Local broadcasters in the convergent media house – the case of Norway

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Abstract:
Present-day picture of Norwegian media market shows that the transformation from mono to mixed media newsrooms increases its rate from year to year and affects every communication platform. Additionally, media houses put pressure on broadcasting. Many editors say that mixed media is difficult to "grasp". Therefore, many questions and doubts about the future shape of the Norwegian media arise: *How to manage mixed media newsroom? What should be required from collaborators in mixed media present time? How does functioning in the structures of media houses affect quality of journalism? Are the media houses the direction where we should be heading? Do local broadcasters have a chance to survive in the market of uniting media? What form a local broadcast will adopt?* The answers to these and many other questions related to the transformation of the media will have to be sought in the coming years, when both market and technological developments force a change in the media shape. In this paper, there are only suggested some trends evident in the emergence of the structure of the Norwegian media houses, especially the changes in the local broadcasters (the change in the shape of newsroom/ editor office; a change in the journalistic skills; preferences of receivers). The material underlying the empirical results of this study is based on surveys and interviews conducted among owners of media houses, editors, journalists etc.

Keywords: media house; local media; market; convergence

Introduction

Contemporary Norwegian media market shows that the rate of transformation of 'mono media' to 'multi media' editorial offices increases every year. However, many editors admit that 'multimediality' is not easy to manage. Therefore, there are questions and doubts about future shape of the Norwegian media: *How to manage the 'multimedia' editor staff? What should be required from editorial co-workers in 'multimedia' present time? How functioning in the structures of a media house affects the quality of journalism? Should we head for media houses?* Responses to these and many other questions related to the transformation taking place in the media market will need to be sought in the coming years. This outline will only show some trends. More comprehensive study devoted to this issue should be the subject of a separate publication.

Analysing Norwegian media from the perspective of functioning of media houses we should mention the phenomenon of media convergence. The term 'convergence' is very ambiguous and present in many scientific branches. Recently, this term has been also well known in the media theory. In the late seventies, the term 'convergence' was used according to changes in media. One of those who helped to popularize the 'theory of convergence' was Ithiel de Sola Pool, who in 1983 described the technological convergence in the form of a

forward-looking fusion of communication channels, which then acted independently. Pool predicted that new technology would connect all channels of communication into one large system. According to Pool, in the future, any content posted by the media will be stored in a digital recording as well as their distribution will be done electronically (Sola de Pool, 1984).

Convergence of Editors – Gordon, Dailey and Lawson-Borders Theories

Gordon (2003) considers the problem of horizontal integration in the media market. He describes among others media houses, which are based on the parallel production of messages for two or more channels. This type of editorial workflow gives rise to management of integrated production of all communication platforms. Gordon in addition to discussing the 'convergence at the level of ownership structure' and 'technological convergence product level', also writes about the convergence of three complementary types of editorial, which include:

- structural convergence - refers to changes in the organization and structure of the editorial work, which is the result of a joint editing of content;
- convergence in collecting information - it says that journalists are expected to gain information that will be able to be freely shared among all media channels;
- tactical convergence - refers to the principles of cross-promotion[1] and content sharing between different channels (Gordon, 2003).

Assumptions of Gordon's (2003) theory allow to organize various forms of integration between the channels and editorial offices. However, using the theory it is difficult to assess the degree of internal integration of individual editors. If we present the 'convergence' as a process, which is aiming from two divergent points towards one common, we are dealing with a classic image of the modern media market, created on the basis of evaluation of editorial offices in the direction: from low to high degree of integration. Such understanding of convergence is described by Dailey (2005) in convergence continuum theory. Dailey's model refers to five levels of 'convergence', which are based on the degree of cooperation between cross-media partners. Dailey has identified five structural levels of the media:

- cross-promotion;
- cloning;
- cooperative competition;
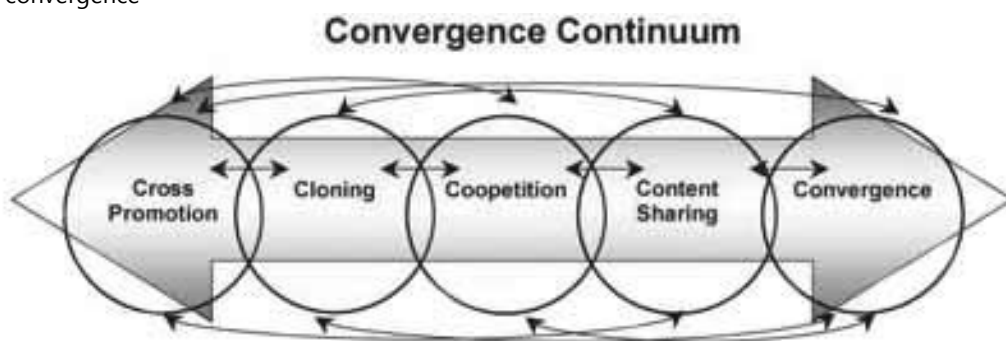- distribution of content
- convergence

Figure 1. Dailey's model of convergence (Dailey, 2005)

The model shows the movement of media between different levels of convergence (from seeming one to complete). The first stage (the left end of scale) is characterized in that that at least two (or more) types of media /

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[1] Cross promotion is understood as 'content marketing of one channel in the second chanel' (Gordon 2003).

channels cooperate in marketing sale of common journalistic products (both visually and verbally). This phenomenon was called by Dailey 'cross promotion' and is the lowest degree of convergence reflected in his theory. Collaboration on this level is limited to five types of activities, such as:

- regular presentation of logo or partner's name;
- marketing promotion of specific content that are broadcasted on channels partners;
- encouraging customers to take advantage of offers that are available in the channel partner;
- allowing reporters and commentator of one channel to come to another channel in order to promote new content and special projects;
- using editorial meetings to discuss the possibility of applying the principles of cross-promotion.

The next level is distinguished by the fact that beside the editorial policy of 'cross promotion', particular content prepared by the partners is published in an unchanged form or slightly modified. Such action is referred to as cloning.

