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POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES OF DIGIT(AL)ISATION AND CONVERGENCE OF TELEVISION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Lamija SILAJDŽIĆ

ABSTRACT:

This study explores the impact of digit(al)isation and convergence on television in Bosnia and Herzegovina, considering the fact that the digital revolution, sparked by the proliferation of advanced digital technologies, has brought significant changes to the media sphere. One of the key phenomena in contemporary media is media convergence, a multi-meaning concept influencing various stakeholders in the media landscape – media owners, management, journalists, editors, advertisers, and audiences. Qualitative research was conducted in this study, through semi-structured in-depth interviews (N=27) with management, journalists, and editors from Bosnian Herzegovinian TV stations (N=15). The aim of the study is to understand how media professionals navigate digital/convergent circumstances and which advantages and challenges they identify. Based on this research, it can be concluded that media professionals recognise the significance of quality content in the media (irrespective of technological changes), as well as the importance of collaborative effort that underscores shared responsibility to uphold standards and excellence within the dynamic digital media landscape.

KEY WORDS:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, convergence, digitalisation, digitisation, media, television

1 Introduction

Digital age, multimedia age, digital world, networked world, high-tech world, super-connected world, algorithmic world – these are just some of the phrases used to describe the world (life) in the 21st century. All clearly point to the fact that digital technologies largely mark this century and influence individuals, societies, cultures, economies, and social relations in the world. It is also a fact that technologies are developing at an ever-increasing speed. Each new technological generation is faster, more efficient, more harmonious, and cheaper than the previous. We have witnessed a more significant and rapid development of technologies in the last hundred years, than at any time in human history. Some experts claim that technological growth in the future will be so great that the generation of so-called digital natives (Prensky, 2001) may experience vastly different Internet and television, envisioning a highly interactive Internet environment with motion images as the basic standard and television as a fully interactive medium (Crnobrnja, 2010).

Media industry is certainly one of the most dynamic and competitive industries of the 21st century and technological changes are very clearly visible through it. In fact, technological innovations partially or completely change the way the media industry functions. This is because these innovations impact all participants in the media game – media management, journalists, advertisers, and audiences. Authors agree that journalism and methods for processing media content change and evolve on a continuous basis (see, for example, Hudíková et al., 2020; Kovach & Rosentiel, 2021).

Two phenomena that have caused major changes in the media sphere are digit(al)isation and convergence. The term *digitisation* refers to the act of converting an analogue signal into a digital form. *Digitalisation*, on the other hand, is understood as the increasingly intensive use of digital technologies in society. Converting an analogue signal into a digital one not only allows information to reach recipients much faster but also expands the field of creative possibilities for content creators. For example, digital television enables the broadcast of 4 to 12 TV programmes on one channel instead of just one, depending on the system (Todorović, 2017). To put it simply, almost any interest group can now get its own TV programme. On the other hand, media convergence began to be understood as one of the main implications of digit(al)isation. Media convergence is considered to become a reality in the media world and is deeply rooted in the digitalisation process. This study specifically explores how these developments have impacted television as a medium.

2 A Brief Look at Contemporary Digital Television in the Convergent Environment

Digital television emerged through the fusion of computer and audio-visual technologies, marking a significant transformation in the broadcasting landscape. Television has faced numerous challenges, but digitisation has made it possible to place the content online and to open new channels. Digital television gained momentum in the early 1980s. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) adopted Recommendation 601 during this period, establishing a unique global standard for the digitisation of television broadcasting (Todorović, 2014). One of the primary advantages that digital technologies brought to television broadcasting is the increased resistance of new digital signals to interference. This enhancement ensures a more reliable and high-quality viewing experience for audiences.

Transmitters for analogue broadcasting have a limited coverage zone, which is very often disturbed either by overlapping with the signal of another transmitter, or by natural disturbances that cannot be avoided (mountain, building, curvature of the Earth, etc.) (Todorović, 2014). On the other hand, digital television broadcasting can transmit a much larger number of channels and free up spectrum that can then be used for other services, such as "standard or high-definition television services, wireless connection, local television, wireless home hubs, etc."

(Nyman-Metcalf & Richter, 2010). Car in Barić-Šelmić (2017) stated that digitalisation is the key factor in television's successful transformation, and it has increased television's ability to communicate more interactively.

