

Bericht und Dokumentation zum Projekt

**Newsroom revisited:  
Neue Integrationsprozesse in Tageszeitungs-Newsrooms im  
internationalen Vergleich**

**Newsroom revisited:  
Newsroom-Convergence in Austria, Spain and Germany**

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## 1. Introduction: the evolution of media convergence

There is no unanimously accepted definition of convergence and most of authors emphasize the difficulty of reaching a consensus (Gordon, 2003). This conceptual discrepancy surfaces both in the academic and in the professional literature on the subject. Academic publications tend to adopt definitions of convergence as a phenomenon which influences the media system as a whole, shaping different areas of communication, so that their approach is generally broader and encompasses a wide range of dimensions (Jenkins, 2006). Professional definitions tend to be more reductive, limited to logistical aspects of media companies, and to the changes in organization, professional practices and content production (Killebrew, 2005). However, the Infotendencias Group (2012) provides a suitable definition of media convergence as *a multidimensional process which, facilitated by the widespread implementation of digital communication technologies, affects the technological, business, professional and editorial aspects of the media, fostering the integration of tools, spaces, working methods and languages that were previously separate, in such a way that journalists can write contents to be distributed via multiple platforms, using the language that is appropriate in each medium.*

Research on convergence which exclusively focuses on the field of journalism has increased notably in recent years (Erdal, 2007). Many authors working in this framework assume that convergence affects the entire media system, but also understand it as a longitudinal process made up of several stages which are ultimately intended to culminate in some kind of newsroom integration. Researchers who adhere to this view include Dailey *et al.* (2003), Lawson-Borders (2003) and Applegren (2004), among others. After stating that it is useful to distinguish the different spheres of convergence, these authors propose that each of these spheres should be dealt with separately to avoid confusions. Thus, convergence can be examined as a process that occurs in a gradual way; rather than being an isolated phenomenon it is regarded as a continuum, a frame of reference in which each media company reaches a particular level of convergence (Dailey *et al.*, 2005). Unlike the model devised by Dailey *et al.*, Applegren's (2004) proposal regards convergence as such not as a final goal, but rather as a framework for action in multiplatform media production. Within this framework, different degrees can be attained: coexistence, mutual promotion, cooperation, cross-media and even, on the highest level, complete integration.

Technological convergence means that almost any digital device with a screen – smartphones, electronic diaries, tablets, online video-game consoles – enables to reproduce almost any kind of content (Infotendencias Group, 2012). Within this context of technological convergence, most European media have adopted a multi-platform approach to production and distribution. In fact, the process of digitalization has obliged news corporations to migrate from a production model that is constrained to the highest degree by the medium of reception – the newspaper, the radio transistor, the television set – to another model which is relatively independent of this factor. In journalism today, unlike what happened in the past, the same piece of news is often consumed through multiple channels and media, often simultaneously. New content management systems (CMS) now make it possible to create and publish material in different formats. At the same time, the working environments are changing: editorial teams that were previously separate are being merged together, and are no longer organized according to the medium in which their work is to be published, but rather in accordance with the type of contents they are supposed to produce. However, as some critics argue, convergence has brought a cost cutting and savings operation and a negative impact on the quality of the media product (Fagerjord and Storsul, 2007).

Empirical research has focused on the perceptions of professionals involved in convergence production. While overall attitudes toward convergence are positive, many journalists perceive a shortage of training, work overload and business-driven strategies as the main barriers to quality in cross-media production (Singer, 2004; García Avilés et al., 2009). Media regulation, resistance from trade unions, lack of management commitment and scarce organizational flexibility also constrain the development of convergence strategies (Quinn, 2005).

## **2. Models of news production in converged newsrooms**

New models of editorial organization break away this single medium autonomy: Cross-border cooperation between departments, programs and channels at a news desk or in a newsroom is becoming the working standard. Topics of the moment, no matter how complex, become more readily identifiable and their coverage can be more flexibly planned and put into practice. Cross-media production enables coordinated reporting of

events in several media outlets (press, radio, television, Internet, tablets, cell phones, and other mobile devices). The production might take place at a single *integrated newsroom* or involve *collaboration among newsrooms* from various media. The concept can also apply to other media products systematically designed for and delivered in different media formats.

The first newsroom-wide tests of cross-media production began as media businesses adopted digital technologies in daily news production and tended to concentrate in big multimedia conglomerates in the late 20th century (Boczkowski, 2004). The starting point in many cases was the exploration of a tighter relationship between the production of the newly developed Internet outlets and traditional formats. The greatest challenge for cross-media production, nonetheless, is coordinating the different journalistic cultures of print, online and broadcast newsrooms. Advocates of cross-media production argue that coordinated reporting may enhance the quality of coverage for an event and optimize the use of human resources in newsrooms, as each outlet provides information that best suits it. At the same time, this global strategy facilitates cross-promoting different outlets from the same company and innovating in cross-media production (Meier, 2007; García Avilés, 2012). Their aim is to offer comprehensive, ubiquitous and continually updated news, using the different media of the company to allow citizens to receive the best coverage at any time or place through the most convenient media device.

However, several scholars point out the risks to news quality and media diversity if reducing production costs drives the convergence process. An early case study found that journalists felt stress and considered their stories less elaborated when doing cross-media production (Cottle, 1999). Newsroom coordination may diminish the diversity of approaches that the separate media take toward a community, may ignore intrinsic differences among media formats that contribute to heterogeneous journalistic discourse, and may make immediacy prevail over analysis.

