

# EBU

OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

# PERFECT STORM

THE MULTIPLE CHALLENGES FACING  
PUBLIC SERVICE NEWS, AND WHY  
TACKLING THEM IS VITAL FOR  
DEMOCRACY

★★★  
**SECOND EDITION**  
INCLUDES RADIO AND  
UPDATED FACEBOOK  
PROCEDURES

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# FOREWORD

News and current affairs are core to Public Service Media. Informing all audiences with independent news and helping them to better understand the world is the basis of democracy. We have been discussing the disruption in our industry for some time now, but focusing on how the tech giants created global platforms. Today we see that these "platforms" are becoming the prime producers and aggregators of content. Sports and drama (two genres really engaging with broad audiences) are in the hands of a select number of players. Is the same going to happen to news?

## **WE NEED TO REDEFINE WHAT WE DO**

We need to reach out to all audiences. To all age groups and youngsters in particular, but also to a growing group who no longer consume traditional news sources or who have difficulties engaging with the news as we provide it today. As the production process fundamentally changes, we have a chance to redefine what we do and to invent new formats and tell the news in multiple ways on multiple platforms to break the 51-49 paradigm, where half of the news reaches half of the audience with often half of the truth.



**WE DON'T GIVE A HOME TO THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE A DIFFERENT OPINION, WHO HAVE FEARS.**

Carsten Thureau,  
ZDF

## **AND WE NEED TO REPOSITION OURSELVES**

Journalism may seem to be in crisis, but even more than being a challenge this is actually an opportunity for public service media news, since it remains the most trusted news source, provided by legacy newsrooms across the world. Journalism needs Public Service Media to continue setting the standards, to drive innovation in how we gather, produce and distribute news. But also to be the voice of quality in journalism.

## **BUILDING ON THE STRENGTH OF THE EUROVISION NEWSROOM**

For many decades the EBU has played a central role in providing Members with excellent news footage. Its role has become even more crucial in moments of breaking news. Today, with excellent skills in user generated content verification, we are among the leaders in clearing and sharing footage coming from online sources.

With this report we launch the Quality Journalism Initiative to build on the strength of the Eurovision newsroom, to develop new services, and to be the voice of high quality news provision.

I want to thank Bill Dunlop for this report and conclude with his words: "Public service news is a precious resource. Let the dialogue begin."



Jean Philip De Tender  
EBU Media Director

# 1. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



YLE uses this montage to encourage journalists to think of all sectors of society when producing news output.

If you're working in television news these days, you may have noticed a change or two. Or three, or four.

To begin with, calling broadcast journalism "television news" is a complete misnomer. The evening television bulletin is still there, but the audience for it is getting smaller and older, and the resources which were once almost wholly devoted to it are now shared with 24-hour a day output on websites, mobile phone applications, YouTube, Facebook and other social media sites, which vary in priority depending on where the young are turning in any particular country.

This is a phenomenon which has touched all broadcasters; but for public service broadcasters, there are several additional challenges on top.

Across Europe there is pressure on budgets. In a growing number of countries, political parties on the right object to what they see as the liberal bias of public service media and want to see their funding cut, usually by a reduction in a licence fee or tax. In several countries where an authoritarian government has taken power, the public service broadcaster has been forced to become the conduit for news with a pro-government bias, while ignoring or under-reporting anti-government statements and protests.



**IF YOUR AUDIENCE IS CONTINUALLY GETTING SMALLER AND OLDER, THERE COMES A POINT WHERE YOU CAN NO LONGER JUSTIFY YOUR FUNDING FROM THE PUBLIC PURSE. YOUR APPEAL MUST BE UNIVERSAL.**

In other countries, the senior management of the public broadcaster is changed in a blatantly political fashion every time power passes from one party to another.



Even when the issue is not overtly political, there is opposition from competitors to guaranteed funding for public broadcasters. This may take the form of companies questioning why, in the multi-channel age, one network or group of networks should have a guaranteed source of income to produce entertainment, drama and lifestyle programmes which could succeed in the commercial market place, as opposed to having much lower funding only to produce “niche” programmes which otherwise would not be made. That is a relatively well-established issue; but a newer, related one is more focused on journalism: at a time when newspapers are struggling to survive, why are

organizations with guaranteed income allowed to publish news and features free of charge across a plethora of platforms, thus taking away the need for consumers to pay subscriptions to publishers who have to survive in the open market?

While obliged to take steps to reach compromise over these issues, public service news providers nevertheless insist on the need to extend the reach of their output. For most of them, the word around which their whole strategy revolves is **relevance**. Put simply, if your audience is continually getting smaller and older, there comes a point where you can no longer justify your funding from the public purse. Your appeal must be universal, and if young people are going to new platforms and consuming their news in different ways to the old linear viewing model, you have to follow them and provide them with content that appeals to them.

There is a second group of broadcasters, such as TF1 in France and TV2 in Denmark, who have a public service remit (meaning a commitment to broadcasting a quota of news and current affairs in peak time), but are funded by selling advertising. They face the same audience-related issues as their publicly-funded counterparts, but their strategy is different: relevance remains important, but mainly in the pursuit of **revenue**. They too must chase the younger consumers who are deserting traditional broadcast news, but their emphasis is on a different set of alternative platforms: those where advertising is possible. This generally means that websites and 24-hour news channels take precedence for resources; these channels’ presence on social media is largely designed to drive viewers back to platforms which can be more easily monetised.

Into this already challenging environment come the risks posed by eyewitness video and fake news. The need for a system of verification of what’s known as “user generated content”, generally meaning the cellphone-generated videos which quickly flood Twitter and Facebook following a breaking news story or controversial incident, has been understood for some time. There are well-developed techniques for quickly verifying video which are relied upon by the customers of social media agencies such as Storyful or the members of the Eurovision news exchange who tap into the EBU-managed verification service, Eurovision Social Newswire.

“Fake news” is more challenging. The very stability of democratic societies can be put at risk by deliberately-planted false stories which spread on social media with dramatic speed. In turn, public broadcasters are at risk: either they might inadvertently publish an untrue story, or alternatively, be accused of bias for NOT running a story, even though they know it to be untrue.

How are public broadcasters to cope with all this? The urgency of the need to accept change, review procedures and modernise output is widely recognised. From the Baltic to the Mediterranean, European public service news providers are repositioning themselves and developing techniques to face up to the challenges of a financially stringent multi-platform age. This report aims to share some of the insights from the discussions which are taking place, the strategies which are being adopted and the tools which are being used to meet the challenges of today’s media environment.

# 2. JOURNALISM UNDER PRESSURE. RESIST - OR LISTEN?



Political pressure to reduce the scope of the BBC was overcome with the help of widespread public support.

Matthew Boyle, the Washington Political Editor of Breitbart News, was holding his own in a hall full of 600 news managers with whom he had little in common. "I hope for the greater good that you guys listen to what I'm saying and what those of us on the centre right are saying," he told the News Xchange conference in Copenhagen. "I haven't seen any evidence that the media is actually making changes, and the fact that they are not makes it easier and easier for Breitbart to continue to grow, and organizations like us; there are many others out there."

He was talking in November 2016 at the height of the so-called populist revolution in global politics: the vote for Brexit had shaken Europe and Donald Trump's election as US President had spread the tremor across the Atlantic. In both cases the mainstream media had been caught on the hop. They had certainly reported on the anti-European sentiment in the U.K. and on the anti-Washington sentiment in midwest America; but the assumption on each occasion had been that the establishment would eventually win the day and all would be well.



I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY EVIDENCE THAT THE MEDIA IS ACTUALLY MAKING CHANGES, AND THE FACT THAT THEY ARE NOT MAKES IT EASIER AND EASIER FOR BREITBART TO CONTINUE TO GROW.

Matthew Boyle,  
Breitbart News

The risk to the political order that these events brought was matched by the risk to the credibility of the traditional media, including public service news providers. Breitbart, until then a raucous voice on the right with a raucous but fringe following, suddenly had global ambitions.



It scoured Washington and New York's journalistic circles in a money-no-object search for experienced journalists who would bring more gravitas to its political coverage. Then it turned its eyes to Europe, with thoughts of expanding its small London operation to other cities.

Meanwhile all over the old continent, public broadcasters were under pressure. The BBC is always a ready target for politicians and newspapers on the right, and they were duly criticized for allegedly approaching Brexit with a preconceived notion about the result. Still today the BBC is under fire for its post-Brexit

coverage, which critics on the right say overwhelmingly reports on the negative, rather than any potentially positive, consequences of the Brexit process.

In Spain, TVE's budget has long been a target for the right-of-centre Popular Party, some of whom would like to see it reduced in scale to something akin to the underfunded Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in America. In 2012 the Popular Party overturned a law that decreed that senior appointees at RTVE be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Spanish parliament. They then very publicly replaced the senior management of the network, sometimes with veterans of the preceding Popular Party government. Journalists working at TVE lament that they once had a universally respected news website but that in recent years its consumption has gone down because people no longer trust it as an independent source of information.

Similar or worse situations exist in Hungary, Poland and Turkey, where once proudly independent public service news providers are currently obliged to toe the line of governments which have little respect for plurality of views and freedom of expression.

In Germany it's not in the boardroom but on the streets that journalists are feeling the heat. The derogatory term "lügenpresse", or lying press, has re-emerged, bringing with it ugly memories of a past era. "Thousands of people shouting this at you with a camera team in the middle of a demonstration, was a very silly situation to be in," says Carsten Thureau of ZDF, referring to protests in Dresden led by the anti-Muslim group Pegida. "That was completely new to me: I've never been confronted with it before. They started to hit us: the cameraman, me and the others."



THAT WAS COMPLETELY NEW TO ME; I'VE NEVER BEEN CONFRONTED WITH IT BEFORE. THEY STARTED TO HIT US: THE CAMERAMAN, ME AND THE OTHERS.

Carsten Thureau,  
ZDF

In Finland, the intimidation comes through cyberspace. E-mails and social media posts accuse YLE's journalists of being corrupt and agents of the CIA. Female journalists are subjected to highly derogatory language and accused of cheating on their husbands. YLE have called in the police to investigate what they say is systematic abuse of their staff on certain websites.

#### **DEALING WITH POLITICAL PRESSURE**

How to react to this type of political and public pressure has been the object of much discussion within public broadcasters. Firstly, there is deemed to be a certain inevitability about it in a fractured political and economic landscape.

"We impose on ourselves the burden of impartiality and that's a very good thing to do," says Jonathan Munro, the BBC's Head of Newsgathering.

“The trouble we will always have is that, on any sort of ‘hot potatoes’ story, the perception of impartiality from one side or the other is not necessarily the same as pure impartiality.” Munro notes that, while the newsroom may have been surprised by the Brexit result, there had not been much pressure from either side during the campaign. This lack of pressure - or the converse, an equally high number of complaints from both sides - is often used by public broadcasters to gauge their success in achieving impartiality over a particular issue.



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Jonathan Munro,  
BBC

But while the natural instinct of any journalistic organization is to stand its ground and defend its work, there is a new phenomenon in evidence in newsrooms across the continent. Journalists are examining their output and asking: do these members

of the public who are so disillusioned with our output possibly have a point?

As a general rule, and accepting immediately that there are exceptions, journalists in public service news come from a mainly middle class background, have gone through college or university education and live in big cities. These factors tend to engender a liberal, enlightened view of society. A more controversial expression would be a “politically correct” view of society. What Brexit, Trump and the rise of the right in Europe have shown is that this perspective is not shared by a vast number of people, and they do not believe that public service media reflect their views, nor adequately report on the issues affecting their daily lives.

Dealing with this question is extremely sensitive and fraught with problems. There is a natural assumption that free movement of people across Europe is a good thing and racism is a bad thing. But what if the factory in your town has just closed, causing hundreds of neighbours, friends and family to lose their jobs; and at the same time a lot of people are arriving from other countries looking for jobs?

Even more sensitive is the question of refugees: unfortunate people who are fleeing conflict which they most probably had no interest in, but which was threatening their lives and those of their families. For public service media this is a story with only one side: the plight of refugees trekking across Europe is heart-wrenching and the assumption is that a civilised society will give them a sympathetic welcome and a roof over their heads. But what if they are perceived by people in the destination country to be occupying public housing which local families

have been waiting a long time to get? Or if, as their economic predicament endures in their new country, a petty crime wave emerges? To report issues like this risks encouraging prejudice and abuse against the refugees. To neglect to report these issues risks accelerating disillusionment with public service news, and potentially aids in pushing people to the political right.

No network has had to face up to these questions more than YLE in Finland. The company used to have an ethical code which stated that the background of someone committing a crime should not be mentioned if had no relevance to the context of the crime. However editorial management in Helsinki eventually came to the conclusion that immigrant crime had become an issue facing Finnish society and therefore it was permissible to mention the fact that suspects were immigrants. The fear was that if YLE avoided this, it would leave the field open for less responsible news outlets which have no commitment to treating such issues with balance and sensitivity. Plus, they felt, if it becomes apparent that something is true, no matter how unpalatable, a public broadcaster has an obligation to report the truth.

Across the Baltic Sea, the management at DR agrees. “I think we’ve been crippled and hijacked by political correctness,” says former Executive Director of News Ulrik Haagerup. “The refugee crisis is the best example but not the only one. You can see it in France where the elite media in combination with the political establishment decided 25 or 30 years ago that the Front National was to be ignored.” Although decisively defeated in the final round of the French Presidential elections, the fact that 11 million people voted for the Front National, and that the



As anti-immigrant demonstrations grew in Dresden, ZDF's crew were physically attacked by some protesters. | © AFP

European Union was holding its breath over its very future, suggests that ignoring this phenomenon of disaffection and hoping it will go away is not a sensible course of action.

SVT in Sweden face the same dilemma today as the French faced a generation ago: the rise of an anti-immigrant party, the Swedish Democrats, in this most socially progressive of countries. SVT, like any public broadcaster, have an obligation to consider that all people are intrinsically equal, and as such, no minority group should be covered in a way that might elicit negative reactions towards that group. This makes reporting the words and policies of the Swedish Democrats a matter of extreme sensitivity, especially when they rail against alleged immigrant crime while the Swedish government refuses to include people's ethnic origin in its official crime statistics. Equally, though, SVT cannot suppress the point of view of the Swedish Democrats when a YouGov poll showed in March 2017 that they had risen to become the most popular party in the country.

While difficult for many public service journalists to come to terms with, the reporting of the views of such political parties

can be understood not as shifting to the right, but rather as stemming the desertion of the people to whom these parties appeal from public broadcasting to other, less responsible sources of news on social media. "These kind of people think we are part of a political class," says Carsten Thureau about the German protesters. "Public television is working very closely with the government, with Angela Merkel, that is what they think. We don't give a home to these people who have a different opinion, who have fears."

For Ulrik Haagerup, it's a matter of going back to basics. "You can't say you're trustworthy if people don't trust you. There is no commercial or advertising campaign that will solve that problem. You have to show it, year after year, that in your daily news you want to reflect reality in the best possible way to give people the good and the bad. You're not biased, you try to be fair and accurate."

#### **ECONOMIC PRESSURE**

Economic pressure on public service news providers comes in many forms. The basic issue is that across the board, broadcasters are having to resource new platforms to

stay relevant at the same time as their public funding is being squeezed. The pressure on funds may be part of a country's general spending cutbacks, or it may be because of a perceived need to force a public broadcaster to become more efficient. Networks like RTÉ in Ireland, TVE in Spain and ERT in Greece have all felt the heavy hand of economic austerity over the past few years.



**YOU CAN'T SAY YOU'RE TRUSTWORTHY IF PEOPLE DON'T TRUST YOU. YOU HAVE TO SHOW IT, YEAR AFTER YEAR.**

Ulrik Haagerup,  
DR

The better news is that often when the pressure on a public broadcaster is overtly political, this provokes a reaction and the more extreme tendencies of certain parties end up being moderated as the voices of pro-public service lobbyists and the general public are heard.

Among networks breathing a sigh of relief over their recent funding settlements are YLE, which at one point faced a cut of 20%, with the consent of all three main political parties, as the Finnish government sought to rein in public spending. In the end they escaped with a 3-year funding freeze then a commitment to an index-linked raise for four years after that.

As the BBC negotiated its charter renewal in 2016, it found itself in the hands of a Conservative Party culture minister who joked about abolishing it. On a more serious level, he believed its remit should be restricted to producing unpopular programming that no other channel wanted. The way that such an extreme curbing of BBC activity was avoided speaks to the importance of a public broadcaster

maintaining its relevance to its audience. The British government launched a public consultation which elicited no fewer than 192,000 emails, letters and online responses, the majority in favour of maintaining the broad scope of the BBC and the licence fee as its funding mechanism. The corporation ended up with an 11-year settlement with inflation rises built in, and the right for the first time to charge the licence fee to users of its iPlayer catch-up service. In return it assumed the financial burden of providing free TV licences for old age pensioners. The net financial result of these new provisions, including for the news budget, was negative, but not on a scale that could not be managed.

Pressure can also be put on one public service news provider by another: France, Finland, Denmark and the UK are among the countries where there are commercially-funded channels with public service obligations to broadcast news in peak time. There is often resentment among those channels over their generally bigger competitors with their guaranteed funding, and this

can lead to lobbying to have the publicly funded networks' scale cut back.

## **PRESSURE FROM NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS**

Pressure on public broadcasters from privately owned newspapers is nothing new; but as the printed press has descended into economic crisis the lobbying against broadcast media with guaranteed funding has reached new heights.

ARD has even been taken to court by publishing houses alleging unfair competition. Their reaction has been to focus attention on how much of the material on their website was first produced for their core TV output. So on tagesschau.de most reports carry a little camera symbol which tells readers, and potential legal challengers, that the story links back to video that was primarily produced for TV, and that its use on the website is secondary.

DR is bullish in defending itself against such pressure. Ulrik Haagerup does not see the logic in commercial organizations trying to fix their own problems by crippling public service media. "I call it flat tyre logic," he says. "Two



Reporting on refugees is a matter of extreme sensitivity for public broadcasters. | © iStock

trucks are delivering important goods, and one of the trucks gets a flat tyre. The reaction from the truck owner is to shout out of the window to everyone passing by, 'Now you have to puncture the tyres of the other truck, otherwise it's not fair.'" In what way, he asks, does that help to deliver the goods?

