Changes and Challenges

-- Problems and Countermeasures Facing Journalism Today

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Abstract

Different countries have differences in news concepts or news values, and the degree of development of media around the world is imbalance, but journalism are facing some common problems as a whole at present. This paper selects three the most important issues facing it today, including the question of journalistic professionalism, the transformation of news media and the profitability of journalism. In addition, it also includes the views of some scholars and feasible solutions.

Keywords

New media environment; Journalism; Questions and solutions.

1. Introduction

To some extent, journalism is to exist for freedom, such as exposing social ugliness, and seeking independence. It is possible to say that journalism is still free, but it is dangerous to over-trust the power of reason and freedom of the press while ignoring the complexity and severity of modern social media communication patterns. "New media era", "Self-media era", "Digital media era", the new media environment for today's society is given a variety of titles, no one can deny the future of journalism, but the development path of it is still full of thorns. There are some problems of journalism in the development model and development prospects. Even some of the most basic things in the journalism industry are still questioned. For instance, the arrival of the new media era has greatly lower the threshold of speech for ordinary people, almost everyone can make comments and spread news on the Internet. Journalism professionalism is being challenged, and traditional news organizations are facing the problem of transformation.

2. Organization of the Text

This paper includes four chapters.Chapter 1 is the introduction. It addresses the social background, research focus, research objects and value. Chapter 2 is the structure statement of the dissertation. Chapter 3 overviews previous and existing research on the development, composition and limitations of journalism and is divided into three parts. Chapter 4 is the conclusion. It summarises the research based on the findings and discussion of the data. This chapter also notes the solutions and further research.

3. Literature References

3.1. The Objectivity of Journalistic Professionalism Is Challenged

Firstly, the professionalism of journalism has gradually been questioned with changes of media environment, in which news objectivity is one of the main issues. Generally speaking, issues such as the objectivity of news and other professional issues are important principles that journalists should always keep in mind and strictly follow. These profession provide a

knowledge system, to guide individuals what to do and what to avoid in any particular situation [1]. At the same time, they create an authoritative atmosphere based on a specific attitude toward the completion of the work and show that reporters should in a certain way to report, as far as possible close to the objective, the greatest degree of reduction of news facts [2].

However, because of the timeliness of news requirements, reporters must quickly integrate information and publish it, so objectivity can sometimes not be accurate. It is because journalists are directly related to the information they release, they are considered responsible and may be sued for defamation. In addition, major monopolies and political parties are inextricably linked, so it is difficult for the news media to achieve objective reporting without the constraints of political factors.

Furthermore, the professionalism of journalism has been challenged for another important reason. The new media environment is mainly based on the Internet, and everyone can become a We-Media and achieve one-to-N communication. Since the development of the We-Media, the production of journalism has no longer only belonged to professional news organizations, but ordinary people can also write and disseminate news. Zelizer believes that the ability of journalists to decide on news makes them different from non-reporters [1]. Tuchman also mentioned that media professionals themselves have adopted the view that professionals are more qualified than the audience to determine the audience's interests and needs [3]. However, in the current media environment, since the development of the media is irreversible, so it is important to emphasize journalism professionalism, not only to focus professional journalists, but also to regulate the media.

Objectivity as an important factor which is emphasised plays a certain role in journalistic professionalism. Tuchman believes that in some cases, 'objectivity' may be seen as a strategic ritual to protect journalists from risks [4]. Zelizer also mentioned that advocating objectivity helps eliminate the original danger brought by the subjective information of reporters, but it is not easy for reporters to maintain it [1].

Generally, there are three factors that influence the concept of journalists' objectivity, form, relationship and content between organizations [4]. Unlike social scientists, journalists have limited capabilities to define and defend their objectivity. They claim professionalism and loyalty to professional ethics, although these are professionally defined. But news products reflect the journalist's personal opinions, not the opinions of the officials they reported [5] .In this case, In this case, even if they have weaker political inclinations or no political positions, it is difficult to achieve a real objectivity. As Radin said, a social scientist is a 'thinker' while a journalist is a 'man of action.' Because of the timeliness emphasises of news, journalists should strive for the earliest time to edit and publish after obtaining information. That is to say, social scientists may carry out reflective epistemological tests on conclusions [4], but the nature of reporters' work requires they have little time to deal with these, so objective will be questioned.

For the above question, I think there are several ways to try to emphasis the objectivity of news. First, journalists verify the authenticity of a message by checking the source, such as making a phone call or through other methods to contact the party of the incident. As 'the fourth estate', the media has the responsibility as a 'gatekeeper', they needs some criteria to choose which information can pass through the gate and which to hold back and also have duty to supervise social and political issues and control the news to be released [5].