Despite the simplicity and cost-effectiveness of analogue broadcasting, the substantial long-term benefits of the digital signal make it a superior choice for the functioning of television as a medium. The initial simplicity of analogue may be attractive, but the enhanced capabilities, improved quality, and versatility of digital broadcasting justify the investment in more advanced equipment. The application of digital technology in television began with program production and later extended to broadcasting and distribution. The first country to fully transition to a digital broadcasting system was Finland in 2006 (with the process concluding in 2007), as reported by the OSCE in their Guide to the Transition to Digital Broadcasting. Bosnia and Herzegovina is among the countries that have not yet fully completed the digitisation process. Understanding the status or challenges faced by the country in this transition is crucial for assessing its progress in adopting digital broadcasting.

Digitisation has not only improved the possibilities of various technologies, such as IT, telecommunications, and audio-visual, but it has also enabled the emergence of convergence – the merging of these technologies. Todorović (2017) explains that the basis of convergence is the fact that computer programmes and data, processing of images and sounds, and the content of messages transmitted over a distance, are represented by identical sequences of rectangular pulses, that is, by the same series of binary values of ones and zeros. Authors who have researched this topic agree that convergence has changed a lot in the media sphere, as it has changed the connections between different technologies, industries, markets, genres, and audiences (see, for example, Pavlik & McIntosh, 2004; Jenkins, 2006; Campbell et al., 2012; O'Sullivan & Fortunati, 2021; Jensen, 2022; Wang et al., 2022). The same authors also emphasise that convergence is not just a mere result of digitisation, but a process that can be viewed as both a technological and a social phenomenon. Vukanović (2016) highlights that the concept of *convergence* is so diverse and broad, that is, it has multiple meanings, which results in the fact that the academic and scientific literature in this area is diverse and, in his opinion, insufficiently developed both theoretically and from empirical perspectives. Fleury (2016) states that convergence is a concept that is very difficult to define, because it can refer to many ideas and processes. More precisely, it is used in two ways, referring to what converges (networks, terminals, social practices, etc.) but also to what happens when something converges (merger, new complexities, etc.). According to Manovič (2015), convergence is characterised as a digital revolution, facilitating the exchange of content through a single platform. From an industrial-economic standpoint, convergence also enables the merging of traditional and online media, reshaping the landscape of media production and consumption (Albarran, 2010). Technological and industrial-economic convergence have also led to social convergence of the media audience (see, for example, Silajdžić & Dudić, 2020; Silajdžić, 2023). Hence, it is essential to define convergence not only from a technological or industrial-economic perspective but also from a sociological standpoint. This broader understanding is crucial as it reflects significant changes in how audiences react to media content and actively participate in its creation (Arango-Forero et al., 2016). Jensen (2022) reminds us that media are programmable in more ways than one, and different media are programmable to variable degrees – as technologies, discourses, and institutions.

Krajina and Perišin (2008) elucidate that in the 1970s, the term convergence denoted the collaboration between computers and telecommunications. By the 1980s, the term primarily encompassed the integration of diverse elements that were previously considered individually (texts, numbers, images, sounds). When it comes to the 1990s, the concept of convergence referred to the connection of television, Internet, and telephone. Fleury (2016) states that the first observed convergence of media practice occurred between television and the Internet.

Drawing on the work of Hess cited in Fleury (2016), the integration of TV and the Internet is particularly notable in various aspects, including (1) searching for information, (2) staying connected with friends or colleagues, and (3) selecting a device for media consumption. Convergence has empowered us to utilise the device of our choice, at our preferred time, and in any location, providing unprecedented flexibility in communication and access to various types of information and content. Based on the above, we can see that convergence is often perceived as a multidimensional construct. Spyridou and Veglis (2016) reference Damingo, Drpagne, Erdal and other authors

who highlight that, despite various conceptualisations, convergence inherently involves the notions of integration and cooperation.

Another inherent aspect of convergence is the variation in its adoption by different media entities, occurring at different speeds. This is due to the requisite investments, substantial organisational and editorial changes, and processes involved (see, for example, Quin, 2005; Tabs, 2013; Spyridou & Veglis, 2016). Critics often object to convergence on economic grounds, asserting that its encouragement is primarily driven by economic considerations. This criticism stems from the observed trend that media adopting a convergent approach tend to reach a larger audience and successfully reduce program production costs through the implementation of integrated newsrooms.

