

# The influence of new media on the development of periodicals

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## Introduction

This doctoral thesis represents a summary of research, studies and results achieved throughout the entire doctoral period. The work comprises both theoretical research with a number of over 120 bibliography entries and concrete results achieved through a series of case studies.

The aim of this work is to realize a study of new media throughout the world and within the Romanian society, and its main objectives that have helped us in this aim, are :

- The study of specialized documentation in the context of new media
- Providing an overview of the current state of new media
- Presenting a short history of the evolution of Internet in the world and in Romania
- The study of the main socializing networks and of their impact on the present society
- Realizing a case study on a local publication, by watching the development and the structure of this organization during the years
- - Determination and use of specific new media instruments to promote the publication
- Realizing a case study for promoting a company with a different activity field in order to determine specific differences in the context of the use of new media.

In terms of chapters, the work is structured as follows:

Chapter 1, *Theoretical considerations on new media*, represents a bibliographical study. In this chapter I made a critical comparison between new media and traditional media and I have described a number of characteristics of new media, primarily its interactivity.

I have described the relationship between new media and information society, reaching a number of topical issues that arise in this context: the on-line games and their impact on users, the way social media transformed the relationship between a company and its clients, the marketing campaigns on new media platforms and the social media in politics. The chapter ends with a series of statistical data about the most important socializing networks.

Chapter 2 presents the most important moments of the internet history, the beginnings of internet in Romania and a short describing of the international organizations involved in internet governance.

Next chapter, *Socializing networks and applications*, describes the main socializing networks focusing primarily on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Linked platforms, both in terms of offered functionalities and supported applications. The chapter also presents several other new media platforms in the form of brief descriptions.

Chapter 4, *The evolution of the publication “Turnul Sfatului - Sibiu” towards new media. Case study*, is a chapter of personal contributions. The chapter starts with a general presentation of Turnul Sfatului organisation, with its three important components, Turnul Sfatului On-line, Turnul Sfatului TV and the weekly printed Turnul Sfatului edition. I presented the structure of the media institution of Turnul Sfatului and its evolution over time.

The chapter continues with two study cases of promoting campaigns using new media instruments, the first one for Turnul Sfatului and the second one for Smile Credit.

The last chapter presents a series of conclusions and of future developments.

## **1. Theoretical considerations on new media**

### **1.1 New media characteristics**

New media refers to the request for access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, at the user’s interactive feedback and its creative participation. New media involves the lack of some rules by which information will be generated both as content and as time horizons, any user being both content creator and consumer, all in real time.

Internet, web sites, multimedia content on PC’s, video games, CD-ROMs and DVDs are new media products.

### **1.2 Interactivity and new media**

The specialty literature shows that there are three different modes of media communication :

- interpersonal media - “one to one”;
- mass media - “one to many”;
- new media – “many to many”.

Interactivity is a central concept in new media understanding, but, despite that, some new media forms, like digital television, possess a small degree of interactivity.

Equally, new media is constantly changing due to the influence of three factors:

- interaction between users;
- evolution of new technologies;
- cultural changes within the meaning of awareness of increasingly greater masses in the use of the internet and in gaining skills to use different types of intelligent equipment.

### **1.3 New media and traditional media**

A consequence of factors listed in the previous paragraph is the decline of traditional media. This aspect has been studied by international organisms (such as UNESCO), but also by national entities or by private companies. An example would be a specialized website with this theme, founded in 2007 by Pall Gilling.

Looking at the statistics, there is a decrease, sometimes massive, of the use of traditional sources of information and entertainment, primarily of those involving printing. This trend is similar in all European states and it will probably grow during the next years.

BRAT - Romanian Circulation Audit Office presented some data for the past 10 years. The report states that newspapers have circulations reduced by 90%, which created a similar decline of their audiences. Since 2010, there has been a 40% decrease in circulation of the tabloids. They have also lost 60% of the audience.