Second, some writing skills can be used in reports so as not to give readers one- sideness of information, for example, reporters could use two conflicting views when expressing a message. A said that the incident is such that since it cannot be determined whether the information is true or not, B's point of view can be listed. One fiction of news is to tell consumers what they want and what they need, so that to inform readers about the event instead of the biased of reporters' views. This is one of the methods Tuchman mentioned about the objectivity in news,

although it has some certain drawbacks [4]. He also pointed that journalists could claim objectivity by citing procedures they has followed. For example, the reporter may specify that he cited other people instead of providing his own opinions.

In addition, Tuchman also pointed some strategies on the objective of news [4]. Newsmen may use quotation marks wisely is one of the skills, and quote other people's opinions as a form of supporting evidence. By inserting other people's opinions, let them speak 'facts.' The use of quotations to eliminate the presence of the reporter, which indicates that 'this is a statement belonging to someone other than the reporter.' Last but not least, arranging news content in an inverted pyramid form to express the objectivity, and put the most important information at the very beginning while the less important things is arranged backward. Similarly, when arranging newspaper content, the 'fact' can be put on the front page, while the 'opinion' is placed behind to attract readers' attention and improve news objectivity.

3.2. Transformation in the Field of Journalism

Online media has become the main channel for us to obtain news, which not only makes it difficult to guarantee the professionalism of journalism, but also challenges the status of traditional media. Over the past decade or more, the main focus of journalism is about changes concerning technology, professional financial issues, its economic relationships, audience and news dissemination, practices and practitioners, and functions, identities, and cultures [6]. We are witnessing what may be the fifth shift in journalistic research to the focus of social technology, as scholars are studying the social and technological dynamics of the transformation of journalism in the digital age [7]. Therefore, the transformation faced by journalism is not only a change in the form of media brought about by technological development, but the changing mode of communication. And the most important focus in the transition process is traditional media, especially paper media.

In the era of mobile Internet, audiences are no longer passive recipients of information. They can publish news anywhere and anytime through mobile or network terminals, and the reading scene is also changing. People often use fragmented time, such as commuting time or meal time to read, and they prefer short messages like micro blogs and more willing to read pictures. As one of the traditional media, print media has lost readers and reduced profits, and some even faced the issue of closure. In order to be able to stay in the market, traditional media organisations began to reform and make transformation. In other words, many traditional media organisations are facing challenges related to decentralised audiences, declining revenues and the rise of digital, social, mobile technologies [6]. In C. W. Anderson and Nancy Thumim's research about media ecosystems has mentioned the situation of local traditional media that although they have not been able to adapt to the new media era, facing the new participants and new media nature, the importance of traditional media institutions still exists [8]. Therefore, under the new environment, it is necessary to make improvement and adapt to changes so that to achieve better development.

The digital exploration of journalism currently seems to be merely a formality, and the media thinking mode still need to be improved. To be honest, the key to adapting to the Internet era lies in the use of Internet thinking, and the so called refers to the use of the Internet to transform traditional industries and create new business models and values. We have witnessed the real change of digital exploration of print media in the past was only carrying on the form, that is, from paper to digital format. However, print media should undergo radical changes from the content, delivery to the feedback extension, rather than merely stay on the surface. From this point of view, it is obvious to see that the biggest obstacle on the way to transform is how to change thinking mode. As Stephen D. Reese mentioned that the future of journalism needs new thinking, and it needs to try to adapt to the emerging, unstable, and shifting digital news work

structure [9]. At the same time, there is an urgent need to develop concepts and methods that are sensitive to the technological changes that affect journalism.

3.3.   Profitability Issues: Production Costs, Remuneration Problems

The relation between journalism transition and profitability issues is that of including and included, but I still choose to divide them into two different problems to analyse, and I will combine solutions together, because some methods are universal for them.

In the press industry, the issue of profit is not just a problem of traditional media, but the new media also has challenges in terms of this problem. The profit model is the way to make money, and the traditional profit model of print media is paying equal attention on circulation revenue and advertising revenue. However, due to the dependence on advertising and the unbalanced structure, plus the audience erosion, which has caused serious business crisis to print media. Usher has mentioned about the situation of the U.S. newspaper industry that the circulation of the top 25 newspapers has dropped for several consecutive years; even The Wall Street Journal , which added the circulation of paid online subscribers, still has declined slightly [10]. In fact, not only has the circulation declined, but there have also been significant layoffs within news organisations to reduce operating costs. Newspapers that were once dailies have reduced to publishing three times a week or only publishing online to save costs [10].

When newspapers lose circulation, they will not only lose users but will also be forced to reduce advertising costs. The drop in profits reflects the core ability of newspapers to make original news reports. As a result, less money is spent on public service news that requires time, energy, labor, and resources [10]. Affected by the new media, it seems that the traditional media has not yet fully understood and adapted to this new communication environment. They have not been able to perfect the construction of news information copyright, news which cost a lot of manpower, material sources and money were sometimes been published on the Internet or retweet freely for audiences instead of secondary sales, which resulting in wast of resources and cost. In addition, Usher also pointed that planed to make up sales decline through online advertising, but this is a strategy that has proven to be unstable.

