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CURRENT TRENDS IN JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE

Intensive technological and socio-political developments have conditioned fundamental changes in journalistic practice and the work of journalists and media professionals. Internetization and digitalization contributed most significantly to this. They unified the media communication space and opened the way for multimedialization and hybridization. Today, both types of media - classic and Internet - use similar types of genres and formats. In the article, the authors name the main characteristics of current journalistic practice, expectations for journalistic competencies and formulate the requirements necessary for their preparation.

Key words: *digitalization, internetization, multimedia, hybridization, journalism*

Introduction

The media has changed a lot since the last century. There are several reasons. The first is intensive technological development in all areas of life. It brings new devices and software, changing, facilitating and accelerating the creation processes as well as various types of activities and methods of media communication. S. Gálik states that the information society can be defined in the context of the rapid development of information and communication technologies at the turn of the 80s and 90s of the 20th century. At that time, personal computers and then the Internet began to spread. In the mid-1990s, in the European Union and the United States, the terms such as “information society” and “knowledge society” became key concepts associated with economic and social development strategies. They were implemented in the political and economic programs of both the European Union and the United States. (Gálik 2014: 9) (See also: Chatfield 2013) The second reason is the process of globalization. On the one hand, it brings about a certain unification, which results in easier decoding of the presented messages. On the other hand, in response to its influence, the emphasis on regional and local culture in all areas of media presentation is increasing. E. Mistrík also states that “globalization accelerates the modernization of technology and the civilization in Europe”. He adds that “two tendencies can be observed in current cultural processes in Europe: the acceptance of common values and the emergence of new values not accepted by the majority. It is possible to observe the internal globalization of European culture, as well as its internal differentiation” (Mistrík 2003: 3) The third reason is the change of political conditions and social atmosphere, democratization of society, but also the sharpening of the struggle between the coalition and the opposition, manifested by changing the behavior and communication of political leaders, but also by the society as a whole. All these reasons have a significant impact on media production, media content, but also on the management of work in the editorial offices of various media and the editing system. In the study, the

authors name the key trends in journalistic practice under the influence of all these factors. They are based on multi-year analyses of the content and pages of professional print, radio, television, online and web media, as well as on the authors' own experience in creating the media content in various types of media.

1 Trends in current journalistic practice

A characteristic attribute of contemporary media communication is a transformation of the media, either in their digital form or a combination of communication over the Internet and over traditional media. This brings an opportunity for the emergence of new journalistic formats, based on the interconnection of various forms of media communication (e.g. internet texts are connected via hyperlinks or conjunct with video comments, part of television or radio broadcasting is communication with recipients via email and social networks). J. Jirák emphasizes that journalism is connected with the development of society and public communication. In this context it is a phenomenon connected with the modernization process and with the establishment of modern societies and their political life. At the same time, it is directly dependent on the technological possibilities of communication. (Jirák 2008: 331) Based on these factors, we can talk about several important trends and characteristics of current journalistic practice.

Multimedia environment. At the end of the 20th and in the 21st century, the expansion of the Internet and digitalization had a most significant impact on the journalism. Due to that, the media environment has become multimedia. There was an absolute connection between the classic media and the Internet space on two levels. The content of classic media is easily spread over the Internet (it has become a relevant broadcast channel) - through the websites of individual media, through the Internet connection on computers or mobile phones you can read current articles of specific newspapers or magazines, listen to radio broadcasts or watch TV broadcasts online. The content of classic media is also available – offline. The recipient has available articles that were published in the past. The recipient can listen to or watch the sessions of the production by the given medium from previous days or even years. This content can be found in the archive of specific media. It is again available via the Internet, also on several Internet platforms, e.g. on Youtube or other websites. In the Internet environment, there are also sites of new media (online media or web portals) that present multimedia content or custom formats inspired by traditional media (reports, programme or sound recordings called podcasts), but not limited by time or the program structure.

Availability. On behalf of digitalization and broader internet connection, the availability of media and media products has also increased. After their intensive expansion and increase in economic availability, many new media began the production. Their content is being distributed, by cable

or satellite. The opportunity to broadcast a larger number of programs on one frequency also brought space for expanding the program offer of the radio and television stations. The Internet and the possibility of receiving it at almost any place and in any information and communication device (computer, tablet, mobile phone) have meant that the media product is already available to the recipient almost everywhere and at any time.

