



New Media Business Philosophy in Conditions of Mass Media Convergence

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the problems of new media business philosophy in conditions of mass media convergence. The main directions of philosophy of modern media business are considered. The choice of a way is defined: accurate information reflection of reality or information monetization. It is established that with the advent and development of various types of media, different models of mass media business philosophy were transformed, which were formed in the first half of the 20th century. However, the process of mass media convergence that began at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century led to global changes not only at all stages of creation to distribution of content but also in the search for other models for the development of the media business philosophy. This article analyzes the philosophy of innovative models for financing media business in conditions of mass media convergence. The empirical base of the research was made up of materials from online publications, reviews of the media markets in Russia and the world, as well as the results of interviews with the experts interviewed on the topic of the monetization philosophy of media business in terms of convergence. The authors identified the following models of media business philosophy in conditions of mass media convergence: 1) product range expansion – sale of content and other goods; 2) data transactions – sale of received data and their visualization; 3) material optimization on space and time – cost reduction by eliminating waste. The considered models of new media business philosophy for the development of the media business in conditions of mass media convergence can only be viewed as additional sources of financing in the 21st century.

Keywords: media business philosophy, media language, mass media convergence, information monetization, accurate information reflection of reality, business models, data journalism

INTRODUCTION

With the development of various types of media, different mass media business philosophy models have evolved and transformed. "The development of periodicals in the 17th-19th centuries laid the foundation for the formation of the main types of newspapers and magazines. In the 20th century, this process continued and led to the creation of a modern system of established types of publications" (Shchepilova & Shchepilov, 2012, p. 29). The mass media business philosophy models were formed based on requests from advertisers (Pushkarev et al., 2019; Vinogradova et al., 2018). It was in the 20th century when the philosophy of mass production prevailed in many consumer sectors, and there was a need for the philosophy of active promotion of goods and services, that the philosophy of advertising became the main source of income for print media in countries with market economies. Prior to this development, for nearly 300 years, the print media business philosophy model "was built almost only around the sale of circulation to end-users, readers, in most cases exclusively through subscription, ... it was this income item that remained the main and determining profitability of projects" (Makeenko, 2014, p. 13).

The main mass media business philosophy models of the organization and financing of broadcasting (commercial, state, and public) were formed in the first half of the 20th century.

During the two postwar decades, television is emerging in Europe and North America

The mass media business philosophy models for broadcasting were taken as the basis for the formation of the television model. Thus, the models of the philosophical and economic functioning of the mass media were finally formed by the middle of the 20th century (Makeenko, 2014).

However, mass media convergence has become a process that may soon change not only the structure of the media in different countries but the entire media philosophy and media economy (Vartanova, 2003, p. 286).

The purpose of this article is to identify and explore innovative models of new media business philosophy in terms of mass media convergence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The researching papers dedicated to the process of mass media convergence began to appear in the late 1990 – the first half of the 2000. The process of mass media convergence has been studied from different angles: technological, economic, cultural (Bayanova et al., 2019; Boeva-Omelechko et al., 2019; Cherdymova et al., 2019; Ezhov et al., 2019; Holopirek, 2007; Kachkaeva, 2010; Kutuev et al., 2017; Lehtisaari et al., 2012; Quinn, 2005, p. 240; Quinn & Filak, 2005; Shayhitdinova, 2012; Tameryan et al., 2019; Vartanova, 2003; Vinogradova et al., 2018; Zheltukhina et al., 2019). Many researchers have analyzed the development of convergence in a newsroom in a specific region (Dupagne, Garrison, 2003, p. 42; Domingo, 2006, p. 541; Lupton, Thurman, 2008, p. 439-455).

Mass media convergence is a process in the modern media industry that began in the second half of the 1990 when the media began to create their own websites. It is associated with technical advantages in the field of information transferring and storage and leads to the merging of previously different media (based on the Internet platform and/or convergent newsrooms), departments, and divisions of media company in order to jointly produce a content and replicate it on different media platforms. Mass media convergence led to the appearance of new types of media, new genres, and forms of content, as well as to the global changes occurring at all stages – from creation to distribution of content, and the global search for other models of mass media business philosophy development.

With the development of mass media convergence and the advent of online media, new mass media business philosophy models have emerged that have gone a fast path of the development in less than a decade (Kachkaeva, 2010; Vartanova, 2003, p. 304).

New technologies have transformed the philosophy model of selling content to consumers: digital content has been sold on various media platforms. Today, the world media have gained enough experience in realizing of the philosophy of paid content on the website. We can distinguish the following mass media philosophy models of the organization and providing of paid content on the website:

1. *Paid content model*: access to all the stories of website is paid. The Times (2020), the Wall Street Journal (2020) provide access to stories on the websites only when payment is made.