One issue which is gaining traction, and which some broadcasters accept as valid, is the existential threat to local and regional newspapers across Europe. In the crisis engulfing print journalism, the local press faces the greatest danger of extinction, and one of the factors they cite is the availability of free regional news produced by public service broadcasters. When TV was TV and print was print, each had its role and the problem was not so acute; but the merging of media means that most broadcasters now produce text and video-based regional news on websites and apps, obviating the need for consumers to buy a local newspaper. Even if a local publisher abandons print and goes online, the website has to be popular enough to attract advertising to survive, a huge hurdle in a local environment, and one not faced by the public broadcaster.

Facing pressure over its effect on regional journalism, the BBC has a provision in its new charter to assist with funding a team of local reporters based around the UK. It has concluded an innovative agreement with the trade body the News Media Association to fund 150 local journalists in regional towns and cities, at a cost to licence payers of about £8m (€9.5m). These journalists will be employed by locally-based news organizations, not the BBC, and they will cover council meetings and stories about public services. Their work will be shared with the BBC, and the corporation in

turn will share video and audio material with the local news organizations after it has first been seen on the BBC. Apart from bringing benefits to both parties in the agreement, it's hoped that the strengthened regional reporting will have a beneficial effect on local democratic institutions in the UK.

## **DEALING WITH FAKE NEWS**

When discussing fake news, the first problem is how to define it. Many journalists are sceptical about the very concept, pointing out that it has always been part of their profession to check facts before putting them on air. Even the notion of deliberately false stories brings a shrug: what's the difference between that and propaganda, which governments have spread since time immemorial?

What is different today is the sheer extent of the creation of fake news, and the dramatic speed with which it can be spread on a global scale. Completely false stories intended to target a party or individual, fabricated quotes from genuine sources and the manipulation of genuine information or pictures are commonplace on social media. Viral sharing means they can quickly become accepted wisdom among users of Facebook and Twitter, and when the results of national elections come into play, as recently happened in the United States and France, that presents a dilemma for responsible news providers: do you just ignore what you know to be a false story, or do you spend time and resources publicly debunking it?

For VRT's Head of News, Inge Vrancken, paying no attention to false stories is not an option. "For us here in Belgium, especially after the Brussels attacks, there were a lot of rumours on social media, and we got a lot of complaints from viewers or listeners who said, 'I read this; why is

VRT not reporting it? You are being really politically correct because you don't want to say that this is true.'" In fact, there were many stories which VRT investigated and found to be false, but what were they to do with them? Should they have given airtime to stories that appear on Twitter only to tell the audience that they were false?

An even bigger problem for responsible journalism is that many people in today's sharply divided societies apparently don't care if a piece of news is fake or not: if it reflects how they feel, they're fine with it. That phenomenon was writ large during the American election campaign when Donald Trump was making statements which were easily shown to be false. Still the crowds came and the voters turned out for him. "In my opinion, facts don't have the weight that they used to," comments Elina Ravantti, Head of World News and Current Affairs at YLE. "It is so hard to fight because even if you present them with a kilometre of facts it doesn't have any effect on them or influence them. Because they simply don't believe you."

The main approach to fake news is not difficult to determine, but constitutes yet another strain on resources: start a fact checker team, and link it to a global alliance.

The best-established alliance is First Draft, supported by Google News Lab and several founding partners, with the Eurovision News Exchange participating in its partner network. They facilitate communal fact checking among members and provide extensive research and resources on their website. An associated service, CrossCheck, was launched specifically to deal with false stories in the run-up to the French election.

The good news about the expense of establishing a fact checking team is that the money is not just spent behind the scenes. Fact checking teams produce material which can be branded and published to add depth to a network's website and social media pages, create analytical items for TV news bulletins and even be turned into TV programmes in their own right.

Detektor became a series on DR based on the work of its fact checkers, and Faktisk is an alliance in Norway between the public broadcasters NRK and TV2 and the newspapers VG and Dagbladet, which produces branded content for use on each member's website and mobile phone apps.

The BBC has Reality Check; it began as a fact checking effort for the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, developed through the 2015 UK election and was used again for the Brexit referendum and the 2017 election. The BBC decided that there were so many big stories with false rumours flying around that they would make the team permanent and give it a brand name. The work of

Reality Check researchers is widely disseminated internally to the many journalistic departments of the BBC, as well as being used as a branded feature on air and online.

Going online also solved Inge Vrancken's problem at VRT. Discussing stories in TV bulletins which are known to be false is a poor use of valuable airtime; whereas capacity on a website is unlimited. "We started an online page where we fact-checked all those stories, and we said to people, 'Go and look on that page'," says Vrancken. "Then we said, 'Okay, this paper said this, on Twitter you could read that; we investigated and this is the result.' And that gave us a lot of credibility with viewers."

Google and Facebook have come under fire for not tackling fake news at its source. Facebook has been particularly criticised.

In the wake of the US election result in November 2016, Mark Zuckerberg scoffed at the idea that false stories on Facebook could have influenced the result. But within weeks, the torrent of criticism which

engulfed him had led to action; Facebook announced its own fact-checking alliance with partners ABC News, AP, FactCheck.org, Politifact and Snopes. If enough Facebook users report a story to be fake, it is passed on to these partners for review. Stories which fail the authenticity test are flagged with the warning "Disputed by third party fact-checkers" and Facebook users are encouraged to think carefully before sharing the story with their friends. Users can even click on a link to find out why the story has been judged false. Facebook says these measures brought a reduction in the proliferation of fake news during the 2017 elections in France and the UK, though other reports said that by the time some articles were flagged, they had already spread virally and the damage had been done. The company also published full-page newspaper advertisements in the UK giving tips on how to spot whether or not a story is fake.

Facebook is also attempting to suppress fake news by reducing the possibility of profiting from it. Using artificial intelligence technology it attempts to



During the recent UK election, Facebook placed newspaper advertisements telling people how to spot false news. | © Facebook



Mark Zuckerberg was criticized for downplaying the effect of fake news on the US election.

detect and delete spoof domains and it is removing links between Facebook and ad farms, where people are paid to click repeatedly on content to create the impression of activity, which then leads to advertising revenue.

However Facebook has resisted the ultimate step of simply deleting articles which are suspected of being false. It prefers to suppress rather than remove the articles. If they're flagged as false they will be placed so far down users' feeds that readers are unlikely to see them and fraudsters are unlikely to profit from them; but they're still on the site somewhere. This illustrates Facebook's dilemma of being a platform which wants to promote freedom of expression, yet needs to protect the reputation of itself and its legitimate content providers.

Never has the scale of the challenge facing the social media giants been more sharply in focus than in the wake of the Las Vegas mass shooting in October 2017, when both Facebook and Google not only failed to suppress reports falsely identifying the gunman and claiming he was an anti-Trump liberal, they actually ended up promoting the fake news. In Facebook's case their algorithm

pushed to the top of their news feed an article from a far right blog which named the wrong man. Further "alt-right" sites were featured on Facebook's Crisis Response page. On this occasion the posts were removed, but not before they had spread worldwide and been screen captured and forwarded innumerable times. A Facebook statement said they were "working to fix the issue".

"We have always said our mission is to make the world more open and connected," says Aine Kerr, Facebook's Manager of Journalism Partnerships. "So fake news ultimately runs counter to that and erodes trust. We know our audience don't want to see it and ultimately the partners we work with don't want to have to compete with false news on the platform. So it's something we take very, very seriously, and we're committed to working on it until we get it right."

The serious threat to stable democracies from fake news has also caught the attention of the European Commission. After the Brexit vote, they awarded a grant of €1m to a group of news agencies - AFP in France, ANSA in Italy and DPA in Germany - to produce

data-based factual material which is freely available to journalists and citizens on a website entitled The European Data News Hub. According to AFP, the site aims "to inform and inspire debate about events shaping the lives of people in Europe and across the world, ranging from the state of the environment to the impact of migration or unemployment." Content is in English, German, Italian and French and includes text, plus static and animated graphics which can be reversioned by broadcasters into their own language and style.

Politicians with an agenda; managements on tight budgets; industry competitors under existential threat; malicious disseminators of falsehoods: truly a "perfect storm" of challenges for today's public service news providers. And that's before even talking about how to reach those millions of young people who aren't watching TV at all any more. The time has never been more crucial to work out where a network's resources can be best spent - and to develop an imaginative editorial strategy which ensures that public service news remains as vital to society in the decades to come as it has been in years past.

# 3. WHERE SHOULD YOUR RESOURCES GO?



ARD's evening news: still popular in times of change.

The audience for traditional evening news on TV is getting smaller and older, bulletins are in terminal decline and they should no longer be the focus of a broadcaster's resources.

That, it seems, is today's accepted wisdom. But it could not be more wrong.

Despite the shifting landscape, traditional evening news bulletins on TV networks across Europe remain in robust health: still attracting audiences which place them high in their channels' ratings; still able to raise national consciousness

with well-resourced original journalism; and still the place where millions of professionals and influence makers get their round-up of the day's events.

## **DON'T WRITE OFF THE EVENING NEWS**

As such, the traditional evening news bulletin remains incredibly important as a vehicle for showing that public broadcasters are taking their responsibilities for measured and balanced journalism seriously, as well as being a key source of information for individuals



WE ARE SEEN BY THE MAJORITY OF THE GERMAN POPULATION AS TRUSTWORTHY NEWS WHERE THEY CAN GET BALANCED REPORTING. SO HOW DO YOU CHANGE IN THAT SITUATION?

Michael Wegener,  
ARD

and families who are not as glued to mobile feeds all day as bored youths, or people in the TV industry, may be.

According to Jonathan Munro, Head of Newsgathering at the BBC, "Broadly speaking, our dilemma is this: the really big built programs already on television are still attracting a very big audience.



And they are reputationally very important to the BBC. So the way that peaktime television and breakfast radio in particular perform has a disproportionately important effect on our reputation. And that feeds into our ability to command a licence fee and it feeds into our ability to say to politicians who are lobbying us, 'Hands off. We're doing a good job for the audience.' So it's really, really important."

The continuing strength of the evening news bulletin is reflected all over Europe. In France, the 8pm hour remains a big draw and the most watched platform for political

interviews and discussion as the country endures political turmoil and an acute terrorism threat. In Germany, the BBC's dilemma is echoed virtually word-for-word by ARD. "We are on a very high level of linear output, while knowing that it will change at some time," says Michael Wegener, Head of the Content Center at ARD News in Hamburg. "We are seen by the majority of the German population as trustworthy news where they can get balanced reporting. So how do you change in that situation?"

Wegener and his colleagues across the industry recognise that a process of constant review is essential, as is having the courage to change what is not working. In ARD's case they concluded that their late night news bulletin was not making much impact so they reduced its resources and invested them elsewhere. In the BBC's case the youth-oriented Newsbeat website was found to be redundant because young people would find links to stories on their social media feeds and go straight to the story on the main BBC news website. The Newsbeat front page was bypassed altogether: so it was abolished and the resources better used elsewhere.

Perhaps the most radical decision in terms of closing a traditional strand of TV output occurred at DR in Copenhagen, where the entire breakfast programme of the main DR channel was taken off air. The money which had been spent on it was invested instead in creating a fast reaction breaking news desk which provides output to all of DR's platforms, linear and digital.

In deciding to cancel the breakfast show, DR used the "U" model of strategic decision making, which former Executive Director of

News Ulrik Haagerup freely admits to having plagiarised from Cardiff University journalism professor Richard Sambrook.

"Strategy should be so simple, even I can understand it," says Haagerup, drawing a large letter "U" on a whiteboard. At the top of the right side of the "U" he writes "Update", representing the need for a stream of reliable information, including breaking news, to be delivered at reasonable speed. At the top of the left side of the "U" he writes "In depth", representing the need for perspective, different angles, nuance and background. At a time when resources are being squeezed, the idea is that any piece of output on any platform has to climb its way up either the right side of the "U", meeting the need for updates, or the left side, meeting the need for depth. Two-thirds of the way down the "U", Haagerup bisects it with a horizontal line and shades in the part below the line. Any piece of output which falls below that line is deemed to be meeting neither of the key criteria, and therefore faces the axe. And thus came to an end DR's breakfast programme.

"As we're not getting more money and most certainly will get less money, we have to decide what is really meaningful for people regarding updates and depth," says Haagerup. "Then we should take out things on the bottom, instead of just cutting 3%, 5%, 8% of everything we do, which is a crazy way of doing it. That would mean everyone would just have to run faster with less time for fact checking and less time for being clever with in-depth output."

Notwithstanding the robustness of the evening news, no-one denies that it is facing a diminishing audience

and one which is getting older. That means a public broadcaster's resources today need to be shared among many platforms, which in turn leads to the question of where channels can most effectively direct their budgets in the multi-platform era.

## 24 HOUR NEWS CHANNELS

The outlook for 24-hour news channels, once seen as an essential tool if a public service broadcaster was to be taken seriously as a news provider, is now mixed. These channels are very expensive to run and the truth of the matter is, they have a very low share of viewers except in the hours following a major breaking story. Even then, in the online era people are just as likely to turn to their phones to follow developments.

In 2016, the BBC carried out a review of its two news channels (domestic and global) and there was a serious school of thought that at a time of financial stringency, one of them should be closed. In the end both were reprieved because the actual saving from staffing and airing the channels was not regarded

as very high, given that the BBC's central newsgathering operation provided most of the field material. Nevertheless, in saving the channels the BBC took a decision to stop prioritising them for resources. The belief is that the growth of rolling news channels in the UK peaked around the year 2011, and that since then investment in other digital services has become a more productive use of development funding.

At the other end of spectrum is TV2 in Denmark, whose 24-hour news channel remains a high priority with growing, not diminishing, resources. Referring to the recent anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, Petter Ettrup of TV2's foreign desk says, "We had a correspondent doing stories in Rome for a week and she was told that we would probably not be broadcasting anything on the main TV channel; she should focus on the 24-hour channel and the website. That's definitely a change in how we think about news, especially foreign news." For TV2 this is part of the shift towards being a 24/7 content provider in the modern era, but there is another motive: revenue. The 24-hour channel generates

profit through subscriptions and advertising and there is deemed to be a need to produce a measure of original content to provide value for those paying customers.

There are other motivations for launching news channels. In September 2016, Franceinfo TV debuted in an already crowded market because of a perceived need to have a publicly-funded news service on a platform which had been dominated by private channels. This is a reflection of France's strong commitment to public services, coupled with the will to find the money to fund them, but it is highly unusual in today's media environment. For most public broadcasters seeking to spread their budget for maximum impact, launching a 24-hour news channel is not even a consideration.

## WEBSITE AND APPS

In the online era, websites are the oldest form of non-linear output but they remain extremely important to all public service broadcasters, whether publicly or privately funded. Broadcasters like VRT have launched second generation websites to refresh

The screenshot shows the VRT NWS website interface. At the top left is the VRT NWS logo. To the right are navigation links: 'nl', 'ontdek', 'zoek' with a magnifying glass icon, and 'net binnen' with a globe icon. Below the navigation is a blue header bar with a left arrow, a clock icon, the time '21:20', and the headline 'Britse acteur Colin Firth is nu helemaal Italiaan', followed by a right arrow. The main content area features a large image of a Ryanair airplane with the headline 'Ryanair-piloot getuigt: "Het lijkt alsof het in het hoofdkwartier in Dublin in elkaar valt als een kaartenhuisje"'. Below this are four smaller news items, each with a play button icon, a category label, a headline, and a timestamp:

- POLITIEK**: 300 linkse betogers tegen Francken en Jambon (21:20)
- CULTUUR & MEDIA**: Arno is voortaan ereburger van Brussel (21:20)
- WETENSCHAP**: "Alcoholverslaving is een ziekte. Hervallen hoort erbij" (22:10)
- PENSIOENHERVORMING**: Pensioenhervorming: "Technisch dossier vereist" (21:20)

VRT are among the EBU Members who have launched updated websites.

the design and introduce more advanced tools for constructing rich content and measuring consumer engagement. Other members like RTÉ, who have come through a long period of economic retrenchment, are now developing their web content under new management.

Websites provide a platform for longer takes on stories with embedded audio and video. They allow live text-based coverage of developing news

with social media reaction built in, analytical sidebars, correspondent blogs and fact checking modules. Rights permitting, there can be a live stream of TV news output.

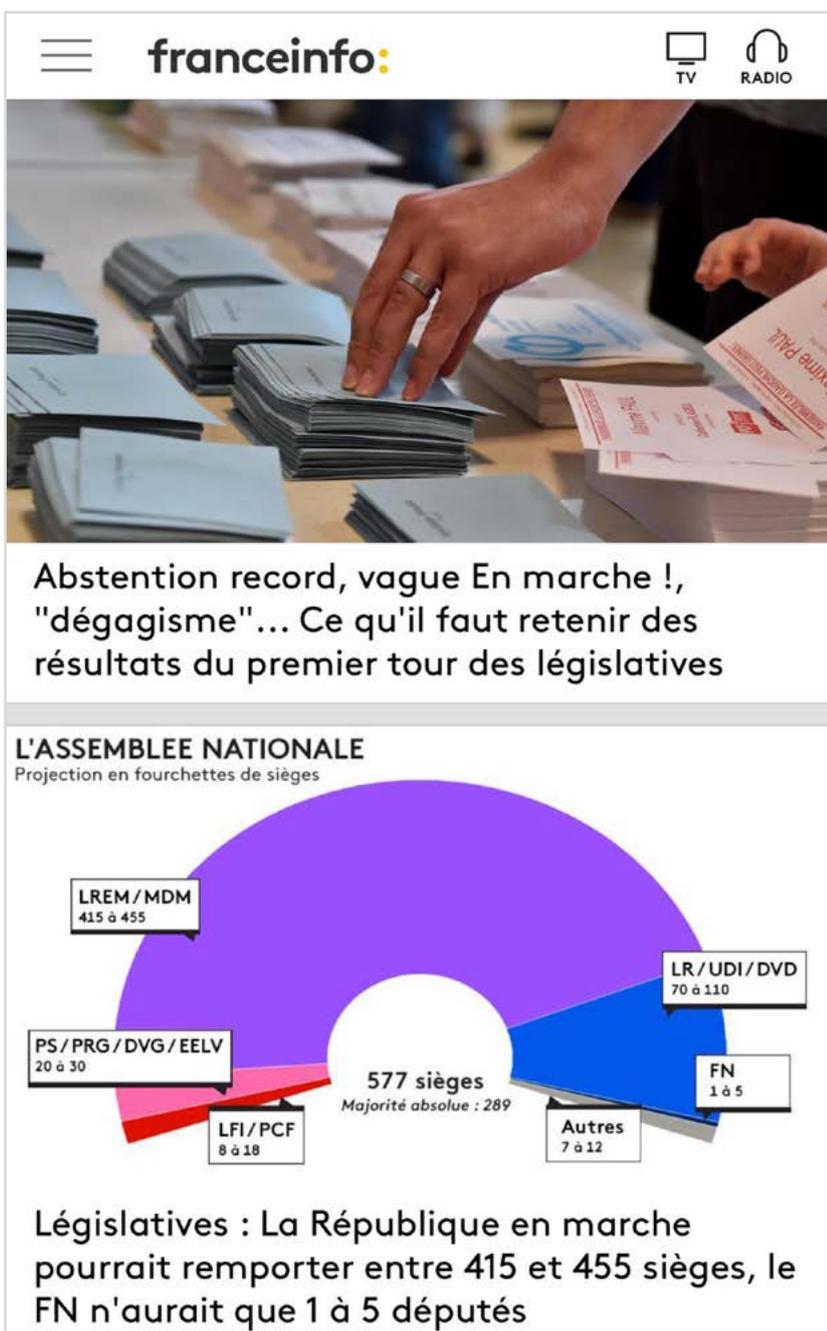
Websites are often the destination for traffic driven from social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook. Their limitless capacity and flexibility give them more depth than social media can offer within their own platforms and they have the advantage,

where permitted, of being easily monetised through banner and embedded video advertisements.