Level three is characterized by the fact that cooperation between the channels focuses only on selected issues that are at the same time competition for material placed on the other platforms. This is called coopticion i.e. cooperative competition. Moreover, the agreement that stands between the channels in this case is characterized by mutual distrust and dislike.

In cases where the channels remain in constant cooperation we can see many examples of joint activities, such as:

- distribution of information in selected cases;
- appearance of guests in the partner's program as experts or commentators;
- allocation of resources between different channels;
- sharing of visual materials.
- However, when they are passed to competition, completely different behaviours is seen:
- blocking access to content – channel partners have access only to selected cases and not to all the material gathered in a given editorial office;
- reluctance, in relation to material provided by the staff of channel partners (underestimating the quality of the texts/recordings and doubts about the competence of the authors);
- a common opinion that the channel partners treat the material from other channels worse for the benefit of the material produced by them;
- disseminating the belief that close cooperation with channel partners can contribute to the decline in the number of recipients - receiving cooperation in the category of "cannibalism" (Gordon, 2003).

Fourth level on the Dailey's convergence scale assumes that all of the conditions for the smooth functioning of convergent media house (assigned to the three previous levels) are fulfilled and the element of competition (see the third level) has been eliminated. This level is called content-sharing. At this level channels regularly share information and develop their own versions of common materials, i.e., published, adapted to each channel, versions of the same reports. Furthermore, cooperation at this level is distinguished by specific forms of action, such as:

- regular meetings to exchange ideas;
- exchanging of opinions on how the material should be presented;
- independent work of reporters in each of the channels in most cases;
- joint planning of special projects or research;
- allocation of costs in connection with the implementation of special projects (e.g. market analysis);
- common strategy of publication for those projects.

The most integrated form of cooperation can be found at the fifth level (right end in the model), which is precisely defined as convergence. In this case, channels are characterized by cooperation, both in terms of

collecting and sending material. Usually, everyone works in a joint editorial office, and the whole team is led by one common editorial director. It is the manager, in Norway often called the 'conductor of the media', who decides on the place where the material will be published, how the topic will be piloted and continued. Everything is done in accordance with the applicable rules of the various media platforms so that customers receive the best possible "end product". The material is developed by a team with the participation of representatives of different channels. Dailey does not specify a common location and template organization of editorial environments, as a part of a characteristic of full convergence, but in the context of the Norwegian media it is a natural and necessary complement to other characteristics of this level of convergence.

Overlapping circles (Dailey's model, pict. 1) illustrate the transition between the various stages of convergence. In other words, the particular features characteristic for cooperation on one level, may also appear on the other. When we move in the right side of the scale, we will be closer to full convergence, and it must be emphasized that cooperation at this level is only a supplement to the changes taking place at the previous levels. In practice this means that a fully converged collaboration also refers to cross-promotion, cloning, sharing of resources/associates, joint planning and publishing.

Of course, the location on the scale is not static. Individual channels can work closely together in selected cases (e.g. election), while in the daily delivery of news they have a lower degree of co-coordinated and integrated production. This flexibility corresponds to the diversity of news production in the so-called 'omnibus media', which are addressed to a heterogeneous audience (Gordon, 2003).

The flexibility of the model may constitute a limitation for its use in practice. It will be difficult to locate the channels having common management and coordinate their production. They work only in certain areas, but a significant part of relevant material (perhaps even most) is produced taking the individual needs of each platform under the consideration. Can we therefore, identify them as convergent or are they on the lower level of convergence scale (e.g. at the level of sharing content or even at the level of cooperative competition)? If the model is to be applied in practice, it is worthwhile to examine more precisely dependencies between different levels. Dailey said that the cooperation between the channels must have at least one of the features characteristic for a given level, so you can refer it to a specific convergence level. The more we can assign the characteristic elements of cooperation, the more typical it is for a given convergence level and its location on an axis becomes more pronounced.

Model of 'convergence continuum' can be accused of that from the standpoint of normativity is quite insecure. Dailey points out that the convergence levels located on the right of the center of axis are more desirable than those at the center and left of it. The level of cooperative competition is considered the least desirable. It is difficult to imagine a media organization, whose primary objective is to achieve convergence at the level of cooperative competition. Whereas, we can easily see that both the level of sharing content and convergence can function as strategic targets for the media houses, which base their activities on the integration of the channels. As for the cross-promotion and cloning levels, they may be a target for those who want their channels to be more isolated.

While the idea of integration has many supporters, joining channels does not seem to be the best solution. To keep channels specificity, it seems more effective to sustain their growth and competitive ability, isolation or limited integration (Bressers, 2006). It is certainly important to see that separation, as well as integration are possible alternatives for channel development strategy of media houses. Negative aspects of competition, unwillingness to change, underestimating other communication platforms will certainly constitute a clear obstacle in the integration of particular channels. Recognizing this element as characteristic, also for cross-promotion, and cloning, we will create some kind of cover for Dailey's normative model.

There are reasons for modifying the model in a way the negative competitive approach would not be described as 'own level of convergence' but rather 'an obstacle to convergence', which can occur at all levels.

However, for proper assessment of the convergence level between the different channels, it is necessary to examine, first, to what extent problems of cooperation appear in the editorial office, and second, what strategies and projects are undertaken to solve these problems. Lawson-Borders (2006) takes an attempt to present different ways of dealing with the management in the editorial office. She describes the organizational strategy of the three leading American media houses. Lawson-Borders focuses on the analysis of seven important aspects of convergence, which according to her, are inherent in the integration of old and new media. Many of them seem to be important also in relation to Dailey's model, since they do not correspond with its "negative spirit of competition". This is particularly associated with such aspects of convergence as:

1. **the acceptance of cultural change** - involves a combination of different cultures within the various channels in the convergent editor office, where all the channels and their employees are treated equally;
2. **awareness of the convergence problem** - convergence is included in the overarching philosophy and identity of the media house;
3. **promoting the principles of cooperation** - workers share ideas, information, and constantly exchange views on how the given issues can be presented in a multimedia way; working in the so-called multimedia groups, providing material for various communication platforms, in particular the extension of multimedia content of the message, "new media" are not treated in a competition aspect but rather in the aspect of complementarity;
4. **mutual communication** - all collaborators involved in the collection and distribution of particular contents, are also participants in the discussion about convergence.

