

## Journalism in the Transition from the Old to the New Age

Maja Vojinović<sup>1\*</sup>, Dragić Rabrenović<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Management, Sremski Karlovci, University „Union-Nikola Tesla“, Belgrade, PhD, [vojnovic@famns.edu.rs](mailto:vojnovic@famns.edu.rs)

<sup>2</sup> Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, B.C, Canada, PhD

**Abstract:** Stories in magazines, articles in newspapers, television news, radio broadcasts, multimedia content, Internet platforms are types of media and therefore is the statement "the media is all around us". Because of this, many people often take media for granted and do not actively think about the information they read, see or hear. Also, there are many prejudices about journalism, journalists and editors, and they are the ones who collect, select, process and shape, and ultimately publish information through the media. This paper will explore the history of journalism, its basic definitions, journalistic codes and genres, as well as its function in contemporary society, with a particular focus on the development of online journalism.

**Keywords:** history, contemporary, codes, genres, online.

### Introduction

The history of journalism as a profession goes back several centuries, and the first real journalists appeared in the 17th century. In that period, newspapers began to become regular publications, and journalists became key figures in a society that was in the process of modernization and democratization. In England, the first newspapers dealt with reporting on social, political and economic topics. With the advent of the press, journalism became a means of disseminating information and opinions, which influenced the formation of public opinion. One of the key moments in the history of journalism is the Enlightenment period in the 18th century, when journalism became a platform for spreading the ideas of freedom, equality and individual rights. "A few years after the abolition of censorship, at the beginning of the 18th century, the press in England experienced a real boom. Various types of papers appear: commercial, liberal, entertainment, political.

A completely new type of newspaper was the Weekly Review, which was started in 1704 by Daniel Defoe, better known today as the writer and author of the novel Robinson Crusoe" (Bjelica, Jevtović, 2006, p.46). Journalism then began to develop in a modern form, with an increasing influence on the shaping of political and social life.

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\*Corresponding author: Maja Vojinović, [vojnovic@famns.edu.rs](mailto:vojnovic@famns.edu.rs)



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## Contemporary journalism

In the 19th century, with the advent of technological advances, such as the telegraph and the telephone, journalism became global and comprehensive, enabling faster and more efficient distribution of information. The modern development of journalism, especially after the digital revolution at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, has brought drastic changes in the way journalists collect and distribute information. „Speech, letter, image, video, sound, noises and numerous messages overcome the absolute limits of the universe, so that thanks to modern means of information and communication technology, everything is possible for human senses“ (Bjelica, Jevtović, 2006, p.195). Online journalism has become the dominant form of media production. Thus, authors Bjelica and Jevtović conclude that „Internet journalism has become an explosive field in which it is most difficult to reach safe and verified information“, (Bjelica, Jevtović, 2006, p.209).

One of the most important aspects of the digital revolution in the media is the change in the dynamics of access to information. Digital media have provided users with instant access to news via the Internet, mobile applications and social networks. Unlike the press, which transmits information periodically, digital media offers continuous updates of news in real time. This speed of content distribution has set standards that traditional print media can hardly match. Another key factor is economic pressure. As advertisers move to digital platforms, print media is seeing a drastic drop in revenue. Advertising, which has been the main source of press funding for decades, has now been diverted to digital giants like Google and Facebook, whose algorithms enable precise audience targeting. This change in the financial model has forced many print publications to reorient to digital editions, often offering content for free, further collapsing the concept of paid journalism.

## Definitions of journalism and its transformation

Journalism can be defined as a profession that deals with collecting, researching, analyzing and reporting on events and issues of public interest. Author of the book „Introduction to media and communications“, Miloš Babić writes that „high interdisciplinary education is important for the performance of journalistic tasks and tasks (whether it is journalism studies, culture studies, or individual disciplines such as sociology, law, economics, or more precisely all those whose mastery enables journalists to deal with certain sectors of the media sphere), (Babić, 2015, p.81). The main role of journalism is to inform the public and help in shaping opinions and behavior and enable citizens to learn about events and issues that affect their daily lives. Digital media is also changing the way audiences participate in consuming and creating news. The emergence of social networks as distribution channels created space for the so-called citizen journalism, where users not only comment and share information, but also create it themselves. This democratization of the media space has led to the growth of disinformation and the so-called fake news, which further complicates the position of traditional journalism, which insists on fact-checking and editorial responsibility. Despite the challenges, print journalism is not dying, it is being transformed. The lead, as a key element of the journalistic text, becomes a strategic key for attracting the audience's attention. It summarizes the essence of the text, sets the context and invites further reading. In the digital age, the lid must be informative and attractive, adapted to fast models of information consumption.