Having a well-developed website which is considered a "go to" destination for authoritative, unbiased news coverage is a source of great pride for public service broadcasters in most countries, as well as being a major factor in maintaining their profile and relevance.

To reach a young audience, websites must include formatting for mobile phones, and preferably a dedicated news app which will automatically kick in if a consumer tries to link to a URL on a handheld device. Apps turn web stories into a lower data, simplified format which loads easily over a cellular or wifi connection and is designed to be read on a small screen. According to a recent EBU survey of its members, there is very much an east-west split over which broadcasters offer news apps; they are universally available in the countries of the former western Europe, but most eastern European public broadcasters still rely on their website as their primary online presence.

With the rapid shift to mobile consumption, a comprehensive strategy for development of apps needs to be part of every broadcaster's plans. RAI sees apps as a means of providing tailored output to different strands of its audience in politically fragmented Italy. Equally, a broadcaster can have a mainstream app and a youth news app; there can be an app for domestic consumption and a separate one for the international followers. The possibilities for serving specific parts of an audience through apps are endless.



Franceinfo's news app, part of the integrated approach involving radio, TV and online

## SOCIAL MEDIA

When considering a social media strategy and which platforms to prioritise for resources, one name absolutely dominates the landscape: Facebook.

Perhaps this is because media professionals of a certain age are all on there and think they're hip as a result! More seriously, it's because of the sheer scale of the Facebook platform, together with its massive power to drive consumers to other platforms such as websites and YouTube. Many millennials long ago deserted Facebook for more fashionable platforms, but Facebook nevertheless brings the mean age of public service news consumers down. As a rule of thumb, and acknowledging that the situation varies from country to country, broadcasters expect viewers of the traditional evening news to have a mean age in their 50s, 60s or higher; consumers of Facebook have a mean age in their 30s and 40s; consumers of Instagram are generally in their 20s and early 30s; and millennials are glued to Snapchat and various similar platforms.



## MASTERING FACEBOOK

For an example of a news provider which has made a massive success of its Facebook feed, it's hard to look past the UK's Channel 4 News.

The motivation for diversifying into Facebook did not come from within. The editor of the programme, which is produced by ITN, was summoned to a meeting at Channel 4's headquarters in London and told that management was concerned

about the high average age of viewers of the 7pm newscast. As a result, a new editor of digital services was hired and the small existing team of digital journalists beefed up. Facebook was not the only platform served, but it's the one which emerged as a runaway success. In 2014, Channel 4 News had 80 million digital video views on Facebook; in 2015 that rose to 600 million and in 2016, the channel had around 2 billion views of its Facebook video posts. Compare that to a viewing figure for the TV evening news programme of around 700,000.

The success of the Channel 4 News Facebook posts has transformed awareness of the programme worldwide. It has more than 4 million followers on Facebook for its main output plus some secondary issue-based pages. The audience is relatively young and well educated, and the comments following each video demonstrate a high level of engagement with global issues.

However, although Channel 4 is a public service news provider in the commercial sector, the Facebook activity has not made it rich. Details of financial agreements between Facebook and its partners and suppliers are

notoriously difficult to pin down; the phrase "non-disclosure agreement" quickly enters any conversation on the subject. ITN, the producer of Channel 4 News, publicly lambasted Facebook in the early part of 2017 for the low level of revenue from advertisements that Facebook shared with content providers, together with the lack of transparency over how the revenue figure was reached. They also complained privately that they had never been approached to be an official content partner, a privilege which at the time was reserved for a small elite of companies in each country, again with no transparency over how any particular partner was chosen.

Facebook was clearly in a learning process over its development as a platform for professional editorial content. To its credit, it took on board the criticism from the content providers and there was rapid action during 2017, as part of what it called the Facebook Journalism Project, to demystify the process of partnering with Facebook, bolster its reputation as a platform for reputable journalism and clarify the revenue model.

The biggest change was the dramatic expansion of Instant Articles, the form of



**IN 2014, BRITAIN'S CHANNEL 4 NEWS HAD 80 MILLION DIGITAL VIDEO VIEWS ON FACEBOOK. IN 2015 THAT ROSE TO 600 MILLION AND IN 2016, THE CHANNEL HAD AROUND 2 BILLION VIEWS OF ITS FACEBOOK VIDEO POSTS.**

partnership which once was the reserve of the few, but which is now available to all broadcasters and is currently used by more than 10,000 content providers worldwide. After a simple sign-up and verification process, networks can start contributing text, audio and video and, where allowed, take a clearly defined share of revenue from advertisements. Facebook says that if a broadcaster sells advertisements using its own sales team, it can keep 100% of the revenue; if it relies on Facebook to find and place the ads, the share is 70-75% to the content provider.

Facebook has also launched what it calls “ad breaks”, which are little different to commercial breaks on TV: during a live video a message will pop up saying, “Back in 30 seconds,” and an advertisement will play. To qualify, a content provider must have a minimum of 2,000 followers and 300 concurrent viewers on its page. The revenue share is 55% to the broadcaster. There are also methods by which broadcasters with sponsorship deals for programmes can link to their sponsors from the programme’s Facebook content.

Facebook also understands that many public service broadcasters are not seeking revenue: for them, the benefit of working with Facebook comes from expanding audience reach and pushing consumers to additional content on other digital platforms. Even for these news providers with a public source of funds, the new form of Instant Articles is an attractive proposition. Despite the rule of thumb age groupings mentioned above, Facebook argues that the massive size of its membership – now more than 2 billion regular monthly users – means it has powerful reach into all age groups and

it is unrivalled as a platform for expanding an audience and growing brand recognition. They are also developing features such as sign-ups for newsletters which can further increase audience loyalty to a brand.

It should be noted, though, that the rush into Instant Articles is not without its pitfalls for content providers. One of the major benefits from a Facebook user’s point of view is that the articles load much more quickly than a link to a web page – it’s estimated as much as ten times more quickly. But the reason for this is that the consumer is being kept on the Facebook platform rather than diverted to a web browser – which, of course, is of benefit to Facebook. That’s likely to diminish the value of Facebook as a driver to other platforms such as websites, something which has been cited by all news providers, commercial or publicly funded, as one of the platform’s main benefits.

Those in the commercial sector in particular have to make a calculation over whether the revenue generated around Instant Articles makes up for the potential loss of revenue from web pages with embedded ads, which will inevitably receive fewer hits. TV2 Denmark says that no less than 40% of its web traffic comes from clickthroughs from Facebook, so for a company like this, the issue is very real. The idea that web content is more easily monetised than social media content may no longer apply and a refocusing of digital output may be necessary. For non-commercial broadcasters, it’s not an existential question, but they are likely to see a rebalancing of time spent on Facebook over time spent on the equivalent web pages. Facebook may be listening to broadcasters’ concerns about the partnering process, but

the steps they’re taking to resolve them will certainly do Facebook no harm.

## **WHERE ELSE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?**

While Facebook is by far the most important platform in social media, as we have seen, it is not necessarily the primary destination for the youngest consumers that a public service broadcaster wants to engage early in their adult lives. Because there are so many platforms, every broadcaster has to make a decision about which ones to serve and which to leave alone. This is not just be about audience size; it’s also about the brand and reputation of the public broadcaster, which can quickly be compromised by content appearing in an environment deemed too trivial, obscure or morally inappropriate to be a good use of public money.



## **INSTAGRAM: FEWER SUBSCRIBERS BUT HIGHER ENGAGEMENT**

The next most important platform for most broadcasters is Instagram. Of course, this only adds to the dominance of Facebook, since it is Instagram’s parent company. Instagram can be added to a broadcaster’s portfolio relatively easily because it can carry content similar to that already being produced for Facebook (or vice versa; ARD often edits with Instagram primarily in mind because of its higher standard of aesthetics, then uses the same video on Facebook). Videos stack up on Instagram as little squares, the way photographs did in the app’s early days, and they remain viewable indefinitely.

Instagram will not produce the sheer volume of subscribers that Facebook does; the BBC, with a well-developed strategy for the platform, has 4.2 million followers, which is dwarfed by its 44 million followers on Facebook.

However Instagram can extend a news provider's reach in a number of important ways:

- Its user profile is younger. Statistics vary by country but normally a majority of users are under 35 years of age, sometimes by a large percentage.
- It has a higher female to male ratio. Whereas the gender of Facebook users is roughly equal, in most countries there are many more women than men using Instagram.
- It is ahead of other social media apps by a long way in terms of user engagement. The research company TrackMaven analysed 51 million posts by 40,000 different companies in the first half of 2016 to gauge the level of interaction by consumers. Instagram subscribers had an average of between 50 and 70 interactions per post per 1,000 followers, whereas Facebook was way lower at around 6 interactions per post per 1,000 followers. Other social media apps were lower still. This dramatic difference in engagement is probably a reflection of the sheer volume of material on Facebook, which means many posts are never even seen at all by their intended recipients, as they are constantly pushed down their feed by newer posts.

A public service news provider which has not yet embraced Instagram must make a judgement about how valuable it is in their particular country; but as a means of attracting a new generation of discerning consumers on a platform which is still growing strongly,

it is undoubtedly worthy of consideration when allocating resources.



### **SNAPCHAT: HOME TO MILLENNIALS BUT OF LIMITED VALUE**

Snapchat, on the other hand, is problematical. It is the platform of choice for teenagers, and the steep growth in young people using it makes it superficially attractive: in the fourth quarter of 2016, there were 161 million daily active users globally, up 50% on a year earlier. What's more, users visit the site on average 18 times per day, which should be music to the ears of a news provider looking to attract a new generation of consumers.

There are two major problems, however.

Firstly, very few users are going to Snapchat in search of news, nor are they likely to be engaged when they find a news feed. The BBC, which recognised the potential

of Snapchat for serving millennials and has a number of themed pages on the platform, is sceptical about the return on investment. "The number of people who are on Snapchat to consume entertainment stories or share stuff in clubs is enormous and growing," says Social Media Editor Mark Frankel. "But the number of people who are on Snapchat to engage with news is minute; in the UK it's less than 1% of all Snapchat users. BBC News on Snapchat, which we've been doing since January 2016, has 4,500 followers. That's tiny."

Coupled with that is the need to dedicate production resources and personnel specifically to doing separate edits for Snapchat. The need for items to conform to the upbeat style which teenagers are used to from material on Snapchat, including slicing longer items into easily digestible segments, means it's not effective simply to transfer an item made for Facebook or Instagram to Snapchat.

Taken together, these factors mean that for many broadcasters, the Snapchat equation does not add up. "If you look at our Facebook



**FACEBOOK WAS CLEARLY IN A LEARNING PROCESS OVER ITS DEVELOPMENT AS A PLATFORM FOR PROFESSIONAL EDITORIAL CONTENT. TO ITS CREDIT, THERE WAS RAPID ACTION AS PART OF THE FACEBOOK JOURNALISM PROJECT TO DEMYSTIFY THE PROCESS OF PARTNERING.**

audience, it's 70% under 35," says Jon Laurence, Digital Editor at Channel 4 News. "It skews more towards the 25 to 34 bracket than the 16 to 25, but Facebook is still a place where people in their late teens and twenties come together in huge quantities. Its 2 billion users is a huge market for us.» That reflects the argument of Facebook management about the primacy of their platform; although the Channel 4 News Facebook feed isn't specifically targeting the millennial audience, the sheer number of people on Facebook means that a lot of millennials are seeing it anyway; probably more than would ever be engaged if Channel 4 News were to launch a Snapchat page.



### YOUTUBE: THE HOME FOR LONG FORM VIDEO

For TV2 Denmark, there is no more valuable platform for streaming video than YouTube. That conforms to the notion that news

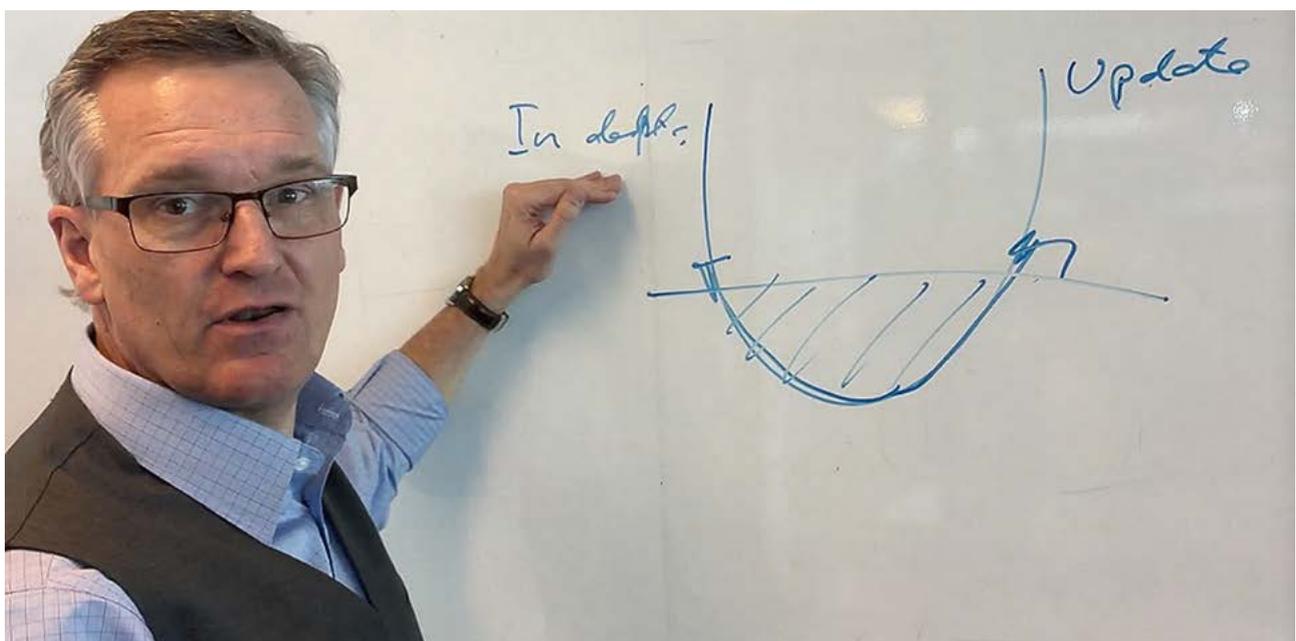
providers in the commercial sector prefer platforms where the insertion of advertisements is straightforward and a revenue share is possible. However, it's about more than that.

YouTube has a special place in the social media portfolios of many broadcasters as the home for long form video. That can mean anything from 7-10 minute features, either specially cut or extracted from broadcast programmes, all the way to full-length current affairs. The attractiveness of YouTube for this may derive from the fact that it is still often viewed on a desktop PC or laptop, where the experience is more enjoyable than watching a long video on a mobile phone.

A glance through some public broadcasters' YouTube channels reveals a 16-minute feature from ARD on life as a Muslim in Berlin; a 21-minute Channel 4 News interview with Martin Scorsese as part of a series on Donald Trump; and a whole series of hour-long BBC Panorama documentaries. The BBC also regards its YouTube channel as a place to put additional

material, including library footage, to add depth and background to a topical story.

For news-related content the viewing numbers on YouTube are not in the same league as Facebook, but the length of engagement is far superior. A recent extended cut of an interview with Angelina Jolie in Cambodia done by BBC World News saw more than 80% of viewers still watching on YouTube seven minutes into the video, an astonishingly high level of commitment for today's restless consumers. YouTube viewers are regarded by news providers as thoughtful and committed, and reaching them is easy: any broadcaster can establish and populate a YouTube channel with no dedicated resources, then drive viewers to it from their more popular platforms such as Facebook, or by trailing it on TV. If revenue is a factor, a broadcaster can opt in to allowing pre-roll advertisements for which it will receive revenue, without complicated contractual arrangements, via a Google AdSense account.



Ulrik Haagerup: if a piece of output neither updates nor provides depth, it falls to the bottom of the U and gets cancelled.



## TWITTER: A “FIRE HOSE” OF CONTENT

Twitter shares with Facebook and YouTube the honour of being one of the original social media platforms, as well as one of the dwindling group which is accessible on a desktop PC as well as on mobile devices.

Originally its 140 character format was designed to share content that would fit on to an SMS text message. Since then Twitter has become universally adopted in newsrooms as a means of alerting followers to breaking stories and hyperlinking them to more substantial sites. Photo attachments and embedded video have become possible, giving Twitter a degree of functionality as a content platform in its own right.

The importance given to Twitter by public service news providers depends very much on the level of interest in the platform in individual countries. The English-speaking world is more attached to Twitter than countries speaking other languages. Both Danish networks regard it as a way to reach influential people such as

politicians, but are dismissive of its ability to serve the public as a whole. That is partially reflected by the UK’s Channel 4 News, who see Twitter as a place to post unedited videos of political interviews and doorsteps, gaining them a following of political aficionados more than the wider public.

The good news about Twitter is that it needs no dedicated resources; everyone in a newsroom who is authorised to do so can just create a handle in the company style and start tweeting.

For the same reason, however, Twitter carries risks. Hundreds and sometimes thousands of journalists within an organization may be allowed a Twitter account on which they can post material without it being previewed by a second pair of eyes. Any mistake will quickly go viral and can be very damaging to a broadcaster’s reputation. Worse, anything libellous can land an organization in court.

