

## **SPECIFICS OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE IN TATARSTAN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Article is devoted to a hot topic in the field of researches concerning the modern processes taking place in mass media space - to development of convergent journalism. Convergence in journalism arises when using various formats and media platforms, merging different spheres of communications, creating synthesis of different ways of information collection and submission.

Authors conduct a research of convergent journalism development specifics in separately taken region of the Russian Federation. On the example of activity of three mass media's editorial offices in Tatarstan (news agency, Internet television and traditional TV channel) which are most advanced in the technological plan it is analyzed at what levels there is a convergence of journalistic work, the main forms and types of different formats merge, genre forms, methods of the journalist work come to light. Authors come to a conclusion that in all three editions synthesis of various formats and genres of media is observed, convergence of the journalist professional specialization is implemented (i.e. there is a universalization of journalistic work). The following most often occurred among convergence types in the analyzed media: technological (emergence in edition of the websites, publics on social networks, in messengers), social (preference to the journalist versatile person owning skills on the text creation, videos, SMM advance), institutional (creation of the new the work organization principles in edition).

In article active influence of a convergence phenomenon on further development of regional and national media system is predicted.

**Keywords:** journalism, convergence, information, edition, format, platform.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Modern society is space of boundless opportunities in respect of communication and informatization. New information and communication technologies erase borders of time and space, becoming the main engine of globalization process. During the world economic, political, cultural and religious integration and unification the traditional mass media also change. If earlier the main platforms of information industry were radio, newspapers and television, then modern society obtains information, in most cases, from Internet resources which synthesize traditions and possibilities of traditional media scientists calling this process "convergence". Relevance of a research subject is caused by rapid development of information technologies in one of the regions of Russia advanced in the technological plan - the Republic of Tatarstan.

The purpose of this work is to research the convergent journalism development specifics in the region and to predict influence of this phenomenon on further development of regional and national media system.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Materials of news agency of the Republic of Tatarstan "Tatar inform", sports music channel "Gong - TV", news media channel "Tatarstan-24" made empirical selection. The research methodology is based on the works by Bardoel J. [1], Vartanova E. L. [2], Gordon R. [3], Jenkins H. [4, 5], Zasursky I. I. [6], Kachkayeva A. G. [7], Kopecka-Piech K. [8], Randall of [9], Fomicheva I. D. [10], etc. (The analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction), the structurally functional, comparative method, a content analysis method, general scientific etc. became the main methods of a research.

## RESULTS

Convergence in journalism arises, first of all, when using various formats and media platforms for transferring the same information: journelese or teleradio format, official site of media, mobile platform (appendix, mobile version of the website), social networks, video platform, messengers.

Process of content creation under conditions of cross-media strongly differs from traditional. For example, the reporting from the place of an event means inclusion in operation of several tools in hands of one journalist at once: picturing of the events on video, in parallel remembering and if need be - writing down information, in the presence of the second working with the camera – taking photos.

Work takes place in the editorial office in team, journalists from different departments unite and carry out not only search, analysis of information and the publication of materials, but also visual execution of content, work on the database, infographics and many other. There is cooperation between various multimedia media, creating the joint ideas and projects.

The concept "convergent journalism" is often replaced with more professional today - "cross-media". It is caused by the fact that the last is less generalized and captures the essence of this direction, as well as emphasizes various types of platforms which make journalism convergent. Cross-media is based on obligatory use by the edition of at least two platforms of broadcasting (periodicals, Internet, radio, television, social networks), and, respectively, distribution of the made content on a number of technical devices (tablets, TVs, smartphones and another) [11].

The American philosopher, culturologist, professor of communication, journalism and communication at university of South California Henry Jenkins offered the following levels of convergence: economic, technological, social, cultural, global convergence [4].

If, for example, technological level means emergence of the websites in media, publics on social networks, boats in messengers and another, then cultural level – means blossoming of a phenomenon of civil journalism when new opportunities for activity of the alternative media (which are not reflecting the point of view of a certain corporation or government institutions) and not professional authors.