Other aspects necessary for the proper management of editorial work, slightly less important from the viewpoint of convergence, presented by Lawson-Borders, are:

1. compensation;
2. competition;
3. customer orientation.

Norwegian Media House – Individual or Convergent?

It seems reasonable to look at the editorial convergence, both through the prism of Dailey's model, as well as from the perspective of study developed by the Lawson-Borders (2005). It is worth noting, how in the relation to above-mentioned theories editorial offices of Norwegian media houses are presented. This study was written because of the research conducted by the Institute of Journalism in Fredrikstad and those conducted by the author of this paper in 2008-2009[2].The basic methods used in the study were interview method (quantitative and qualitative analysis) and observation method. The work of Dailey and Lawson-Borders form the theoretical basis for research, and research tools used to gather the material has been prepared using the seven areas essential to assess the degree of convergence, i.e.:

1. **strategy and commitment** - the concept of convergence of the media house, the motivation for multimedia investing;
2. **organization** - the integration and organization of the media house;
3. **communication** - the flow of information in the media house;
4. **status** – the balance of power between the channels and its effect on cooperation;
5. **collaboration and innovation** - the type of cooperation;
6. **competence** – knowing how particular channels interact, quality of management, actions taken to achieve convergence;

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[2] A research tool used in the study is a questionnaire, which consisted of open and closed questions. The addressees were: publishers, editors in chief and journalists working at Norwegian local and regional media. Number of participants interviewed:126; year of research: 2008-2009.

7. **customers and the market** – marketing management including the problem of convergence.

The study included experienced editors-in-chief, managers of individual platforms, journalists and owners of media houses[3]. Moreover, the study used both, editorial sources where there is a clear division among the channels and those where this division is almost unnoticeable. During the project, interviews with editors-in-chief were conducted during which the strategy and vision for the development of various media houses were discussed. Media houses involved in the study are as well local as regional and national, for example: Adresseavisen, Agderposten, Bergens Tidende, Dagbladet, Drammens Tidende, Romerikes Blad, Stavanger Aftenblad, VG.

The choice of particular editors was dictated by: size range, geographical location and a comparable number of distribution channels. Additionally, editors participating in the study are distinguished by extensive experience and have been firmly rooted in experienced editorial offices. Furthermore, these are media houses, which, apart from newspapers and the Internet also have radio and/or TV stations. In all cases, in each media house, we have at least two communication platforms.

The analysis shows that the concept of 'media house' is interpreted differently by each of the editors (especially when it comes to its internal organization). For some, this is just joint building and independent work of each platform, for others, common editing of the material for all platforms. Therefore, the degree of integration or the degree of alignment among the channels in the various media houses is highly diversified. There are media houses: completely non-integrated, moderately integrated, and tightly integrated.

The choice of the appropriate integration strategy is the most important issue for the development of the internal structure of each of the Norwegian media houses – for many of them the most important is consistency among different platforms. Visible in virtually every media house, the increasingly deepening co-operation of "old" and "new" media platforms provokes many questions and controversies. The most frequently raised issue is whether the editors union by a combination of channels increases or reduces competitive ability of media house on the market, where the fight for the message and audience is becoming increasingly fierce.

The idea of maintaining separate communication channels in the Norwegian media houses is based on the opinion that the media house is not able to win the competition, eliminating the boundaries among the channels. The specificity of the channel and specific competitive challenges require full attention, substantial financial resources and strategic thinking focused on the specifics of the channel. Enough to look at the traditional TV stations or the paper editions of newspapers (especially national and regional e.g. Dagbladet), enough to look decline in their popularity. The task of all media houses is therefore, conducting a thorough analysis of market needs and and adjusting its development its development strategy to the expectations of the consumer. It is certainly a big challenge for most editors, especially since modern media often develop very unpredictably. Therefore it is extremely important to constantly monitor competitors, conduct market analysis and product development. Each of the channels is a big challenge if they are managed independently since winning clear marketing impact on many levels requires a strong and internally coherent organization. In the case of Norwegian media houses, we frequently see that for a single channel it is important to maintain cooperation with partners working outside than inside the media house. According to Arne Krumsvik such a phenomenon may be due to the fact that Internet journalists derive greater benefits from dialogue with the users rather than journalists working in traditional media. Editors of media houses like: Dagbladet Multimedia, Drammens Tidende Nye Aftenbladet Multimedia were at the beginning skeptical concerning any innovations. Many journalists had the view that booking material for newspaper or developing it according to its logic is necessary and should be done at the expense of new media (radio, television) and especially "network." Therefore, it can be concluded that the

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[3] Experience in managing a team of multimedial newsroom was taken into account.

development of local journalism characteristic of new media, and especially for the communication in the Internet in Norway is slowed down by the newspaper, which also results in slowdown of the media house, as well as the weakening of information broadcasting.

The solution involving the functioning of separate channels has many drawbacks, especially when you consider the lack of use of the similarities in the editorial work. According to media theorists (e.g.: Gordon, 2003; Dailey, 2005) such organization triggers the so-called "channel cannibalism" manifested by the fact that channels "hunt" for the same audience and the same editorial content with a relatively similar profile.

In Drammens Tidende journalists at the beginning, perceived the competition at the level of "news production" as unjust. Whereas, in their opinion, lack of coordination of activities carried out in a separate editorial offices was frequently the source of conflict referring to who, what, where and when to publish.

Looking at the phenomenon of "cannibalism" from a wider perspective, it can be assumed that the separation of different platforms may result in that that channel will develop its own characteristics in a way that manages to stop question "cannibalism". The Internet and its capability of multimedia broadcasting will adopt a form absolutely different from traditional media, and thus becoming complementary and not competitive offer (Dagens Næringsliv,12 October 2006).

