The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: Drifting together or drifting apart?

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The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences – **structure of presentation**

**Drifting together?**
- a more interactive nature of relationship
- meeting the audiences’ demands

**Drifting apart?**
- decline of circulation and reach of the paid-for journalism, especially in Europe and the US: journalism is at risk of losing its *economic* value for the audience
- loss of credibility and trustworthiness: journalism is at risk of losing its *journalistic* value for the audience

**Consequences:** appeal for more authenticity, accountability and transparency in journalism (*new digital approach of transparency*)
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **Drifting together?**

**a more interactive nature of relationship**

for instance: email, comments to the stories, ratings
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: *Drifting together?*

**a better knowledge of the audiences’ desires, expectations and interests**

- technologies of digital media (ratings, search words), but also more audience research due to increased competition and market pressure
- consequence I: conforming to audience demands, tailoring news content to appeal to consumers
- consequence II: changing news values (e.g. shifting away from “hard“ news (e.g. foreign) coverage towards “news-to-use” such as health, lifestyle, education or to „light“ news topics)
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **Drifting together?**

meeting the audiences’ demands who want to access the news in a variety of forms and times

- multiple-platform publishing in convergent newsrooms (e.g. print and online with audio and video)
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: Drifting together?

meeting the audiences’ demands who want to access the news in a variety of forms and times

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Edward Roussel, Daily Telegraph Media Group’s digital editor: “It's about serving the customer, not serving the newspaper.”
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **Drifting together?**

- meeting the audiences’ demands who want to access the news in a variety of forms and times
  - multiple-platform publishing in convergent newsrooms (e.g. print and online with audio and video)
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **Drifting apart?**

Decline of circulation and reach of the paid-for journalism (newspaper), especially in Europe and the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>paid daily circulation</th>
<th>2007 (over the previous year)</th>
<th>2003 - 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>global</td>
<td>+ 2.57 %</td>
<td>+ 9.39 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>– 2.37 %</td>
<td>– 5.91 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia / Oceania</td>
<td>– 4.28 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>– 3.03 %</td>
<td>– 8.05 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>+ 6.72 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>+ 4.7 %</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>– 0.49 %</td>
<td></td>
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Source: WAN World Association of Newspapers, June 2008
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: Drifting apart?

Decline of circulation and reach of the paid-for newspaper, especially in Europe and the United States

**Example Germany** (5th largest national market for newspapers worldwide; no free dailies): The decline of newspaper circulation and reach has been dramatic over decades.

![Graph showing daily reach of newspapers in West Germany](image)

Source: Allensbacher Markt- und Werbeträgeranalysen AWA 1980 - 2008
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **Drifting apart?**

**Decline of circulation and reach of the paid-for journalism (newspaper), especially in Europe and the United States**

At the same time: **Boost of free papers and free content on the web**

**Free dailies** now account for nearly 7 per cent of all global newspaper circulation and for 23 percent of circulation in Europe (WAN 2008)
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **Drifting apart?**

**decline of circulation and reach of the paid-for journalism (newspaper), especially in Europe and the United States**

at the same time: **boost of free papers and free content on the web**

Do people no longer want to pay for journalism? **Journalism loses its (economic) value for the audience.**

*Newsroom Barometer of the World Editors Forum (survey among 704 senior newspaper editors from around the world, conducted in March 2008):*  
“A majority of editors – 56 percent – believe **news in the future will be free**, up from 48 percent from last year’s survey. Only one-third believe the news will remain paid for, while 11 percent were unsure.”
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **Drifting apart?**

**loss of credibility and trustworthiness**

trust in and respect for journalism is declining / on a very low level in many countries
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: Drifting apart?

astonishing: in countries with a free press trust in journalism is low – higher in developing countries with partly free or not free press

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<td>Egypt</td>
<td>74</td>
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(1) BBC/Reuters/Media Center Poll: Trust in the Media
Polling was conducted in-person or by telephone from 10 March to 4 April 2006 with a total sample of 10,230 people.

per cent („A Lot“ and „Some Trust“)
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- *likely reason I*: **insufficiently accountable handling of press freedom** (journalistic scandals and errors; fewer hard news, more “light” news topics and entertainment)

- *likely reason II*: **media diversity and different angles of view** (people have the problem that things are often ambiguous – whom should they trust?)