3 Methodology

Qualitative research was conducted in this study, using the semi-structured in-depth interview technique. Interviews were specifically tailored for participants in various roles, including management (owners, directors, editors-in-chief, or other authorised personnel), journalists, and editors from TV stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The primary objective of this research was to investigate the transformative impact of digitisation and convergence on programme production, focusing on aspects such as cost reduction, increased speed, accessibility, expanded reach, improved insight into audience feedback, and organisational changes in newsrooms. The study also aimed to explore the experiences of both journalists/editors and management in adapting to these new circumstances and to assess how they perceive and evaluate feedback received from the audience. This qualitative research aimed to address the following topics:

1. Investment Challenges: Digitisation and convergence necessitate significant investments, including the purchase of equipment (hardware and software) and the training of media workers. Delays in adopting these programme production models are often attributed to these financial requirements.
2. Cost Reduction: The introduction of multimedia integrated desks is expected to result in reduced programme production costs.
3. Time Constraints: Journalists working in convergent newsrooms are hypothesised to have less time to prepare media content due to the obligation to deliver it across multiple platforms.
4. Efficiency and Speed: Convergence is anticipated to enable a faster flow of information to the audience and a more efficient insight into feedback.

The interviews were conducted via phone or video call (Skype, Zoom). Respondents were guaranteed anonymity throughout the analysis and presentation of research results and were marked in the text with identifiers like I:1, I:2, I:3, etc. The thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was employed to systematically analyse the interviews, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of key themes and patterns emerging from the participants' responses. This method involves familiarisation with the data (collection and transcription), then coding, i.e., the first level of data abstraction, after which themes were developed that describe the basic characteristics of the collected data.

According to data obtained from regulators and self-regulators, Bosnia and Herzegovina currently hosts a total of 46 TV stations. For the purposes of this research, a representative sample was selected, comprising a minimum of 10% of the total number of media outlets, ensuring a comprehensive and balanced representation in the study. This approach allows for meaningful insights into the experiences and perspectives of participants within the media landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The sample for this research comprised a diverse set of 15 TV stations, representing various categories including public services, commercial television, local television, and regional television. The selected sample aimed to capture a comprehensive spectrum of perspectives within the media landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In total, 27 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted,

encompassing 8 interviews with management and 19 with journalists or editors. This diverse range of participants allowed for a nuanced exploration of experiences and insights related to digitisation and convergence in different television contexts.

Table 1. Management of TV stations – sample

Type	Name of TV station	Number of participants
Public Broadcasting Service of B&H	BHT 1	1
Regional news television	N1	1
	Al Jazeera Balkans	1
Commercial TV stations	Hayat TV	1
	O Kanal	1
Local public broadcasting services	RTV USK	2
	RTV Zenica	1
IN TOTAL:	**7**	**8**

Source: own processing, 2024

Table 2. Journalist and editors – sample (own processing, 2024)

Type	Name of TV station	Number of participants
Public Broadcasting Service of B&H	BHRT	5
	FTV	4
Regional news television	N1	2
	Al Jazeera Balkans	2
Commercial TV stations	NOVA BH	1
	Face TV	1
Local public broadcasting services	TVSA	3
	RTV TK	1
IN TOTAL:	**8**	**19**

Source: own processing, 2024

4 Results and Discussion: Thematic Analysis of Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews

The table below outlines the key topics and corresponding codes derived from the interviews conducted with management, journalists, and editors of TV stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table 3. Topics and codes obtained through conducted interviews

Topics	Code
Digital production, presentation, and distribution of content	- The impact of digital technologies on journalism and television work; - Advantages of digital production, presentation, and distribution of content; - Disadvantages of digital production, presentation, and distribution of content; - Increasing the number of channels, sources, and information; - Faster flow of information; - Challenges of the online environment and disinformation.
Technological convergence, business and management	- Marketing content through multiple platforms; - Procurement of equipment and software for carrying out convergence; - Reduction of programme production costs; - Greater reach of marketed content; - Managers-mentors.
Journalists in a convergent environment	- Integrated newsroom; - Adapting content to different platforms; - Increasing the volume of work for journalists; - Resistances for implementation of convergence; - Professional training; - Journalistic skills.
Interactivity with the audience	- Insight into audience feedback; - Social media; - User contents; - Irregularity of the Internet space.

