

WHAT IS THE CONVERGENCE AND HOW IT WILL AFFECT JOURNALISM CREATIVITY

Viktorija Kafedziska

International Balkan University-Skopje, N. Macedonia, viktorija_kafedziska@yahoo.com

Abstract: Convergence, nowadays, is a main factor in journalism. New generation will work through different media platforms, even in different media houses. For young students in journalism this process is important because it is likely to influence their career. All journalists need to know how to tell stories in all media, and how to write appropriately for those media, as preparation for this new era.

Convergence varies from country to country, and from culture to culture both within countries and individual companies. Other influential factors include laws that regulate media ownership and the power of digital technology. The type of convergence that evolves in any given company will be a product of that company's culture.

In this paper we will not discuss a convergence as a "corporate conglomeration," where big companies merge because of the mutual benefits of amalgamation. We will discuss convergence as a form of journalism, which takes place in the newsroom as editorial staff members work together to produce multiple products for multiple platforms to reach a mass audience with interactive content. If pressed for a simpler definition, we would argue that convergence is about doing journalism and telling stories using the most appropriate media. The importance of the news event should dictate the depth and type of coverage, and influence the size of the team involved. Multimedia assignment editors will decide on the most appropriate medium for telling the story

Academics in the United States has identified at least five forms of convergence First is *ownership convergence*. Second is *tactical convergence*. Third is *structural convergence* The fourth is *information-gathering convergence*. The fifth is *storytelling or presentation convergence*.

Several forces, working together, render this form of journalism possible. The main factors are the fragmenting of audiences, the availability of relatively cheap digital technology, and changes in social and legal structures that make cross media ownership more possible. Media companies hope they can reach fragmented audiences through multiple media, recognizing that consumers have already embraced convergence, in the sense that they use a multitude of media.

Cultural factors can encourage or inhibit convergence. A conservative newspaper that sees itself as a paper of record will have issues partnering with a tabloid television organization. Similarly, print journalists who look down on television people, labeling them as dimwit poor spellers, are less likely to welcome broadcast people into their news rooms.

Another key is training in the sense of exposure to ideas, and learning how to operate in different media. Part of the problem is the language that separates print and broadcast journalists; an editor in print is very different from a broadcast editor. Working together and sharing media experiences can help diminish the perception of difference by both groups.

Keywords: convergence, journalism, news, cultural factors, media

1. INTRODUCTION

Just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, most definitions of convergence depend on each individual's perspective. Indeed, convergence tends to have as many definitions as the number of people who practice or study it.

Larry Pryor, a professor with the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California, maintains that a definition is vital because a new idea needs a common vocabulary. "If we all have a different concept of what convergence means, we are making it difficult to progress."

For Pryor, convergence is what takes place in the newsroom as editorial staff members work together to produce multiple products for multiple platforms to reach a mass audience with interactive content, often on a 24/7 timescale. Professor Rich Gordon of Northwestern University has identified at least five forms of convergence in the United States, as summarized here: (Gordon, 2003).

1. Ownership convergence. This relates to arrangements within one large media company that encourage cross-promotion and content sharing among print, online, and television platforms owned by the same company. (Gordon, 2003, p. 64).

2. Tactical convergence. This describes the content-sharing arrangements and partnerships that have arisen among media companies with separate ownership. The most common model is a partnership between a television station or cable channel and a newspaper where each company keeps its own revenues.

3. Structural convergence. This form of convergence is associated with changes in newsgathering and distribution, Gordon wrote, but it is also a management process in the sense of introducing changes in work practices.

4. Information-gathering convergence. This takes place at the reporting level and is Gordon's term for situations where media companies require reporters to have multiple skills (2003, p. 69). In some parts of the world, this represents the most controversial form of convergence as people debate whether one person can successfully produce quality content in all forms of media.

5. Storytelling or presentation convergence. Gordon said this type of convergence operates at the level of the working journalist, though it needs management support in terms of purchasing the most appropriate equipment. He predicted that new forms of storytelling would emerge from the combination of computers, portable newsgathering devices, and the interactive potential of the Web and television, as journalists learned to appreciate each medium's unique capabilities (2003, p. 70).