Analysing the factors influencing the development of the Norwegian media, we see that the idea of integration is dominated mainly in larger newsrooms. Especially when it comes to common resources and content. Integration is also present at the level of the organizational structure of the media house, as a company. Empowering the already existing 'brand product' is the justification for the integration of particular channels. An example of such action may be Aftenposten media house, where there was a fusion of Aftenposten Multimedia and Aftenposten its parent company (so far focused on publishing of the leading, influential journal in Norway) in one fully integrated media house.

Frequently cited reasons for introducing the editorial integration is the pragmatics of such a solution. It is a common organization of the production of news, which supports many platforms (e.g. preparation of items that can be replicated on different platforms). Integration is also designed to increase effectiveness of work of newsrooms. This seems to be particularly important, especially today, when most of the leading titles in connection with the shrinking market, is forced to take up radical changes in organization of work of editorial offices (Klassekampen, 10 May, 2007).

Another argument for the acceptance of integration in the media are the possibilities that open up through the transfer of unnecessary resources from "old" to "new" media. The transformation of fossilized, for many years, work pattern of mono into multimedia arouses feelings of insecurity and even dislike of the team however, it can still stop and minimize the negative effects of dismissals in newsrooms (Dagens Næringsliv, 12 October 2006). However, ongoing research show that many editors-in-chief are skeptical to 'let' their team members, working in traditional newspapers, form other channels; the Internet is particularly unkindly treated. Majority believes that such solution is rather unlikely to bring Internet editing the title of the desired audience. Integration supporters justify the need of its introduction by the fact, that in order to face a large and powerful competitors, it is necessary to use all the resources of media house, and not just journalistic "unity" and the attachment to tradition.

In assessing the integration of editorial work we can see its more practical justification, especially when it comes to organizing daily work of the team. Thanks to cooperation among the platforms we avoid duplication of work, stress, surprises causing unnecessary chaos such as: sending several teams to the same meeting, calling for the same source many times from different channels, planning the same titles for "network" and "traditional " newspapers etc. For many editors such everyday conditions are very important and almost as strongly argue for the introduction of integration.

Aspect of competition is used as an argument for both integration and separation of channels in the media house. Lack of competition, or rather the perception of competition only at the level of information provided to

recipients has a small impact on integration. If the Norwegian newspaper will not feel that the other media threaten their hegemony in the sphere of news, it is rather difficult to convince the media industry to invest in "fast" communication channels. In such situation it appears that the coordination between channels, "fast" and "free is still" weak.

The current situation in the Norwegian media market shows that many local media houses are based on a similar pattern - with no particular competition and the relatively limited integration. However there are some exceptions, such as the media house in Arendal. Therefore, the question arises whether the local media houses will cope with a possible sudden and strong competition from a network journalism, like the ubiquitous information services (eg, VG Nett, Dagbladet), or network social networking (such as local versions: Nettby, Facebok, Underskog).

Typology of Norwegian Media Houses

The division of Norwegian media houses, presented below, has been developed by analysts from the Institute of Journalism in Fredrikstad[4]. Classification was carried out taking into account the results of the questionnaire developed to assess the degree of editorial convergence of various media houses in Norway. The survey was based on Dailey's theory of convergence and Lawson-Borders study. Typology presented below focuses on the main elements of evaluating the level of integration and thus functions as a 'bench marking' tool.

On the one hand, the results of the interview seem to be obvious, on the other, surprising. The more features of the cooperation are in the media house, the greater integration and higher degree of convergence. We can of course wonder to what extent these studies represent a true picture, and subjective perspective of individual employees of media houses. Of course, as with most sociological research we must take into account a certain amount of subjectivity in evaluating the results, which do not diminish the relevance of the study as far as the assessment of the level of convergence of Norwegian media houses are concerned. The following four types of media houses were identified on the basis of convergence rates in Norway[5].

1. separate media house;
2. slightly integrated media house;
3. integrated media house;
4. convergent media house.

1. Separate media house

In 2008 this category was represented by the Drammens Tidende media house (DT Nye Medier and Drammens Tidende newspaper). DT Mediehus was distinguished by the minimal interaction among the staff and professional groups across all channels. Employees were unlikely to be moved amongst channels and cooperation in particular cases was quite limited. By introducing a joint meeting of editors Drammens Tidende has taken a step towards a more co-coordinated production of news, but in 2008, DT media house did not yet have: common editorial and news management, cross-group structure and common rules for publishing.

Media house also did not have a multimedia strategy. Although, multimedia meetings of editors were proved that DT was moving in the direction of integration, it did not seem then that this would happen soon, since there were too many differences between a traditional newspaper and Nye Medier. Then the DT media house had the image of too segregated or separate. In 2009, due to changes in the newsroom and the rapid development of networks, DT joined a group of converging media houses.

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[4] Analysts from the Institute of Journalism in Fredrikstad has been conducting a systematic assessment of changes in the structure of the Norwegian media houses since 2006. The data presented in this article refer to the situation from the years 2008-2009.

[5] Thy typology is taken from CFJE (Center for Professional Development in Journalism) divided into four classifications of multimedial competence in the newsroom – from the channel specialist to slightly convergent, strongly convergent and multimedial reporter. See Jacobsen P., Rasmussen SK (2002), *Fra bladhus til mediehus*, CFJE

2. Slightly integrated media house

In 2008, at this level of integration were media houses such as: national VG, Dagbladet and local Agderposten. A common feature of these media houses was that the editorial team had worked worked for many channels. This was the most important distinctive feature in comparison with media houses of the previous level. Employees of all the above mentioned media houses supplied material, or formed a ready-made texts for many channels. Slightly integrated media houses are trying to maintain evaluation of coherent policy, starting from the exchange of ideas, information and sources ending with conducting joint market research. The scope of these activities is obviously different in each media house. The most advanced operations were conducted in Agderposten and VG. However, in Dagbladet media house there was introduced the so-called trial system i.e. group structures, whose goal was to achieve full integration of all channels. VG and Agderposten did not apply at the beginning 'matrix organization' in their branches. VG editors launched the first vertical organization dedicated to tourism investment. Moreover, the first 'light integrated media houses' had at the beginning its own editorial staff for special channels and a separate news management. They did not have, however, a common "super newsroom" or "conductor of news."

