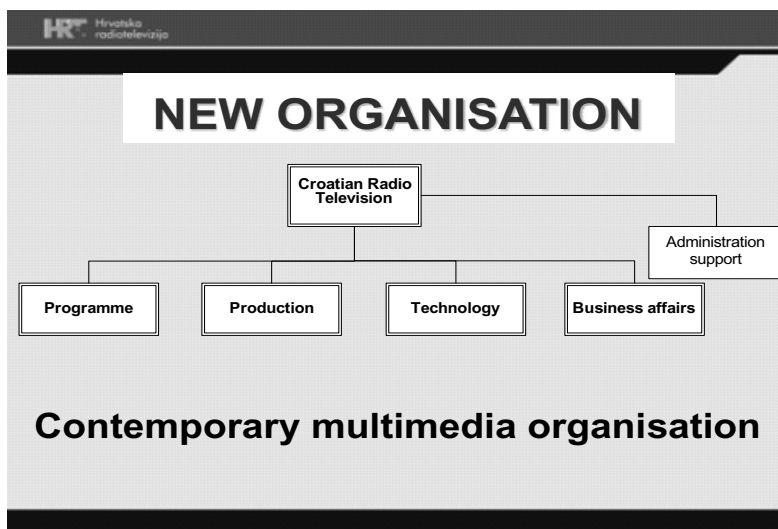
The Transformation of HRT into a Multimedia Organisation

For HRT 2013 was marked by setting new rules and regulations for the new organisation. HRT had begun leaning towards a multimedia approach at the end of the last century and the start of the new millennium and the restructuring process is announced to be completed in 2017. But, before anything could be done, certain conditions had to be fulfilled, i.e. a multimedia organisation had to be set up that would, thanks to its multimedia skills, be able to produce a multimedia product. It was still too early for anything like that at the time, but the current state of affairs points to the fact that the end goal is still far away, as it is necessary to change the whole of HRT's setup before this very necessary step towards modernisation and an integrated newsroom can be made.

It is obvious that making it operational is of vital importance for the success of the restructuring proposal and HRT's strategic development. "Such a medium represents not only a new distribution channel; it is also a unified technological platform for a more efficient coordination of in-house production processes, for the diversification of program broadcast options as well as for the prompt broadcasting of information", stresses the Director General's strategy document titled, Croatian Television Mission and Vision (2012). The new HRT is primarily looking for a new approach to the media and wishes to show that a public service is no longer just radio and television, but a joint effort which acts as a new medium. It was obvious that the multimedia organisation requires the overall restructuring of HRT and a new approach to organisation, programming and human resources.

The strategy document presented by Director General Goran Radman (HRT, 2012) describes the obligation of HRT as a public service which serves all Croatian citizens, while citing as its basic values credibility and impartiality, professionalism, national and general values and what is crucial for the development of multi-media organisation, innovation and creativity, technological neutrality, media equality. In March 2013, Croatian Radio Television adopted a new organisation. According to the new functional organisation the program jurisdictions, which until recently laid with separate organisational units of Radio, Television and Music Production, is to be integrated into a new single organisational unit called Programme that is headed by a programming manager (CPO). Besides Programme, there are three more units: Production, Technology and Business. Within the Programme unit is a central news engine called News Media Service (*Informativni medijski servis* – IMS), the integrated news operation which produces and distributes news and information content for the radio and TV channels, web portals and other platforms. The News Media Service would serve also as a news agency along with the strong web site.

For the first time in an HRT program, multimedia is stressed as a media content, not as a new organisational unit. The idea is that all the departments should

Figure 1: New Organization of HRT

Source: Presentation of the HRT CEO Goran Radman when announcing the new organisation, 2013.

produce multiplatform content. The new set up of HRT envisages the development of such a multimedia organisation which will take advantage of multimedia skills and be able to produce multimedia products.

In such an organisation, the News Media Service has been established to enable better use of resources. In News Media Service, radio, television and online media are fused into a single news media service. This type of organisation will allow for a faster and better public news service and will, at the same time, make better use of reporters' competences and technological resources and optimise cross-platform use of multimedia news content (HRT, 2012). The News media service should be organised as a Super desk with the specialised desks and the pool of journalists for fast news reporting. The reporters will be working for the preferred media outlet and they will also specialise on the area they cover. Users will, on the other hand, be able to employ produced news media contents in a diversified, multimedia and cross-platform manner, in accordance with their habits, abilities and needs. The News Media Service was meant to be a pilot-project which provides an insight into how the new organization functions and whether a convergent newsroom can actually work, as well as whether the overall project of multimedia organisation is feasible.