### **1.4 The relationship between new media and the information society**

Media consumers increasingly begin to participate in the design, production and marketing of content and of media experiences. Over the past few years we have seen an increase in user generated content and user driven innovations as a significant cultural and economic phenomenon.

Co-creative media culture occurs when a significant component of design, development, production, marketing and distribution of media material occurs by directly involving customers or users.

### **1.4.1. On-line games**

In the last decade these consumer-producer interactions have evolved to such a scale and depth that now are an increasingly important source of cultural and economic value creation.

The following situations appear increasingly more often:

- In the months preceding the commercial launch of a game, this one is provided for tests to a community of players;
- Expert players test the game for hundreds of hours, feeding the team of developers with a solid and critical feedback;
- Users that test do not only aim the bugs; they identify and announce the weak features of the game that require updates and repairs;
- Feedback can occur on specialized forums, or through direct emails.

### **1.4.2. Social media and the companies' clients**

It is equally likely that social media completely change the thinking about customer service. From the role that it has in the life of a company's clients, to the important role in the business itself, the introduction of social media in the business world will produce major changes in the customer service department. Customer service is not just a department or an office within the organization, it becomes a product and it should be treated with the same importance as the one they use to promote the company's products.

### **1.4.3 The marketing campaigns**

In order to understand how these campaigns function, we take into account the media impact over the focus on attracting the customers' attention and over the increase of sales. Campaigns have a high degree of similarity:

- sales need a boost, because stagnant and not growing fast enough
- the company financially invests in a campaign to draw attention and to influence customer behavior.

### **1.4.4 Social media in politics**

The growing use of social media by a growing audience of citizens, sharply rises the opportunity to research the web as a device to explore and to pursue the political preferences.

Scientists have recently begun to investigate the use of social media as a device for estimating results, for evaluating the politicians' popularity and for comparing the political preferences which citizens express online with those obtained by using traditional polls. For example, it was demonstrated that the number of candidates mentioned in blog posts is a good estimate of electoral success and acts more effectively than election polls.

Similarly, some researchers have stated that the number of supporters of a candidate on Facebook could be a valid indicator of electoral votes.

#### **1.4.5 Social media statistics**

In this section we present some relevant statistics of four social media platforms. They are: Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn.

### **1.5 Conclusions**

This chapter has attempted to illustrate through statistics the global phenomenon of digital communication. Some conclusions are obvious:

- Users become contributors
- On-line games are an opportunity to connect big communities of people, that will contribute to their permanent development and in the same time it represents a real chance of income, if the management is correct and efficient.
- Real-time digital support is a prerequisite for the promotion of new media
- New media marketing campaigns are a reality in the business world
- New media is commonly used in estimating the political situation, especially during election campaigns.

## **2. Internet**

### **2.1 Important moments in the internet history**

In this chapter I highlighted the most important moments that led to the Internet, as we know it today.



## **2.2 The beginnings of the Internet in Romania**

### **2.1.1. The stage of dial-up internet connectivity**

### **2.1.2 First Local Ip Registry in Romania**

### **2.1.3 The registering of “.ro” domain at IANA. First connection TCP/IP**

### **2.1.4 RNC – National Computer Network for Research and Technological Development**

## **2.3 International organizations involved in governing the internet**

### **2.3.1. ICANN**

### **2.3.2 IANA**

### **2.3.3 IP Local registers**

### **2.3.4 Regional associations of the registers of domain names**

### **2.3.5 TERENA**

### **2.3.6 CEENet**

## **3. Socializing networks and applications**

The concept behind the socializing networks is not a new one. Since the dawn of civilization, people have sought ways to live together with each other and to socialize. Socializing has got a new meaning in the digital age. Nowadays, the friendship relations start and develop on sites like Facebook, YouTube or LinkedIn.

### **3.1 Facebook**

Facebook is considered by some people a synonym of "social media". Facebook represents that portal where you find and interact with friends or colleagues and it is a portal to the world. Although the main idea of Facebook is to post photos, links or thoughts, there is also a strong commercial component. Users can support their favourite brands or organizations, becoming their "fan".