Multiformat of media production. Internetization has caused all formats of classic and new media to appear together in this unlimited space. Those who do not present themselves on the Internet today have a significant handicap compared to other media. Text, photo, infographics, video, audio / podcast, hyperlink, are part of every media website or online portal. Each classic medium has also its own website, which is not only a broadcasting space, there is an archive of the stories and other reportage, but there is also a special web content - many basic topics / programs are developed or supplemented. For example, radio or television websites contain their abbreviated versions or original formats. These are supplemented by bonus recordings from the creation of the program (aftermovie), or interviews with creators in text, audio-visual and auditory form. Of course, the original formats of classical media are also produced- printed versions of newspapers, magazines, and full broadcast for radio or television. On the other side, online news portals publish news and journalistic texts, special online articles, photographs, but also videos, or even entire discussion, entertainment and educational programs, have their own television and podcast section. Especially nowadays, an increasing number of podcasts are being published, i.e. audio recordings that can be downloaded into a mobile phone, tablet or PC. Media content, notice and reactions to it, are presented through social networks (old and new ones). H. Pravdová, J. Radošinská and J. Višňovský also emphasize that "multiplatform journalism has gained enormous popularity in a relatively short time due to its ability to convey complex information through text, sound and image" (Pravdová, Radošinská, Višňovský, 2017: 6). (See also: Osvaldová, Tejkalová 2010, Manovich 2001). The media are placing particular emphasis on captivating the attention of the recipient, trying to provoke a response and interaction with the audience. A medium that does not have at least two platforms is becoming uninteresting for recipients as well as for advertisers. It is also true, parodying the well-known statement – “The one who does not use the Internet and social networks today, is as if he did not even exist in the media world.”

Multimedia content. Current contributions of the Internet environment are characterized by forms of multimedia. This means that we find classic text information in it. In addition, they contain photos and video links to related articles. Thus like television, a multimedia contribution reaches both senses - sight and hearing through various journalistic formats. However, the advantage of production in the Internet environment is

immediate and with permanent availability, and accessibility form various devices with the possibility of extensive and unlimited selectivity. At the same time, by using various forms of journalistic expressions, it brings creativity to journalistic work, and thus builds specific multiplatform genres. Different media use different ratios of specific elements, which is related to the media strategy towards recipients and competitors (media characteristics and its competitiveness strategy), accessibility of information sources (e.g. several agencies also supply video and audio recording to textual information). Technical and technological equipment of the editorial office (somewhere they have their own photographers and video reporters, the editors have to manage it themselves). The creators can control the multimedia in terms of implementation (conceptual - how to optimally use individual elements to build the media product, and technical - mastering work with technology and software). (See also Švecová 2017, Ondrášik in Tušer 2010, Bednář 2011)

Genre hybridization. Genre hybridization is related to multimedia. When evaluating journalistic genre types, we can state a large degree of stability in the procedures of depicting objective reality, as well as in the selection of linguistic and stylistic means. In the news and journalistic genres, or artistic genres in classical media, we can identify their compositional structures, language and style in specific stereotypical schemes. These changed with the development of the medium itself, as well as with the influence of other conditions. These are for example as the type and typological characteristics of the media, preference for topics from an editorial or social point of view, editorial roles within editing, the degree of popularity of the media in a certain development stage of the media and mental settings of the socio-cultural environment. The new era of journalism is influenced by the beginning and establishment of the so-called online journalism, which continued the tradition of creating in the classical media. However, during more than twenty years of development, it has also found its own ways of interpreting the depicted reality, using the possibilities of multimedia, unlimited and fast availability of the online environment, and the associated perspective of immediate interaction. The creator/Journalist can take these factors into account and can use them intensively. It follows that there are several positives and comparative advantages of online journalism over journalism in the classical media. At the same time, we can state that even in online journalism, certain stable schemes and structures of depicting reality have already been established. These are based on genres and programs of classic media, but make full use of the possibilities of the Internet environment.

Complexity and broad of spectrum (links). The variability of the display method is complemented by the variability of the topic menu. The Internet environment allows the author to incorporate into the content also articles or explanations that were created in other terms (usually not very

old), they supplement explain and enrich the basic topic. Such processess are offering the view of the topic from other angles. At the same time, however, it does not expand too much the basic scope of the contribution, and thus does not burden the perception of the recipient. It's up to him whether and when to look at related articles or links.

Interaction. The Internet environment has brought a new dimension to media communication - very fast, often instant feedback. While in the 20th century, the recipient had to write a letter that reached the addressee (management, creator), several days to weeks passed. Today, the recipient can express himself immediately, either while watching the program or after reading the paper. E.g. Online portals or websites have a space for discussion, programme of electronic media can be viewed via social networks and recipients can express their opinions through comments. The possibility of direct online interaction in real time creates space for the emergence of new formats that actively use it (in the form of response to the product - feedback on the product during its presentation or just after the end), content formation (SMS voting), involvement in sessions, e.g. in the form of questions for guests via email or Facebook).