3. Integrated media house

This category, in 2008, included such media houses as: Avisa Nordland, Romerikes Blad and Stavanger Aftenblad. Of these three, the first two are distinguished by a high degree of integration, while the Stavanger Aftenblad gained slightly closer to the slightly integrated level. This was mainly due to the fact that the comparatively new structure of Aftenblad media house was not rather based on multimedia production rules. Editorial organization and management of the news section was clearly integrated with a common "super newsroom" and "conductor channel" for all platforms.

Dividing line between the integrated and convergent media houses has been fixed after taking into account the degree of convergence in each of them. Avisa Nordland, for example, and Romerikes Blad had multimedial editors (partially integrated), which functioned during the day covering the greater part (but not all) of channels included in the media house. Also, interpretation of the news director's work is quite different in the various media houses. In Romerikes Blad news director was rather a "coordinator" rather than "conductor". The news director's attention is focused on reviewing information produced in various channels, however they do not manage Romerike TV.

4. Convergent media house

Although Adresseavisen, Bergens Tidende and NRK Østfold presented in 2008 the most complex form of organization in the newsrooms, they remained within the category of 'convergent media house'. In the editorial offices mentioned above, we can find most of the indicators of 'convergence'. Adresseavisen is slightly different since, there were fully applied only the principles of 'matrix organization', while the group structure has been introduced only partially. A similar organization of editors and news directors represents NRK Østfold. The regional office does not function as a 'conductor' of media. Instead, there was introduced: the system of duties and the position of 'news director on duty' who provides multimedial coordination around the clock. Editorial Board is divided into small groups responsible for individual channels, but they work in the same multimedia room with minimal physical distance from each other.

It should be noted that also in the media houses (apparently fully integrated) still much has to be done to achieve full integration and the maximum of convergence. It can be mentioned that: more employees could work multimedially, more cases can be solved in a multimedial way and more opinions could be issued.

Local Media House Structure – Case study

1. ADRESSEAVISEN - TRONDHEIM

- leading regional media house in central Norway - the oldest newspaper
- publication in four channels: paper (Adresseavisen), network (www.adresseavisen.no), radio (Radio-Adressa) and TV (TV Adressa)
- TV and radio organized in one company (formerly TV-Trondelag)

The most important thing for those who were managing Aderssa Media House was to integrate almost all areas of the editorial activities. Kirsti Husby (news editor) admits that other media houses show tendency to separation, in contrast to Adressa, where all editorial activities tried to get close to each other as much as possible. Journalists and editors were aware that if they want to compete with other houses, they are forced to use its resources, regardless of the communication channel. One, even the best-developed distribution channel will not allow the comfortable operation of a medium in contemporary communication reality, therefore Adressa puts emphasis on the integration of all platforms.

The editorial staff is constantly introducing new organizational solutions to strengthen even more cooperation between the channels. Additionally, it is extremely important to give collaborators a sense of ownership of all channels in the media house.

The heart of Adressa organization is the head office of the newsroom or the main office of news where the managers of the channels have their permanent place of work. This is also the place where the news editor and news director on duty supervise the work of the whole media house. Director on duty is called 'the conductor of channels' and is responsible for coordinating and controlling the multimedia production of information. The head of duty has three employees who work in shifts (one week day work, one week nights and one week free). Previously, the news editor was also the "director of channels", but according to most workers of Adressa it was not a perfect system, since the news editor was not able to take care of each channel properly. Media analyst Sigurd Host admits that:

> The role of the channel conductor in such a large media house should be fully focused on the given problem. This multimedia work requires decision making virtually 24 hours a day. After a while it appeared that it was difficult to reconcile this with the other tasks that the news editor had at Adressa (Host, 2009).

Directors on duty have much more ease to concentrate on content production, control and care for the fast channels - web, television and radio, so they are not in the clear shadow of traditional newspaper. Adressa invests in improving the competence of team members supervising the work of individual channels, with the focus on the proper selection of the heads on duty. Due to this fact, directors on duty of the report manager were required on radio and television. Such action was taken to show the desirability of channels integration. It can be assumed that the strengthened multimedial competence in this team will enhance the concentration on multimedial information production.

Also, co-location of the channels around a "conductor" and the remaining team in the news center is to show the merits of integration in the whole media house. Location of all channels (press, radio, television, network) on one open level, aims to strengthen cooperation and improve information flow. In Adressa, news office of 'paper' newspaper is next to network office; behind it there are radio and television units and all the platforms are concentrated around the news center. This arrangement of individual editors is related to the reorganization of the editors board, which means that the news editor is solely responsible for the content published in all channels. Integration is also continued at the level of reportage manager and departments such as sport, culture e.g.: section of culture and sport, in Adressa, has been completely integrated with the multimedia branch. Although the multimedial organization of news center is already a standard in Adressa, previously some adjustment had to be made to meet the specific requirements of individual departments, such as: report manager in the network, in order to better control and care for their employees, instead of moving to the news center

remained in their section. In such cases, the idea of integration is shifted to the background, because practical considerations prevail. This does not impinge in any way, on already highly integrated structure of Adressa media house, which shows the structure of the daily editorial meetings:

- 8:00 - meeting of report manager led by news editor. All channels and branches are presented; a brief assessment of the printed newspaper is presented; planning activities for the day on all channels;
- 8:30 - joint editorial meeting three times a week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday);
- 8:45 - each section (press, web, radio, television) has its own meeting;
- 10:15 - meeting of report managers conducted by the chief of a day shift (starts at 10.00 and receives messages from the news editor.) During the meeting, attended by representatives of all channels and branches forming a DM Adressa, any current matter is discussed. They also give appropriate status for strategic and multimedia matters published in the following day's newspaper;
- 14:45: meeting conducted by the head of a day shift, during which information is communicated to a night shift. Head of a night shift starts his/her work at 14:00. The meeting was attended by representatives of all channels.