### **3.1.1 Facilities of Facebook platform**

*Facebook Notes*

*Facebook Chat*

*Facebook Gifts*

*Facebook Marketplace*

*Facebook Messaging*

*Voice calls and Video Calls services*

*Video View Service*

### **3.1.2 Ads on Facebook**

Much of Facebook profits come from ads. Generally, Facebook has a rate of clicking on ads lower than most major websites. According to BusinessWeek.com, poster type ads on Facebook have generally received one-fifth of the number of clicks received by ads on the internet that cover the whole page, although precise comparisons may reveal a greater difference.

### **3.1.3 Publication of ads**

In february 2015, Facebook announces that it has reached the 2 million people threshold, of people who published ads, the biggest increase coming from small businesses.

## **3.2 Twitter**

Twitter is probably the most simple social platform. Despite this, it seems to be one of the most interesting, as shown by the users' growth rate. Messages are limited to 140 characters or less, but it is sufficient for posting a link, a picture or even for changing thoughts and ideas with your favourite celebrity. Twiter interface is simple, to learn and to use, and creating a profile only lasts for a few minutes.

## **3.3 YouTube**

### **3.3.1 Generalities**

YouTube is a video content distribution service and became so popular that holds a catalog of billions of videos, the platform becoming the second largest search service for certain topics, primarily for media. This site holds a wide range of information, from promotional videos to

tutorials on any topic. Users have the possibility to distribute, evaluate and debate about the visualized information.

### **3.3.2 Characteristics of Youtube**

*View of content*

*Uploading of content*

*The quality and type of video format*

*Content accessibility*

*Platforms*

### **3.3.3 The social impact**

Individual private companies, but also the large-scale ones, used YouTube to increase their audience.

## **3.4 LinkedIn**

### **3.4.1 Generalities**

One of the few public social sites which is oriented towards business, LinkedIn is for the cyberspace the same thing that were once the "networking" groups for the business communities.

### **3.4.2 The user's profile**

The basic functionality of LinkedIn allows users to create profiles and connections between them.

### **3.4.3 Applications**

In October 2008, LinkedIn opened "an application platform".

### **3.4.4 Other LinkedIn functionalities**

*Groups*

*Job listing*

*Online recruitment*

*Promoting abilities*

*Advertising platform*

*LinkedIn Influencers*

*LinkedIn Pulse*

## **3.5 Other socializing networks**

**Google+**

**Xing**

**Renren**

**Snapchat**

**Tumblr**

**Pinterest**

**Twoo**

**MyMFB**

**WhatsApp**

A few conclusions:

- New media phenomenon is based on communication networks offered by specific technical infrastructure ICT;
- Electronic communication comprises larger and larger masses of citizens
- Firms and business environments are generally using social networks to provide advertising and thus increase profits
- The upward trend in the number of users and the development of specialized platforms demonstrate that the effectiveness of a publication (its impact) largely depends on its ability to transform itself into a "new media" publication.

## **4 The evolution of “Turnul Sfatului - Sibiu” publication towards new media. Case study**

### **4.1 General presentation**

#### **4.1.1 Short history**

Turnul Sfatului is an aggregate of information products: news website, weekly printed publication, video information channel and it is extremely active in the New Media area. Turnul Sfatului is produced by a team of journalists, that starting with 2009 has become a constant and active presence in the society of Sibiu.

#### **4.1.2 Turnul Sfatului On-line**

The newspaper's website, [www.turnulsfatului.ro](http://www.turnulsfatului.ro), has over 37.000 published articles during its seven years of activity. It also gathered more than 166 000 comments posted by readers. There are over 2 million unique visitors in one year and an average of 160 000 unique visitors per month.