Source: own processing, 2024

4.1 The Influence of Digital Technologies on the Production, Presentation, and Distribution of TV Content

TV managers, journalists and editors agree that digital technologies have transformed journalism and media. This attitude is expected, because technology certainly defines the media in a sense of their standards, work principles and creative scope. Nevertheless, a journalist from a regional news television emphasises that digital technologies have fundamentally changed journalism, but only in the context of the way of working, not in relation to the passion and desire to discover truths, problems, or positive values. The methods of production, presentation, and distribution of TV content are nowadays significantly different compared to a few decades earlier. Even in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a poor and technologically backward country compared to Western countries, modern digital technologies have "knocked" on the doors of TV stations. There are many steps in the quality of equipment and software in the digitisation process, but it can be stated that all TV stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina are digitised, at least to such an extent that they have computers and software with which they perform part of their professional job. To talk about the digitisation of the entire media, both the production, presentation and distribution of content, many other segments must be considered. A manager of one commercial TV station states (I:4).

Even those with the smallest annual budgets have become digital, most of them work digitally. The quality of that hardware and software tells you about a certain level of professionalisation in the business. But to absolutely digitise a "small" medium, hardware and software can be acquired with some small means and enable digitisation.

The director of a local RTV station says that, thanks to digitisation (that is, the Internet), even the medium he manages is no longer considered literally local, because it is now available globally through online platforms. Digitisation has made it easier for journalists to work because it has enabled a faster flow of information and greater availability of various sources and information. The advantages are certainly reflected in both speed and quantity, because much faster and much more material can be produced with digital technology. The quality of the produced content (image, audio, and signal) is better, and the processing and distribution of the material is also facilitated. A journalist of a regional TV station (I:16) states that journalists have gained speed through digitisation, but not the essence.

> It seems to me that digit(al)isation has put that "human touch" into the background. Of course, this does not mean that digital technologies should not be used, but I would like to restore that "humanity" to some extent. It seems to me that digitisation has led to the weakening of former teamwork.

Most managers, journalists and editors also pointed out several key challenges of the digital transformation of journalism and television work. Speed, which everyone unanimously mentioned as the first association with the word "digit(al)isation", can also be a disadvantage or a challenge. The urge to be the first and fastest to publish sometimes leads to making professional mistakes, as participant I:5 emphasises.

> As much as the speed has made work easier, it can sometimes be a double-edged sword in terms of excessive expectations for the quantity of production, which sometimes comes at the expense of quality.

A manager of one commercial TV station points out that it is absurd to talk about digitisation of media in Bosnia and Herzegovina because we have not entered the sphere of business digitisation. He also points out that the programs (e.g., in the news editorial system), which most TV stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina use, are still very primitive. Another manager from the Bosnian Herzegovinian public broadcast service (I:5) describes the digitisation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina as sluggish and slow. She points out that the position of public broadcast services in our country is much worse than it should be.

> Precisely because of the unresolved problem of public broadcasting service financing and the limited funds invested in technology and programming. We often lag commercial TV stations, lose the possibility of purchasing TV rights for major world events, and suffer political pressure. All this ruins our reputation.

Journalists of three public RTV stations that form the system of public RTV broadcasting in Bosnia and Herzegovina also agree that these media are not in a very good position for numerous reasons.

> I don't believe that money is the biggest problem. There is also a lack of will. (I:17)

> It's true that public RTV services are sluggish, rigid, whether that's a legacy of the past in the 80s or not, I don't know, but I think it is. That is a question for the management. (I:27)

Managers of commercial TV stations confirmed that there are problems in the completion of the digitisation process, especially at the legislative level. Directors of local TV stations are aware that the complete transition to digital broadcasting will be the biggest challenge for them, because they have smaller annual budgets, but they are also aware that only media who tackles the challenges of digital transformation will survive.

4.2 Technological Convergence, Business, And Management in a Convergent Media Environment

Given the fact that almost every digital device with a screen can be used to reproduce different types of content (text, audio, photo, video), and that the same news can be distributed through several channels or media, TV stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina strive for a multi-platform approach in production and content distribution. This approach is called technological convergence, and continuous learning and improvement is necessary, both in managerial, journalistic, and organisational terms, to use its full potential. Technological convergence is most clearly seen through the work of journalists in the field, but also through the work of producers and editors in the newsroom.