Little disputes reagarding the Publication Channel

Close cooperation between the channels is a superior aim in *Adresseavisen*. *Adressa Media* House had functioned for long time basing on conventional rules of cooperation between individual platforms. There were no written directives regarding publication and everyday cooperation between the channels. However, journalists were motivated to publish where they had the largest number of recipients. Because of this the journalists working for different platforms had worked out a kind of "day order" that was universal for all channels. It was settled which events should appear in the fast channels (the Internet and radio) and which of them can and have to be retained for a newspaper.

The experiences in *Adressa* show that an increasing competition and the growth of the number of recipients have clearly raised the status of the Internet among the employees of the *Adressa MH*, and more and more often it is the Internet where they publish the so called "hot news" regardless of what channel they work for. It is worth emphasizing here that we rather will not find among the journalists any conflict regarding the choice of the publication channel of a particular information. The division on account of the speed of the transfer and importance of the thorough analysis seems to be very natural and universally accepted. In the so called "fast media" (the Internet, radio, television) appear mainly the news that do not require the detailed coverage, whereas the problems that can be a base for a more comprehensive article are usually left for the newspaper. It should be added that although we find there is an assignment of journalistic roles to the determined communication platforms among the journalists of the *Adressa MH* (radio, press, television, the Network), there is a place like Internet where everybody meets and, however the journalists of various channels are not on their duty in the "Net" any longer, they prepare materials which are published on the Internet. One can think that all employees of *Adressa MH* treat the Network as their channel.

According to Kristi Husby (2009), the most multimedia reporters in a media house are those who work for the newspaper. Basically they provide the material for all channels, except for television because they refuse to do it due to technological reasons. TV production is considered to be technologically complicated, demanding a lot of time, marked with fixed production programme (cheaper and less technologically demanding web-TV becomes here more often an alternative for traditional television.) Fear of technology is not a huge problem in *Adressa* editorial staff (it was a problem earlier especially among older employers.) Today everybody knows that when an accident happens, they immediately go to the scene of event, irrespective of which channel they work in. Using mobile phone technology they take pictures, record video films, interview. Reporters that are in the field call and give reports directly from the scene of event for radio or the Internet, while those reporters who are on duty in the

studio comment them for the radio and television. Yet, according to the assumptions of the development strategy of Adressa MH, standardization in journalist's profession is not what should determine journalist's future. Husby states that:

> Despite of the integrated model for all employees, it is important to take care of uniqueness and specificity of each channel, and for this reason journalists specializing in publication in a particular channel are needed. Obviously we are aware that the knowledge of digital technology is indispensable for the correct functioning of each channel, and this is why there has been created in Adressa MH a special media laboratory which influences the development of the offer and increase of the digital quality of the contents published in all channels. The aim that motivates the reporters working in Adressa MH is to adhere to diligent journalism, journalism staying close to a recipient and his or her problems. The journalist's role is still to take care of conveying the news, as it used to be, which depend on a fixed day order and, moreover, are transmitted quickly and on a few channels at the same time (Husby, 2009).

2. AGDERPOSTEN MEDIA HOUSE (ARENDAL)
Media House in Agderposten:

- Local Media House in Arendal
- It publishes on four channels: newspaper (Agderposten), the Internet (agderposten.no), radio (radioP5) and television (TV AGDER, previously TV Aust Agder)

The editorial section of *Agderposten* has made a huge step towards the close cooperation and common identity but one cannot speak about full coincidence in its case. Nevertheless, the disposition of forces between the channels indicates favouritism of the newspaper which has the biggest number of recipients and the biggest number of co-workers, and it publishes the best news. Yet it should be noticed that this situation undergoes rapid change as a result of growing competition, this means especially the broad offer of new communication platforms and that is why integration and greater coordination of the channels in the common multimedia environment is a must also in case of the local media house which Agderposten is.

In relation to this, the *Agderposten* media house, as most of the Norwegian media houses still transforms its organisational structure. The offices situated in the centre of Arendal are reorganised in such a way so that the channels working within the media house could be gathered in one place, making easy at the same time the cooperation and the flow of information between the individual platforms. Not so long time ago the editorial offices of particular channels were quite spread in a building similar to a labyrinth where the television and the radio were almost "hidden" and very distant from the editorial news office of the paper magazine and Internet workers. Peer L. Andreassen (news editor) says that[6]:

> This "structure of a labyrinth" significantly made difficult the integration between the channels because the journalists, to be true, were only "sitting" in the same building and were doing nothing else. It was hard to work together over material or to have the common day order for all platforms. The location of all editorial offices on the same level changes decidedly the functioning of the media house and helps to enhance its position towards the competition. The communication in Arendal still evolves from a labyrinth difficult to fight one's way through to an open space where one could easily find and exchange some information (Andreassen, 2009).

Obviously, it is multimedia editorial news office that is the heart of the *Arendal Media House*. Preparing the plans of a new editorial structure *Agderposten* took advantage from scouts' help whose task was to examine other media houses and to find the best solution, both architectural and organisational, for this newly establishing editorial house. Taking into account the effective management of the editorial staff in *Arendal MH*, the focus was directed towards the joint management of the editorial team. The news editor, the culture editor, the main duty network and television editor, and the editor-in-chief share one office which helps them to monitor everything and to properly distribute the information that the editorial office receives. Moreover, it was especially important for the media house to keep the strong position of the radio, therefore it has been decided that the network and

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[6] Interview with Peer L. Andreassen, 2009.

the radio have been joined together on the plain of the local and regional news. The task of the network platform is to give efficient support for the radio news, and this is the reason why the editorial radio office has been situated near the office where the network duty is held so that the news broadcaster in the radio could just turn around and read the news directly from the Internet.

