It’s about People and Tech

Trends and Predictions: What newsrooms will need this year and beyond

Presentation for the 14th WAN-IFRA Middle East Conference, Dubai, 7th March 2019

By Dr Alexandra Borchardt, Director of Leadership Programmes
The Reuters Institute at the University of Oxford
Who we are and what we do

Comparative Journalism Research

35 years of Journalist Fellowship Programme

Leadership development, policy support
Digital News Report:
World’s biggest ongoing news survey

74,000 respondents

37 Markets
Trends and Predictions: 200 participants, 29 countries
Main gateways to news
ALL MARKETS

Q10a_new2017_rc.
Which of these was the MAIN way in which you came across news in the last week? Base: All/under 35s that used a gateway to news in the last week: All markets = 69246/19755.
How publishers rate platforms

% that say important or very important

87%

Google

43%

Apple News

43%

Facebook

42%

YouTube

ALSO

Instagram 31%

Twitter 29%

WhatsApp 16%

Amazon 16%

Snapchat 8%
Technology trends in the newsroom:

- Storytelling
- Steering
- Producing
Podcasting is on the up – driven by young

% ACCESS AT LEAST MONTHLY

UK 18%

PODCASTS VS RADIO NEWS BY AGE – ALL MARKETS

- Podcasts (monthly)
- Radio News (weekly)

[Bar chart showing access by age group (18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55+) for Podcasts (monthly) and Radio News (weekly), with 18-24 age group having significantly higher access to Podcasts (5x)]
Use of podcasts in different countries

PROPORTION WHO ACCESSED A PODCAST IN THE LAST MONTH - SELECTED MARKETS

Q11F_2018. A podcast is an episodic series of digital audio files, which you can download, subscribe, or listen to. Which of the following types of podcast have you listened to in the last month? Base: Total sample in each market.
Use of online news video by country

PROPORTION THAT USED ONLINE NEWS VIDEO IN THE LAST WEEK - ALL MARKETS

Q11_VIDEO_2018a. Thinking about consuming online news video (of any kind) over the last week, which of the following did you do? Base: Total sample in each market (excluding urban markets Brazil, Turkey, and Mexico).
Do news users want to watch more or less videos?

PROPORTION THAT WANT TO SEE MORE ONLINE NEWS VIDEOS – SELECTED MARKETS

Q11_VIDEO_2018b. News organisations can decide to produce stories in text or video format. With this in mind, in the future would you like to see more videos/the same number/fewer? Base: Total sample in each market.
Proportion that prefer news in text over video

SELECTED MARKETS

Also showing change from 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mostly text</th>
<th>I read text stories and watch video news about the same</th>
<th>Mostly video</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OPTQnD. In thinking about your online news habits, which of the following statements applies best to you? Base: Total sample in each market. Note: Also showing change from 2014.
Smart speaker growth

Growing faster than the smartphone at a similar stage. Around 30m already using them in the US.

Smart speaker penetration by country and age

Now also available in
- Spanish
- French
- Danish
- Swedish
- Norwegian
- Dutch
- Japanese
- Korean
News is not as important as we might hope….

THREE TYPES OF NEWS USAGE
- Interactive/conversational
- News updates
- Live radio and podcasts

MIND THE GAP
News widely used, but less valued

Base: All that own a smart speaker & are aware of its features
n = 185
It’s about data

Question #1 in our leadership classes: “Where is our north star metric?”
Robo-Journalism

AI newsreaders in China

Anime reporter in Japan

Journalists with no ego, work 24 hours and day and never ask for a pay rise

AP will have written 40,000 automated stories by the end of 2019 …
Beware of the “technology will fix it” trap!
Editors still matter more than machines

We need to invest more in Artificial Intelligence (e.g. machine learning) to help meet future challenges

- 7% Disagree
- 15% Neither agree nor disagree
- 51% Tend to agree
- 27% Strongly agree

We need to invest more in Editors and Journalists to help meet future challenges

- 5% Disagree
- 10% Neither agree nor disagree
- 34% Tend to agree
- 51% Strongly agree
We need to invest in AI and Journalists

“We need a mix of both AI and Human intelligence”
Ritu Kapur, CEO The Quint, India

“We always need more journalists. However we must also invest in technology to help those journalists be as efficient as possible so they can pursue the work with the highest impact. In addition, AI investments will help us serve our audiences and combat misinformation”
Lisa Gibbs, Director of News Partnerships, AP
Attracting and retaining talent will be the next big challenge for journalism
New competitors

What’s cool?

Hostility towards press

Rising demands
Concern about talent and diversity in the newsroom

- Retaining talented staff: 74%
- Attracting talent (given pay and conditions): 73%
- Staff burnout (overload, relentless nature of the job etc): 62%
- Level of diversity in the newsroom: 56%

Q9 Rate your level of concern about the following issues (showing code for concerned and very concerned)

Digital leaders survey, N=196
Is is possible for media companies to attract the right level of tech talent?

“For Journalists, we're still a good address. For technical and IT staff, we struggle to meet market levels (pay, conditions, career opportunities)”
Swiss Publisher

Leading a group of product, UX and tech, News and Media is a long way from first choice for most talented staff.
Product Head, Regional publisher

The disparity between the rates paid to staff in Editorial and Technology is at once illuminating and alarming. As an industry we seemingly value the skills of the latter much more than the former - which seems short-sighted given content is still the key driver of success.
UK Publisher
Think about your incentive structures
The strongest incentive is purpose!
Takeaways

- Audio and voice are growing, video – not so sure
- Data will drive newsroom innovation
- The best data doesn’t help if there is no talent
- To attract and retain talent, think about your incentive structure
- Purpose is the strongest incentive!
Your questions, please!

Alexandra.Borchardt@politics.ox.ac.uk

Digitalnewsreport.org
Reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk
@AlexaBorchardt @risj_oxford
www.alexandraborchardt.com