A manager from regional news television reminds that the concept of multi-platform approach originated from media management, which, he believes, should not hesitate in achieving the conditions for convergence (technological and financial), because investing in the realisation of these conditions is not an expense but an investment. Managers agree that qualitative implementation of convergence requires financial investments. Thus, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the richer media managed to provide advanced technological prerequisites for multi-platform work, but the smaller/poorer media find it more difficult.

> In a managerial sense, it is not a one-time investment, we now have to reinvest to get an even more modern programme. It's an ongoing thing. I think even people who invest in convergence don't understand that they will have to invest more, but it will pay off. (I:1)

> We have invested a lot. We don't have enough money to buy SNG satellite vehicles, but we can buy backpacks that are useful for live reporting. So now we have the possibility to go on 4 locations for live reporting. (I:3)
> We are financed by grants, we have turned to projects, it is very difficult to get money, big advertisers go to big public services or commercial television. Big advertisers are bypassing us. (I:8)

One manager from regional news television emphasises that one should also invest in people, not only software and hardware.

> It must be possible to train people, constantly highlight those who are the best in the process, and then use them to train those who understand a little less. It's teamwork, because if someone doesn't put enough effort into the convergence process, the whole process will fail. (I:1)

On the other hand, after the cost (or investment) required for the acquisition of equipment and software, program production costs are essentially reduced, according to management structures.

> Three teams went to the press conferences for the same event in the past, recorded everything the same, instead of one team going, recording and inserting the material that everyone uses afterwards. That's how we operate, one team goes to the field and brings the material that they inject into the system. Then 50 users from all countries of the region can use the same material at the same time. (I:1)

TV managers agree that the most obvious advantage of multi-platform approach is the greater reach of the content.

> Currently, we have television, which we broadcast in all ways in B&H and the world, via satellite, cable, terrestrial transmitters. Part of this information is distributed through several platforms that we have, primarily the web portal, then Android and IOS applications. We publish on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. We also have our 5 programs on our web application where subscribers can follow it, that is, access most of the archive. We created a broad platform; I think that in that context we were forerunners even in relation to some world-famous media. (I:4)

The main advantages of sharing content through multiple platforms are: better connection between editors and journalists, better flow of information and exchange of content between different platforms, which contributes to the quality of the final product. On the other hand, the main drawback is the resistance that appeared after the idea that one journalist prepares content for multiple platforms, so it very rarely happens that one journalist prepares content for all platforms, states the director of the public broadcasting service.

When it comes to the production of features in newsrooms, these situations are rare, and mostly it is about content that is less demanding in terms of production, such as an interview that one journalist does for all platforms. Research contributions, daily information and topics are mostly characterised by partial exchange of content such as some statements of relevant interlocutors. And journalists (both radio and television) from the field, for example, while an event is taking place, send information and photos or videos to their colleagues from the web portal, who edit and publish them, so that breaking news can be published as soon as possible. (I:5)

The directors of one regional news television and one commercial television believe that the increase in workload for journalists can also be seen as an advantage.

In the past, journalists were media specialists, thematic generalists, they worked for a certain media but more stories. Today politics, tomorrow business, the day after tomorrow something else. The risk of multitasking journalism is the amount of work that journalists have today due to the need to prepare content for multiple platforms, but it can also be an advantage. If you are on one story, you will be on it for days, from the position of media specialist and thematic generalist you become thematic specialist and media generalist. (I:1)

50% of our journalists can work for different media. Is it more work? It is probably true for individuals, but I am still guided by the logic that every journalist should have 5 working days a week, and in journalism we cannot consider 8 hours of work, sometimes it is 10, sometimes 6, and sometimes 3 hours of effective work, unfortunately or luckily. Ultimately, we all need to understand journalism as a profession that is not a factory, so that we know that we enter the factory at 9 am and leave the factory at 5 P.M. (I:3)

However, managers are aware that it is difficult to achieve a situation where one journalist is universal and works equally well for different platforms, but they want those who have talent and potential to do so. On the other hand, they have understanding for journalists who cannot adapt to a multiplatform and multitasking approach to work. Regardless of the skills of working in a convergent environment, which are commendable but not necessary everywhere, directors primarily expect journalists to have a broad general culture, information, and a desire to work. Journalists must be ready for continuous training, according to the director of the local RTV station. Knowledge of foreign languages and basic IT literacy are no longer listed as special, but basic skills that journalists should possess, as well as communication skills and willingness to work in a team. Most directors agree that journalists should be able to react well and quickly under time pressure and be ready to work on weekends and holidays. In addition to changes in the way journalists work in the convergent environment, the working modalities of management structures or managers in the media have also changed.