Besides the changes in the spatial organisation of the editorial offices, a new shape of the structure in managing the editorial staff was introduced. The present chiefs of individual channels emphasize the fact that the focus should be on the need of the implementation of day order, which should be defined with the commitment of the main duty editor, news director and the "conductors" of all channels. The management of the media house in Arendal wants to relieve the main editor who, in their opinion, should focus on the whole process of production in the media house, while the news director should be occupied with supervising the news in publication. In *Agderposten* one will not find one multimedia news director or media's "conductor". The person that is the nearest to this function is a news editor, yet, according to Andreassen (2009), there are too many duties imposed on the news editor and because of this the news editor cannot manage properly the multimedia structure of the media house. In his opinion the main duty editors start to think in a multimedia way noticing also other platforms such as radio or the network besides the leading newspaper, and this helps us to suppose that the organisational structure of the local media house will not differentiate so much from managing a multimedia news production in a national tabloid (for example *VG*).

Meeting with three out of four channels

In a media house, where the channels are diffused and it is hard to have direct exchange of the opinions and information, the appropriate planning of the editorial meetings and coordination of the flow of information seems to be particularly important. A fixed structure of morning meetings, in which participate the workers of three (out of four) platforms: newspapers, the Internet, television, has been established in *Agderposten*. The agenda of these meetings looks as follows:

- **8:15** – the meeting during which the day order for the whole media house is arranged. In this meeting that starts the work of the editorial staff participate the editors and main duty editors from various platforms, for example main duty editor, the news editor, network director, TV chief, culture editor and editor-in-chief. After morning brainstorming of the representatives of all channels, the discussion goes to a group level (news, culture, television).
- **8:30** – three meetings end: first in the group of news, in which the editorial team of the network takes part too; second in a cultural and feature section; third in a TV department.
- **11:20** – next meeting, still with the participation of the representatives of the newspaper, network and TV, the aim of which is to present the current situation in the editorial offices (for example which questions are in progress, and which has been "struck off" or delayed.)
- **14:30** – informative meeting – this time the meeting is only for the directors of the departments of the paper magazine and the Internet reporters. Meanwhile, the part of the TV workers deal with the production of the broadcast that will be soon transmitted, and the rest of the team spends their time on further planning.

The radio reporters join this system of meetings to a small degree. It happens that the reporter working in the radio takes part in the meeting at 11:20, but the radio channel besides this one exception is not presented during other meetings. According to Andreassen, the radio in Arendal lives its own life – the radio editorial staff receives currently all news which have appeared in the media house and the representatives of other platforms do not mind it. The absence of the radio reporters during the meetings is easy to be justified due to clearly practical reasons – one reporter on the duty produces 24 hours of the programme during his or her workday. In connection

with this there is not much time for meetings although the main focus in the daily radio programme is put on the music programmes.

However, the radio staff has full access to the SaxoPlan (equally with the co-workers from other channels), the tool that helps to organise work in the whole *Agderposten Media House*, which means that all members of the editorial staff irrespective of the channel they represent can have a look at the matters that are currently presented and at their status. *Agderposten* was a pilot editorial office in the examination of the electronic tool that organised the work of all platforms. Multimedia presentations of the news created thanks to the Saxo programme are used as a starting point to the morning meetings in the editorial office, due to which the representatives of individual platforms can familiarize themselves with the matters over which the whole team works . According to Andreassen, this integrated system of planning functions very well when it is used correctly, yet there is still too few people that come to like it, which may pretend that thanks to Saxo we know everything about the matters and the resources of the media house in Arendal (Andreassen, 2009).

Newspaper is still the most important

Despite the fact that the multimedia has been the part of the *Agderposten* strategy since 1999, when the paper magazine celebrated the 125th anniversary, yet many years had had to pass before there appeared clear development of new media: radio, network and television. It should be indicated that the radio still has the position of an "outsider" in the media house in Arendal. Stein Gauslaa (former editor-in-chief) admits that the development of the fast channels has been seen only since year 2004 when the TV studio in Arendal was established in a place which previously had been the head office of the local newspaper. Discovery of the potential of the Internet came even later. *Agderposten* received its own network editorial office with four editorial co-workers just in September, 2006. Earlier the duty editor of the newspaper took care about the network.[7] The above situation shows that the fast media are relatively new initiative of the *Agderposten* media house. It should be added here that they are significantly smaller than the traditional paper magazine, both when it comes to the number of recipients, editorial workers, and the disposition of forces in the media house; it is beyond doubt that it is still the local title that is the most important:

> Newspaper is still the most significant medium because it has undoubtedly the biggest clout, however the Internet can pride itself on the fastest growth. Television has more recipients than the Internet, also on the fields where the newspaper has weak position, that is in the buffer zones where we meet competition (Andreassen, 2009).

The local newspaper in Norway is perceived as a brand product of each of the media houses, both when it comes to the scale and tradition as well – which can be also applied to the *Arendal MH*.

> When we talk about Agderposten Media House, the readers, listeners or viewers do not always know what this name means. Many of them think that when you work in Agderposten you work in a paper magazine. Although among the directors and the journalists gathered around particular platforms more distinctly intensifies the feeling of the identity of the media house, not of the editorial office: press, radio, television or network, it seems very crucial to make the recipients aware of this phenomenon. (Andreassen, 2009)

Next argument that confirms the unity in the *Agderposten* can be the fact that all reporters employed in the *Arendal MH* earn the same salary, irrespective of the channel in which they work. This system was introduced not so long time ago, but Andreassen says that its positive effects can be already seen. He states that equalizing the salaries was very important step both for the status of a channel and for their use in various channels and on various work positions.