This might be the reason why the Head of News Media Service Zoran Šprajc was dismissed in November 2013, half a year after being appointed. The company management was unsatisfied with the results.

HRT's News Media Service at Present State

It is obvious that almost one year since the announcement and the launch of the new organisation, everyday practice shows that the radio and TV departments are still divided and the barriers are still in place. Although the physical dislocation of the main segments of the radio and television news and current affairs newsrooms represents a problem, what is even more of a problem is the fact that there exists no sharing of media content in an organised manner. Not only is there no sharing between radio and television, at the moment there is not enough sharing within the same media. One example is HRT News Channel, HRT4, launched at the end of 2012 as a channel specialised in news and current affairs. The TV news channel was the first to start cooperation with the radio. The fact that video cameras and a multi-media mixing desk have been placed in one of the Croatian Radio's studios is seen as a big step forward, as now some of the news and current affairs radio shows and interviews are broadcast on HRT4. After the News Media Service was established, one would expect it to give an extra push to the development of the news channel, and integrate it even more with the web portal and radio news. Instead, most of the energy in the newsroom is being spent on the production of the main central news which has been rapidly losing viewers in the last few years. As a result of establishing joint news media service, the only visible change in cooperation between TV and radio is the fact the radio daily editor attends the daily meeting of the News and TV programming editors. However, HRT is failing to take better advantage of several hundred people working in the newsrooms of radio, TV and new media, cooperating and sharing the content often, as in that way HRT could offer the audience improved and better quality journalist content. Instead of this, several journalists are simultaneously, but not jointly working on the same stories for similar shows. At the same time, due to the different digital newsroom systems, the content producers do not use all the advantages of the digitalisation of news production which was introduced at HRT back in 2005.

In order to follow the best practices, in order to set up an integrated newsroom it is necessary to first and foremost establish a joint assignment desk, the central point of planning and gathering of information and audiovisual content. The cooperation of a large number of people is the characteristic of the organisation with "assignment or planning desk" system. Currently, there are still separate radio and television desks in HRT news production although in the official organisation of News Media Service they do not exist. However, the tasks that are traditionally named as 'desk tasks' are not always identical to what is commonly understood within the Anglo-Saxon organisation of a newsroom. The desk, apart from being the central point for the planning and gathering of news, is also the place where the tasks of reporters and camera journalists are planned and where plans are made for

how technical equipment is distributed among crews, as well as how the other needs in the news production are met. It is pivotal that it is always clear who is in charge of what and who is doing what. The operational working meetings with editors of bulletins are important for the smooth functioning of the desk and it is recommended that they be held every day at the same time (Perišin, 2010).

Some changes in the organisation of the news and current affairs news desk of Croatian Television could have been made much earlier. For years those who had been at the helm of the news and current affairs programming and also those leading the company did not fathom the importance of the internet, so that they had no interest in who was working in that particular news desk or who is able to do what.

The Web desk is physically dislocated from the rest of the newsroom and television news production area. It is curious that even today this news desk has so-called picture editors who are in charge of just editing the videos, while journalists are only in charge of the text. Web journalists do not even work on the same computer system used for the editing of sound and picture, although the newsroom is digitalised and has the Avid Interplay system installed. HRT has still not managed to have a TV journalist out in the field who would also send a short news piece for the web page, something quite common at commercial Nova TV.

The regional desk, the task of which is to coordinate the work of local correspondent centres is also one of the sore spots in the current functioning of the HRT system. Its role is to communicate with the correspondent centres and submit the needs of editors from Zagreb and to convey the offers from the correspondent centres and push their ideas and reports. The regional desk is physically separated from the central assignment desk of the news and current affairs programming. The easiest way to get there is using the route passing through the TV studio from which news bulletins and central news shows of the HTV's first channel are broadcast. The TV studio with four cameras was an idea implemented by the former editors. Just a few years ago these very spaces had been refurbished, so that there is an open-plan space acting as a large newsroom. The news and current affairs programming editors had been replaced too often and each of those moves resulted in only cosmetic changes to the set of *Dnevnik* (the main news show) and in the replacement of the anchors, but no thoughts were given to the upside of a digitalised and spacious newsroom with the aim of improving quality.