2. CONVERGENCE

Why is convergence emerging? Several forces, working together, render this form of journalism possible. The main factors are the fragmenting of audiences, the availability of relatively cheap digital technology, and changes in social and legal structures that make cross media ownership more possible.

1a). Fragmenting audience

Media companies hope they can reach fragmented audiences through multiple media, recognizing that consumers have already embraced convergence, in the sense that they use a multitude of media. Gil Thelen has pointed out that people's information-seeking behaviors are changing and media organizations need to adapt to respond to that need. Howard Tyner, a former editor of The Chicago Tribune who became a senior vice president of the Tribune Company, has long maintained that the business of journalism is about "eyeballs"— getting as many people as possible to look at media products. "A media company's game is to deliver content to consumers," he said. "The newspaper is and will be for a long time the engine to gather and edit news. But it won't be enough to just deliver that information to newspaper readers. We [also] need for our news and information to go to the eyeballs of Web consumers and TV viewers and cable customers and even radio listeners, although they aren't using their eyes" (Tyner, 2004). Convergence increases an organization's chances of reaching the largest number of eyeballs. Convergence also makes news available when people want it and in the form they want it, rather than expecting audiences to consume news when networks and news papers make it available. Audiences have fragmented, and intermedia competition has increased.

1b) The availability of digital technology

In February 2004 the chairman of the New York Times Company and publisher of The New York Times, Arthur O. Sulzberger, Jr., told a conference at Northwestern University that convergence was "the future" for the media. He said his company had acquired companies such as the Discovery Channel to allow Times journalists to tell stories in print, online, and on television. "Broadband is bringing us all together," Sulzberger said. "We have to do it in papers, digitally and on TV. You can combine all three elements. News is a 24/7 operation, and if you don't have the journalistic muscles in all three [platforms], you can't succeed in broadband." Sulzberger described the process as "a hell of a challenge" (quoted in Damewood, 2004).

1c) Social and Legal Structural Factors Affecting Convergence

Technological change tends to gallop ahead of legal changes because regulations take time to be implemented, while technology always appears to be moving forward. Regulation is a key factor in the emergence of convergence, in the sense of providing a framework for its evolution. Singapore provides an example of the influence of legal factors on the development of convergence. Until 2000, the country's two media giants operated a comfortable duopoly: Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) ran all print media and the Media Corporation of Singapore (MCS) ran all broadcasting. SPH published eight dailies: three English, three Chinese, one Malay, and one Tamil. MCS operated five television and 10 radio channels—the bulk of Singapore's broadcasting. Laws that allowed one company to own print and broadcast media were enacted in 2000. Also in our country there is regulation which allows to manage information through different media. In our regulation is forbidden members of political party, even his or her, member of the family to possess the media.

3. MULTI MEDIA JOURNALISM

Dr. Juan Antonio Giner, founder of the Innovation International media consulting group, wrote that 7 out of 10 newspaper executives said their reporters had formal duties in at least an other medium apart from the newspaper (2001b, p. 28). Newspapers were becoming "24-hour information engines" just as broadcast organizations like CNN had become 24-hour news providers. "Media diversification is the past. Digital convergence is the present.

Multimedia integration is the future,” Giner wrote in the online edition of *Ideas*, the journal of the International Newspaper Marketing Association (INMA).

Today, media are businesses, and one of the realities of business is the need to make money to sustain the supply of content. Journalism needs advertising and advertising needs journalism, because advertising pays for good reporting just as good reporting attracts customers for advertising. In the best of all worlds, the journalism–business tension resolves itself in a balance where good journalism attracts enough advertising to sustain both the journalism and the need to make a profit. If the equation gets out of balance, such as during an economic recession or when managers get greedy, the tension becomes more magnified. If the equation is balanced, convergence can work. From the journalist’s perspective convergence offers a chance to do better journalism by giving reporters the tools to tell stories in the most appropriate medium. Technology frees them from the limits of individual media. (Huang, E., Davison, K., Davis, T., Bettendorf, E., Shreve, S., & Nair, A. 2003)

Cultural factors can encourage or inhibit convergence. Angels will not work with people they perceive as devils. A conservative newspaper that sees itself as a paper of record will have issues partnering with a tabloid television organization. Similarly, print journalists who look down on television people, labeling them as dimwit poor spellers, are less likely to welcome broadcast people into their newsrooms. A recent study found that some print and broadcast journalists are locked in a cultural clash known as an intergroup bias dynamic. (Kraeplin, C., & Criado, C. 2002) November 15)

Both print and broadcast journalists were most negative in rating the plan when they thought it was the sole work of the other group (Filak, 2004). Managers play a vital role in pointing out that journalists share the same core values. Instructors in various institutions also are seeking ways to instill these collaborative values in their students (Birge, 2004).