Media director is also a psychologist, mentor, and advisor today. The emotional intelligence of managers is very important, they are key in recognising and promoting the benefits of convergence. In a converged environment, there is not much bureaucracy because we don't have time for it. Passion and desire are key, if there is no passionate approach to work - there is no convergence either. (I:1)

The entire administration of our media is 5 people and the director. Everything is subordinated to the programme, journalist, cameraman, editor, direct producer. ... I am proud that I can now leave here and that no segment of our media will suffer. We made a system; we didn't make some "I" moment. (I:2)

4.3 Professional Experiences of Journalists and Editors: Working in a Convergent Environment

Convergence brings many positive things, from the fact that it allows journalists to further educate themselves and improve, to the fact that resources are saved. The editor of the public broadcasting service emphasises that many assumptions must be fulfilled for it to function successfully.

> When it comes to our media, it was introduced more on paper than it was practical. The first thing that managers came up with was "of tomorrow we are in convergence", without any detailed explanation, without any training, without any precise and accurate assignments. The second thing is that for convergence to be successful, you must provide people with the technical conditions for such a thing. (I:14)

One journalist from a local TV station believes that digitisation and convergence have accelerated the process of program production, but he is sceptical about what TV stations in B&H can offer to the audience in a new and high-quality way. A journalist from a regional news television broadcaster with many years of experience believes that convergence has resulted in greater autonomy in work, which has brought more work to journalists, but he believes that it also has its drawbacks. On the other hand, his colleague with less journalistic experience says that since she started working in journalism, she worked in a convergent environment, which became natural and usual for her. She sees the advantage in the fact that she can improve her skills and develop creativity in different ways.

> It would be crazy not to use all the possibilities that are available. ... It's no longer just a matter of knowing the facts, but also of recounting and interpreting those facts to someone, the way you should do it visually, the skills you need to use, you must use social media. (I:18)

A journalist from another regional news television broadcaster says that the workload for journalists has increased in the convergent environment, which on this television channel looks like the first thing a journalist does when they come to the field is to take a photo or stand up and write a short tweet. Web journalists then download and publish this information on the portal and share it on other platforms and social media. During the day, this news is supplemented on the web as information arrives, the journalist very often reports live from the field to various daily shows on television, and when they return to the newsroom, they shape it all either into a text for the portal or into a TV report in which they give the comprehensive story. To put it simply, instead of one task, a journalist has 10 more mini tasks that complicate their work. The editor at a regional news television broadcaster also states that the amount of work has increased, but that the responsibility towards the work has remained the same.

> Responsibility towards work, passion, or desire to change something in society is certainly one of our duties, it does not change, technology changes, contribution changes, way of working changes, but that way of love for journalism, for doing something good in life doesn't change, and that's something key to which we should strive for (I:26)

The journalists from the two public service broadcasters explain that the convergence of the public services works so that the journalist from the field sends a photo and a short text to their colleagues in the web editorial office, who then format it for the portal, and after returning to the newsroom, the journalist prepares their report for television or radio. They are provided with office telephones and Internet connection (although the equipment is moderately adequate), but they are not provided with any additional training to adapt their work to different platforms. The public broadcasting service journalist believes that the convergent approach essentially improves the quality of journalism, because a journalist learns to work in different ways. A potential problem can be the imperative of speed, that is, publishing the information without adequate and complete verification. The positive aspect of convergence is that content reaches the recipients faster, but the negative aspect could be if identical content is published on all platforms or if unverified and incomplete information is published. A public service correspondent

with many years of experience believes that a journalist must know how to use digital technologies if they want to survive today.