When asked whether it would be easier if the whole news and current affairs news desk were to be placed in the same space, those from the regional desk respond with a unified – no. In the view of the current situation, their stand is understandable. The TV studio being placed in the central part of the newsroom already makes it tough for those working there (editors of daily news shows, desk editors, production managers, etc.) and is practically hindering the work of the assignment

desk which is operating from that area. The reason is that the telephones in the desk are muted, due to the live news shows being broadcast from that very space, so that incoming calls can often be missed if the light signals on the phones are not monitored closely. Since the coordination with the regional centres, correspondent's centres and studios is (around 20 of them, all in all) mainly based on telephone conversations, it would be very hard for them to do their job if they were to move to the newsroom where the assignment desk is based. In view of the fact that the future news organisation is envisaging a much more powerful news desk and news media service which would represent the very core of news production for all platforms, it is clear that simultaneously with the new HRT structure, a new space organisation should be considered, too. The online media is still isolated and functions as a separate department within the television News Department. Within the new organisation, the online media newsroom under the name "New Media", makes part of the News Media Service. The separate entity is in charge of all the media content, even company promotion. The people in the department are loaded with all kinds of work, and they do not have time to produce much of the original content.

HRT's Internet Portal

Reading newspapers via the internet has become a new habit of a growing number of people. This has forced broadcasters to move towards convergence and better use of its resources. The production of news never grinds to a halt when large and serious broadcasting companies are in question. In such places digitalisation has enabled the production of more content on even more channels, but has also broadened the prospects of cross-media content production (Perišin, 2010: 205). The national television broadcasting companies, Croatian Television (part of HRT), Nova TV and RTL all have modern equipment and digitally produce their programming. All three national television stations, the public one and the two commercial ones, publish their content on the internet. This represents the very beginning of cross-media content production and distribution. If we define convergence as the permeation, merging and combining of different media and their resources, which in that way functionally amalgamate into a unified production mode, Nova TV has come closest to this model and it still produces far fewer minutes of news and current affairs programming than HRT, suggesting that it is probably easier to connect TV production with the new media within a smaller system.

At the moment, HRT has still not found a clue in clearly defining who is responsible for which program segments. There is a duplication in the media content, but also duplication in the following of events. The look on the web portal of HRT (www.hrt.hr) shows that it does not have the advantage of all the content and resources it could have, and there is no defined strategy of the online media. The

division between classic and new media doesn't exist anymore. Television as a medium, for example, changes the way it distributes its content. According to the IAB Europe data for Croatia in 2012, 36% of Croatian viewers watch television online at least monthly,¹ 6% of Croatian viewers do it daily. When it comes to reading news online, the percentage is much higher: 60% of internet users read news online at least daily. That's one of the reasons why most of the media companies try to have the news first on their web site or mobile application.

Comparison of the HRT and Nova TV Portal

As opposed to when you tap into the HRT internet news portal (www.hrt.hr), when you tap into Google and search the name of the Nova TV national commercial broadcaster news portal (www.dnevnik.hr) the information that comes up first is that it is 'the leading video news portal'. Since it is described that way, all the articles are accompanied by video. This represents a very big advantage of Nova's Dnevnik.hr, due to the existence of the integrated newsroom. Apart from taking advantage of a digitalised newsroom, TV journalists covering stories from Croatia are reporting the news from the field to journalists working on the portal. Once journalists are back in the newsroom, Dnevnik.hr has at its disposal their raw footage from which sound bites can be taken, or whatever else they choose, securing that most of the articles are accompanied by video. They can use the raw footage and paste it to the article and then later a report from the News at 5 pm is also added, only to later be accompanied by reports from the main news show Dnevnik which is broadcast at 7:15 pm. So, readers are immediately offered the pictures and sound bites. The reports from Dnevnik are later used to further work on the story. For example, there is a story about violence in schools, which is reported by the portal's journalist.² The journalist actually researched the story and a boy, one of the victims, was recorded, his voice changed, as well as that of his father and this was placed on the portal to accompany the article. Later, a report from the main news bulletin, Dnevnik was published, as it gave an even more in-depth look at the story. This story lasted even longer, as it was researched on several occasions with new elements being added and with parents writing into the newsroom via email. The portal of a TV broadcasting company is a reflection of its multimedia mindset and its orientation. In view of this, it is pivotal to take care of the multimedia character of the content published on the portal, but also to secure its relevance. As an example we compared how the portals of Nova TV and HRT covered the announcement of the death of the Vene-

¹ <http://www.iabeurope.eu/research-and-papers/mediascope-europe-2012-croatia-summary-launch-presentation> (accessed 10th November 2013).