Attractiveness instead of quality. Many of diverse media and online media even update its processing. Yet, there is still competition who will bring information first, which medium will be mentioned as a source for a given topic. There is too much information in the media space. The recipient expects that the creator chooses the most important information and process the facts into an interesting and easy-to-understand form. Z. Hudíková, H. Pravdová and A. Gažicová also emphasize that "the reduction in the fight for the recipient, it tries to provide him with the most comprehensive package of information that the media obtained and prepared for the audience. It is not the form that matters, but the attractive content, which is diverse and brings not only bare facts, but also respondents' statements, analyses and interesting facts" (Hudíková, Pravdová, Gažicová 2020: 122-123). Today, the media have two functions - informing and entertaining. If the media fulfil them and manage to keep their attractiveness to the recipient, then they will ensure their popularity and the benefit of advertising funds. Under the influence of the above factors, there is also a change in the content and method of processing due to the wider differentiation of groups of media recipients and their different media experience. On the one hand, the media try to personalize their products according to the needs and expectations of their target audience. On the other hand, we can observe a certain levelling of the offer, because if an attractive topic or format appears, we will gradually find them in the offer of all similar media, as well as a reduction in the quality of individual content.

Simplicity of expression. A dynamic lifestyle, the need to quickly understand offered information and contents make media production easier in its structure and formulations. It is also due the change in the way we

communicate under the influence of new technologies. It is natural for the young generation to express themselves briefly and simply, they are taught the SMS language and journalism transfers this language into its work. Another reason is so called laziness of the recipient (some people do not want to devote a lot of energy and time to understanding the information, they are used to simplicity - a perceptual stereotype). Another reason is that the products are presented e.g. via social networks or various mobile applications. With such perceiving, the brain gets tired faster, attention decreases rapidly, and understanding is less accurate.

Lay or novice journalism. The recipient is accustomed to being constantly contacted by the media and encouraged to take action. And he himself is interested in actively participating in the creation of journalistic formats, which is made possible by the Internet space and the media themselves. The media have created various applications through which they collect tips for reports, photos and videos that become directly part of their media products. Recipients can also present themselves in the form of authorial work - blogs.

Multifunction of the editor. Production of this rich and diverse media content requires journalists to handle various forms of production. E.g. to be able not only to write the text, but also to create interesting photographs, or a short auditory or audiovisual recording for the story. If they are creating a video or programme, they should be able to write an engaging text for it, or be able to shorten it to the most interesting passages. J. Višňovský emphasizes that "the real challenge for journalism in the second decade of the new millennium is to develop side by side with the latest media technology while maintaining the highest standards linked to the quality of information processing" (Višňovský In Pravdová, Radošinská, Višňovský, 2017: 174). Lately, it has become increasingly important that the content can be processed entirely, or parts of it or trailers for it, for classic and new social networks - Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and more. The journalist is expected to be able to do these activities in terms of concept and realisation - create of content and use technology. Such multimedia skills the journalist needs more when working in regional and local media.

Conclusion

The media environment is very lively and dynamic. On behalf of intensive technological development and the emergence of new communication possibilities, there are also an adaptation of journalistic genres, the emergence of hybrid and new formats that journalists must learn to create. The socio-political environment needs to be monitored as well and various topics interpreted in the new contexts. The audience of the media is very differentiated, strongly individualistic and demanding on convey content in an attractive form. The influence of all these factors has caused the journalist's way of working changed significantly compared to the last

century. Even today, main task of journalist is to inform about current social phenomena and socio-political situation. To orient the recipient in the different situations, through journalistic expressions, which journalists can create thanks to personal preconditions and education (formal and informal). To cope with all the new conditions, a new style of journalism is needed. Using the modern technologies and knowledge of changes in psychological perception of media information which are prepared in new form. Th is why the quality education of journalists during their university studies or in the editorial office is also very important. It must be focused on the ability to quick, criticall, creative and quality processment of all the information into classical and multimedia form. The higher education process itself consists of teaching subjects dealing with theory and subjects developing various skills. Theory forms an important basis for the deliberate creation and placement of content in contexts, practical subjects are essential for the ability to create quickly. The optimal composition of subjects prepares the students in their fundamentals. At university, the education time is limited. The school often offers several of other activities to develop their professional skills in different types of media production. Many schools have a close relationship with practice through the media. They address various practitioners, invite them to classes, organize various discussions, workshops and courses. students can see what awaits them in the media, or they can practice partial skills during the workshops. Only thanks to continuous lifelong learning and the expansion of knowledge and skills, journalists can meet the demands of modern mass media communication.

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