Speaking of convergent journalism it is necessary to mention the main subject of activity - the universal journalist. It is a person who is capable literally of everything. Here is how it is described by the British journalist David Randall in the book "Universal Journalist": "Universal journalists are not narrow experts. They have to be ready to report under any circumstances, they are obliged to know how any material is made, to be able to inform and to entertain. They are capable of editing, prototyping, understand subtleties of registration and are able to operate edition, are capable to perceive new technologies, as well as to create and sell newspapers" [9, page 2]. It is difficult to argue with it, currently in the majority, if not in all, mass media journalists do not work in one direction only. With the advent of smartphones they became automatically photographers and if resolution of the camera and video columns allows. Today you will surprise nobody with social networks and if before SMM an expert was the certain person, now the ordinary journalist will also cope with it. The journalist becomes the editor and the proofreader of the text, and still he writes not only on one certain subject, but on any the editor-in-chief demands. Such employees are much more appreciated as they are multifunctional, and appointing them to a task, you can be confident in quality of performance.

The essence of transition to a new format - cross-media - consists in one-time use of a large number of ways and instruments of providing information in the published material. Competence of new experts, their skills, abilities and thinking which will be capable to provide audiences really quality multimedia content remains the only topical issue.

A variety of text filling options, graphic technologies, photo and video content, animation, audiovisualization, use of interactive elements for convenience of audience and many other things is a basis to convergent journalism, and it creates very convenient, pleasant and easily perceived content - journalistic material differs in presentation, which is appreciated in the modern world.

The phenomenon of convergence exerts a great influence on further development of regional and national media system of Russia [12, page 22]. For confirmation of it we will submit the analysis of the mass media of the Republic of Tatarstan which are carrying out activity within convergent journalism: Tatar-inform news agency, sports music channel "Gong - TV", news media channel "Tatarstan-24".

The choice of these mass media is explained by the fact that these editions operating in the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan united "under one wing" several kinds of activity, as well as several media platforms.

Created initially as internet mass-media, the Tatar-inform news agency united several fields of activity at once: printing journalism, photocontent, video content, SMM (messengers, social networks). Now there was a merge of several, earlier independent editorial offices - the Tatar-inform agencies, the *Sobytiya* newspapers and the online newspapers *Intertat*. As a result, the same team works on creation of content and the leading process of these three media. After merging of the editorial offices rebranding was made - the logo and submission form of text, photo and video content changed (photo - a watermark in the form of a logo on the right side of the photo was added, video - a conclusion of key phrases to a video series). The main content – is text (reporting, news notes, analytical materials, interview etc.). In December, 2016 the new format of video records - with a conclusion of key phrases to a video series was entered. Active work is conducted in the Telegram messenger. On demand daily morning mailing of the most necessary information (weather, situation on roads, exchange rate), five latest popular news, a subscription to online broadcast of press conferences, actions on the website "Tatar inform" and on an evening edition of news about the most important events of a day is possible. With one click it is possible to learn about exchange rate, weather forecast, situation on roads at the time of inquiry. Actively social networks are attracted: the application for exchange of photos and videos of Instagram (photos and video from actions with the short description are published), VKontakte (materials directly from the website are published, photo reports give all the best, draws of tickets are organized) and Facebook (materials directly from the website are published).

In "Tatar inform" convergence of printing journalism genres and internet mass-media, professionalism convergence is observed (if necessary journalists can remove the photo report from an action, activity is carried out both on the official site, and on third-party social networks). Convergence types in "Tatar inform" e-technological (creation of the bot in Telegram, group and page in VKontakte, page in Facebook) and social (without going deep into the subject, the journalist can write, for example, post-release from a press conference).

Interesting example of convergence in journalism is the GongTV sports music channel. The channel represents a format, new to the region, - television on the Internet. The private channel is placed and conducts the activity only on the basis of worldwide Internet network. It is available to the user in any place of the world. Broadcasting language - Russian and Tatar. The main content - video records and text materials (interview). There are headings and programs for two main subjects - sport and music. Shows the main sports events, news, creates analytical ("Winners") and entertainment programs ("A star tent", "Forms"), the show about a healthy lifestyle ("Yoga Time"), organizes reality- and the talk-show, transfers reporting from the presentations, musical awards, sports competitions, broadcasts documentary cycles and feature films. Founders of channel shoot and present videos of actors of the Tatar platform, actively using at the same time social networks (first of all group on social network "VKontakte").

Level of global integration in the channel – is genres convergence of media (television and the Internet). Convergence type – is technological (creation of the individual website of television channel on Russian the Internet the domain - gongtv.ru).

It should be noted that cooperation with production center "Pixelfilms Production" is presently one of content creation processes, besides a technical part.

The interview with persons of Gong TV channel can be considered a special type of convergence - convergence in a square. Here within TV channel text materials are placed on an Internet resource. Each interview on "Gong TV" is, first of all, representation to audience of the new actor, disclosure from all directions of its activity as the project is implemented together with production center of "Pixelfilms Production".