² <http://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/nasilje-u-skoli-se-nastavlja-hoces-da-ti-sad-glavu-gurnemu-skoljku---271474.html> (accessed 17th March 2013).

Table 1: Number of Articles on Death of Hugo Chavez on Nova TV and HRT Portals

	Nova TV	HRT (Public service)
No. of articles (5 March 2013)	1 article	1 article
No. of articles (6 March 2013)	9 articles	0 article
No. of articles (7 March 2013)	2 articles	1 article
TOTAL	12 articles	1 article
No. of articles taken over from the HINA state news agency	3 articles	1 article
No. of articles including video	6 articles	0 article
Articles written by web journalists	1 article	0 article

zuelan president Hugo Chavez. From the way each portal looks, it can be seen in what way both TV stations covered the event online.³

The death of Hugo Chavez had reached Croatian newsrooms on Tuesday evening, March 5, 2013. Both the HRT and the Dnevnik.hr portals had published the news the same day.

Just a quick look at the way the two TV broadcasting houses have tackled the news of the death of Hugo Chavez showcases how they understand internet platform and how much the news workflow is converged. It is clear that Nova TV published much more articles than HRT. We are looking here at the event with consequences on the political situation in South America, as well as international relations. All foreign media were churning out articles left and right and analysts were examining the situation. The Nova TV portal had obviously an earlier prepared article, which was an interview with an expert who analysed the implications of Chavez's death.

Apart from relevant articles on Chavez, Nova published on its portal some interesting facts about Chavez's death, like the one about how the Montenegrins had said goodbye to Chavez or what his final tweet was.⁴

³ The example has been picked up and explained in the class Television News in Multimedia Environment by the student Sanja Vištica.

⁴ <http://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/svijet/a-ovako-su-se-crnogorci-oprostili-od-chaveza---277463.html>. (accessed 17 March 2013).

During the same two days, HRT's portal only had two articles on the issue, both taken from the HINA news agency. At the same time, HRT invested many more resources in covering Venezuela during those days. HRT sent its journalist there, reported live for the main News TV and radio bulletins for three days, but did not put these stories on its internet portal.

As far as the information published on their pages it seems that both Nova TV and HRT are making an effort to publish relevant and accurate news that the public should know. The structure of the web page layout is also interesting. HRT is more in favour of merging texts i.e. creating a single text on the issue, while Nova's Dnevnik.hr is more prone on 'chopping up', i.e. separating linked information into chunks which could also be merged into a single article. The principle of Nova TV editing is that it prefers to separate and then place a link on the article linking it to the previous article. For example, HRT's portal had the reaction of the opposition to the agreement on Ljubljanska Banka in a single article⁵, separated by just a subtitle, while Dnevnik.hr had a new, separate article⁶. Both portals are content-wise covering most important events. Apart from using multimedia elements to a much smaller degree, it can be said that HRT copies HINA articles 'word for word' to a much higher level. It can also be noted that HRT, in principle, does not publish the texts written by their radio and TV journalist, although they are readily available in the computer newsroom system. There are little original texts and original research done to provide the background of a story. Dnevnik.hr is quicker at taking the reports from its own news bulletins which are then transferred into the web format and add fresh content to it. Although Dnevnik.hr portal uses HINA articles to a lesser degree, it often uses translations of texts from foreign internet pages.

Overall, HRT's web portal is lagging far behind Nova TV's portal in its use of multimedia. As for the usage of the convergence newsroom, it can be said that in that segment Nova TV is following all the current trends, but at the level of content the options offered by convergence still offers much more than has been taken advantage of.

On the Path to a Converged Newsroom

There is a question why, one year after the announcement of the new organisation, there are no visible results. The organisation has been changed, the new people with the new tasks appointed, and some of them already dismissed. What went

⁵ [http://www.hrt.hr/index.php?id=vijesti-clanak&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=203924&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=866&cHash=5cfbe88f27](http://www.hrt.hr/index.php?id=vijesti-clanak&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=203924&tx_ttnews[backPid]=866&cHash=5cfbe88f27) (accessed 17 March 2013).