- *likely reason III*: **journalism has lost its sacred aura**; audiences have a much greater chance to choose and question
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **Drifting apart?**

**loss of credibility and trustworthiness** (above all in countries with a free press tradition)

“Consumers trust and rely on journalists less, and expect more of them, because they have alternative sources of information.”
(www.stateofthenewsmedia.org; USA)

“the public asks the journalist for an explanation for the way he fulfils his job”
(a French journalist in a survey of Monika Metykova, 2008)
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **Drifting apart?**

**loss of credibility and trustworthiness** (above all in countries with a free press tradition)

Do people no longer trust in journalism?

**Journalism is at risk of losing its (journalistic) value for the audience.**

**Distrust leads to switching:**
Over one in four people (28%) across the 10 countries surveyed either strongly agrees (13%) or somewhat agrees (15%) with the statement, “In the past year I have stopped using a specific media source because it lost my trust.”

*Source: BBC/Reuters/Media Center Poll: Trust in the Media 2006*
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **consequences**

to sum up the challenges:

- newsrooms are more interactive, know their audiences better and use new platforms to make the news accessible in a variety of forms and times
- but: journalism is losing its *economic* and its *journalistic* value for the audience

How can editorial departments meet these challenges?

- restore your credibility and trustworthiness
- more authenticity and accountability through *transparency*
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: consequences

more authenticity and accountability through transparency

traditional approach:

- Ombudsman (Public Editor, Readers‘ Editor, Defensor del Lector, Leseranwalt)
- Code of Ethics
- Leserbeirat ("readers‘ advisory board")
- (transparent) Corrections
- accountability for journalistic scandals
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **consequences**

**more authenticity and accountability through transparency**

**new digital approach:** learning from the Blogosphere

✓ Are the sources in articles clearly identified? (linking creates checkability and hence credibility)

✓ Is the rational behind the news explained, especially the editorial decisions?

✓ Has the journalist „a human voice“? Does he talk about „how we got the story“?

✓ Are all sides asked to comment? (news as conversation)
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: **consequences**

**more authenticity and accountability through transparency**

**new digital approach:** open the windows and the drawbridge of the **fortress newsroom**

✓ Example I: **Initiative „Transparent Newsroom“ of „The Spokesman-Review“** (Spokane, Northwestern USA): live webcasts of all daily news meetings; editorial decisions explained in the blogs „Daily Briefing“ and „Ask the Editors“
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: consequences

more authenticity and accountability through transparency

new digital approach: open the windows and the drawbridge of the fortress newsroom

✓ Example II: Initiative „Öppen redaktion“ („Open Newsroom“) of the Swedish newscast „Aktuellt“: two video reporters always in the newsroom; clips from conferences and conversations instantly on the web
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: consequences

more authenticity and accountability through transparency

new digital approach: open the windows and the drawbridge of the fortress newsroom

✓ Example III: Editorial Blog of the German newscast „Tagesschau“: all editors in chief and about 50 journalists explain and discuss the editorial decisions with often several hundreds of comments

subtitle: behind the news

1,250 comments about a blog item on an interview with Putin (30-08 to 30-09)
The changing relationship between journalists and their audiences: consequences

**Drifting together**
journalists are more interactive and try to meet the audiences’ demands

**Drifting apart**
journalism is at risk of losing its economic and journalistic value for the audience

**more authenticity and accountability through transparency**
*traditional approach*
*new digital approach*

Our news culture demands transparency of government officials, politicians, business leaders and celebrities. Shouldn't we – of all people and professions – be the most transparent?

Source: Jeff Jarvis, buzzmachine.com
References


GfK Custom Research (2007): Doctors and teachers are the most trusted (www.gfk.com).


Jarvis, Jeff: www.buzzmachine.com


www.freedomhouse.org

www.stateofthenewsmedia.org