Proceeding from the aforesaid, it is possible to draw a conclusion that the most part of TV channel programs of "Gong TV" on the Internet is directed to disclosure of new faces in the Tatar platform, their acquaintance to audience by means of the Internet platform.

The news media channel of Tatarstan Tatarstan-24 – is an example of several kinds merge of activity. One team works for several spheres at once: television, periodicals, SMM, blogging.

Besides placement of the main content in a television format activity continues also on the Internet platform. Level of global integration consists in convergence of different types of media (television channel, website, blog) and convergences of professional skills here (if necessary journalists can remove, for example, the photo report from an action).

Genre of convergent journalism – is hypermedia (synthesis of several transmission media of content, journalism genres). The media channel is more than indicative example of this synthesis. During rather small period the traditional channel in the only possible television format turned into multipurpose mass media.

Convergence types in given media – is technological (creation of the website, group on social network "VKontakte"), social (the journalist versatile person who is creating plots and at the same time writing short news notes for video content).

The main content – is video records and text records. On the website the materials shown in news releases are loaded. Also short text news notes, responses of inhabitants of the heading "Mobile Reporter" are published and two blogs work.

Also possibilities of social networks are actively used: video records with text comments and the reference to the website of Tatarstan-24 media channel are published in social network "VKontakte", interactive communication with audience through polls is conducted, reposts from pages of Efir channel, the program "Urgent Conversation", "Economy News of Tatarstan", "Mobile Reporter 24" are done. The microblog on Twitter and the page on social network "Facebook" where news in the form of the reference and headings are published is kept.

The distinctive feature of the channel can be considered existence of the blogging project "Mobile Reporter". Functioning of the blog – is an example of action of a convergent journalism tendency on the media channel. Two personal platforms - the fashionable blog of Elmira Minkina and Anton Glukhov's autoblog act on the channel. The main content of blogs – is a private judgment on hot topics within the orientation. Elmira Minkina covers all main tendencies of seasons in the fashionable blog, advises on better fashion combining, enters the historical information, returning in the past, remembers images of

actresses in cinema and series etc. Anton Glukhov through own experience touches on urgent issues of the world of car owners. For example, reflects on road signs or tells about novelties in the auto world.

Besides blogs on the website there is a heading "Urgent Interview" where earlier teleplots of the Urgent Conversation program were placed. For example, "What occurs behind the scenes of the Olympic Games?" or "Urgent conversation: changes in traffic regulations came into force". Since March, 2014 here also actively began to place plots of news, but already in printing option. Now it is already independent section with the leader Sergey Kochnev. These modifications of content transfer once again show dynamics of three spheres convergence on TV channel: printing, television and Internet journalism. The ordinary journalist - TV man of this edition turned into the universal journalist.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Having studied processes of global integration and process of content creation in the conditions of cross-media, it is possible to draw a conclusion that the central role in convergent journalism is played by the universal journalist capable to think comprehensively, as well as to work in different formats.

We analyzed activity of three mass media of Tatarstan: Tatar-inform news agency, Gong TV Internet TV channel and Tatarstan-24 media channel. Having determined levels, genres and types of media it is possible to draw the following conclusion: at all three editions synthesis of various formats and genres of media is observed, convergence of professional specialization of the journalist (i.e. there is a universalization of journalistic work) is implemented that is quite expected as convergence in principle cannot happen without these two components.

The following most often occurred among convergence types in the analyzed media:

- technological (journalists actively work in a format of the websites, publics on social networks, bots in messengers);
- social (the editorial offices give preference to the journalist versatile person possessing skills on creation of the text, videos, SMM advance);
- institutional (new formats of work demand creation of the new principles of the organization of work in edition).

Drawing a conclusion about convergent journalism in general, it is possible to designate two parties: positive and negative. Positive – is convenience and saving of time for audience which has an opportunity to obtain the fullest information through several forms of content transfer: text, audiovisual information, video and photocontent on the basis of one media. Negative – is need of increase in financial costs of founders and publishing houses for the maintenance of different types of editions and resources. It is possible to refer to shortcomings of convergent journalism: uniformity of materials, because of a look from one foreshortening, as the group of journalists and politicians of the edition in the conditions of purely technological convergence do not change.

## **SUMMARY**

With development of technological devices and change of a life rhythm, convergence becomes one of important and necessary processes in the modern world of media. It is thought that convergence - that process which in the next decades can reverse not only all system of mass media and communication, but also various related industries.

## **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

Authors confirm that the submitted data do not contain the conflict of interests.

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