#### **4.1.3 Turnul Sfatului TV**

Under the name Turnul Sfatului TV, it is posted on "YouTube" channel everything that means video production. Since the 16th of May 2014, the date the account of Turnul Sfatului TV was created, 439 recordings were posted. From video reports to road events, dialogues with citizens, interviews or programs, there were gathered over 590 thousand views during this period, which means an average of 1,343 views per each video uploaded to Youtube channel.

#### **4.1.4 Turnul Sfatului weekly printed publication**

Turnul Sfatului means a weekly printed publication that appears every Monday in Sibiu county, in a format of 12 pages and a circulation of 2,000 copies.

### **4.2 – The structure of Turnul Sfatului mass-media institution**

#### **4.2.1 General considerations**

Beyond particularities, the specialty literature divides media institution into three segments, depending on the nature of business. Thus, any media institution has a journalism department, a technical department and an economic department.

#### **4.2.2 – The organization of Turnul Sfatului editorial team during 2009 - 2014**

The model of editorial team realized by Turnul Sfatului ever since 2009, was the one of creating a classic organization formula, readjusted to market demands and to the needs of information of the modern consumer.

#### **4.2.3 – The organization of Turnul Sfatului editorial team during 2014 - 2016**

With an editorial team composed of eight members, work was carried out easier and some organizational changes have allowed some very good results.

#### **4.2.4 Structure changes**

In comparison to the structure of the editorial team from two years ago, Turnul Sfatului has become more flexible in terms of the relationship with the social networks and with the needs of the

constantly present readers in this online environment. The news have become more personal and there has been a greater willingness to events that could have a big impact in this area.

#### **4.2.5 Conclusions**

According to the processed data in realizing this study, from Google Analytics, during 2014- 2015, Turnul Sfatului had 3.48 million online interactions.

### **4.3 The promotion of companies by using New Media instruments. Case studies**

#### **4.3.1 The promotion of Turnul Sfatului newspaper through on-line marketing during April 2013 – January 2014**

The case study started in April 2013 and sought to obtain concrete information about the relationship between marketing on Facebook social network and a number of specific metrics of interest for Turnul Sfatului newspaper in Sibiu.

First were established metrics of interest for the company. Among them, the most important are:

- Number of likes
- Number of unique visitors
- Revenue from advertising

To achieve these objectives, there were set:

- Three periods of the running of campaigns
- Establishment of the financial investments associated with the 3 campaigns

#### **4.3.2 The promotion of Turnul Sfatului newspaper during June 2015 – September 2016**

##### ***4.3.2.1 The dynamics of the assessments in the studied period***

For research and analysis of results I defined the following approach methodology :

- The reference period was established
- I determined metrics of interest
  - Number of appreciations on Facebook
  - Number of visitors on Turnulsfatului.ro website
  - Revenues from advertising
- Another goal was the loyalty of readers

- There were established concrete strategies and actions
  - Sponsorship of TurnulSfatului.ro news on Facebook
  - Buying Likes for the Facebook page of TurnulSfatului
  - Making TurnulSfatului branding campaigns on Facebook

In 2015, more precisely in early June, when the Facebook promotion campaign of Turnul Sfatului newspaper started, the publication had 10 726 appreciations. In September 2016, after 15 months, the number of those who posted appreciations on the page significantly increased and reached 24 478.

#### **4.3.2.2 The profile of users who appreciate the Facebook page of Turnul Sfatului publication**

Although the number has increased considerably during the period May 2015 - September 2016, the profile of the network users who appreciated Turnul Sfatului page, remained approximately the same.

The proportion between women and men was kept the same (59% -41%), the largest audience age remaining the same - 25-34 years category, and the proportion of visitors by geographical area being similar.

#### **4.3.2.3 Increasing readership base and their loyalty using Facebook social network**

Before launching the promotion campaign in New Media networks, Turnul Sfatului had an audience mainly coming from the loyal readers, namely those who entered the website directly without using intermediate sources such as search engines or social networks. It has always been considered a positive situation because the newspaper's target was the fidelity of those who read Turnul Sfatului through the content quality, users naturally returning in search of information they were interested in.

