THE MAIN TRENDS IN THE PROGRESS OF ONLINE JOURNALISM IN THE GEORGIAN AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA SPACE IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE DIGITAL AGE

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Introduction

It is generally accepted that traditional press and online journalism have coexisted for more than two decades. This period was marked by the skepticism of publishers and pundits towards digital media, and a markedly pessimistic view of the future of newspapers. Amatui researcher's prediction has been published several times, claiming that digital media will lead to a decrease in press readership or even the complete disappearance of printed newspapers.

It is therefore not surprising that publishers have been forced to take various steps to retain readers. Taking into account the current reality, it is expected to expect a further decrease in the sales of daily newspapers in Eastern European countries, including in the Georgian media space. Paradoxically, the circulation of some print newspapers and magazines published in the United States, Asia, and North Africa is growing slowly but steadily. However, this does not reflect a general trend.

News web portals are expected to further strengthen their positions. In recent years, digital media has taken over the place where Internet users spend a lot of time, e.g. Social networks. Online journalism has also strengthened its niche in the distribution of alternative news and the so-called in the development of different dimensions of civil journalism.

The term "online journalism" refers to the publication of journalistic content and news stories in all forms on the Internet. The Oxford Dictionary of Journalism specifies that "online journalism" includes various types of news distributed through websites, social media, e-mail, newsletters, and other channels or forms of online communication.

Online journalism, which stands in stark contrast to more traditional ways of disseminating journalistic information related to the press, allows journalists and producers to present news in a non-linear way, meaning that the recipients of information can choose when and how they want to know the news.

Keywords

digital era, online journalism, new media, mobile journalism, multimedia platforms.

Main part

The beginning of online journalism can be dated back to the first half of the 1990s. As the Internet grew and spread throughout the world. Following this development, the US Congress passed legislation declaring this emerging network free for worldwide use.

As for Eastern Europe and specifically the Caucasus region, here relatively later, from the first half of the 2000s, taking into account the strategic geographical location, together with the Internetization process, the development of online journalism began initially in Georgia, and later in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

It is quite evident that every online media outlet established in Georgia has, at least to some extent, adopted and modified pre-existing genres in order to expand their own information processing and dissemination capabilities. It is clear that the genres of online journalism are based on the genre typology used in the press. However, on the other hand, the presence of audio-visual content and other graphic, multimedia and interactive aspects of the Internet function as a framework for the creation and formation of specific genres specific to the online environment (eg online interview, online discussion or online reporting).

The influence of the Internet on journalistic content, its types and formats is much smaller than its ability to provide access to as yet invisible types of information. However, current practice suggests that online content published in text, audio or audio-visual form is similarly presented in traditional media. Online journalism is no exception to this general rule - many traditional journalistic texts published on the Internet are also available and in exactly the same form as in print.

It should be noted once again that the Internet has brought a significant breakthrough in terms of access to information. The influence of an online publication on the content of the material published in it is an important factor in the work of Internet journalists and thus determines the popularity of online news media as such. In addition to taking into account its own topics and formal specifics, online journalism also takes into account economic aspects, since it is

possible to precisely define the target audience and thus use the placed advertisements quite effectively.

Another economic strength of online journalism has to do with minimizing printing and distribution costs. However, as we can say from the example of Georgian Internet media, the costs related to the creation of any new product (web-newspaper, online magazine, Internet TV, etc.) are still quite high. Creating new content for the web is just as expensive as publishing it for print.

Journalistic practice in Georgia, as well as in many other countries of the modern world, has clearly shown that the local media is quite reluctant to take into account the transformation processes taking place in the online environment. One of the reasons for this rather low trust in the Internet is the fact that media organizations still struggle to find optimal business models that can generate additional profits through the Internet (for example, advertising revenue).

Changes are also noticeable in terms of the journalist profession itself. Nowadays, it is not enough just to write well, you must also be able to work effectively with the Internet, the so-called With "smart" devices, video cameras, editing software and so on.

"Mobile journalism" is a specific type of journalistic production, where news in various forms (text, audio-visual recording, etc.) is distributed via the Internet and displayed on the screens of portable devices, mainly mobile phones and tablets.

The growing importance of mobile journalism is related to the development of mobile Internet and innovative products offered by global telecommunications operators. Mobile news publishing includes various ways of distributing journalistic content - from SMS and MMS alerts, news media web portals and specialized mobile applications.

The emergence of mobile journalism is related, accordingly, to the development and wide public use of mobile Internet and wireless network connectivity. For example, Eurostat data shows that in 2014, 36% of EU residents aged 16-74 could access mobile internet, and 2 years later it was already 51% (Eurostat, 2015).

Responding to new trends in mobile publishing, we can safely say that there are significant differences between traditional and mobile web design - these are the technological specifications of mobile devices and take into account the ways of using portable means of communication. The decisive criterion here is simplicity, in terms of data visualization, navigation and the content itself.

Mobile Internet also requires special forms of navigation, as readers cannot use computer equipment such as a mouse. Another important change brought by

the mobile Internet is the so-called characteristic of the daily press. An opportunity similar to "folding paper".

Currently, we are not able to uniquely identify the priority web content because it is impossible to predict whether users will read the news via desktop, notebook, mobile phones or tablets. Moreover, it is also difficult to determine which type of document orientation ("landscape" or "portrait") is preferred by the user of a particular mobile device.