> It is true that this is a burden compared to the time when the news was typed on a typewriter and when it was enough to do two news a day and that was a norm. Today, in one day, we do two or three reports for radio, television, and the portal, but it's simply how it is. I can't live in 1995, when the Internet was just in its infancy. (I:27)

Some journalists point out that sometimes a generational gap is present, because older colleagues did not acquire new skills quickly enough and resisted changes. One journalist from a the local public TV station believes that it is not only a matter of resistance due to age and the habit of working in one way, but also due to the fact that public media journalists are financially more secure (because they are financed either with budget funds or funds from the RTV tax), so it happens more often that they refuse to do something they don't consider to be their job because they have a job as a journalist for one media outlet.

4.4 Intensification of Interaction with the TV Audience/Recipients

Due to the expansion of digital technologies and the increase in the possibility of distributing content through several different channels and/or media, apart from the fact that TV content now reaches more people than before, the level of interactivity with the audience/recipients has also intensified. More intense interactivity and faster and clearer insight into audience feedback is very valuable for television.

> I think that in a bunch of good and bad comments, it is generally appropriate for us to hear what the audience what they want to tell us, and I also think that it is appropriate for every company to know how their audience breathes, what they like and what they don't like, and possibly to change something based on some constructive comment from our audience. (I:23)

> Feedback is very important to us, and we often include our audience to, say, find an interlocutor on a certain topic, and we certainly respond to their messages on a certain topic that could be implemented. In addition to praise, we are glad to read constructive criticism. (I:10)

However, respondents warn that this democratic and unregulated Internet space has negative aspects that can become a potential challenge for professional media. One journalist from the public broadcasting service considers anonymous web portals problematic and harshly criticises the media that resort to sensationalism and clickbait headlines to gain more attention from the recipients. On the other hand, the director of a highly watched commercial TV station admits that at one point they used such a trick to fight for a better position of their web portal.

> Until a year ago, we used 'Jelene Karleuše'[1] to fight for the higher position of our web portal. And when we reached a goal, our goal was the top six, we reached the third position in Bosnia and Herzegovina, then we tore down everything that was junk. And believe me, there were no reactions at all, we even had an increase in the number of the audience. (I:4)

After they created and invested in web portals, TV stations realised that social media also became an important part of the Internet where they should be present. Social media have thus become very significant, but also challenging for media professionals. On the one hand, they can be a good source of information or a way to find interlocutors, but it is not good that the public treats them as another medium, because we can all post on social

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[1] Remark by author: "Jelena Karleuša" refers to a popular Serbian pop-folk singer. In this context, the term is used metaphorically to signify a style of music often associated with certain pejorative connotations, such as perceived shallowness or lower artistic quality.

media – regardless of whether we respect the standards or not, whether we tell the truth or not. TV journalists and editors emphasise that the audience's comments on social media are important to them, but they don't fully accept them because there are many fake profiles whose comments are used to fight dissenters or spread hate speech, and not as real feedback on media content.

The big challenge for TV stations is how to filter large amounts of comments on social media, because they generally do not have enough employees to dedicate some of them exclusively to this task. Management ultimately decides whether to allow comments under their posts on social media or not, and how to filter them. In addition to the fact that journalists have insight into the comments of recipients, recipients and creators of content can often serve as an opportunity for a story or to supplement some topic. The director of a commercial TV station says that sometimes they publish videos or photos of recipients/citizens that are of high quality or cover an event that journalists and editors did not know about, and sometimes they also publish students' articles about youth projects or actions.

The public broadcasting service journalist explains that she sometimes uses content created by the audience (a photo or a video clip), but she must indicate who is the author of that content. She considers user content to be significant more often as an occasion or an idea to investigate a certain topic, because she is aware that the content created by the audience (that is, any of us) does not have to be accurate.

> The importance of the content created by users is great – it enables visual records (which have the highest authenticity) from events and locations where a TV camera has not yet reached. In our country, it is especially important when it comes to events in smaller cities where there are no local media, nor do the larger ones have correspondent offices. In the end, the citizens themselves are not responsible for the policies of the media companies, they are not subject to some systemic pressures, which can happen to the media, as well as any other company. (I:25)

Although all previously mentioned challenges for the media are big, managers of two regional news televisions see young people as the biggest challenge for the media in the future, that is, attracting young people to seek and consume credible media content.