Main point here is discussions about trust in journalism as an indicator for change in the institutional environment of news companies. It argues that the strategic efforts of news companies to be perceived as a trust worthy cornerstones of public debate in a convergent environment are less effective than they have been in an analogue media system. But it also concludes that trust remains important for our understanding of how new institutional arrangements emerge to provide reliable news in a convergent media environment. It points out that professional actors in journalism should use the reflexive character of trust to maintain their value networks. The disruptive change in the media industry is well described in many scientific articles, consultancies’ whitepapers and professional blogs (e.g. with a focus on innovation, see Ekdale, Singer, Tully, & Harmsen, 2015).

Another key is training in the sense of exposure to ideas, and learning how to operate in different media. Part of the problem is the language that separates print and broadcast journalists; an editor in print is very different from a broadcast editor. Working together and sharing media experiences can help diminish the perception of difference by both groups. This is necessary to explain why “doing trust” (Frevert, 2014, p. 47) is a successful strategy to bridge information gaps between news organizations and their audiences in convergent news markets

As proposed by Welskopp (2014, p. 56ff), we can distinguish between three layers of trust in a professional context. First, working trust, defined as aggregated, collective, and often implicit knowledge about professional programs and workflows. This could be observed in a well-rehearsed news room team. Second, self-efficacy, which is defined as a shared, stylized understanding of your own professional role. This can, for instance, be observed in programmatic papers from journalist unions or in journalists’ contributions to the debate about the relationship between bloggers and journalists. And third, trust in personal professional networks, for example reliable sources, experienced freelancers or well-known editors working for another news company. These layers gain importance, if we assume that established news organizations fail in their strategic efforts to claim trust in their capabilities to provide the public with relevant news and background information. Because, then, we may find trigger events for a new self-energizing process leading to a new shared mindset of trust on one of these layers.

But even in this convergent media environment, trust keeps its important role. It is still relevant on a structural level to cope with unavoidable contingencies in the societal function of journalism. But we also learned that adding conceptual layers to this traditional view on trust in journalism helps us to understand how it stabilizes the institutional role of journalism under these new conditions. We may differentiate between working trust, self-efficacy and trust in professional networks to describe changes in journalism culture and enhance the analytical strength of trust, if we conceptualize it as a unique modus of coordination in news value networks beyond markets or hierarchies

4. CONVERGENCE IN JOURNALISM, IMPACT OF MEDIA INDUSTRIES AND THE PROCESS OF CREATIVITY

Media convergence has been mapped from a variety of perspectives, with scholars tracing the impact of digital convergence, for example, on everything from texts to consumption. Yet, few have examined how the rise of a convergent media landscape is impacting funding in and across contemporary media industries

Recent public and scholarly debates over funding in the media industries seem tied to the impact of digitization, which has provided a catalyst for change in terms of how media is now produced, distributed, and consumed across multiple platforms. As such, fundamental business models for funding media are changing too. Trends such as crowdfunding and co-creation—as well as subscription-based platforms such as Netflix and video-on-demand services such as iTunes—have all made media infinitely more sharable and personalized in the digital age. It is thus time to take stock of such funding innovations in contemporary media industries, especially given the wider industrial, technological, and social transformations brought about by media convergence. Media convergence has been mapped from a variety of perspectives, with scholars tracing the impact of digital convergence, for example, on everything from texts to consumption. Yet, few have examined how the rise of a convergent media landscape is impacting funding in and across contemporary media industries. It is important to examine such a relationship, and to assess ways in which convergent characteristics of connectivity, hybridity, networked society, etc., have informed approaches to funding across media sectors. There is certainly much academic work devoted to the ways in which media is responding and adapting to new modes of convergence and its “transmedia turn” (Fast & Örnebring, 2015; Fast, K., & Örnebring, H. (2015, September 15).