2. *Hybrid model (paid and free content model)*: involves the combination of paid and free content ("freemium" and "premium"). The main content is provided free of charge, and premium one (that consists of more complete information about events, access to the archive, special offers, etc.) is charged.

3. *Twice hybrid model (paid and free content model on two websites)*: since 2011, the Boston Globe (2020) has been using two websites to distribute content. Its paid website (<http://www.bostonglobe.com>) contains news, articles, comments, analytics, and photos which were published in the daily and Sunday issues of the newspaper. A free resource (<https://www.boston.com>) does not contain all the content of the printed version. There is news, a guide to the world of entertainment.

With the development of mass media convergence, researches have repeatedly emphasized that "in order to maintain their sustainability, traditional media channels must develop new business models" (Möller & Stone, 2013, p. 104). This reflected the emergence of a new mass media business philosophy. Some researchers believe that since technologies are developing very quickly, there cannot be anyone sustainable business philosophy model. For example, in Finnish media companies, there is still no understanding of what will be the main source of profit for the online version of the newspaper (Lehtisaari et al., 2012, p. 43). Other researchers, such as J. Cage (Julia Cagé), a French professor of economics, generally believe that the media business has no potential for monetization (Zhilavskaya, 2016, p. 120).

The first major research dedicated to the monetization philosophy of the media in a media business we can consider a Ph.D. thesis by Zhang (2008) Yuyan Ernest "A study of media convergence: does it promote good journalism, economic synergy, and competitiveness?". The paper explored the philosophical and economic perspective of the mass media convergence process.

The issue of monetization of the newspaper business in terms of media convergence becomes particularly relevant. Therefore, researchers (Ketonen 2013; Lehtisaari et al., 2012) often wonder about searching for new business philosophy models for the newspaper business, as the existing print media model in the form of circulation and advertising goes away. As is known, for the period from 2010 to 2015, the circulation of newspapers worldwide fell by 2%, while advertising revenues decreased by 13%.

Thus, the question of the new media business philosophy in conditions of mass media convergence needs to be resolved: accurate information reflection of reality or information monetization?

METHODOLOGY

The authors used the following theoretical methods: descriptive, comparative historical, typological, historical, and philological, sociological, and statistical, hermeneutical, structural, linguocultural, and interpretative analyses.

The empirical base of the research was made up of from stories of online media, reviews of the media markets in Russia and the world, as well as the results of interview of experts interviewed on the topic of the monetization philosophy of media business in terms of mass media convergence. The duration is period from 2012 to 2019; 17 people from 14 media companies took part in the survey. Among them are editors of Internet versions, employees of advertising departments, and top managers of the Russian media.

RESULTS

After analyzing the scientific literature in philosophy, sociology, linguistics, journalism, marketing, economics, cultural studies etc. (Averina, 2014; Barabash, 2010; Blagolev 2011; Domingo & Salaverrria, 2007; Fisher, Grant, & Wilkinson, 2008; Gumperz, 1982; Hoffner & Haefner, 1994; Jamieson & Campbell, 1997; Marconi & Siegman, 2017; Rosin, 2016; Shayhitdinova, 2012; Sokolov, 2019; Tezer et al., 2019; Thompson, 1995; Urazova, 2010; Zheltukhina, Zelenskaya, & Ponomarenko, 2020), after studying the experience of the world media, we concluded that the following innovative models of new media business philosophy in mass media convergence conditions can be distinguished:

1. Product range expansion – sale of content and other goods. This media business philosophy model deals with the creation of online stores on the websites of printed media (or online stores – independent websites, launched by the media).

Because the basis of the media business philosophy (the lack of information among people, and the audience reach of advertisers) has disappeared, it has become increasingly difficult to sell a content and an audience. The media must look for what can be sold other than content and audience. Therefore, mass media develop today the sale of any goods on the site (Miroshnichenko, 2018). There are many examples of creating online stores on print websites (or online stores – independent sites launched by the media) in world practice.

Print media has been actively engaged in online commerce since 2013. The Wall Street Journal (2020) launched one of the first online stores, on this site you can buy various wines.

Usually, a mass media launches a website of selling of any goods in a partnership with certain brands, specializing in the sale of certain goods. Launched by the Daily Mail (2020) in 2016 at www.mailshop.co.uk (Mailshop, 2016), one can see mainly home and garden products (Goodfellow, 2016).

Many mass media sell branded products as goods with the logo of the publishing house. For example, in the online store of the newspaper *New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/>), one can find clothes and notebooks with the trademark of the publication.