In 2015, amid the start of the campaign on Facebook, the percentage of those who visited the website of Turnul Sfatului through the social networks, has increased to 39.16%, while the percentage of those who accessed directly was reduced to 29.33%. And the percentage of external links fell to 11.62%, while search engines brought 19.79% of those who arrived on the website of Turnul Sfatului.

In 2016, things have turned to the desired direction, in the sense that, even amid a campaign on Facebook, the most significant percentage belongs to those who entered directly on Turnul Sfatului webpage - 37.33%. Social networks have brought 32.81%, search engines - 18.83%, and external links - 10.64%.

#### **4.3.2.4 The reader's access on page depending on the used technology**

Any on-line newspaper can be received by the reader by three main ways:

- by computer (desktop or laptop, Windows, iOS, Linux )
- by smart-phone (Windows, Android, iOS)
- by tablet (Windows, Android, iOS)

### **4.4 New Media campaign of Smile Credit company**

In this case study it was used an analysis system based on specific new media metrics presented below.

- It was established the period of the campaign running
- There were determined the metrics of interest
  - The number of appreciations on Facebook
  - The number of clicks on page
  - The number of clients who accessed a credit
- There were established concrete strategies and actions
  - out-door panels
  - advertorials in several local newspapers
  - advertisement on an advertising site
  - a contest on the new created Facebook page of the institution
  - a campaign run through Google AdWords

The Facebook page of the institution started from zero and got to 3.730 people who declared that they appreciated the page, in less than three months. This was primarily achieved as a result of a paid campaign. For this purpose, during the 6th of August and the 5th of September, there were invested 581 lei in order to attract new appreciations on the Facebook page, and there were attracted 3.730 persons.



## Conclusions and personal contribution

In this work I realized an analysis of the term new media, presenting a series of definitions, ideas and conceptions, statistical data and scientific researches.

- I have used the term “new media” as a generalization in order to refer myself to a wide range of media technologies and platforms. The long line of platforms that I referred to makes it difficult to define new media. If the streaming offered by Voyo.ro is clearly a new media platform, the technology that makes possible the distribution of this service into our homes, is a support for new media.
- Each technology serves a different function, but the potential overlap space – like using iPhone for watching a movie, in comparison to using it for phone calls or text messages, makes impossible the defining of the term new media. Nevertheless, it is clear that the novelty brought by new media consists of the fact that users can be both producers and consumers of content, even though production is limited to a restricted public.
- I have realized a comparison between traditional media and new media, and we can conclude that taking a look at trends within the last years, new media is a clear winner. But here, as well, things can shade. Currently we catalogue Facebook, Twitter or any other on-line socializing network, as new media. But usually we do not take into account the ways in which traditional media transforms in order to cope with the requirements of society of new media.
- The readers’ trend of migration from print towards online has already happened and there is no doubt that the situation might change again. But there still is a migration of public interested in information and of the means used to access web pages. It is becoming clearer and taken new statistics show that in the last year the share of those who used a phone to access the web page [www.turnulsfatului.ro](http://www.turnulsfatului.ro) grew and became dominant compared to those who used a desktop. The trend is the growth of this information medium, and news sites should follow this trend. In this respect, during the coming period, it is to achieve changes including of the mobile version of the page Turnul Sfatului, with the purpose of becoming much easier to use.