Careful thought about who is authorised to tweet in the company’s name is therefore essential, as is a robust set of social media guidelines. Journalists need to be reminded that they must not write anything on Twitter which

they would not be prepared to say in a TV broadcast. Particular attention needs to be paid to retweets, when a correspondent might start forwarding other people’s posts which are not as balanced as his or her own work would be.

There is one other drawback to Twitter. If the statistic above showing that the proportion of people who interact with Facebook content is surprisingly low, the number for Twitter is lower still. Twitter has been described as a “fire hose of content”, spewing out tweets in chronological order, often dozens per minute depending on the number of people a user is following. None of it is prioritised. Unless a Twitter feed is being constantly monitored by the recipient, the vast majority of posts will simply be missed. Therefore a news provider using Twitter as a platform to engage viewers needs to be committed to providing a very regular diet of content so that at least some of the tweets will be seen by the network’s followers at any particular time. Even then, the percentage of people who react with a click through to additional content will be tiny.

In considering which platforms to be on and which to bypass, it’s important to remember that these outlets are not an end in themselves. “Ten years ago, I think we had a mentality about thinking and nurturing the different platforms as if the platforms themselves were very important,” says Naja Nielsen, Head of News at DR, “whereas now I think we have realised that the platforms, television or radio or mobile or web or Facebook or whatever, are just tools we use to solve our task.”

In the end, the task is about providing compelling, reliable and unbiased news content. The choice of platform is about how best to get that content to as wide an audience as possible.



**I THINK WE HAVE REALISED THAT THE PLATFORMS - TELEVISION OR RADIO OR MOBILE OR WEB OR FACEBOOK OR WHATEVER - ARE JUST TOOLS WE USE TO SOLVE OUR TASK.**

Naja Nielsen,  
DR



# 4. EDITORIAL APPROACHES TO THE MULTI-PLATFORM ERA



In VRT's Brussels newsroom, the presenter becomes familiar with the new Facebook Live facilities.

The corridors of a network newsroom are not the place where you'd expect to be confronted by a cluster of human cardboard cutouts, but that's exactly what happens when you enter YLE.

Eight people representing a cross-section of society (among them a young female student, an executive in a suit, a parent, an unemployed man from a rural area) are lurking wherever you turn, reminding you that they exist, and they expect to be served by their public broadcaster. The same eight people appear in a poster on the newsroom walls. They're

ranged across the top of eight columns, while down the left are time slots: 06.00, 09.00, 12.00, 15.00, 18.00 and 21.00. Every journalist working at YLE is expected to take a glance at this poster from time to time and ask: what are we doing to serve THIS person at THIS time of day?

YLE call it their clock model, and it's the backbone of the most radical approach to the new era anywhere in Europe: a 100% "mobile first" policy. Every item that is produced at YLE News is published the moment it is ready on the company's website and social



THE AGENDA OF NEWS OUTPUT HAS TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY EXPANDED. THE SECRET IS TO BROADEN IT WHILE STILL MAINTAINING ITS AUTHORITY, DIGNITY AND DEPTH.

media platforms. That includes background and analysis from specialist correspondents: nothing is held back for the evening news bulletin, which becomes a depository for the best of what's already been created during the day. "The correspondent has already written a beautiful piece about what a story means," says Jukka Niva, Editor of YLE News.



"The same correspondent can just march into the evening news studio and explain the same thing as they already did six hours earlier online."

Underpinning YLE's approach is a realisation that in the non-linear world, every consumer has to be fought for. In the old days, the theory goes, a captive audience would sit in front of the TV and absorb a broadcaster's news output, no matter what was in the bulletin. They had the choice of changing channels, of course, but whether intentionally or by default, a large percentage of society would catch the

evening news. Nowadays, nobody is forced to sit through a running order of items created by someone else, and nobody will stay a second longer on an item if it loses their interest. "You're in a completely different competitive environment," says YLE's Elina Ravantti. "You have to make them interested, you have to make them find your story and try to do it a way that they don't run away. And that is new."

In parallel with the obligation to publish as soon as possible, the clock model also encourages a broadening of the news agenda. At this point we enter a sensitive area: news is a serious business - about wars, political policy and disasters. When it goes beyond that, traditional journalists rail against what they see as the "dumbing down" of their profession. However, if there is one consistent message from all news managers who have piloted through successful digital strategies, it is that the agenda of news output has to be significantly expanded. The secret is to broaden it while still maintaining its authority, dignity and depth.

Therefore, to serve some of those eight people at certain times of day, news which might have been the sixth or seventh item in a traditional bulletin rises to the top. Issues facing families with children is an example cited by Jukka Niva.

"Parental leave is something that is interesting for everyone in this country from age 20 to 40 and it has a tremendous effect on their life, on their salary, or if they get fired from their job when they have their first kid." The idea is not to do a lifestyle feature on parental leave, it's to recognise and explore genuine issues linked to the topic which would

not previously have made it into a linear running order; or would at best have been confined to the end of it. Significant developments in areas like health care and nutrition also fall into this category - but only if they are a genuine news development, rather than just lifestyle tips.

Not all broadcasters are ready to take as radical an approach to their output as YLE, but most of them have adopted key elements of the strategy that the Finns have embraced as a whole.

"I don't know how you wake up," says Brecht Decaestecker, Editor-in-Chief of digital platforms at VRT, "but the first thing I do is take my smartphone and see what's on there. Some people go immediately to our website. Other people go to Facebook. Other people go to their email, so we have to have a newsletter there. You have to be everywhere." That means providing fresh content first thing in the morning that Belgians didn't see seven hours earlier when they fell asleep. Then that content has to be renewed throughout the day.

In Italy, RAI has a particular problem because of the number of "stakeholders" they have to keep happy. The three RAI channels' news bulletins are identified with three different political shades and this has impeded development of a network-wide digital strategy.

However RAI's approach to overcoming these problems has lessons for other broadcasters: essentially, they want to produce a unified website with a single front page and content for all of RAI, but then personalise their social media apps. That would mean that the company's news app could be tailored

by users to deliver items in tune with their thinking, while the website remained the independent, unified face of RAI.

“The app is very different from the web user experience,” says Giuseppe Mondelli, who is responsible for new media projects at RAI. “You can personalise your home page, setting the type of content and the themes or keywords so you can filter the news that you find when you open the app. Then for each topic, you can subscribe to notifications.”

All over Europe, then, broadcasters are developing their own approaches to serving online platforms. But what kind of content is actually needed to fill these multiple strands of output?

### HUMAN INTEREST IS KING

Universally, when talking to editors with a well-developed multi-platform strategy, there is agreement that the primary criterion for content aimed at digital outlets is a strong human interest element.

Stories which feature men in suits walking through revolving doors in Brussels, Strasbourg or any number of European capitals, will not engage consumers of Facebook or other social media platforms. “We want to talk about people, not society,” says Kristoffer Pinholt, Editor-in-Chief of Digital Content at TV2 Denmark. “And we want to use real cases; we want to use humans to tell their stories.”

If there’s any doubt about the market for human interest content, the dramatic growth of the news agency AFP from being a French language entity to a global video brand, should dispel it. They looked at the content offered by Reuters and AP, which is valuable as a video source for breaking stories and institutional events, and recognized the need to take a different approach. They set up multi-skilled journalist/videographers around the world with a specific remit to dig out untold stories with a strong human element, or to develop the human angles of stories which were already in the news.



**WE WANT TO TALK ABOUT PEOPLE, NOT SOCIETY. AND WE WANT TO USE REAL CASES. WE WANT TO USE HUMANS TO TELL THEIR STORIES.**

Kristoffer Pinholt,  
TV2 Denmark

“Talking about Venezuela, we say OK, let’s talk to a woman who is queueing up four hours a day; let’s talk to a person who doesn’t have medicine; let’s find the human consequences of the story,” says Juliette Hollier-Larousse, the Director of AFP’s TV section.



RAI aims to produce a unified news website while allowing personalisation of its news app.



Constructive news does not just report on what's bad in society; it asks, what can we do about it?

A measure of the attractiveness of this human interest oriented material in the multi-platform era came when the EBU partnered with AFP to offer selected stories which would broaden the content in the Eurovision News Exchange. Then in early 2017 the BBC announced that it was dropping its subscription to AP and signing a contract with AFP. The old argument that a broadcaster had to have both of the big agencies as “insurance”, in case one of them got exclusive video of a big story, was not strong enough in an era of financial stringency. This is especially so because this type of insurance today is just as likely to come from the mobile phone video of an eyewitness as it is from an expensive news agency.

### **CHANGING THE TONE OF NEWS**

Another part of the effort to “humanise” news content is the drive to change the daily agenda from being relentlessly negative – political crises, disasters, scandals – to finding positive ways

forward through the issues and problems that people face in their lives. The most famous iteration of this is “constructive journalism”, the brainchild of Ulrik Haagerup during his time at DR. The idea has made such an impact, especially in the Nordic countries, that Haagerup has now left the company to head a Constructive Institute in partnership with the University of Aarhus and the EBU.

Constructive news is not about trivialising the news, nor ignoring big stories such as the aforementioned crises and disasters. Haagerup’s theory is that reporting on these events is important, but it’s only half the story: the half which has taken place in the past. Constructive news attempts to project forward.

It’s about posing the question: now that we know this, what can we do to improve the situation?

“The interesting thing for a lot of people is, who has ideas about how we can solve this problem with housing or with drugs?” explains Haagerup. “We use energy, resources,

time, correspondents to figure out, ‘So we have this problem here, what did they do in Holland? What did they do in Canada? Can we do the same? Can we put inspiration into the public debate about it?’ That’s constructive journalism.”



**CONSTRUCTIVE NEWS ATTEMPTS TO PROJECT FORWARD. IT'S ABOUT POSING THE QUESTION: NOW THAT WE KNOW THIS, WHAT CAN WE DO TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION?**

Having a positive effect on the democratic process is important to proponents of constructive news. In today's sharply divided societies the concept aims to move politicians away from internecine squabbling and towards thinking about how to improve the society they're elected to govern. If they fail to do so, popular engagement with constructive news exposes them as being increasingly out of touch with public sentiment. And constructive journalism does appear to be popular. Since implementing the strategy, DR's audience research figures show a rise in trust for their news output on all platforms, but most markedly online: the metric for trust on their website rose 11 percentage points in the space of a year.



**THIS INTERACTION THING IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT; WE DON'T HAVE THE DNA FOR IT. BUT THIS IS SOMETHING WE HAVE TO START LEARNING FROM THE GROUND UP.**

Mika Rahkonen,  
YLE

## ENGAGING THE CONSUMER

YLE have adopted constructive journalism as part of their overall strategy to serve a broader audience. They say that traditional news full of negative events creates alienation because people do not recognise their own lives from what they see in the news. For YLE it's all part of the trend away from a broadcaster unilaterally telling its viewers what's important, to engaging in a dialogue with those TV viewers and online followers.

"This interaction thing is extremely difficult; we don't have the DNA for it," says Mika Rahkonen, Head of YLE's Media Lab. "But this is something we have to start learning from the ground up."

As everyone knows who has read an online comments section, the interaction is not always positive; moderation on the part of the broadcaster is essential to ensure that the worst of malicious posts are kept under control. However the ability of the consumer to talk back does generate engagement, and if a newsroom takes time to read the reactions, they may well benefit. "We cannot write a single story in which there is not someone out there who knows better than our reporter," says Rahkonen. He and his colleagues have developed ideas, pursued fresh angles and made valuable contacts through paying attention to the more thoughtful online responses to their stories.

ARD also regards interaction with its social media content as important. When selecting stories they consider a triangle with three key attributes at the corners. Relevance is the number one consideration; aesthetics is another; and the third is

how well a story will engage followers. "We look for topics and parts of a story that are discussable, that people can actually interact with," says Patrick Weinhold, Head of Social Media at Tagesschau. "They have an opinion on it. They agree with the story or they disagree with the story, but they need to have an emotion towards it."

Other companies like TV2 Denmark seek to achieve a different kind of engagement, one which will bring positive change to society. "Almost every day in the evening news we have a piece which we call "The 7 o'clock inspiration," says Mikkel Hertz, Editor of TV2 News. "We try to find stories that will inspire people to do something, to help each other in some way. It's not about soft pieces, it's about the individual who stands out. A lot of people like that."

## MAKING FACEBOOK WORK FOR YOU

Following on from the widely understood need to have a significant presence on the goliath of all social media platforms, Facebook, is the need for individual broadcasters to develop a strategy there which works well for them.

Britain's Channel 4 News has achieved its success by playing to its strengths and, importantly, resisting the temptation to produce content in areas where it knows it is weaker.

As a long-form once-a-day broadcast with a relatively small team specializing in original reporting, virtually the entire Facebook output of Channel 4 News is in the form of short videos featuring its in-depth coverage reformatted for a wider, younger audience. The best recognized example



Harrowing reports from inside Aleppo garnered 300m views on the Channel 4 News Facebook page.

was use of its award-winning reporting from inside the siege of Aleppo in Syria. For 18 months Channel 4 News received exclusive material from the city, which won the programme multiple awards. The original broadcast reports were shortened, the most striking shots put at the top and subtitles added. The Channel 4 News identity was strongly featured but not until the end, once the viewer had been hooked by the content. In all during the time that Channel 4's Aleppo material was prominently featured on Facebook, it attracted more than 300 million views.

The areas that Channel 4 News doesn't normally get into are running updates on breaking news, partly because the team knows it has well-resourced rivals who specialise in that area, but mainly because the remit of the channel is to be distinctive. For much the same reasons Channel 4 is reluctant to get into Facebook Lives, because they know they do not have correspondents stationed all over the world and therefore the lives would be inconsistent.

### THE VALUE OF FACEBOOK LIVES

Facebook Lives have, however, proven successful for other, more mainstream public service news providers; so much so that a number of them have built small live areas in the corner of their newsrooms and equipped them with remotely-controlled cameras to make going live fast, easy and low cost.

The most basic type of Facebook Live involves a presenter and one or more correspondents sitting together on a basic set giving detail and background on a big story of the day. VRT, YLE, TV2 Denmark, the BBC and many other public broadcasters have areas in their newsroom suitable for this, and DR has kept the old breakfast news studio equipped for short-notice live use.

Facebook Lives from the field are also popular. These usually feature a correspondent on location giving additional depth to a story. They can be anchored by a presenter in a

studio throwing questions at the correspondent, although that involves a higher level of resources. More usually, they simply have the correspondent on location being filmed by the producer on a mobile phone, taking questions submitted on the spot by viewers in the form of Facebook comments. Usually the producer will simply shout the questions to the correspondent; the rawness of this, in contrast to the smooth professionalism of a studio presentation, is all part of the attraction.

A variation of adding depth to a story through Facebook Lives is to give viewers insights into the process of news production.

This will involve showing what's going on behind the scenes; for example, the difficult living and working conditions in a conflict zone. TV2 Denmark often features one of their correspondents, Rasmus Tantholdt, who is regarded as being especially good at engaging his audience as he travels to some of the most dangerous places on the planet.



IN A FACEBOOK LIVE, USUALLY THE PRODUCER WILL SIMPLY SHOUT THE QUESTIONS TO THE CORRESPONDENT. THE RAWNESS OF THIS IS ALL PART OF THE ATTRACTION.

Tantholdt's work for Facebook is a mix of showing the way he and his team operate on a very personal level, while at the same time folding in perspectives on the story they're covering. Managing to provide information on a story while simultaneously building audience attachment to the broadcaster is clearly a feat of immense value. A recent Facebook Live done by Tantholdt from Syria had 500,000 views, a substantial proportion of Denmark's entire adult population.

As well as doing pieces from the field, the BBC has done lengthy Facebook Lives from their London headquarters. In one of them, the live camera and reporter streamed from inside the studio control room during an actual broadcast of the 6 O'Clock News. An unflappable studio director happily turned and answered questions from the Facebook Live reporter while the programme's edited reports were playing out. Other valid themes for this kind of Live might be with editorial staff discussing their subject choices in the course of the day, and camera crews talking about how difficult situations were filmed.

To an extent, of course, this kind of thing is of more interest to people within the

industry than the general public, but it has value as a tool for demystifying the news process, especially at a time when public broadcasters are facing cynicism from sectors of the public over how their news agenda is managed and their choices made.

#### REBRANDING FOR A YOUNG AUDIENCE

One issue which is much discussed is whether it is a good idea to create a separate brand for the part of a public service news provider's output which is aimed at young people. If the familiar names Tagesschau, Telediario or Le Journal are a turn-off for millennials, what about something snappier which might catch their interest and hopefully create a foundation for long term loyalty? It's an issue on which views are mixed. There are essentially three ways to go:

- create distinct brands of output aimed at young people which intentionally look completely different from the main broadcaster brand;
- create a more hybrid solution in which youth brands are established but kept within a broadcaster's design family;

- create youth-oriented output but post it under the main broadcaster brand.

Once again YLE has adopted the most radical approach. They launched a brand name Kioski, featuring factual content for young people. It started as a daily TV programme, website and social media apps. In the spirit of trying things out and quickly discarding those which don't work, the TV programme was cancelled, and while there is still a web presence, it contains numerous hyperlinks to push consumers towards Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, the primary platforms for which Kioski content is designed.

There is also minimal mention of YLE. It is there in the "handles" on each platform (e.g. @ylekioski), but that is where any reference to YLE ends on the social media apps; once you've established yourself as a follower on a platform, you might never see the YLE name again. This has both an upside and a downside. It clearly distinguishes the content from the branding of the main channel, which is the whole point if the theory is that mainstream news is not attractive to this section of the audience. On the other hand, if the aim is to say to young people, "Here is interesting content generated for you by your public service news provider," in the hope of overcoming cynicism about establishment news output and one day migrating these young viewers on to the main network, it may be self-defeating to expunge all mention of that fact that it is YLE which is behind Kioski's content.

VRT is a broadcaster which occupies the middle ground on this issue. They produce a product called Ninja News for the radio network NMN,

with a target audience of 16-24 year olds. They intend to develop it on to other platforms because of its potential for extending the age profile of VRT News.

In doing so, the parent brand might not be explicitly mentioned, but the intention is that young consumers should at least subconsciously equate what they're watching with VRT. "I think it has to be a look and feel from the same family as VRT News," says Brecht Decaestecker. "So they know they are not watching VRT News, but something

which is linked to VRT News." The extent to which the design of the extended Ninja News should reflect this is currently under consideration.