Some Russian newspapers also open online stores with the aim of selling branded products on their websites. For example, on the website Arguments and Facts (2020) there is an online store where you can buy books in a digital format dedicated to various topics. The project “Books” arose because of the collaboration of the publishing house Arguments and Facts (2020) with the company LitRes (2020), the largest copyright holder for using electronic copies of Russian-language books in the network.

2. Data transactions – sale of received data and their visualization. This media business philosophy model means the transition to data journalism (Aitamurto, Sirkkunen, & Lehtonen, 2011), that is, journalism which bases its investigations on data (discovered and collected by journalists) and on their investigation made with computer-based methods as a new media business philosophy model.

In this case, the model can be built around the sales of the obtained data to other mass media and (or) other organizations (for example, research centers). In 2014, a data department opened in ProPublica (2020), a non-profit news organization known for its investigative journalism. The sale of generated data attracted \$30,000 of revenue for the first five months of the department's existence; the total revenue from the activities of the new division reached \$200,000 in 2016 (Keng & Ser, 2018, p. 46).

The cost of data varies depending on a consumer who buys it. This philosophy of pricing policy is carried out to combine the philosophy of publicity with commercial interests. For data sets which the department staff took a lot of time and effort to make it, the editors charge a one-time fee: in most cases, it is \$200 for journalists and \$2,000 for researchers. Those who want to use the data for commercial purposes should contact the department to discuss prices. Where the customer is not sure if the premium dataset is suitable for his purposes, he can first download a small sample of the data and a file explaining how to use it, for free. ProPublica (2020) datasets contain extensive information for researchers and journalists. Premium data sets can save scientists months of work (Klein & Grochowski, 2014).

In addition to selling the data itself, media companies can provide services for visualization of data. During the 2012 London Summer Olympics, the New York Times (2020) interactive team turned the raw data of the International Olympic Committee into various charts and graphics to sell them to other mass media companies. The Indonesian media company Katadata (2020) provides data analysis and visualization services for commercial companies and government agencies. In August 2017, the company fulfilled the order of a government agency to visualize the history of the country's economic development (Keng & Ser, 2018, p. 46).

3. Material optimization on space and time – cost reduction by eliminating waste. This media business philosophy model (Bubnova et al., 2018; Lehtisaari et al., 2012; Miroshnichenko, 2018; Shayhitdinova, 2012) assumes the allocation of newsrooms' space for sale or for rent.

This model can be implemented by transferring a part of employees to remote work.

Since 2009, the publishing house of the Economic Newspaper (2020) has introduced several technical innovations. The editorial and publishing system (RIS) and the workflow system that allows to automate the

process of producing printed content, that lead to the possibility to transfer many employees to remote work. The transfer to the virtual space allowed the holding to lease 150 square meters and to receive an additional income. The publishing house believes that this model of work can be adopted not only by professional publications but also by the mass press.

The Texas Tribune (2020) edition has its own venue where events, forums, and conferences can be held. *The Studio 919* is a 1000-square-foot conference room in downtown Austin, with an enchanting view of historic Congress Avenue, just a few blocks from the Texas State Capitol. The Texas Tribune (2020) receives up to a third of revenue from organizing forums and conferences.

DISCUSSION

Nevertheless, the question of profit from the listed media business philosophy models is quite controversial. There are also examples of unsuccessful attempts of developing of online stores. For example, “in the Moskovsky Komsomolets (2019) they tried to develop an online store on the site as a new source of income, but this project had to be closed. As practice has shown, people prefer large online stores with cheap prices since everything is on stream” (Baranova, 2017, p. 39).

The Komsomolskaya Pravda Publishing House (2020) has been selling books under its own brand since 2005. Previously, the books could be bought at the periodical press stores and in offline stores. The publishing house offers high-quality book collections 4 times cheaper than the market value. These are historical, often rare books, biographies, educational literature, as well as books written by journalists of the Komsomolskaya Pravda (2020). Books are selling also on electronic media.

However, after 2014, when the collection boom passed, book sales declined, many offline stores closed. The Komsomolskaya Pravda Publishing House (<https://www.kp.ru/>) which had 6 offline stores and at the beginning of 2019, only one has left. Offline shops have been making a profit for a long period of time due to the collection boom, now books are no longer sold in this volume, so other products began to be tested for sell in the publishing house. At the end of 2018, the assortment of goods in the Online Store section on the www.kp.ru website has expanded considerably: in addition to books, there were added such products as lawn mowers, lamps, various clothes, cosmetics, etc. In the Komsomolskaya Pravda publishing house (<https://www.kp.ru/>), they decided that the consumer may also be interested in these kinds of products. After a year has passed, it turned out that 95% of the sales are still remaining books. Also, the Books section on the website was the most visited by the users. The publishing house will reduce the range of other products or maybe completely they will stop to sell it. In the turnover of publishing house, new products make up a tiny fraction. It is clearer for people to buy a book in a publishing house than, for example, a refrigerator or a lawnmower. To explain to the consumer the reason they should buy such kinds of products on the website www.kp.ru it is necessary to spend a lot of time and money.