The most typical feature of the mobile Internet is the ability to use mobile applications. These are specific pieces of software designed to function and be used on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. A mobile application is usually downloaded and installed by the user of the device. Mobile applications of newspapers and news web portals are typologically called "mobile web apps". Readers can filter news according to their areas of interest. Which means access to the latest information is instant and continuous.

In the study, we will analyze the general trends in mobile publishing (digital applications designed to browse and read online newspapers via smart phones, tablets and similar devices) related to two main issues that media producers must take into account, namely:

➤ The first issue is related to the selection of textual and audio-visual information. These news are meant to be published online and therefore need to be organized effectively in the communication space. In other words, they should be positioned appropriately on the screens used by readers (eg computer screens, smart phone or tablet screens). This information design is basically a set of functional editing capabilities that structure and process information used to create compact journalistic products;

➤ The second issue is the creation of special types of applications that correspond to the technical characteristics and limitations of communication devices used to mediate journalistic content. Focusing on reader interactivity and comfort should be one of the priorities of publishers. In this case, mainly the technological design of communication devices is taken into account. We need to make sure that they are available to a wide range of users.

In accordance with the two categories listed above, we define the so-called "Information design" as a general approach to content arrangement and information presentation. Its goal is always to clearly and effectively convey specific ideas and information to the reader. These approaches were originally

developed to improve the usefulness and visual appeal of printed books and manuals, but are now found in online news production processes for web pages.

It is clear that the use of mobile phones has had a significant impact on editorial practices and journalistic activities. In this regard, some scholars point out that the mobile phone is a tool of high importance for the journalist's work, as well as the pen and later the portable computer, which were important in the case of previous generations of journalists. A journalist employed in online media practically uses a mobile phone in connection with daily activities, mainly to find sources of information, to record interviews and videos, to create photos, as well as to edit and send them.

Of course, the effective use of mobile devices in journalistic production requires new media competencies: mainly the ability to find and verify information online, editing skills related to the processing of photos, recorded sounds and videos, knowledge of the functions of social networks, and others. However, these trends affect not only the creation of journalistic content, but also the distribution of news content and its reception by consumers.

The increasing trends in the number of mobile phone users and the general popularity of portable devices have led newsrooms and online newsrooms to the idea of developing their own mobile applications. the so-called The emergence and widespread use of 'smart' mobile phones has also influenced current forms of 'citizen journalism'.

Because mobile devices are equipped with modern operating systems (eg Windows, Android, iOS), recording technologies and Internet-connected applications, their users can create high-quality photos and audio-visual content that can later be used by media outlets smoothly and easily.

People who are eyewitnesses to various events and activities regularly send photos and videos directly to newsrooms and news agencies, which helps spread information much faster. Thus, they can provide almost complete informational material that helps journalists in obtaining news.

The British elite newspaper The Guardian was one of the first to recognize the importance of mobile communication as a means of obtaining information in 2002, when it offered users the service Mobile Alerts, designed to inform interested readers via short text messages (SMS). It mainly included information about politics, culture and sports news.

Subsequently, already in November 2005, the website of another elite British newspaper, the Daily Telegraph, started offering similar content, which included audio recordings of the most important daily events (prepared and read by

professional journalists), becoming the first news web portal in the United in the kingdom. The content was provided free of charge and was 25 to 30 minutes long. Data could be downloaded and listened to via computers, iPods or MP3 players.

To expand mobile and online services, a year later (in 2006), a well-known British news portal associated with the daily newspaper The Guardian decided to develop a new content that would include analysis and commentary on the latest news and events on their website. The aim was to offer readers as wide a range of opinions as possible.

More than a hundred experts from all spheres of social life were involved in the project. Moreover, www.theguardian.com started offering a service called GuardianWitness in April 2013, allowing eyewitnesses and citizen journalists to publish their own audio-visual content.

Another example of publishing user-generated media content is the platform YouTube Direct, operated by the streaming giant www.youtube.com. This service allows professional editors to browse, retrieve and, with the consent of the author of the material - as well as publish user-generated videos and other audio-visual materials. Using it, users are no longer perceived as ordinary receivers, many of them become reporters or photographers.

conclusion

Focusing on the place and role of journalism in the twenty-first century globalized society, we must conclude that the processes of receiving news and publishing opinions on public affairs are radically changing. Authoritative British media researcher Brian McNair points out that the dominant model of journalism in the twentieth century, which was previously embodied by professional journalists producing objective and reliable information, has now been completely transformed by the influence of new media and modern technology (McNair, 2009).

Despite many pessimistic views offered by other authors, McNair does not worry about the future of journalism itself: *"Journalism will not die in this environment because it is so needed on many social, political and cultural levels. Journalism has a future. It will evolve, as it has, from the antique styles of early newspapers to the glitz of the modern prime-time newsletter...but how will it change, and will that change be for the better or for the worse?"* notes Brian McNair.

However, other forms of journalism related to the so-called with citizen journalism. It seems that almost anyone who can access the Internet can also freely publish and disseminate their opinions and thus can provide a somewhat critical alternative to the dominant mainstream media. Many Internet users belonging to

the young and middle-aged generation have adopted media products created by citizen journalists as their primary and regular source of information.

We are witnessing the evolution of new media. These development trends are manifested on a global scale in all areas of the journalism industry segment. World economic indicators related to the press market, most notably newspaper circulation and advertising sales, suggest that crisis scenarios in which the traditional press will cease to exist entirely are highly likely overstated. However, we must accept the fact that the dominant position of newspapers as the most popular news sources is gone forever. They have to adapt and transform into multimedia platforms.

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