When it comes to the journalistic craft and its standard in particular channels, there are obviously some differences in the bonuses given depending on the experience and time spent at work. Taking into account age

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[7] Interview with the former editor-in-chief Stein Gauslaa, February, 2009.

and job seniority of the journalists, nobody should be astonished that the average age among the network and television reporters is much lower than in the paper magazine. In the radio editorial staff the average age of the reporters is rather quite similar to this of the journalists working in the local newspaper. This status quo has also its consequences in relation to experience and routine (Andreassen, 2009).

Besides the journalistic craft itself, the degree of the comprehension in the journalistic work is pretty differentiated especially in the Internet when compared to a paper magazine. Though the reporters also create their own material in the Net, to a huge degree it is based on copying and processing the material released in newspaper columns. The editors from www.agderposten.no admit that there is still too few of them and they do not have enough time to become absorbed in particular affairs (Andreassen, 2009). Paulsen maintains that it leads to lowering of the status of the Internet inside the media house. There exists this kind of danger that the reporters of the Net may have impression that they play in a "B team" (Andreassen, 2009).

Which channel?

The news editor does not want to describe the relations between the channels as a relation marked with rivalry, but he emphasizes that in case of such organisational structure one cannot avoid emotions, particularly around the question of the day order for the whole media house and discussing which of the matters will go to the Internet and which will be kept for a paper magazine. Usually this division is apparent – the news relating the affairs exposed to the competition are transmitted in the fastest channel, while the news so called "of one's own" which we know that are only "ours" are published in the newspaper. However, on the market of the local Norwegian media, where the newspaper has still small competition, the notion of the fastest channel is still vast. Andreassen notices that the duty chiefs in his media house favour paper magazine and decidedly place it above the Internet. The duty chiefs would like that every matter would appear first in the newspaper and later it could be taken to the other channels. The reporters from the other platforms also postulate that in their channels there should appear new information, which arises of course numerous disputes:

> When an idea is good, you want to be first… Sometimes we suggested them, that the journalists should present their own case in their medium. We don't want people think that one medium stands higher in a rating and that any of the channels is better than the other, but it happens that we have to speak to a journalist from the Internet or television that this affair will be released in the newspaper. And the other way round (Andreassen, 2009).

Gauslaa stresses that conducting the publication and the choice of the target publication channel in the media house has changed dramatically – for the advantage of the fast media. He asserts that it would be more and more visible, because new competitors of the traditional forms of communication can endanger it very rapidly, nevertheless convincing everybody to such change is a huge challenge for the management of the media house. The biggest problem could be to persuade the editorial staff that the news have to be released in a given medium here and now and it has no greater importance whether the channel is called network, radio, television or newspaper. The most important question for us is to be the first who broadcast local and regional information, and not to stay in the background of the *VG.net*, when this type of communication is at stake. Unfortunately *VG.net* is such a strong organization that very often the local and regional media houses lose when competing with it concerning the speed of reports. This is why we had to fight (Gauslaa, 2009).

Multimedia Reporteres

In the *Agderposten* Media House most of the journalists work in a multimedia way. Reporters who serve in the Internet prepare simultaneously the material for the newspaper, two of them are also on duty in the television. The journalists employed in the press editorial office search for information for TV programme, and the photographers enrich it with video material. These are the reporters that are said to be the most multimedia

workers in the whole media house. They simply "think in a multimedia way" all the time irrespectively of what they do. It happens that the journalists of the newspaper prepare the recording for the radio or, being in the centre of affairs, play the role of a TV reporter and convey "live report." It takes place usually when the matter is particularly crucial from the point of view of the whole local society. The decisions about multimedia/monomedia attitude towards a given question are made during the morning meetings of the representatives of all platforms. The main editors together with the reporters and the editor-in-chief arrange, for example, press conferences, issues of registration, opening an exhibition or other similar affairs. The network reporter goes there with a video camera and dictaphone and records films and material for the radio, which is later published on the Internet and broadcasted in the radio and television. The journalists who work in a multimedia way usually do it willingly, they do not act under pressure and additionally they are characterized with peculiarly personal interest. The news editors agreeably admit that not all of them should work in a multimedia way because there is also a need for editors specializing in a particular field of communication which certainly guarantees the higher quality, especially in more complex journalistic forms. Having in a team both experts in a given channel/genre and the employees who are able to work in different channels is a warranty of the correct functioning of the whole media house (Andreassen, 2009). One has to remember that some journalists (especially those experienced and used to work in one medium) simply do not cope with work in many channels at the same time, yet they are experts at their field. In *Agderposten* many trainings are carried on practically all the time and their aim is to improve multimedia competences of all employees, for example the course of preparing radio material as a part of commitment of the media house in the Channel 24; the course of writing for the Internet for the whole staff. Nevertheless, not everybody wants to take part in those trainings.

Summary

In conclusion, it should be added that the tendency of the integration of the local broadcasting radio stations with other channels, such as press, television or the Internet, is typical for the development of the local radio broadcasting in present-day Norway. Such concentration of all communication platforms within "media houses" may, on the one hand, contribute to the narrowing of the variety of information material on the local level, and, on the other hand, gives opportunities to strengthen the local radio in relation to the nationwide media offer and national and regional NRK programmes. Moreover, depending on the circumstances that accompany the broadcast of a programme/programmes, the concentration of power may to some extent influence the strengthening of the editorial content transmitted in the local radio stations.

It should be, after all, emphasized that the local radio has developed in a quite different direction than it was initially assumed and today it oscillates in a much smaller degree around the profile of an "advocate of the local contents" (in the traditional sense of this word.) There comes this intensely flourishing commercial radio to the foreground that bases itself on music and entertainment where so called "local material" is adjusted to its main format (entertainment) and to some fields of interests of the younger group of recipients. Furthermore, the strengthening of the position of the local commercial radio stations has occurred simultaneously with the development of the Internet and with the establishment of some larger subjects (with numerous concessions) in various areas, which has not been left without any impact on its current shape and form. Contemporary Norwegian local radio consists to a huge extent of the entertainment and partially of the news, which we can obtain both from the radio transmission and from the Internet, because the part of the local broadcasting radio stations (especially those included in the media houses) is already present in the Internet.

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