Numerous newsrooms are trying to redefine their role through quality investigative work, in-depth analyzes and exclusive content that cannot be easily found on the Internet. In this sense, the press is

trying to find a new value in a time when information is available to everyone, but its accuracy and credibility are increasingly being questioned.

Digital media have irrevocably changed the landscape of modern journalism. Although print media have lost their primacy as the main source of information, they still play a significant role in preserving professional standards and credible journalism. The future of print lies in the ability to adapt to the digital environment, maintain its unique value and find sustainable business models. Rather than competition, the relationship between print and digital media should be seen as a potential for synergy – where digital media expands reach and print provides quality, context and accountability.

### **Journalistic codes**

Journalistic codes represent a set of ethical principles that regulate the behavior of journalists and journalistic organizations. These codes include guidelines on objectivity, accuracy and accountability to the public. „Journalistic codes represent a set of ethical principles that regulate the behavior of journalists and journalistic organizations. These codes often include guidelines on objectivity, impartiality, accuracy and accountability to the public. In addition, journalists undertake not to spread false information, manipulative narratives, or anything that could harm the integrity of the profession. In many countries, journalistic codes set high standards for journalistic freedom, protection of sources, and avoidance of conflicts of interest. These codes serve as guidelines for journalists to work in accordance with principles that ensure public trust and maintain professionalism“ (Donev, Vojinović, 2022, p. 279). In many countries, journalistic codes set high standards for journalistic freedom, protection of sources, and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

Codes like the BBC's from the 1920s ("No bias and sensationalism") or The New York Times' principles ("Just the facts") became the foundation of professional identity. However, today's challenges, such as misinformation on social media, require rigorous verification.

In terms of genres, the difference between short news, in-depth reports and columns is reflected in the purpose: the news informs, the report humanizes the problem, and the column offers perspective.

Journalism, despite technological changes, deals with three fundamental principles: accuracy, relevance and ethics. Throughout history – from stone tablets to algorithms – journalism has proven to be more than a craft. It is a living dialogue between society and truth. Although the techniques change, the three pillars remain the same: an ethics that imposes limits on sensationalism, a methodology that seeks 5WH even in 280 characters, and a responsibility to those who do not have a voice. As Heinrich Biel said in the 19th century: "Newspapers are a beacon in a sea of ignorance." Today, when the beacon shines through smartphone screens, that goal remains the same: to illuminate the darkness, even as algorithms try to blind us.

Journalism is not a profession that ends with the last sentence - it is a requirement that each sentence be laid as a foundation for the next question.

### **Journalistic genres and social networks**

Journalism is divided into different genres, which are used to report on different types of events and topics. Each genre has its own specific characteristics and requirements in terms of style, tone and structure. Some of the most important journalistic genres include reporting as the most basic genre of

journalism used to convey facts about events without personal commentary or interpretation, then commentary which allows journalists to express their opinions on a certain topic, (Valić Nedeljković, Pralica, 2020). Commentators often provide in-depth analysis and interpretation of events, but must be clearly labeled as such. Moreover, interview is a dialogue between a journalist and a source, where the journalist asks questions in order to obtain information or views on a certain topic and reporting that covers broader social or political contexts and often includes research and field reporting. They have a narrative character and describe events or personalities in detail.

Analysis as a distinct genre, since it provides a deeper understanding of events, using data, statistics and contextualization to provide a clearer picture of complex issues.

Social networks play a key role in spreading information, but also in creating public opinion. Algorithms determine which content the user sees, which can create so-called an "echo chamber" in which already existing opinions are reinforced. Although they allow journalists to communicate directly with the audience, they also require greater responsibility because every published content leaves a digital trail.

The genre spectrum of journalism reflects the complexity of modern information. Traditional genres such as news, reports, interviews and reports have been expanded by digital formats that include multimedia content. Each genre has a specific function - from instant transmission of facts to in-depth analytical interpretations of social phenomena.

The structure of the journalistic text has evolved from the traditional to the inverted pyramid. While the former model implied a gradual disclosure of information, the modern approach places key information at the very beginning of the text. The 5W+H model (who, what, when, where, why and how) remains fundamental to constructing a comprehensive news report.