The percentage of sales in the online stores of the publishing houses is not so large as to even recoup half of the editorial costs. The trend towards the development of an online store on the website of the publishing house (or online stores – independent websites launched by the mass media) is a matter of philosophical and ethical nature. The development of online stores leads to an increase in branded content on media websites, the growth of native advertising. Back in the late 1990, The New York Times (2020) was criticized for advertising the company Barnes & Noble (2020), that sells books. If a visitor of a newspaper website bought a book from a link provided by the website, then the website received a commission. Such a mechanism may create a temptation for commercial reasons to include in reviews and reviews of those books that are most likely to be bought. It is very difficult to keep the line between editorial and advertising content, combining the interests of journalism and media business (Teaching Online Journalism Ethics, 2020). Perhaps that is why Grazia (2020) magazine, in 2014, have launched an autonomous e-commerce website, closely linked editorial and commercial information.

Due to the dynamic development of computer technologies, we cannot consider data journalism as a promising mass media business philosophy model, as the machine can replace the work of a journalist.

In turn, the editors of the world mass media are still careful in investing their resources in the development of data journalism, despite the presence of a few examples on the monetization of the generated data. Most

leading newsrooms see it rather as a new mass media business philosophy way to improve the quality of stories and attract new audiences and advertisers (Keng & Ser, 2018, p. 45; Vartanova, 2003). For example, a data library on the site of the Texas Tribune (2020) non-profit newspaper gives most of the traffic to the website (Stiles & Babalola, 2010). For regional mass media, the development of data journalism is a catalyst for mass media business philosophical innovation in a newsroom.

Data journalism so far has the potential for influence on the addressee rather than income. It takes an incomparably longer time for content to be created based on analyzing big data than writing ordinary journalistic texts. It should also be noted that data journalism is developing in a new philosophical ecosystem that includes potential competitors for the media – organizations that are specializing in providing and visualizing various data.

For example, in the UK, a website called “Where Does My Money Go?” (2019) provides visual data on tax expenses. The American Maplight (2019) organization provides political information. Such companies, as a rule, are non-profit and are supported by funds.

The philosophy of material optimization on space and time realizing in allocation of newsrooms’ space for sale with the accompanying transfer of employees to remote work is not widely used by the world mass media, so it’s too early to talk about the guaranteed success of this mass media business philosophy model.

However, organizing seminars and other events for the readership in the newsroom can play a positive role, including from philosophical and financial points of view. Some publishing houses introduces a club system, the members of which can be users who have paid a fee. In the fall of 2017, this system was launched by the American magazine Atlantik (The Atlantic, 2020). Users who pay \$12 a month or \$120 a year, in addition an access to exclusive stories, web browsing without advertising, and gifts, can get into the newsroom insights or even to meet the renowned authors (The Masthead Membership, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The study made it possible to discuss the problems of new media business philosophy in conditions of mass media convergence.

The main directions of philosophy of modern media business were considered. The choice of a way of the new media business philosophy for information monetization was defined.

The following innovative models of new media business philosophy in conditions of mass media convergence were described.

1. Product range expansion – sale of content and other goods. This model realizes the creation of online stores on the websites of printed media (or online stores – running by independent media). With the development of Internet Technologies, it has become increasingly difficult for mass media to sell content to audience and to sell audience to advertisers. As a result, the media began to look for a new mass media business philosophy – for other products that could be sold more efficiently than the content. Such products became a variety of things used with or without the trademark of the media.

2. Data transactions – sale of received data and their visualization. This model is a transition to data journalism, that is, journalism which bases its investigations on data (discovered and collected by journalists) and on their study by computerized methods. In this case, the business model can be built around the sales of the obtained data to other media and (or) other organizations (for example, research centers), as well as the sales of data visualization services.

3. Material optimization on space and time – cost reduction by eliminating waste. This model offers the allocation of newsroom’s space for sale or for rent. This model can be implemented by transferring a part of employees to remote work.

Dedicated business models, if successfully operated, can become additional sources of income for mass media. But the experience of individual media cannot always be “shifted” to a specific newsroom. The profit from their use is not able to cover even half of the costs of running the media company, however.

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