I would like to interlinked the two problems together and talk about the situation and solutions since I think the issue of profitability is interrelated with the transition of journalism. As paper media content is constantly spreading online, how to make profit through the Internet has become the focus of journalism industry. The content sales has become a breakthrough point in the traditional media dual market, and digital subscription has emerged. Initially, digital subscriptions appeared in the form of PDF until the booming of multimedia message and mobile news, and the appearance of 'pay walls' and App client subscription had broadened the profitability of print media in the digital era. Digital subscription is an exploration of the profit model of paper media, but this kind of profit model is still carried out under the paradigm of traditional media business mode. Therefore, from the perspective of its practice, it has not brought profit breakthroughs to the paper media. For example, the 'pay wall' launched by The Times in 2011 was considered revolutionary. In this way, The Times has been able to win both print and digital users. However, with the popularity of mobile electronic devices, people can easily obtain news information on social networks, which is also a new challenge to the profitability of traditional media.

The changes in journalism industry from traditional modes to the new media are mainly reflected in content, media form and audiences' reading habits. Digital newspapers are one aspect of the transformation of newspapers into new media. To my point of view, it is an important direction for the future development of the newspaper industry to base itself on the traditional newspaper, develop and apply advanced technologies, and cater to online media. More importantly, due to the limitations of platform and content, it is necessary to develop a wide variety of reporting methods to meet the needs of readers. Diversification and developing

industrial chain are also an option for traditional media to make transformations, and many press groups promote themselves by extending to other fields. In addition, many media organisations are increasingly focused on giving users opportunities to organise their own stories rather than relt on journalists to make news. The advantage of doing so is that it can increase the interaction with readers, and increasing the user base as one of the ways to attract audiences.

Newspaper can make deep positioning for the 'three high' group as a method to raise revenue. The so-called 'three high' refers to the high education level, higher income and higher-aged (elder) group in the market. Due to its unique characteristics, the paper media has a certain level of education in audience groups, and the ageing of audiences is becoming more and more obvious, and people aged over 45 occupy a major proportion of newspaper audiences. With the increasing popularity of e-products, readers are more likely to read through electronic products especially among young people, but as the age increases, long-term use of electronic products to read and browse will easily lead to eyestrain and vision loss. Therefore, some of these people returning to the print media, and then it has a new spring. In this way, for this group of stable 'three high' people, print media need to carry out an in-depth positioning and in-depth analysis of content to appeal them. This group of people have mature mind and their views on things are no longer limited to the surface, they can see the essence by the phenomenon and are good at analyse problems in depth, most of them have stable income and effective consuming power. Therefore, the traditional media can use 'minority' content model to tailor content and presentation to consumers' preferences, concerns and professional characteristics in light of their reading habits and consumption characteristics.

4. Conclusion

The hegemony of the traditional mode of mass communication has given way to hybridity. Therefore, I think that the solution for media transformation can be considered from the perspective of media convergence and strengthen cooperation and alliance among various media, which seems to be a development trend. Prof. Pool, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, first proposed the concept of 'Media Convergence'. In his book The Technologies of Freedom, he referred to 'the convergence of modes', which means mutual integration between media. To some extent, media integration, mutual cooperation and infiltration could reduce their operating costs and enter the new media market, it is also helpful to adapt to audiences' receiving information habits through establishing platforms among print media and new media in the mobile Internet era.

The mobile Internet has brought some crises to journalism industry, especially the traditional media, which made the media integration and transformation an inevitable trend. However, traditional media have irreplaceable social function and values, so in the mobile Internet era, paper media should embrace the Internet to break through the plight, meet customers' requirements to develop digital newspapers and other products, build user-oriented ideas and serve for the technology-oriented concepts. In addition, it is necessary to insist on making high-quality depth reports and focusing on positioning reader groups. Traditional media could change the previous single business pattern to the diversified business mode, so as to promote journalism industry, expand its own business channels and promote the integration between culture and capital.

Everything has a process of sprouting to flourish and then decline from the peak, and the media is no exception. The development of traditional media in journalism, such as the plight of newspapers and the polarisation of audiences, I think it is inevitable. Certainly, the role of traditional media can not be ignored, and they still has a certain status, but their squeezed market share and the decreasing audience are all facts. The evidence leads me to believe that it

may be possible to make further development for them if adopt certain means and methods. Therefore, traditional media, especially newspapers, need to be combined with new things, such as in tactics, style, etc., to break the pattern of one-way communication while maintaining their own characteristics. "The benefit of discussing the future is that they haven't come yet," said Maryanne Reed. "But the bad thing is, there is no sign that the future is coming. If you wake up one day and find that the future has knocked on the door, but you are not ready yet, then you will only be abandoned."

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