In a convergent media environment things are more complicated for at least three reasons. First, news companies have to defend their market position against new competitors such as search engines, instant messaging services or online social networks. Second, they are facing innovative ways of news production and news presentation such as crowd sourcing or de-bundling. Third, they have to readjust their products to qualitative change in user habits and media usage strategies, often described with key words such as mass customization or produsage (Bruns, 2008). Consequently, some media economists are using value networks instead of value chains to describe value creation in a digital economy (Ollrog, 2014, p. 170; Wirtz, 2013)

When we speak about convergence of journalism main question is how journalist cope with creativity. When applied to research, creativity can be seen as an “all-encompassing term that includes artistic and arts-based work but also the broader sense of creating, making, and doing” (Brown, N. 2019). Applying creative and arts-based methods in research brings with it advantages that, we argue, will make our research on journalism practice more relevant. As van der Vaart, van Hoven, and Huigen 2018, point out: (1) creative and arts-based methods provide us with new perspectives that traditional methods do not provide, and allow us to question currently dominant disciplinary approaches and understandings; (2) they allow us to address complexity that does not need to be expressed to fit within binary distinctions; (3) they allow us to include and express affective and experiential knowledge, where the research subjects become partners rather than mere objects of study. So, while creativity is an important element in journalism *practice* (Coffee 2011)

Cristina Archetti offers an inspiring exception in her call for and use of creative writing—such as poetry—in journalism studies. As Archetti argues, such an approach helps us to realize that there are issues related to objectivity in conducting research that go beyond the mere correct application of a methodology; that a considerable part of the reality and practices of journalism we study can be neither captured nor expressed through academic enquiry (and texts) alone. Beyond allowing for more ways for scholars to express their research, creative writing stimulates “a researcher’s engagement with the senses, feelings and the surrounding reality” (Archetti 2017)

Ultimately, we argue that such approaches are needed to complement current research methods and ways of telling stories about the field. Indeed, to adequately capture the many forms of journalism that are currently practiced, the various spaces for change and innovation, and to break open our at times limited understanding and ways of telling stories about journalism, we need to break away from traditional conceptualisations of journalism or solely understood through the lens of democracy and its institutions (Deuze and Witschge 2018)

As dancer, fashion designer, psychotherapist and author Roberta Štěpánková states, at some stage. in our academic lives we may ask: “Is my storytelling right?” But as she reminds us: “there are no ‘correct’ stories, just multiple stories.” So the question here, is how do we tell multiple and multi perspectival stories, and also, where desired, tell them in new ways?

Industrial journalism has drawn from professional ideals to reinforce boundaries as digital journalism constantly ignores and blurs lines. Journalism has reacted with a mix of distrust and caution to armies of parvenus that produce news and that serve as news sources such as citizen journalists and social media corporations. It carefully opened the door to new forms of news and commentary – from citizen journalism to readers’ input out of fear of damaging professional reputations and corporate brands. Newsrooms insist on affirming the difference between facts and truth,

journalistic genres and formats, real and fake news, news and propaganda as a host of impostors and journalistic wanna-bes flood the Internet. Journalists criticize Facebook for blurring lines between news and advertising (Moses 2018)

Digital Journalism challenges industrial journalism in many ways. It presents opportunities and threats. Just as it offers possibilities for newsrooms to tap into a wealth of information and to engage with multiple publics, it has also thrown industrial journalism off its dominant position. By doing so, it pushes the latter to reassess its connections to social actors, to adapt to new circumstances, and to revalidate its social standing and power when news are everywhere. Digital journalism also pushes scholarship to open the analytical lens in order to examine a range of networked practices that happen beyond newsroom-centered, industrial production of news.

5. CONCLUSION

Convergence is a form of journalism, which takes place in the newsroom as editorial staff members work together to produce multiple products for multiple platforms to reach a mass audience with interactive content. If pressed for a simpler definition, we would argue that convergence is about doing journalism and telling stories using the most appropriate media.

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