Not surprisingly perhaps, it is the broadcasters with the strongest brands which stamp their name on every strand of output, whether it's youth oriented or not. The BBC's Newsbeat web pages may have been deemed redundant but the brand for young people is alive and well on social media. Wherever it appears, it is with a logo

which says clearly "BBC Newsbeat". The same is true on Instagram, Snapchat and wherever else BBC output appears. If there's a section of youthful society that rails against an established broadcaster's news output, the BBC is keen to win them over, but not at the expense of compromising the consistency of its global brand.



YLE's social media platform Kioski packages news and features for a young audience.

# 5. TECHNICAL APPROACHES TO THE MULTI-PLATFORM ERA



A Channel 4 News "meme bar" at the start of the Jeremy Corbyn interview dissolves away as the video zooms in to fill a square box.

What's the most important thing a public broadcaster can do in 3 seconds?

Answer: engage a Facebook viewer.

That's how long you've got, as Facebook users flick through the feeds on their phones, to make them pause and take a look at your content. If they flick on without stopping, you've lost them. For this reason, the process of making a successful item for Facebook has turned into a fine art, with endless experimentation and continuous format development.

## EDITING ITEMS FOR FACEBOOK

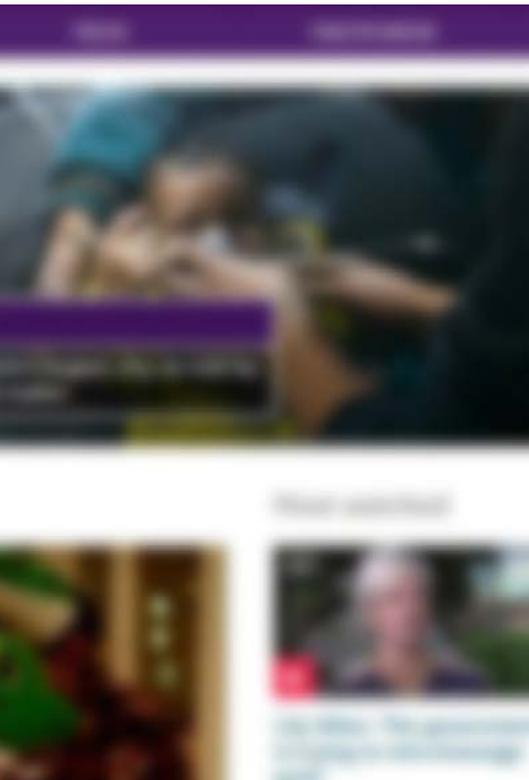
The first rule is that it's simply not good enough to take items edited for broadcast and stick them on a Facebook page. Many broadcasters still do this, some because of a lack of resources, some because Facebook is not their primary priority and some because they have not yet realised how ineffective such a policy is. A well-developed Facebook strategy involves identifying items with a strong human interest element and reviewing them to find the most striking shot:



IT'S SIMPLY NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO TAKE ITEMS EDITED FOR BROADCAST AND STICK THEM ON A FACEBOOK PAGE.

the one with the emotional tug. That must be moved to the very top of the item and accompanying words added over the opening frames to

grab a user's attention. Once engaged, the story can then be developed. It will almost certainly need rewriting from the original TV version because of the different order of the shots, and voiceover by a reporter needs to be replaced with subtitles. One of the most remarkable statistics of the digital era is the number of Facebook



videos which are viewed without sound. Typically it's over 80%.

"All of our digital material is audio agnostic on Facebook so it can be consumed with or without sound," says Jon Laurence, Digital Editor at Channel 4 News. "About 85% of our views are consumed without sound, so that's really important for us. We basically made sure that everything we made in terms of digital video could be consumed with the mobile phone as the primary destination. That meant captions, it meant subtitles, it meant lots of square videos rather than 16:9."

## RETHINK WIDESCREEN

The square format is another Facebook essential. After years of producing material that looks good in widescreen 16:9 format, now digital video editors have to go the other way and find the part of each shot that looks best within a square, cutting off the bits to the left and right. The reason is simple: if you are holding your mobile phone horizontally, a widescreen picture will fill the screen and look great. But as soon as you turn your phone vertically, the position in which most people hold their devices, a widescreen picture gets squeezed down to a tiny image which fits across the centre of the screen, with large black bars above and below it. By using a square format, the image remains a consistent size whichever way the phone is held. It is notable that since their launch Facebook Lives have had a square picture, and of course this format means videos become interchangeable with Instagram, which has used a square format for photos and videos from the start.

The exception to the use of square video would be if a company had very strong material shot by its own camera crews and it decided it wanted to feature the full breadth of the images. In this case, for best results it would be relying on its Facebook consumers to tap on the video and turn their phones horizontally to see it full screen, which implies a high degree of commitment to the item. For average stories, square video is a safer bet.

## ASSUME NO AUDIO

As for subtitles, the whole story needs to be told with succinct captions. Proportionally to the video, these need to be much bigger than they would be on TV



TYPICALLY,  
OVER 80% OF  
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so that they are legible on a mobile phone screen. The sub-editor's art truly comes to the fore here: maximum impact from video, nursed along by the minimum number of words needed to get the story across. Channel 4 News has also developed what they call "meme bars" for the first shot of an item: large words across the top and bottom of the opening frames of a video, again aimed at hooking the viewer in a split second. These then dissolve away as the video zooms in to fill the square box.

To make editing quick and efficient, experienced broadcasters have these formats stored as dozens of templates within their editing software (usually a normal commercial product such as Adobe Premiere). There will be widescreen and square video boxes, plus sample captions written in the station's usual typeface and colour palette and pre-stored in all the sizes and positions which are commonly used. These can then be overtyped in seconds with the actual words which tell the story.

Also in the video clip store will be an animated graphic featuring the network's branding (normally its name, logo and any slogan which it uses).

This will usually be added at the end of an item, never the beginning, which is reserved for the most engaging shot.

### **EDITING FOR OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

As mentioned above, editing for Instagram can follow much the same lines as for Facebook, but story selection and formatting should ideally have a greater emphasis on aesthetics. This means that it is sometimes better to edit first for Instagram on the basis that a well-crafted item featuring breathtaking images will be equally usable on Facebook; whereas not every item for Facebook will be worthy of posting on Instagram.

If a broadcaster decides to move into Snapchat, the video formatting becomes even more difficult. Ideally images would fill the screen in 9:16 format (the opposite of widescreen; the screen would be filled with the phone held vertically). Square video can also work with graphics added to fill the screen above and below. The video editing, script, caption

style and music would all have to be upbeat, and the length of the items kept short.

YouTube presents fewer problems. For this platform, the key thing is creating graphics which are suitable for the target audience of any particular piece of video, to be added to the opening and closing of items. Since broadcasters post content on YouTube aimed at all age groups, and it is the platform of choice for long-form video, it's possible that several variations on style will have to be developed; but these are just a matter of design, they do not present major technical challenges. Longer videos watched on a tablet, laptop or PC are also more likely to be viewed with the sound turned up, so captioning is not so crucial.

### **THE PROBLEM WITH TV GRAPHICS**

If video edited for TV rarely translates directly on to social media platforms, graphics created for TV never do. Their typeface is too small, they almost certainly

contain too much information for a cellphone screen, and they definitely will not fit a square format. Yet a simple animated graphic with an interesting piece of information is attractive for a mobile phone user, either on its own or within an edited package. This is something often overlooked when resources are being allocated to social media production by newsroom managers: they'll probably devote a proportion of journalists and video editors to digital output but they probably won't think to make provision for a graphic designer.

Linked to the need for graphics is an area which is new to most people working in a TV newsroom: the need for still photographs. When it comes to editing for social media, high quality stills are in huge demand. Remembering that the most effective items are those which produce an emotional response, a harrowing photo, or a joyously happy one, will often portray a situation more concisely and with greater impact than a piece of video.



Social media items can be edited on the same commercial software as TV reports, in this case Adobe Premiere.

BBC NEWS | ENGAGEMENT Top 5s Social Logout

**TELESCOPE**

Home



### The man who quit heroin and became a fruit juice millionaire

Khalil Rafati beat his heroin and crack cocaine addiction and went on to become a millionaire.

**First Published:** Sun Mar 26 2017 23:06:33 GMT+0000 (UTC)  
**Last Updated:** Mon Mar 27 2017 14:59:55 GMT+0000 (UTC)  
**Index:** Business

Data from 00:06 27/03/17 till 16:59 27/03/17

<p><b>1,380,569</b></p> <p>Total Views 4,094 right now</p>	<p><b>1:03</b></p> <p>avg. engaged time 1.02 right now</p>	<p><b>30%</b></p> <p>avg. recirculation 29% right now</p>
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The BBC's own software, Telescope, gives detailed information of individual stories.

A strong still photo can be used as the first shot of a social media item and more stills can be mixed in with video as the item progresses. Grabs taken from video rarely work as stills: they don't have the necessary resolution, depth or clarity, nor the perfect composition needed to achieve maximum impact. The news agency AFP, in partnership with Getty Images, reports a big rise in demand from broadcasters for professionally-shot still photos compared to a decade ago, and this is directly related to the needs of digital output.

### DRIVING THE CONSUMER TO OTHER PLATFORMS

As well as satisfying the need for content on a particular outlet, a well-developed social media strategy will also aim to drive users on to a broadcaster's other platforms. The most obvious example of this is Twitter, where a short message is normally accompanied by a bit.ly-style URL which will take a reader to the full story on a website or news app.

Some public service news providers have developed their own innovative ways to keep a viewer engaged.

We have seen how TV2 Denmark relies for revenue on having consumers migrate from social media apps to their website, which can be more easily monetised through advertising. As with other content providers, TV2's Facebook feed features video which, when it first appears, is silent. When a viewer taps the video, two things happen simultaneously: as intended, the sound is activated; but at the same time the video is moved to the top half of the phone screen and in the bottom half, a page carrying the same story from TV2's website automatically appears. The first thing the viewer sees on that web page is the banner advertisement across the top. The benefits of this for TV2 are twofold: firstly, whether the Facebook consumer chooses to click through to the web page or not, it is registered as a page view just because it has popped up on the phone. Secondly, without ever leaving

Facebook, the consumer has been presented with a revenue-generating web advertisement.

### INNOVATIVE USE OF FACEBOOK MESSENGER

Other networks maintain their users' interest by engaging them in virtual conversations. To do this, they have developed tools for the Facebook Messenger app.

The two German broadcasters, ARD and ZDF, jointly operate a youth platform called Funk; it was mandated by the regional governments to cater for people between the ages of 14 and 29 and has a presence across a range of social media platforms. Realising its potential for disseminating factual information to a younger audience, a group of employees in the Tagesschau newsroom in Hamburg created a "chatbot" for use on Facebook Messenger. It's called Novi and users of Funk are encouraged to subscribe to it.

The conversation on Facebook Messenger starts with a twice daily feed to Novi users of top stories, written as messages in a brief conversational style.

Then the user takes control. She or he has the option of clicking on prompts such as "next" to skip a story, or "more" to be linked to a fuller report on a website. Or the user can send his or her own messages back to Novi: typing the word for "explain" will return a message with a selection of shortform backgrounders explaining complex stories as a series of text messages. Typing in any subject (for example, "Trump") will return a message with content on that subject from Tagesschau's online archive.

"It's a little bit like artificial intelligence," says Michael Wegener of ARD. "They come up with some news stories of the day. If you decide you want more, you press on "more". Or ask it a question and it will try to find an answer."

DR's product is similar. Subscribers to their Facebook Messenger feed receive a daily update of stories, then are encouraged to ask questions relating to the initial message. For example, a text message about the American ban on carrying laptops in

hand baggage might be accompanied by the question, "Also mobiles?" If a user taps on the question, back comes a new message with the answer: "No, mobiles are fine, it only affects laptops." When the user moves on to the next story, it will also have a question attached. Whatever choice the reader makes, the important thing is that he is staying for longer and longer on DR's app.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

When it comes to measuring how successful a broadcaster's online strategy is, there is one statistic which is now regarded as paramount. It is the length of time that a consumer remains active on a particular platform, whether that is a website or social media app.

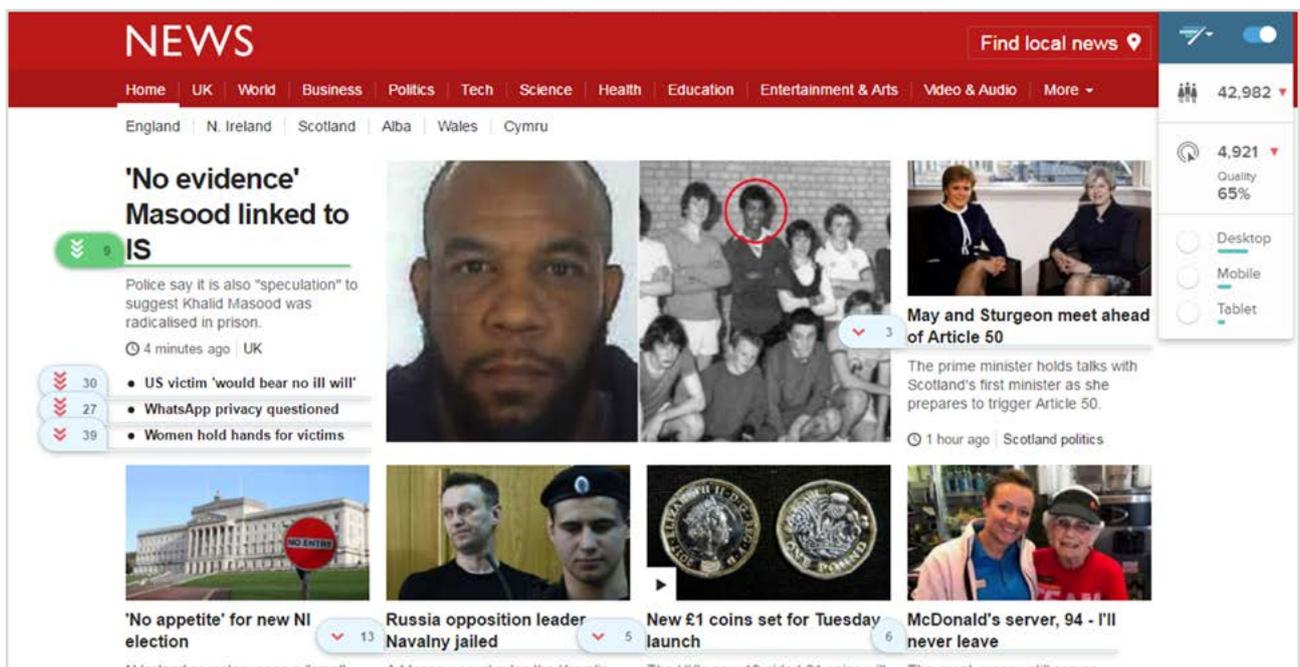
Content providers used to obsess about the number of individual page hits they got, or the number of unique users they had; these metrics are still important as a first step, but they're discredited as an overall measure of success. If tens of thousands of people click on hundreds of thousands of web pages but then immediately click on to the next thing,

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**THE LENGTH OF TIME THAT A CONSUMER REMAINS ACTIVE ON A PLATFORM IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE NUMBER OF PAGE HITS OR UNIQUE USERS.**

that's not a worthwhile level of engagement, neither in measuring popularity of the content, nor in returning meaningful statistics to advertisers where that is a consideration.

The length of time a consumer stays with a piece of content, known as engaged time, is



Chartbeat in action, showing how stories are performing on the BBC website.

The screenshot shows the 'yle Dashboard' for user 'walliusa'. It features a navigation bar with 'Käytetty aika' and 'Artikkelit'. The main content area is titled 'KÄYTETTY AIKA' and includes a bar chart of 'Tuntia yhteensä eilen' (215 h) and cumulative statistics for the last 7 and 30 days. Below this is a 'PARHAAT ARTIKKELISI' section with a table of top articles. One article, 'Purkautumispaineet Italian supertullivuorossa kasvaneet rajusti', is highlighted with a green circle around its view count of 1,423. Annotations on the left explain that the dashboard provides user names, hours spent, best articles, and automated insights.

**Journalists' own dashboard: main view**

YLE led the way in developing detailed feedback for individual journalists about how their stories performed.

regarded today as a much more meaningful measures of accomplishment. Related to that is whether the consumer sees a link to related content and clicks on that, known as recirculation. The third key metric, visitor frequency, shows how often a particular consumer comes back to a site for more. Frequent returns by loyal users who stick with items to the end constitutes the ultimate prize for any content provider.

For all digital platforms, there are tools to provide detailed analytics of these activities; they might be provided by the platform host, such as Facebook or Google; they may be bought from commercial third parties; or they may be developed in-house by a broadcaster.

### TOOLS FOR MEASURING ONLINE PERFORMANCE

For websites, the most popular piece of real time analytical software is Chartbeat. Through the application of a widget on a website's front page, Chartbeat shows at a glance how many people are currently on the site, how those users

are divided among PCs, mobile phones and tablets, and the current popularity ranking of each individual story on the front page. It also shows how far a reader scrolls down a page, a crucial measure of engagement. In Chartbeat terms, for a presence on a web page to be classed as a "quality click", the reader must remain on the page for a minimum of 10 seconds.

The BBC supplements Chartbeat with its own in-depth tool, Telescope. By clicking on an individual story, this shows the total number of views a story has had and the average engagement time during those views. It's also possible to see where readers came from; in the case of a well-established provider like BBC News, the majority will come directly from the site's own front page. In terms of social media referrals, Facebook is by far the biggest source, and in keeping with findings elsewhere in this report, a surprisingly low number of referrals come from Twitter.

YLE Dashboard, the Finnish broadcaster's advanced in-house tool, takes a similar

approach but focuses very much on individual journalists' story performance. It returns detailed statistics to the writer of each story showing the number of hours spent by web users on that journalist's stories and which articles were the most and least successful. It also gives precise statistics on Facebook interactions such as shares, likes and comments, all of which add up to a measure of an article's impact.

For measuring success on their social media sites, most public broadcasters rely on the service provided by the individual platform; for example, Twitter Analytics or Facebook Insights.

The Facebook tool provides statistics not just on views, but also on the percentage who like and share an article, the number of people actively talking about it, plus the gender, age group and geographical location of consumers. A start-up recently bought by Facebook, CrowdTangle, allows content providers to track in detail how their articles are being forwarded around the world.



NEVER BEFORE HAS SUCH  
PRECISE INFORMATION BEEN  
INSTANTLY AVAILABLE ON  
HOW PUBLIC SERVICE NEWS  
PROVIDERS' WORK IS BEING  
RECEIVED AND THE REACTION IT  
IS ENGENDERING.

These insights can be taken a step further by third party companies like Socialbakers and Quintly, both of which log a company's performance on all major social media sites and create benchmarks to show how it is performing against its competitors.