Digital journalism has brought revolutionary changes in the production and distribution of information. The Internet has transformed the media space - news is no longer geographically limited, the audience becomes an active participant in content production. Online platforms enable the instantaneous flow of information, but at the same time impose challenges such as authentication and combating disinformation.

### **Online journalism**

The development of online media began at the beginning of the 90s, parallel to the development of the Internet. The first online articles were published on the static websites of major newspaper companies, as a supplement to the printed editions. In 1994, 'The Daily Telegraph' became one of the first newspapers with its own website. By the end of the nineties, more and more media moved to the Internet, and the first exclusively online portals appeared, such as 'Salon' and 'Slate'. During the 2000s there was a rapid growth of online media thanks to the wide availability of the Internet, the development of blogs and social networks. Today, online journalism dominates the information space - information is published in real time, with multimedia content, interaction with the audience and the possibility of commenting. Traditional journalism relies on print media, radio and television, where there is a clearly defined editorial process and time gap between the event and its publication. Online journalism allows for immediate news publication, with a greater degree of interaction with the audience and flexibility in format. The difference is also reflected in the dynamics of work - while traditional media are slower and focused on fact-checking, online media often publish information under pressure of speed before final confirmation, which can lead to the spread of misinformation.

Online journalism emerged in response to technological changes and the development of the Internet, which led to new forms of information distribution. Given the speed and availability of information via the Internet, online journalism has become the dominant form of journalism in many countries. „Starting with twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, news portals, web platforms and other Internet content, almost the entire world population has succumbed to the influence of an unchecked amount of content that creates human consciousness, opinion, reshapes and dictates the actions of human behavior, especially the younger population“ (Vojinović, Davidov, 2022, p.44).

Major advantages of online journalism are speed, multimedia and interactivity. The function of journalism has a key role in modern society. Its functions include informative function, control function, educational function, social function, etc. Digital journalism has brought revolutionary changes in the production and distribution of information. The Internet has transformed the media space - news is no longer geographically limited, the audience becomes an active participant in content production. Online platforms enable the instantaneous flow of information, but at the same time impose challenges such as authentication and combating disinformation.

The functions of journalism are multiple and crucial for the democratic functioning of society. The information function provides access to reliable data. The critical function enables questioning of government decisions. The educational function raises the level of public awareness. The integrative function strengthens the sense of community. The control function acts as a mechanism of public supervision over institutions of power.

## Conclusion

Throughout history, journalism has been key to conveying information - starting with ancient systems like the Roman Acta Diurna, where news was carved in stone, to today's instant sharing of articles via social networks. This profession developed as a response to the human need for accurate and fast information, but also as a tool to control the powerful. From the first printed newspapers in the 15th century to the explosion of digital platforms, its role remains clear: the collection, verification and distribution of facts. Journalism is a profession with deep roots in history and an important function in modern society. Through its ability to inform, educate, control government and connect people, journalism plays a key role in maintaining democracy and freedom. Considering the faster development of technology and the emergence of online journalism, this profession continues to develop, facing new challenges and opportunities.

Online journalism is more than just the transmission of information over the Internet – it represents a fundamental change in the way we experience, analyze and share news. It allowed us to get information faster than ever, to participate in discussions ourselves and to be part of the global information flow. However, this freedom also carries responsibility – both for the media and for us as users. At a time when the line between accurate information and manipulation is getting thinner, it is crucial to develop media literacy, critical thinking and journalistic ethics. The future of online journalism will depend on the ability to use technology for the benefit of society, without compromising the truth. Only in this way will journalism remain a pillar of democracy in the digital age. Further technology development is expected – artificial intelligence and automation are already being used to generate short news stories, while virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are being explored as new ways of presenting information. Ethical issues, the fight against misinformation and the preservation of professional standards will become even more significant challenges. The question of where journalism begins is becoming increasingly complex.

The once clear boundaries between professional journalists and the public are disappearing. Every smartphone, every social network, is a potential source of information. Professional journalists must now navigate through this complex information environment, preserving the principles of professionalism and ethics. „People must be an active parameter and factor in the creation of information, both through their work and mutual relationships and communication. People who participate must know what is happening now but also predict what will happen in the future“ (Davidov, Vojinović, 2025, p.56).

The future of journalism will not be defined exclusively by technologies, but by values. The ability to find the truth, provide context, and serve the public interest are key imperatives that transcend all technological change. Journalism remains a critical mechanism of a democratic society, a bridge between facts and their meanings.

### **Conflict of interests**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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