> Today, especially the younger generation, they follow everything through mobile devices, they are the future, we must orient ourselves towards them, as much as possible TV content should be published on mobile devices. (I:1)

> I care to see how we approach young people. We have to find a way to create values, and our value is to inform and educate, how to convey that to young people. (I:2)

They conclude that it is necessary to release new, youthful energies, which they hope will create a little more international and open thinking, and that the media will then follow this path. They optimistically see the victory and dominance of quality and professional content in the media future in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

5 Conclusion

The analysis of the conducted interviews unequivocally confirms that the methods employed in the production, presentation, and distribution of TV content in 2023 have undergone substantial and transformative changes compared to several decades earlier. Even in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country with economic challenges and considered technologically behind Western counterparts, the influence of modern digital technologies has made a significant impact on the media landscape. Despite economic constraints, the media industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been immune to the transformative power of digital technologies, reflecting a global trend

toward digitalisation in the media sector. In the ongoing acquisition of sophisticated equipment, it is evident that the richer media organisations are taking the lead. However, the resilience of even smaller-budget media entities is noteworthy, as many have successfully secured the minimum necessary funds to adapt and thrive in a digital environment. Interviewed managers/directors, editors and journalists are aware of both the positive and negative aspects of digitisation. The advantages are certainly reflected in both speed and quantity, because much faster and much more material can be produced with digital technology. The quality of the content is better, and the processing and distribution of the material is also facilitated. On the other hand, there are still negative aspects to digitisation, which are reflected in the fact that the speed enabled by digitalisation can lead to excessive expectations for the quantity of production, which sometimes comes at the expense of quality. The need to publish first and be the fastest, therefore, sometimes leads to making professional mistakes and publishing incorrect information.

When it comes to convergence, the analysis of the interviews showed that, on the one hand: a) creating conditions for quality implementation of convergence requires financial investments; while on the other hand, b) after the cost (or investment) required for the acquisition of equipment and software, the costs of program production essentially decrease. The most obvious advantage of the multi-platform approach is the greater reach of media content, while an increase in the amount of work for journalists in a convergent environment can be considered a disadvantage. Although opinions in this regard are divided, all respondents confirm that the amount of work for journalists has increased, and that a potential problem may be the imperative of speed. Media managers point out that they are aware that it is difficult to achieve a situation where one journalist is universal and works equally well for different platforms, but they insist that those who have talent and potential do it. They also emphasise that the work modalities of managers in the media have changed.

The analysis of the interviews showed that journalists' professional experiences of working in a convergent environment are different, and conditioned by several factors: whether they work in commercial or public TV stations, in what way and at what level convergence is implemented in the medium in which they work, whether and how it is required of them to adapt content for different platforms, as well as which logistical prerequisites are available to them. Most of them agree that convergence has enabled journalists to expand their knowledge and skills, but that the imperative of speed can be a stumbling block. Several journalists believe that due to the development of digital technologies and the application of a convergent way of working in newsrooms, a generational gap can be felt, because older colleagues did not acquire new skills quickly enough and resisted changes. However, the resistance is in some cases conditioned by completely unprofessional reasons, such as the fact that journalists working on public media do not fear for their existence and are therefore too lazy to acquire new skills and invest additional efforts in their work, justifying this by the fact that "their salaries are low" or that it is "not their job". Although journalists describe working in a convergent environment as difficult due to the increase in the amount of work, most of them believe that journalists, as well as the media, must follow trends and developments and adopt modern work modalities to survive in the future. In the end, journalists believe that the benefits of convergence can only be properly utilised through high-quality cooperation between management and journalists (providing all objective assumptions for high-quality work).

Due to the expansion of digital technologies and the increase in the possibility of distributing media content through several different channels and/or media, the level of interactivity of media (in this case TV stations) with the audience/recipients has also intensified. More intense interactivity and faster and clearer insight into audience feedback is very valuable for media professionals, they agreed. However, there can also be potential challenges, which are reflected in the expansion of anonymous web portals or fake profiles on social media, which often only serve to spread disinformation, manipulation, fighting with dissenters, spreading hate speech, etc.

Recognising the paramount significance of quality and professional content in the media space, both managers, directors, and journalists of TV stations acknowledge the imperative to leverage all available capacities to secure victory and dominance in this arena. This collective commitment includes advocating for the necessary support from the regulatory bodies responsible for steering the digitisation process and regulating the operations of the media and the media market. The awareness of this collaborative effort underscores the shared responsibility to uphold standards and excellence within the dynamic digital media landscape.

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