When it comes to demonstrating that a broadcaster is making wise use of its public money, these kinds of in-depth statistics are essential. Never before has such precise information been instantly available on how public service news providers' work is being received and the reaction it is engendering.

Sometimes the statistics can produce a surprise. In March 2017, DR was without its specialist social media producers for a couple of days because they were attending a seminar. For those two days the channel's Facebook output in Copenhagen was produced by other newsroom journalists with no special training in social media. What happened to the daily reach figures gave management a shock:

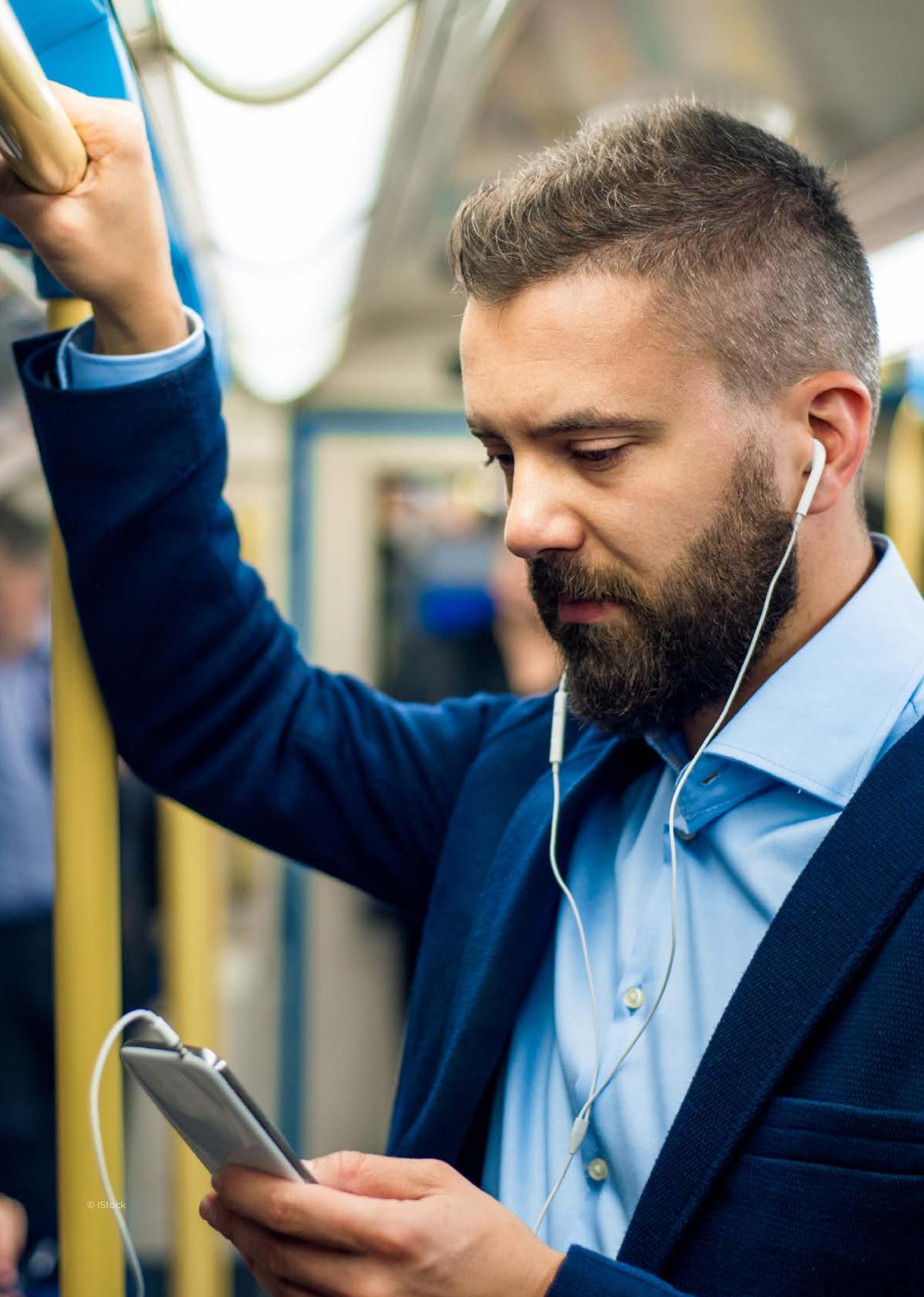
Daily reach of Facebook items produced by DR social media team:

- March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017: 1,521,043
- March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017: 1,330,457

Daily reach of Facebook items produced by other journalists during the social media team's absence:

- March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017: 960,182
- March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017: 749,073

With the Facebook specialists out of town and no-one thinking about that crucial first shot and caption, the number of hits fell by more than a third. It is remarkable evidence not just of the importance of training for social media, but also of how much sustained effort it takes every day to build up a social media audience, and then to keep it.



# 6. ADAPTING RADIO FOR THE MULTI-PLATFORM ERA



Key BBC programmes like Radio 4's Today have a social media presence which reflects their distinctive tone while staying within the overall BBC brand.

Radio is a survivor.

The medium has prospered for almost 100 years, defying regular predictions of its demise in the face of more advanced technologies such as television, home and car entertainment systems, smartphones and the internet. Among the plethora of output from the BBC today, the single greatest audience reach is for the 08.00 news summary on Radio 2, a music station which, in its present incarnation and its previous one as The Light Programme, has been around since 1945.

That doesn't mean in any sense that radio can be complacent. The competition online for the ears of listeners is as acute as the battle for eyes in the video world; and when you add offline music libraries on smartphones, the odds of someone choosing to listen to public service news rather than all the other options available to them become longer still.

For this reason, it's as necessary for radio as it is for television and newspapers to develop a multi-platform presence. The core will be audio content but each



NO-ONE IS GOING TO WAIT FOR THE NEWS ANY MORE. THE OLD MODEL OF BULLETINS ON THE HOUR AND HALF-HOUR NEEDS TO BE SUPPLEMENTED WITH THE ABILITY TO BREAK NEWS RAPIDLY ON A VARIETY OF PLATFORMS.

strand of programming has to build audience loyalty by adding value on a website and social media platforms.

Notwithstanding its commitment to having its name attached to all news output, the BBC produces distinct social media content and even individually tailored apps for its key



radio segments, designed to appeal to the target audience of each strand of output. Newsbeat is one example, and there are many others.

“We’ve spoken a lot at the BBC about how much of our social media profile is BBC News and how much is associated with a programme brand, particularly a radio programme brand,” says Jonathan Munro. “So The Today Programme on Radio 4 has a social media identity: its own streams, its own Twitter feed, its own Facebook page, etc. That’s increasing our reach and our range but at the same time

there is a dilution of the BBC brand.” Munro feels that, as long as the BBC name is still featured within the sub-brand, that’s fine. “The social media attached to programmes need to reflect the mood and the tone of the programme, and that means they can be a bit different in a good way from the core BBC brand.”

One thing is evident for radio as much as for other traditional media: no-one is going to wait for the news any more. Therefore the old model of bulletins on the hour and half-hour, while it will continue to exist as a staple, needs to be supplemented with the ability to break news rapidly on a variety of platforms. “You have to redevelop your formats both when it comes to linear radio and when it comes to the digital and social environment,” says Cilla Benkö, Director General of Swedish Radio. “And you have to customise the news. Who do you want to reach at what time on which platform with what?”

For Swedish Radio, sharpening up its news content during peaktimes comes in the form of dispensing with any “sidekick” presenters in the morning programme studio and keeping the news presenter there throughout the broadcast so that he or she can step in at any moment with a breaking story and run with it. That is supplemented with the creation in the newsroom of a digital desk which has a target of getting coverage of a breaking story on air within three minutes. The first priority is to get together as much radio output as possible, but soon the desk will turn to feeding the network’s website and pages on Facebook, Instagram and so on.

Members of the EBU with both TV and radio output will be able to add video from the Eurovision News Exchange to their radio-oriented websites and social media apps, and members who are radio only can apply to sub-licence News Exchange video for the same purpose. Most news agency agreements for broadcasters should cover radio websites which come under the overall company brand. To provide a measure of original content, traditional radio correspondents need to be trained and encouraged to shoot snippets of video, even on a mobile phone, which will enrich the placement of their reporting on digital platforms.

### **BUILDING RADIO’S REACH**

Just as with television, 24-hour radio news channels sprung up in many countries in the 1990s and most continue to this day. However whether launching such a channel is the best use of resources in the cash-strapped multi-platform era is open to question.

Certainly 24-hour channels can extend reach into those sectors of the audience which it’s feared are increasingly turning away from traditional media: VRT with MNM, the German networks with Funk and Swedish Radio with its brand P3 News have all developed distinct youth-oriented platforms. The BBC, in adding Radio Five Live to its line-up alongside the more sober Radio 4, brought an informal tone to its speech output and attracted a younger, more sports-oriented audience to the crucial breakfast and early evening slots.

However maintaining 24-hour channels is a huge financial commitment, and the relatively low audiences outside of peak times makes

the equation difficult for less well-resourced public broadcasters. One possibility opened up by digital audio broadcasting is to create “pop up” channels, which might occupy an available slot on a terrestrial multiplex for a few days or weeks around a major event such as an election, or a breaking news event such as a terrorist attack. The same content can be streamed on the web and social media platforms for as long as it is relevant, then the channel simply closed down until the next big event.

## PODCASTS

Radio broadcasters are also able to utilise platforms which are less easily adapted to television. Podcasts are an essential part of any comprehensive radio strategy; while video podcasts are not uncommon, the format remains most suitable for, and therefore dominated by, audio. Subscribing to podcasts has been around for almost as long as iTunes itself, and more recently the music streaming service Spotify has added podcasts to its library and the start-up website Acast has grown in just three

years to become a major global host of podcasts. For commercially-minded news providers, Acast offers the possibility of inserting highly targeted advertisements around their content. Podcasts on platforms such as Spotify and Acast have the additional benefit of bringing down the age profile for radio content compared to a traditional off-air broadcast.

Content for podcasts can simply be a radio bulletin or programme segment which has been “topped and tailed” with station branding. However the next logical step is to produce programmes specifically for the digital audience. Extended discussions on sport and politics are obvious choices: Swedish Radio established a US election campaign podcast in 2016 which proved so popular that it has been extended indefinitely and rebranded simply as a USA podcast. Extended explainers giving a historical perspective on global issues such as the Syrian crisis, would be another ideal role for a podcast. The market for material like this is particularly strong in non-

English speaking countries, where in-depth discussion of current affairs in the country's own language is widely appreciated.

## MAKING YOUR CONTENT FREELY AVAILABLE

From there, the next question is, just how widely do you want to make your content available?

When dealing with video, there will almost certainly be conditions attached specifying what a broadcaster can do with it. This might take the form of contractual restrictions over which platforms third-party video can be used on, which countries it can be broadcast into, and so on. If a news provider is the originator of the video, it may want to monetise it by striking agreements with broadcasters in other territories. All of this adds up to tight controls on video distribution which are likely to be less stringent for audio; and certainly for audio originated by the broadcaster itself.

With this in mind, and given



The three main protagonists in the “smart speaker” war: Amazon Echo, Google Home and Apple Homepod.

the desire to broaden the audience as much as possible, the Swedes took the radical decision to make the entire content of their public radio network available to whoever wanted to use it. That is the reason why it appears freely on Spotify and Acast, but it can also be embedded by newspapers on their websites, by third-party owned apps, and even by other radio networks.

What makes this possible is Swedish Radio's adoption of a technology known as "open API", short for "application programming interface". Essentially, this allows any organization to access the network's content freely on an HTML5 player and embed it within their own web pages and apps. The users are not allowed to change or edit the content, so SR preserves its editorial integrity and can get credit for producing the content by including station branding within the audio segment. But the network plays that aspect down. "It's not so much about promoting the Swedish Radio brand, it's because the audience are asking for it," says Chief Innovation Officer Simon Gooch. "We see an opportunity to fulfil an audience need as part of our remit and our reason to exist." They know that the best way to maintain their relevance is to be universally present and recognised as the foremost provider of high quality speech radio in Sweden.

It should be said that in countries with more globally-used languages and larger populations, where there is intense competition between radio networks as well as between broadcasters and newspapers, there may be a less magnanimous attitude towards rival outlets embedding a broadcaster's content. However in most countries, if public service



**[SMART SPEAKERS] ARE GOING TO CHANGE THE WORLD. THEY ARE EXTREMELY GOOD FOR AUDIO AND IF YOU ARE A RADIO BROADCASTER YOU HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE GOING TO BE THE NUMBER ONE CHOICE THERE.**

Cilla Benkö,  
Swedish Radio

and the reach of the audience are the most important factors, a generous approach to use of content can help cement the broadcaster's position in society and strengthen support for its continued public funding.

#### **THE THREAT - AND OPPORTUNITY - FROM ALEXA**

As if transforming into multimedia news providers wasn't enough of a challenge for radio broadcasters, there's a new threat - from a little box in the corner.

The growth in use of "smart speakers" - principally Amazon Echo, Google Home and Apple Homepod - provide a particular problem for audio news providers. If you want to read or view something, the current generation of these devices is irrelevant; but if you want to listen to something, it looks very much like they're the future. "They are going to change the world," says Cilla Benkö. "They are extremely good for audio and if you are a radio broadcaster you have to make sure that you are going to be the number one choice there."

For now it's not clear how that will happen. Whereas European TV and radio networks are heavily regulated with requirements to be fair and balanced, output from smart speakers carries no such stipulations. Even if a country's government were to discuss somehow regulating the output of these boxes, the idea would be highly controversial and impossible to enforce without getting into the area of blocking internet content, which is unthinkable in most European countries. Therefore when consumers ask Alexa what's in the news, there is no guarantee that what Alexa will play is a bulletin of public service radio news, as opposed to news from either a randomly chosen provider, or worse, whichever organization has paid the platform most money to be head of the queue. The listener may not know the source of the news at all: Alexa could be playing out fake news from a source which has worked out how to exploit the operating system and get to the head of the queue when someone asks for a news bulletin.

# Maria har gjort hela Puerto Rico strömlöst



## Lyssna direkt

- P1
> P1  
 22:55 **Kulturnytt**  
 23:00 Ekonyheter
- P2
> P2  
 21:00 **Musik mot midnatt**  
 00:00 Notturmo
- P3
> P3  
 22:03 **Musikguiden i P3 med DJ: dancehall och reggae**  
 23:00 Ekonyheter
- P4
> P4 Stockholm
📍 BYT  
 22:12 **Karlavagnen**  
 23:00 Ekonyheter
- P5
> P5 STHLM  
 22:03 **P5 STHLM**  
 00:00 Ekonyheter

Radio networks used to dealing with audio now have to think visually to build a strong online presence.

## MAXIMISING YOUR CHANCES ON SMART SPEAKER SYSTEMS

An important part of the answer lies in consumer education. When promoting content available via Alexa, broadcasters have to encourage listeners to ask specifically for “BBC News”, “France Info” or news from RAI, Czech Radio, RNE or any other public broadcaster. It could be that consumers will learn to be more specific themselves once they have been subjected to a few bulletins from less reputable sources.

At the BBC, Jonathan Munro believes that the quality of broadcasters’ output will help them prevail. “We need to be acutely aware that there’s a lot of so-called “news” out there, and the brand power that many members of the EBU have to associate themselves with properly, rigorously checked authoritative news is a really important tool which we need to play very carefully,” he says.

That gives public broadcasters an advantage; but there are also important practical steps which they can take to increase their chances of being played out by the box in the corner.

Both Amazon Echo and Google Home are based on open platforms, which means anyone who obtains a developer kit and has a modest understanding of how the systems work, can write what Amazon calls a “skill”, the smart speaker equivalent of an app. There are already more than 15,000 skills active on Amazon Echo and they help to transport consumers directly to particular streams of content based on the voice commands that Alexa receives. Having a series of skills linking to a public broadcaster’s strands of output, coupled with educating listeners to be specific in what they request, are the single most important ways to ensure that public service content is found and played out.

This combination of broadcaster preparation and consumer awareness really comes to the fore with the Echo’s Flash Briefing feature. Any user can log in to the Alexa website and set up their own personal Flash Briefing. They will be presented with a long list of news sources, from global brands such as Deutsche Welle and CNN to local stations which have written the necessary skills to ensure that they appear here. The listener can select as many or as few sources as they want, and place them in the order they want to hear them. Once that’s set up, the consumer only has to say, “Alexa, play my Flash Briefing,” and the latest news summary uploaded by each of the selected sources will be streamed in the specified order. Crucially, if the same consumer calls out the more general command, “Alexa, what’s in the news?” the Echo will play out that person’s Flash Briefing; which means that the worry over whose news is streamed in response to that command goes away.

If a radio broadcaster hasn't yet done any development for Amazon, all is not lost. When no specific skill is detected, the Echo will turn by default to the TuneIn radio app, which carries live streams from 100,000 radio networks around the world. Provided that a public service broadcaster is present there, and again that the consumer has been specific in requesting a particular network, the chances are that the Echo will find it on TuneIn. Amazon also has partnerships with Google Play Music, Spotify, Pandora and iHeartRadio, another reason why broadcasters should consider formatting content for these platforms.

Google Home is far behind Amazon Echo in terms of adoption, at least in the English-speaking world; but it has the same open architecture, and skills can be written using the Google Assistant tool. Some analysts think that Google Home will eventually overtake Echo because of more advanced features such as the recognition of multiple voices within a

household and a higher level of automation, together with the Google brand's superior recognition around the globe.

Following its December 2017 release in the US, UK and Australia, Apple HomePod will be made available in additional countries during 2018. It is controlled by the iOS operating system and therefore does not have the same open architecture as the other two devices. Just as for the iPhone and Mac computers, it's expected that the writing of skills by third parties will be permitted, but this will require a higher level of specialised skill and the environment will be more tightly controlled. In terms of partnerships, the HomePod is programmed to direct listeners primarily towards Apple Music, rather than the many other sources which are available, so only radio networks which are included on Apple Music will be easily found by the device.