⁶ <http://dnevnik.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/hrvatska-i-slovenija-dogovorile-se-oko-ljubljanske-banke---277444.html> (accessed 17 March 2013).

wrong? The new organisation, the new managers, the mindset that has remained the same?

To achieve a positive change, a break is needed from the traditional “analogue” way of thinking and into a paradigmatically entirely fresh mindset and media management (Wenger and Potter, 2011). It is an area where not much has been done, besides the warnings and experience from others. After the new organisation was announced, ex-BBC news editor and presently media consultant David Brewer⁷ was invited to work with HRT and he was engaged in providing his “know how” to the HRT middle and senior management.

Together with the group of “frontrunners”, journalists and technical staff gathered under the name of HRT’s Digilab,⁸ David Brewer wrote a report in which the then state of HRT appeared to be more promising than it is now. One of the reasons for the failure, at least the failure in the first year, could be understood from his report.

When he left HRT in March 2013, he stated that HRT has:

- A strong, established brand.
- Excellent journalists who care passionately about their profession, the brand and the HRT audience.
- Enough senior journalists who are committed to convergence and want to make it happen.
- A maturing and changing target audience expecting content on multiple devices.
- The space in which to build a converged newsroom.

Brewer advised next steps in the HRT convergence process and gave advice that the recommended next steps should take place as soon as possible. Most of the steps Brewer advised did not happen. As a direct result of Digilab team working with David Brewer, 10 steps were detected to be fulfilled by the end of 2013 in order to obtain positive reactions among the staff. Most of it could have been done, but the middle management has not seen it as important.

⁷ <http://www.mediahelpingmedia.org/about/team/147-david-brewer>

⁸ The author of the article was herself a member of the Digilab team. Digilab team was created in 2012 under the roof of HRT’s Academy as a team of frontrunners with the intention to create enthusiasm for the new way of working cross media by bringing people from the different platforms together, to let them discuss and invent the new workflow and to make the changes and gains visible for the rest of the organization. After the new managers were appointed Digilab’s role was marginalized although all the best practices showed that the existence of such a group was important for the change to succeed.

1: Convergence Champion

A senior member of staff needed to be appointed as the “project leader for convergence” (Brewer, 2013). The problem was that the newly appointed programme leaders did not understand the process and did not have the vision for what it could mean for both HRT and its audience.

2: Convergence Superusers

All the media consultants stressed that the small team of senior staff from TV, radio and online needs to be part of a team who meet regularly to plan and implement the convergence project, set action points and milestones, report back on any issues and measure the success of the various steps taken. At HRT the team was formed, but at the moment the new bosses in the new HRT structure were appointed, the team became marginalised.

3: Convergence Communication

Although each development needed to be communicated to the staff so that they understand what was going on, it did not happen.

4: The Business Case

The convergence team needed to set out the business logic for convergence. They, as well as managers needed to be able to articulate why it's of vital importance both for HRT as a brand and for the audience.

5: The Process

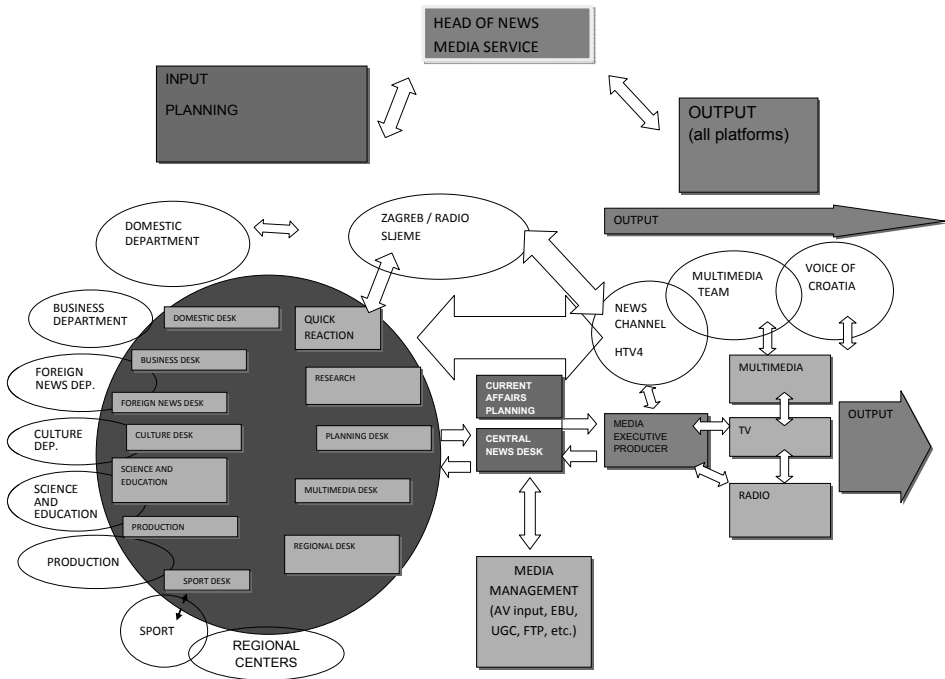
There was not a clear decision about the workflows required, the roles and responsibilities, the planning process, the production process and how converged items are broadcast on air and online. Not enough was done to change the mindset, so the workflow remained the same.