- The connection between new media and the information society can be noticed by studying the on-line games and the way they determine the users to become contributors, and also the way the real-time digital support transforms new media into a vital instrument for companies.
- New media is more and more used to estimate the political situation, and the marketing campaigns on social media do not represent a novelty any more, for a long time now. The influences of new media on the citizens have been described through a series of statistical data.
- We can also conclude the following, and namely that if we take a look at the core of the management of social media programme, we will see that it is a simple purpose product driven by opportunities.
  - a) The purpose is to help the company to function better, to supply a higher value degree of the public or of the shareholders, of its fans or clients, and to generate organic and viable growth of the business.
  - b) The opportunity consists in doing this by combining the use of technology easy to use, the significant increase of results and the building of solid relationships with clients and fans, all these at a very low cost.
- New media is an objective reality of mass media that develops in a fast pace at the same time with the technology evolution and the users' enhancing of skills to use the new technology for information, communication and storage.
- The traditional periodical publications must adapt their management process so that they can cope with the new media requirements (from publicity, form of appearance, content, or distribution to the financing method).

The most significant personal contributions are :

- Realizing a comprehensive bibliography study concerning internet and new media
- Analysis of the structure of the institution of Turnul Sfatului from Sibiu and its evolution in the context of new media
- Realizing some case studies of specific marketing using new media tools:
  - Two marketing campaigns for Turnul Sfatului publication
  - Marketing campaign for Smile Credit

- Analysis of the impact of these campaigns according to a number of specific metrics for the evaluation of new media

The results were disseminated through participation in national and international conferences, with a total of 8 items. These contributions are :

Stoica Eduard Alexandru, Pitic Antoniu Gabriel, Martin Florin Marius, **Bucur Călin** - *The Impact Of E-Government On The Economy In The Context Of Improving The Costs* - Revista Economica, vol. 65:3, Sibiu , pp. 73-81, ISSN 1582-6260, 2013

Antoniu Pitic, **Călin Bucur**, Eduard Stoica - *Automatic Classification of Messages in Social Media. Case Study for Romanian Language* - The 1st International Conference for Doctoral Students IPC 2013, 22-23 Nov, Lucian Blaga University, Sibiu, ISSN 2344-3448, pp. 114-119, 2013

Alina Elena Pitic, Ioana Moisil, **Călin Bucur** - *The dangers of Social Media. A case study on children age 10 to 12* - Modelling and Development of Intelligent Systems, October 10-12, Sibiu, ROMANIA, ISSN 2067-3965, pp. 88-93, 2013

Eduard Stoica, **Călin Bucur**, Antoniu Pitic - *New-Media Technologies Implementation in Companies*, 21st International Economic Conference – Prospects of Economic Recovery in a Volatile International Context: Major Obstacles, Initiatives and Projects IECS 2014 – 16-17 May, Sibiu, 2014

Eduard Alexandru Stoica, Antoniu Gabriel Pitic, **Călin Bucur** - *New Media E-marketing Campaign. Case Study for a Romanian Press Trust*, Procedia Economics and Finance 2015, 10.1016/S2212-5671(14)00851-X

Eduard Alexandru Stoica, Antoniu Gabriel Pitic, **Călin Bucur** - *New Media E-marketing Campaign. Case Study for a Romanian Press Trust*, Procedia Economics and Finance, Volume 16, 2014, Pages 635-640

**Călin Bucur**, Florea Diana, Pitic Antoniu Gabriel - *Sharing feelings and events: effective social media strategies for the promotion of arts and culture*, The international conference "Challenges, Performances and Tendencies in the Organisation Management" 22 – 24 iunie 2014, Murighiol

Eduard Stoica, **Călin Bucur**, Antoniu Pitic, Banciu Doina - *Romanian Language Twitter Messages Classification*, Studies in Informatics and Control, ISSN 1220-1766, vol. x, 2016 (SUBMITTED)

Further developments of this work are oriented towards:

- Extension of case studies for other institutions or private companies

- Creating a software application that will enable tabulation of results and benchmarking them at various levels
- Determining the appropriateness of campaigns using other new media platforms
- Defining a management strategy for "new media" periodicals oriented towards mobile equipment (phones, tablets, etc.)

The development of the study conducted by this doctoral work will mostly depend on the evolution of information and communication technology and equally on the increase of the users' skills (whether private or public) in using facilities offered by new media for personal and institutional information.