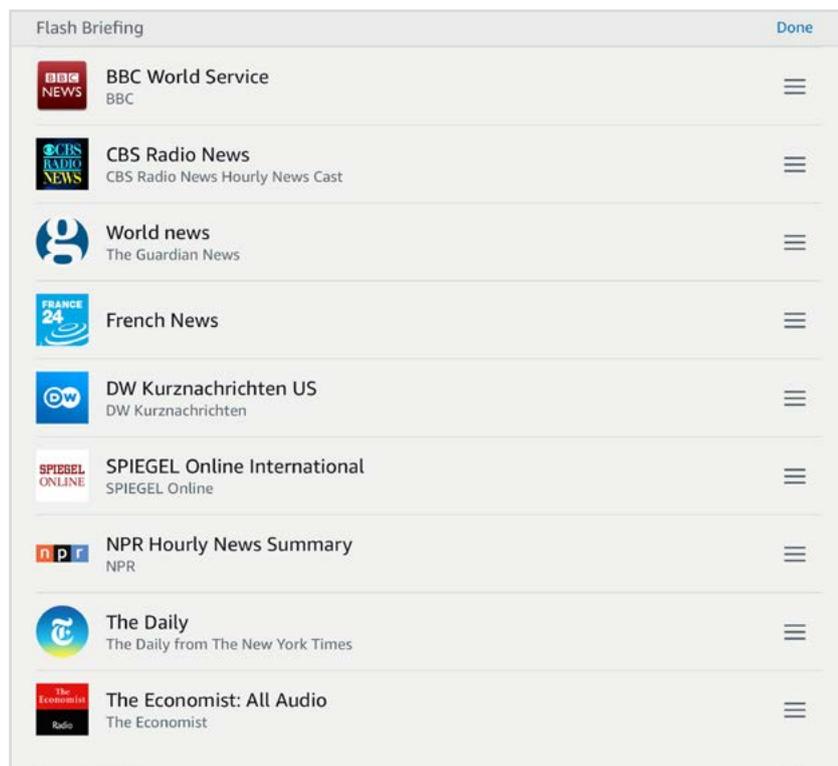
The HomePod has an advantage over its longer-established competitors when it

comes to languages. It is based around the latest version of Siri, which understands more than twenty different tongues. Google Home will have eight languages active at the end of 2017, but Amazon has been criticised for its slowness to move beyond English and German. Of course, it is still possible to get the device to play radio stations in any language, but the instruction will have to be in one of the very few languages the Echo understands. Google's commitment to the rapid addition of new languages is another reason why it may ultimately prevail in the smart speaker war.

So are smart speakers a threat or an opportunity?

Peter MacAvock, the Head of Distribution and Platforms in the Technical Department of the EBU, notes with optimism that listening to radio has already emerged as the primary activity on these boxes. "The most popular skill on Amazon Echo is the radio. So it may be a threat, but for sure it is a significant opportunity," he says. "The standard battle cry of the broadcaster is that his content must be available on any device that any customer uses at any time. The same holds for these personal assistants. The broadcasters need to be very careful as to how they position themselves, but they need to be on these different platforms."

The next stage in this developing technology is likely to be personalised radio. When you combine an individually-controlled delivery platform like Echo with apps such as Pandora and Spotify which built their business around creating personalised music selections, it cannot be long before listeners start to create their own ideal radio station. Whether this is a good thing is open to question: the dreaded "filter bubble", in which people only listen



A typical running order for an Amazon Echo Flash Briefing. Consumers choose from a range of news sources and place them in the order they want to hear them.

to output which is in line with their own views rather than being exposed to a broad range of opinions, comes into play. The creation of personal filter bubbles flies in the face of the mission of public service news to provide a broad range of views; but they are a reality which has to be faced.

“The industry has a window of opportunity but we should beware that the audience’s perception of radio might get changed into something that radio itself no longer serves, that would then provide a disconnect with our audiences,” says Benjamin Poor, the EBU’s Project Manager for Digital Radio. “I think the thing that public service media should be doing is surprising people; surprising the audience with new ideas, with new content. So a smart algorithm for a personalised service would still surprise listeners.”

Once again, the broadening of content to appeal to different groups of consumers, together

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**I THINK THE THING THAT PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA SHOULD BE DOING IS SURPRISING PEOPLE; SURPRISING THE AUDIENCE WITH NEW IDEAS, WITH NEW CONTENT. SO A SMART ALGORITHM FOR A PERSONALISED SERVICE WOULD STILL SURPRISE LISTENERS.**

Benjamin Poor,  
EBU Project Manager, Digital Radio

with a dose of imagination and originality, backed by encouragement to listeners to be specific about the source of content which they want, will be of paramount importance in keeping public service news to the fore as personalization of radio content takes hold.

### CONNECTING EVERYTHING TOGETHER

So in the multi-platform world, radio has to be everywhere: part of the great media convergence in which TV stations write text stories for websites, newspapers embed live video, and radio studios include, well, television cameras.

The gradual adoption of digital audio broadcasting across Europe has opened up the possibility of enriching the radio experience with metadata, including details of the programme that’s being listened to plus graphic and video illustrations. The EBU is working to ensure that a common standard is adopted by device manufacturers so that a single feed of supplementary material can be received without problems on whatever platform is being listened to, be it a digital radio on a kitchen table, a phone with cellular data, or a car radio with a video screen.

The next development will be to grow audience engagement by introducing a button which a listener



The radio studio used by RTBF’s “La Première” network is now fitted with a set and multiple TV cameras.



The smart speaker gains a screen: Amazon Echo Show.

can press to obtain more information about what they're listening to. Perhaps that will bring a broadcaster's web page to the screen, or perhaps it will interrupt the broadcast with additional audio content such as a podcast before returning to the original stream. And ultimately, why should this involve pressing a button? In a car in particular, drivers will be able to speak the command, "Tell me more" to call up the additional content; or even "Tell me more later," in which case the content they cannot safely look at while driving will be waiting on the broadcaster's mobile phone app or website the next time they go there.

The distribution of universally-compatible metadata is an essential element to ensuring that radio does not appear basic and old-fashioned compared to other sources in the digital age. If there's any doubt about its importance, consider this: throughout this chapter the "box in the corner" smart speaker has

been discussed as an audio-only device whose threats and opportunities are unique to the radio world. However in May 2017, Amazon revealed its latest device: the Echo Show, a smart speaker with a screen. With it, the convergence of media, and the intense competition for consumers, moves to the next level.

As the kids might say: OMG.



THE MOST POPULAR SKILL ON AMAZON ECHO IS THE RADIO. SO IT MAY BE A THREAT, BUT FOR SURE IT IS A SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITY

Peter MacAvock,  
EBU Technology &  
Innovation

# 7. CHANGING NEWSROOM CULTURE



VRT has overturned decades of newsroom culture by focusing desks on subject areas rather than individual strands of output.

“The unions at our network are very analogue.”

So said the executive charged with pulling that network into the digital age.

She was not disheartened, nor even dismissive; it was a fact of life which had to be dealt with in developing her company’s multi-platform strategy.

The extent of union resistance to change varies from country to country, with Italy and France historically most protective of existing practices. This necessitates

a step-by-step approach to serving new platforms, and a willingness of both management and workforce to compromise.

At RAI, for example, during a Facebook Live it is a technician who holds the phone and presses the “play” button; but no matter how willing he is, he is not allowed to select the questions from the viewers’ comments; that is a journalist’s job. At France Télévisions, the new rolling news channel Franceinfo was almost pulled off the air after just two weeks in a dispute over journalists doing edits

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IT’S REALLY IMPORTANT TO EXPLAIN WHY IT’S NECESSARY. THEN YOU FEEL A LOT OF FEAR. ‘WILL I BE ABLE TO DO THAT?’ THAT’S THE REAL FEAR.

Inge Vrancken,  
VRT

and editors writing words. Eventually management and unions agreed to a series of experiments in multi-skilling without committing to permanently adopting the practice.

One day such restrictions might be past history; but there are stages to be gone through to get there.



## GETTING STAFF ON BOARD WITH CHANGE

Wariness about the new era is by no means confined to union activists. For many committed employees who have been in TV all their lives, it is a worrying time. For this reason, constant dialogue between management and workforce about change is essential.

"First of all, it's really important to explain why it's necessary," says Inge Vrancken, Editor-in-Chief at VRT. "Then you feel a lot of fear. 'Will I be able to do that?', that's the real fear. Of course it's very human

that a lot of older people are scared of younger people coming in and taking over with their enthusiasm and their knowledge of all these new digital forms."

Vrancken spends a lot of time seeking to reassure experienced employees that they remain a valuable resource: their many years of knowledge of the Middle East, or Russia, or China are essential assets for a serious public broadcaster whose rôle is to provide depth and context. She also flatters her on-screen talent to coax them on to new platforms: "Sometimes I try to make it personal; to say, 'You know, old people know you from being on television, but I want young people to know you as well.'"

Having a hands-on management which displays empathy and communicates a clear vision is common among broadcasters who have made the greatest success of their online output.

Before joining ITN's Channel 4 News, Digital Editor Jon Laurence spent three years as a TV output editor at Sky News. He then cut his digital teeth at the Daily Telegraph newspaper. This hybrid background of experience at the sharp end of traditional TV journalism combined with work on a quality newspaper's online platform put him in a unique position to develop Channel 4 News' digital offering while garnering the respect of its long-standing correspondents and producers. "The transition we've had has been very harmonious in relative terms," says Laurence. "I think that having someone who can keep the rest of the newsroom on side and understand their values and what drives them, then adapt that for another medium, is important."

Channel 4 News has put in place a training programme which means that at any time two legacy newsroom producers will be attached to the digital team learning how to make successful social media output. Crucially, however, the training also goes the other way: two members of the 18-strong digital team will at any time be attached to the main evening news programme to train as TV producers. Channel 4 News is about half-way through creating a production team which is truly multi-skilled in all areas of its output.

At YLE, this cross-fertilisation of staff is taken to a whole new level. The youth channel Kioski is not just a means of broadening YLE's appeal to a young audience; it is also an internal training platform for the channel's journalists. The Kioski production team is intentionally housed in a different building from the main YLE newsroom. Staff from the legacy team together with all new employees are sent to Kioski to work for a period of three years, after which they are redeployed to the main newsroom. The idea is that they will bring a completely fresh approach to producing content for the more mainstream evening news and the online output of YLE.

Whether such a radical approach brings lasting results has yet to be proven. YLE management says that the number of hits on its mobile platforms is up across the age spectrum, not just among younger people, suggesting that the lively style developed at Kioski is being noticed and appreciated. However, given the relative newness of the project, they admit it will take 2-3 years to determine if the strategy has resulted in a long-term upward trend in users and length of engagement.

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HAVING SOMEONE WHO CAN KEEP THE REST OF THE NEWSROOM ON SIDE AND UNDERSTAND THEIR VALUES AND WHAT DRIVES THEM, THEN ADAPT THAT FOR ANOTHER MEDIUM, IS IMPORTANT.

Jon Laurence,  
Channel 4 News

## REGROUPING THE NEWSROOM TO SERVE MULTIPLE OUTLETS

Just as staff have to get used to the reality of working for multiple outlets, managers have to create the conditions that allow them to share journalism across numerous platforms in an efficient way.

The most common newsroom reform that is taking place across Europe is the restructuring of journalist teams away from being dedicated to a particular outlet, to being dedicated to a particular specialist subject. That means creating units for different topics such as legal affairs, the arts, business, science, the environment and so on. Sometimes these specialist groups are empowered to choose the stories they feel are worthy of coverage and sometimes a subject is assigned to them; but the crucial thing is that whatever they're researching or investigating, from the start they think about how it will work on all platforms: the web, social media, television and radio.

For some, this might not seem particularly revolutionary; specialist units with correspondents and producers are nothing new. However, their work historically has been directed at the peaktime TV bulletins, which were regarded as the most prestigious outlet. "We were used to having all the scoops," says Naja Nielsen, who used to run DR's evening news programme. "We thought we were the best, we thought we were the most important. Now we've had to move power, people and resources away from that and concentrate them on journalism, then learn to work together as one big group."

VRT is another channel which has just implemented a reshuffle of their newsroom into topic-based desks. They see the approach as not just essential from an editorial point of view, but also as a means of using technical resources in the most efficient way. Avoiding duplication of effort, whether among journalists or camera crews, is essential when a public service broadcaster is being constantly asked to do more with less.



Channel 4 News aims to have all journalistic staff trained in both traditional and online production.



The DR newsroom is staffed to have breaking news on the air within a minute of hearing about it.

That's echoed by TV2 Denmark, where Editor Mikkel Hertz talks of journalists tearing down the silos and working together efficiently: "Not calling the same sources, not requesting the same pictures from the archives, not bothering the people in graphics more than necessary."

At ARD, they have found that journalists are actually happier with the topic-based approach. The company carried out experiments to determine how many subjects a person could reasonably handle in a day. They found that journalists disliked having to work on different topics at the same time, but were perfectly happy to take one subject and develop it for different platforms. ARD regards this as a sign that newsroom staff are gradually building an understanding of the work of what once would have been regarded as a different department. As with most broadcasters, it is a continuing process but one in which more employees, both on camera and behind the scenes, are becoming comfortable every day.

### **BUILDING A NEWSROOM FOR THE MULTI-PLATFORM ERA**

Reshaping teams into different groupings is one thing, but what about reshaping the physical space in which they work? On this question there is a cardinal rule: a big open space is your friend, and a pretty courtyard or atrium in the middle of the building, is your enemy.

The BBC and DR are among the lucky European broadcasters whose newsrooms were designed and built in recent years, with the multi-platform era in mind.

At New Broadcasting House in London, the newsroom is the centrepiece of the entire construction; a vast open-plan hive of activity on the lower ground floor, visible to everyone who enters the building.



**WE PUT MOBILE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NEWSROOM. WE BUILD ON A CULTURE OF 70 YEARS OF RADIO AND TV SO IT'S IMPORTANT FOR EVERYONE TO UNDERSTAND THAT DIGITAL IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR EVERYBODY IN DR NEWS.**

Christian Lindhardt,  
DR

The newsroom produces fresh content day and night for domestic and international television, radio, online and social media.

In the middle of the floor is a large, diamond shaped multi-platform intake desk. When a story breaks, journalists sitting here will consider from the start how to deploy teams and resource it for all platforms. How many camera crews and correspondents will be needed to provide constant coverage without anyone becoming overloaded? How can the news channels have live reports and correspondents still have time to edit for the evening news? What about rolling radio coverage and their evening news bulletins? Will the website want a live stream? Will there be Facebook Lives?

Radiating outwards from this central area like the spokes of a giant wheel are rows of desks housing the production teams of

the many strands of BBC output. One of these is for BBC1 bulletins; on another journalists are working for online; there is a row for the BBC News Channel and another for World News, radio bulletins, and so on. Every team, no matter the platform, is within easy walking and talking distance of the central intake desk, and of each other.

Completing the picture around the sides of the newsroom are the control rooms and edit suites as well as the main TV news studio, whose glass wall behind the presenters features views back into the production area. The entire process of covering a story, from initial intake to final output on multiple platforms, takes place in single, integrated location.

DR's newsroom in Copenhagen is on a smaller scale and was completed a few years earlier than the BBC's; but it had the requisite open plan shape which made it adaptable as the number of

strands of output grew. Right at its heart is the digital desk.

"We put mobile in the middle of the newsroom. It was a strong signal to the rest of the house," says Christian Lindhardt, Head of Digital. "We build on a culture of 70 years of radio and TV so it's important for everyone to understand that digital is extremely important for everybody in DR News."

Just how important is shown by the creation of a fast reaction desk in the newsroom, which was set up using the money saved from closing the DR breakfast programme. The desk was created in the summer of 2016 after two major stories broke in quick succession – the truck attack in Nice, followed by the attempted coup in Turkey. In the middle of the Danish holiday period, DR threw all the resources it had into covering the deaths in Nice, then found it had almost nothing left when the Turkish coup happened the next day.



The BBC's open plan newsroom in London is a model of how to integrate teams serving TV, radio, website and social media.

The post mortems resolved that such a situation could never happen again. It was decided that the network should be able to go live on multiple platforms within a minute of any major story breaking. To do that, a minimum of five people needed to be on duty at all times: a director, an editor, a presenter and two reporters. Understanding that it would be incredibly expensive to maintain a team like this only for occasional breaking stories, their central position in the newsroom also allows them to produce day-to-day output for TV, radio and online; but the rule is that they must never be assigned anything which they cannot drop at a moment's notice to deal with breaking news.

In stark contrast to DR, across the water in Hamburg, ARD's attempt to bring its teams together has been hindered by a building design which has quickly become outdated. To demonstrate the problem, Michael Wegener stands in an open air courtyard among semi-mature trees, locked in on all sides by glass-walled offices. "Isn't it beautiful, our park?" he asks. "This is in the middle of our operation! And actually this was built just 20 years ago when we thought this was the way to organise a newsroom."

The intake area is in a building off to his right. The production area for traditional TV is across the courtyard from that, behind him. And the website and social media area – that's in the part of the building to his left. To get from one enclosed area to another does wonders for a journalist's step count, but little for his ability to collaborate. Having failed to get the architect's permission to enclose the courtyard and integrate



**OUTPUT DESKS NEED TO TREAT EACH OTHER WITH MUTUAL RESPECT, NOT BELIEVE THAT ONE PIECE OF OUTPUT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANOTHER. EVEN IF IT IS TODAY, THERE IS EVERY CHANCE THAT IT WILL NOT BE TOMORROW.**

the newsroom, ARD is now taking over a car park next to the online area and starting again with brand new construction. It will not be ready for two years.

ARD are by no means the only broadcaster stuck with this situation. Even in VRT's reshuffle, there is a lot of walking round corners to find people you need, when line of sight would be better. However not everyone has the luxury of a custom-built newsroom, nor the budget to create one. The essential thing is that collaboration among teams is encouraged, whether they are sitting next to each other or not. Intake must be done in the most efficient way possible, and shared. Output desks need to treat each other with mutual respect, not believe that one piece of output is more important than another. Even if it is today, there is every chance that it will not be tomorrow.

# 8. RETHINK EVERYTHING - EXCEPT YOUR VALUES



Whether it's for TV, the web or social media, content must always maintain the standards expected of a public broadcaster.

A century ago, movies were short and their aspect ratio was narrow. They had no sound: to follow the story, there were captions on the screen. All the viewer was listening to was music.

Judging by the way things are in 2017, we obviously liked it that way. Today we're watching things on a device in our hands rather than in a cinema; and the music is coming from our iTunes library rather than a piano on a stage. But that transient period when pictures were wide and words came out of people's mouths as sound, is just so passé.

Who would have imagined the radical change which has descended on our industry so rapidly?

"In every single business there's an understanding that products tend to evolve, there's product development," says Mika Rahkonen Head of YLE's media lab. "We've seen very little product development in the news business in decades, so it was bound to happen."