6: Quick Wins

The advice was to start with “quick wins” immediately, not to wait and to show that convergence can bring more quality journalism. According to media consultant David Brewer, there was a need to start demonstrating convergence on one story every week, then assess and evaluate, learn from the process and move ahead. Although there was good will and concrete ideas, the managers did not let their staff do anything outside the schedule.

7: A Converged Forward Planning Desk

Although forward planning is essential in order to establish the HRT differential on all devices/platforms, at the moment the planning is still concentrated on the

Figure 2: News Media Service Workflow

Source: The HRT News Media Service Project Team.⁹

main news television (Dnevnik) neglecting other TV news outlets and other platforms.

8: Enhancing Online/Digital Content

According to Brewer's report (2013), HRT's news website should become the essential source of information for Croatian citizens. There should be compelling reasons for the user to return. The public service online strategy should include quality news and better public debate, enriching the user experience, leading to viral dissemination via social media.

⁹ The scheme was created by the project assistants Tena Perišin (author of this article) and Tomislav Špoljar (the present Head of News Media Service) with the intention to draw the future workflow of the HRT News Media Service.

9: Convergence as an Objective for All

It is not clear how the convergence is articulated for all business units and how it would be accepted as a personal objective of every member of the staff. As stated in Brewer's report, without a cascading objectives system, involving appraisals and feedback, the introduction of convergence will be more of a challenge.

10: The HRT Corporate Convergence Objective

This all starts at the top. The HRT senior managers have not done enough to convince the staff they are determined to protect the Croatian public service and make it the leader in the area. In his report, Brewer suggested to the senior managers to set and communicate the goal, for example making HRT "the most converged, multi-skilled multimedia news organisation in the Balkans" (Brewer, 2013), and charge the human resource department to work with senior middle managers to define what that would mean for all HRT business units and staff.

Conclusion

There is a very real possibility of neglecting the accuracy, truthfulness and value of news in a situation when the media is filled with unverified information and when media companies are looking for fresh information all the time. In this very field lies the responsibility of public services which should not bow under pressure. In view of its resources: technical, human and financial, but also in view of the modes of financing (TV licence fees and advertisements), the Croatian general public expects for HRT to become a role model which will show that convergence does not only result in quantity, but also in quality of journalism. It can hardly be said that current HRT which has gone through a turbulent period of changes and through scores of 'temporary management' teams over the past few years, is a 'role model' or anyone's ideal broadcasting company, but it is a fact – it has the potential to shake up the system, change it around, break up its cumbersomeness, freshen it up using the power of young people, as well as the wisdom and knowledge of senior journalists to speed it up and make it more flexible. Although a change could bring savings in the long-term, investment in technical equipment seems to be inevitable, but at the moment this seems like too big of a step. Since the set up of the news and current affairs news desk is a result of the set up of the whole media company, in order for HRT news and current affairs to be reorganized, a tremendous effort has to be made. It is not just a matter of having a restructuring plan, but also a well thought out plan of breaking down the resistance of employees towards it, as well as breaking old habits.

Croatian Radio Television as a public service should ensure that the objective of introducing convergence is set for all staff and all units, and needs to define cor-

porate objectives which are not just letters on paper. They should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time sensitive and at the same time serve the public interest. Convergence as proclaimed in the strategic documents, is not only a means for HRT to become more efficient, produce more news or high-quality programme, or keep their employees, but it is also a survival kit for the public service media in Croatia.

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