Over the years there has certainly been a need for reflection. Should the evening news be at 8pm, 9pm or 10pm?



WE'VE SEEN VERY LITTLE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEWS BUSINESS IN DECADES, SO IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN.

Mika Rahkonen,  
YLE

Is rolling news something we want to get into? Is this story worthy of our running order or does it amount to dumbing

down? Did we miss that story, or under-resource it?

If only these were the only things we had to worry about today.

Public service news providers in the modern era have to pay attention to their audience to a degree that they've never experienced before.



"There is a demand for dialogue with the audience, and we are not very good at that," says YLE's World News head Elina Ravantti. "Because as public service broadcasters we have gained our audience, so to say, without doing anything really special. If a journalist did a story for our 8.30pm news bulletin, he or she could be pretty sure there would be 800,000 or a million people watching it, no matter what he or she did."

No longer. The next generation of news consumers will not automatically come: people expect news providers to go to them, and to win over

every viewer individually with their content. Not only that, dialogue is a two-way process, and listening and responding to the audience is essential. "If you decide to live stream an event on Facebook you could generate hundreds, thousands, of comments," says Mark Frankel, Head of Social Media at the BBC. "If you decide to ignore those comments, you can very quickly start to look at Facebook as just another arm of broadcasting and start to disengage your audience quite effectively."

But what does this mean for public service news? If everything is about audience metrics and keeping consumers happy, how are public broadcasters to remain distinctive from commercial channels?

The secret lies in adapting to a changing environment while resolutely keeping some key principles intact.

### **PRODUCE CONTENT YOU CAN BE PROUD OF**

First and foremost, digital content must be worthy of the broadcaster. In the words of ARD's Patrick Weinhold, "We want to transform the idea of what Tagesschau is to online and social media without giving up what we are." The team has found it tough to implement that: their content was competing with holiday photos, sports clips and cute animals; but they maintained faith that an agenda of serious news and politics would gradually build up a thinking audience.

That is echoed at ITN's Channel 4 News. "We focused on keeping one thing the same and making one thing different," says Digital Editor Jon Laurence. "The thing we kept the same were our traditional values: really serious journalism, emotionally intelligent storytelling, original

stories that other people weren't reporting. The thing that we changed was our production and our workflow, essentially with the viewer on the mobile phone in mind."

At VRT, the size of the audience is important, but it's not everything. "In my eyes, digital editing is a constant combination of metrics and gut feeling," says Brecht Decaestecker. "And by gut feeling I mean, know what you stand for and what you have to do because of that."

He cites the example of VRT's website giving top billing to the signing of Article 50 by the British government on the same day that Belgians were lapping up news about a murder case on the coast. "A lot of times your most read story shouldn't be your number one article," says Decaestecker. "The big article at the top of your home page is the one where we say, 'As a newsroom we find this important'."

Even those broadcasters who have launched brands for young people specify that they should not be dominated by celebrity and trivia. Kioski in Finland may be targeted at millennials, but it retains its public service remit to cover serious topics. An example they cite comes from the time when Syrian immigration was dominating the news. The team stood a young man with a beard, who looked stereotypically Muslim, in central Helsinki. He was holding a sign which said, "Please hug me". Then Kioski filmed the reaction. "With the help of that video, when people came and hugged him, or ran away, or whatever they did, we told a story about the immigration crisis," says YLE Editor Jukka Niva. "So you have a hard topic but you find an angle that is as sexy to young people as something about the Kardashians."

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Brecht Decaestecker,  
VRT

### ACCURACY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN SPEED

The second principle is that being first with a story is no longer the priority it used to be: it is much more important to be accurate.

It is very much a journalistic instinct to be a few minutes ahead of the opposition in breaking a story, but in an era of consumption on social media, it is less of a measure of success than before. Only on Twitter, with its following of politicians, news junkies and other journalists, will it even be noticed who was first to break a story. Consumers on Facebook, other social media platforms and websites will digest the story when they see it and will not be aware of whether another outlet was a few minutes ahead of, or behind, the site they're currently reading.

But the real reason that it's essential to give precedence to accuracy is that in the social media age, the consequences of publishing a story which turns out to be wrong, are devastating.

Before you know it, the inaccurate story will be spreading uncontrollably

across the internet, with the handle of the originating broadcaster firmly attached to it. This might be because people believe the story to be true and want to share it, or it might be because it's known to be a mistake and people want to have a laugh at the source. Neither of these is a good scenario.

Britain's Channel 4 News found this out the hard way on March 22nd, 2017, when they went to air with what they believed was a scoop: the name of the man who had carried out the attack on Westminster Bridge in London earlier that day. The programme had obtained the name from what it thought was a solid source, and it wasn't alone: several other outlets had named the same person on Twitter. Unfortunately it transpired within minutes of Channel 4's item going on air that the person in question was in prison and could not possibly have been the attacker.

The same correspondent who had broken the story had to go back to the studio a few minutes later and say, "It may be that we are not as certain about the identity of the attacker as

we thought." The repeat showing of the programme scheduled an hour later on the Channel 4+1 network had to be pulled. Channel 4 put out a statement of correction the same evening and the Editor followed up with a public apology to the programme's viewers. None of it was enough to stem the reaction: tweets and retweets, newspaper headlines naming Channel 4, global coverage on dozens of websites and social media feeds, and ultimately, a damning verdict against the channel by the UK broadcast regulator, Ofcom. For Channel 4 News, a programme more used to collecting Royal Television Society, BAFTA and Emmy awards, and which had just been universally praised for exposing a major election expenses scandal, the effect of the mistake was chilling.

No broadcaster ever wants to go there. In the multi-platform age, accuracy before speed matters like never before.

### KEEP MOVING FORWARD, EVEN THROUGH THE SETBACKS

The final principle for achieving success in the digital era is that a public service news provider must constantly innovate. Along with that comes something which can be hard to accept: sometimes innovation leads to failure.

The phrase "try and fail" was used by several senior newsroom managers during research for this report. The need to move quickly into new areas has never been more pressing, but the need to rethink and move on if something is not working, is just as urgent.

"People's media habits are not as predictable as they used to be," says Elina Ravantti at YLE. "We have to be able to change quickly, we have to be



ARD's development lab in Hamburg is constantly experimenting with new designs and formats for its digital output.

agile and we have to be alert. And we have to fail a lot: start a lot of new projects, fail a lot in order to learn. And this is something that is difficult for our journalists because they like to plan very carefully, execute the plan and see the fruit of it.”

AT VRT, Inge Vrancken agrees. “I think we as the management have to have the flexibility to say to everyone, ‘We’re going to keep on changing, let’s see what’s coming towards us. It’s all new to all of us. But we’re going to keep on moving forwards until it works and there are results.’”

“That’s the most beautiful thing about the digital age,” says her colleague Brecht Decaestecker. “There are no answers. Everyone is operating by trial and error. Can we try this? Does it work? That’s not right, maybe we can go this way. And we can look around: what are they doing in France? What is the BBC doing? ”

The British approach is not quite as exuberant, but the general principle is the same.



**WE HAVE TO BE ABLE TO CHANGE QUICKLY, WE HAVE TO BE AGILE AND WE HAVE TO BE ALERT. AND WE HAVE TO FAIL A LOT: START A LOT OF NEW PROJECTS; FAIL A LOT IN ORDER TO LEARN.**

Elina Ravantti,  
YLE

“There are no doubt plenty of social media platforms, some of which I’ve never heard of, which the BBC hasn’t properly penetrated yet,” says Jonathan Munro. “I don’t think we can draw a line and say, ‘This clutch of brands are definitely within the BBC envelope and this clutch of brands are definitely outside of the BBC envelope.’ I think it is a moving target.”

As broadcasters try to hit that moving target they are not entirely without guidance. There is no shortage of metrics showing the popularity of different platforms in different countries, together with the age profile and habits of users. In each country public broadcasters must examine the research and decide which are likely to be the most appropriate and useful platforms for them. The problem is that, whatever the statistics say, the result is unpredictable: and that is why, from the biggest networks in Europe to the smallest, there is no substitute for giving something a go and seeing what happens.

## WHAT MAKES IT ALL WORTHWHILE

As public broadcasters take these risks - as staff are obliged to learn new skills, as managers ward off pressure from politicians, as finance directors squeeze budgets, and as everyone learns to adapt to a world of constant change - it is worth recapping why all of this is worth the effort.

Public service news is a precious resource. It is central to intelligent discussion in a peaceful democracy. It opens people's eyes to different perspectives. It gives people a world view. In other words, it is something well worth preserving and nurturing.

However, public service news is under threat like never before. To some extent it is being attacked intentionally for its values or its perspectives. To some extent it has lost the confidence of people who believe it does not address their problems and concerns. To those issues broadcasters must pay due attention, broaden their outlook and implement change where necessary.

More than anything, though, public service news is under threat from competition. People who once could have been relied upon to tune into their public broadcaster now have thousands of sources of news from hundreds of sites on dozens of platforms, right there on handheld devices that are with them every minute of the day.

Public service media can still be their most valued source of news, but now we have to go and find them, and present them with content in a form that appeals to them. The distinguishing features of the output must be that it is reliable, of high quality, and reflective of multiple points of view. That way it will stand out over time from outlets which come from a particular political standpoint, or deal in trivia and gossip, or are just plain malicious.

This report has sought to lay out the challenges facing public service news in the modern era, and to share some of the innovative approaches which are being taken to tackle them. The report is not exhaustive:

there are undoubtedly many good ideas out there which have not been included and in a constantly shifting environment there will be many new challenges ahead.

When it comes to sharing knowledge to face up to these challenges which threaten our very existence, we are not at the end of the process, we are only at the beginning. May the dialogue continue from here.



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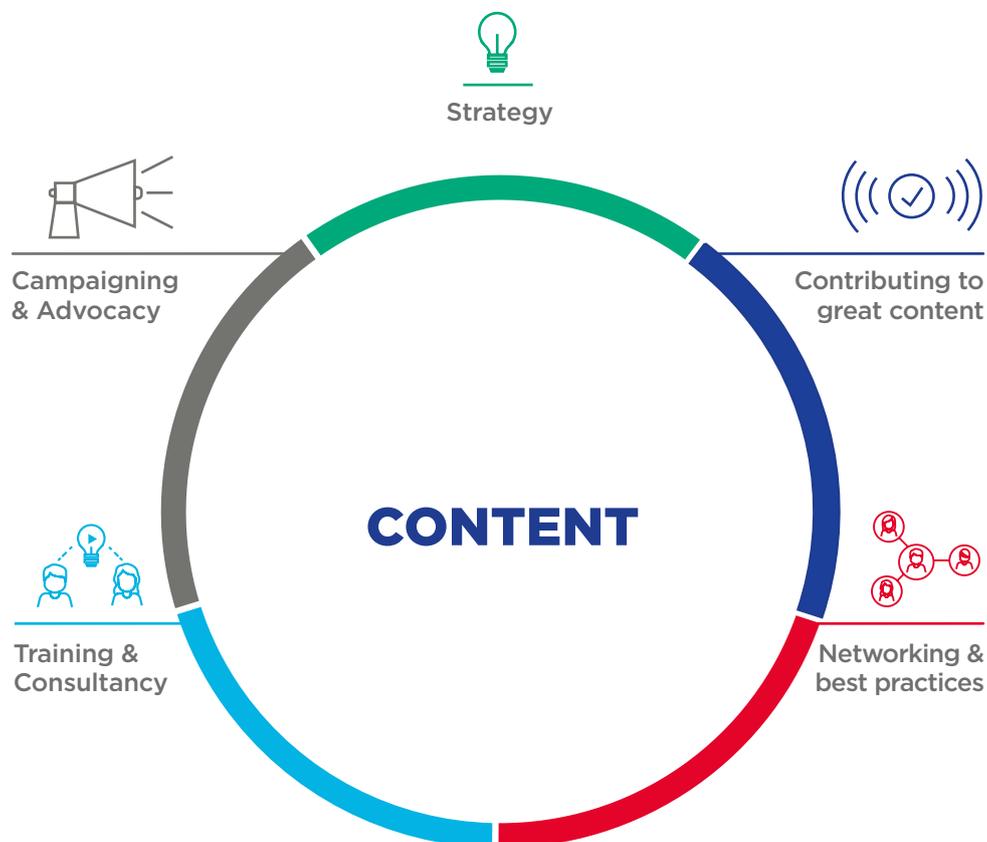


# EBU CONTRIBUTING TO QUALITY JOURNALISM

Supporting Members in delivering quality journalism and remaining relevant to all audiences is one of the key priorities for the EBU. The importance of this topic was highlighted by our Executive Board and resulted in a new Quality Journalism Initiative, led by the Media Department with support from across the organization. It is also endorsed and supported by the EBU Network of Editors-in-Chief.

The initiative's aim is two-fold: on the one hand, to support EBU Members in repositioning PSM news as the most trusted source of information available and, on the other, to help Members disseminate news in different formats to all types of audiences – with a special focus on the younger generation.

This report, issued at the start of the initiative, gives an overview of where PSM journalism stands today. We are now working within the EBU and with Members to identify likely scenarios for the future of PSM journalism and assess how we, as an organization, can best help Members get there. Here are some of the avenues currently being explored and assessed for feasibility and relevance:



## **STRATEGY**

### REFLECT ON CHANGES OCCURRING IN THE FIELD OF JOURNALISM

- Explore the idea of forming an EBU Institute of Quality Journalism
- Deliver at least one strategic news report per year
- Map those audiences which have not been traditionally reached by PSM news. Consider different platforms (with a specific focus on young audiences) and design a roadmap to engage with these audiences
- Explore topics such as personalized news and discoverability

## **CONTRIBUTING TO GREAT CONTENT**

### EXPAND NEWS EXCHANGE TO NEW FORMS OF CONTENT

- Investigative journalism pilot project researching and reporting on key issues in society already in progress
- Currently exploring Members' interest in exchanging long-form content
- Currently studying how to build on the existing Youth News Exchange to diversify the reach of news and promote media and news literacy
- Further develop the Eurovision Social Newswire, a collaborative workspace for EBU Members & News Exchange Sublicense partners to discover, verify, prepare and exchange content from social media
- Assess the feasibility of an EBU Quality Journalism showcase: an online platform editorially selected by EBU News Editors and Members to showcase best practices in PSMQuality Journalism

## **NETWORKING & BEST PRACTICE**

### STRENGTHEN EXISTING NETWORKS AND BUILD NEW ONES

- Tap unexploited Member expertise, e.g. networks of correspondents in Brussels, Rome or Washington or the now informal network of Editors-in-Chief, which we could also use to leverage the power of the group
- Build new networks with specific expertise, such as a European network for fact-checking or the recently launched digital news and UGC verification groups
- Map and structure all existing and new EBU news-related networks in order to leverage and enhance the power of groups, as well as for exchanging strategies and best practices

## **TRAINING & CONSULTANCY**

### HELP MEMBERS BECOME THE NEWS PROVIDERS OF THE FUTURE BY GIVING THEM THE RIGHT SKILLSETS AND TOOLS

- Advise and share best practices to implement transformation and open innovation in newsrooms
- Explore the design of new master classes and other training formats responding to latest needs

## **ADVOCACY & PARTNERSHIPS**

### BE THE VOICE OF PSM NEWS SO THAT WE CAN POSITION OURSELVES AS THE MOST TRUSTED NEWS SOURCE AVAILABLE

- Support Members in living up to PSM values and editorial standards by providing them with the tools to evaluate performance
- Create a network of Member ambassadors, taken from the EBU as well as from external organizations, to defend and promote the importance of PSM news
- Build strong partnerships with institutions advocating the importance of PSM journalism, including even closer ties with the Constructive Institute at Aarhus University, and reposition the News Xchange as an EBU Quality Journalism initiative
- Negotiate with third-party platforms on behalf of PSM news & current affairs
- Explore the idea of an EBU award for best practice in PSM Quality Journalism

# AFTERWORD

Much of the research for this report was done during a rapid tour of Europe in the spring of 2017. I could not visit all 70+ active Members of the EBU, so after consultation with my colleagues, I chose a small group of broadcasters to represent Europe from north to south, in countries large and small, some funded by licence fees and some by advertising. The issues were common to everyone, but the ways of dealing with them were varied and always fascinating.

While the printed report is a finite document, the online version is not. I would be delighted to hear from Members who were not mentioned in the report, but who have developed their own original approach to the digital age which they would like to share with the rest of Europe's public service media. I will make a point of keeping the web version up to date with fresh ideas and points of view.

Meanwhile, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to everyone up and down Europe who spent so much time with me and spoke frankly and in depth about their challenges, successes and failures. A special thank-you goes to Atte Jääskeläinen, the former Editor-in-Chief of YLE, whose vision and support of innovation made his company an inspiration to many other public broadcasters across Europe. The level of belief in the value of our product at all the networks I visited was striking, and the commitment to rethinking it to keep it relevant for the next generation was extremely heartening.

Please accept my sincere thanks, and keep in touch at: [dunlop@eurovision-us.net](mailto:dunlop@eurovision-us.net).



Bill Dunlop  
President and CEO of Eurovision Americas, Inc.

Bill Dunlop is President and CEO of Eurovision Americas, Inc., the US subsidiary of the European Broadcasting Union. He is a former Senior Programme Editor of ITN's Channel 4 News and Editorial Director of Euronews in Lyon. He has served as a judge at the Royal Television Society Journalism Awards in London and on several occasions at the International Emmy Journalism Awards in New York. He recently authored an essay for Cardiff University School of Journalism, "How the Mainstream Media created President Trump - and President Trump saved the Mainstream Media."

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) is the world's foremost alliance of public service media (PSM). Our mission is to make PSM indispensable. We have 73 Members in 56 countries in the European broadcasting area and an additional 33 Associates in Asia, Africa, Australasia and the Americas.

Our Members operate almost 2,000 television and radio channels together with numerous online platforms. Together, they reach audiences of more than one billion people around the world, broadcasting in more than 120 languages.

We are one EBU with two distinct fields of activity: member services and business services.

Our member services strive to secure a sustainable future for public service media, provide our Members with a centre for learning, sharing and expertise and build on our founding ethos of solidarity and cooperation to provide world-class content through our exchanges, coproductions and collective rights negotiations.

Our business services, operating under the Eurovision brand, are the media industry's premier producer and distributor of top-quality live news, sport and entertainment with over 60,000 transmissions and almost 100,000 hours of news and sport every year.

We have offices in Brussels, Rome, Dubai, Moscow, New York, Washington DC, Singapore and Beijing. Our headquarters are in Geneva.



Discover more about the EBU  
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