Cases of media convergence occur with varying degrees of complexity, depending on the different cultures, companies and countries that are involved (Klinenberg, 2005; Boczkowski and Ferris, 2005). To research into the changing processes of convergence, some authors propose using a matrix based on a large number of descriptors which are designed to measure the level of development of convergence in media companies

(García Avilés *et al.*, 2009). This matrix encompasses four areas of analysis: the focus of the project, editorial management, journalists' practices and the organization of work. In this way, it is feasible to distinguish models of convergence which range from full integration to the coordination of isolated platforms, including many different strategies by which editorial teams might cooperate. However, as these authors point out, "none of these models does exist in a pure way and none of the analyzed companies completely fulfils the requisites of each model".

By means of this typology and of a matrix of 32 questions which are relevant in convergence processes, research provides editorial managers with tools to develop their newsroom strategy; these tools are not aimed at creating *the ideal newsroom*. Instead, they are a help for research as well as a practical planning of media companies at three different levels:

- **Full integration:** The infrastructure required for multi-media production is located in one single newsroom. The aggregation and processing of information, as well as news dissemination are steered centrally. In the newsroom workflows for all distribution channels are defined. News flow managers decide what human and technical resources to devote to each event. Story builders coordinate reporting on a single event and decide which materials to gather (video, audio, photos, data) and the best cross-media publication strategy. More than half of journalists work for two or more platforms, and they are constantly trained to that end. Convergence is an explicit corporate target and a long-term process of strategic, economic and journalistic development.
- **Cross-media:** A majority of journalists still work for one distribution platform exclusively. Accordingly, newsrooms and news-desks can remain separated spatially. However, there exists a central overall steering of workflows and contents by coordinators and news managers. Building cross-media teams is possible and being promoted, as are multi-media initiatives by single journalists (and their further skill-honing training). Thus, at least one fifth of employees need to be multi-skilled in this model.

- **Coordinating independent platforms:** Neither the supply, nor the production or distribution of news is affected by the cooperation of different media channels within a company. Individual interest, if anything, drives single journalists to work on multi-media projects – with no particular management intent. Behind it is the purpose of preserving autonomous units with an edge, without taking the risk of diluting journalistic core competences or abandoning the platforms’ specific identities. Nevertheless, cross-media promotion of products and their contents is common. In anyway, a basic awareness of convergence on the management level and among leading editorial staff is necessary.

One common characteristic of editorial change projects is their not only *cross-media* but also *cross-department* character. Journalists should no longer think in a platform-oriented (“I have to supply my pages/programs with content”) but rather topic-oriented manner (“What’s the topic of the moment? How should we approach and research it – and in what way should the storytelling be different on different platforms?”).

- The *news-desk* functions as the control centre of coordination and production, where all materials available to the editors flow together. In newspaper offices, this is the place where individual pages of various departments are coordinated and produced in order to become a print product. At this news-desk, the different channels of cross-media production are orchestrated. Depending on the concept, one, two or up to a dozen editors can work at the news-desk.

- The *newsroom* is not simply an open-plan office in its traditional sense: its physical layout supports new editorial concepts of cross-media and cross-department news processing. The walls are torn down between departments and channels; all journalists work in a joint editorial space, conducive to increased cooperation and coordination.

- Occasionally, both concepts are combined and the news-desk becomes the centre of a newsroom.

Successful cross-media production requires teamwork, a challenge to journalists' individualistic work of that demands training and flexibility (Deuze, 2004). Companies cannot expect convergence to serve as a cost-saving strategy. Convergence may instead allow growth, resulting in better quality and better coordinated content in the outlets of a media group and fostering loyalty and visibility among audiences who have new information-seeking behaviours (Quinn, 2005).

### **3. Media convergence in Central Europe**

Not only in the US (Singer, 2004) but also in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, newsroom editorial routine features different kind of integrated and cross-media production (García Avilés et al., 2009). As early as 2007, almost every editor-in-chief of a current events online platform (97 per cent of 175 interviewees) agreed with the statement that editorial offices disseminate information “no longer through just one, but through various channels of distribution” (Neuberger, Nuernbergk, Rischke, 2009). Key phrases such as *multi-channel strategy*, *multi-platform publishing*, *cross-media journalism*, *integrated newsrooms*, *bi- or trimediality* have dominated conferences and strategy papers of editorial managers, publishers and directors for years now (Meier, 2010).

Cross-media processes in many newsrooms were slower in daily practice: only 22% of journalists in Austria in 2008 were working for more than one platform at least occasionally (Kaltenbrunner et al., 2008). In 2013 the editorial offices of the dailies *Der Standard/derStandard.at* in Vienna and *Tiroler Tageszeitung* in Innsbruck have moved to new newsrooms, where they intend to implement different kind of cross-media and integration strategies. The creation of a joint newsroom for all channels of the Zurich daily *Blick* (belonging to the publishing house *Ringier*) was considered in 2010 an example of good practice in managing a difficult transfer process in times of cost- and staff-cutting and because, according to Kaltenbrunner, “the processes of integration are accepted as a permanent struggle for more cross-media understanding and production” (Stark and Mierzejewska, 2012).

Convergent newsrooms exploit digitalisation's technical possibilities to increase their penetration of the current highly competitive news consumer market. The intention is to

compensate for the steady losses in print newspapers and public broadcasting, by targeting the younger age bracket and various online groups, neither of which are consumers of traditional news publications. That, at least, is the hope of innovative editors-in-chief and media managers.

As a rule, such newsrooms tend to utilize internal resources, rather than creating new teams or hiring staff to establish new platforms or channels. Nevertheless, journalists often fear that convergences policies may lead to shrinkage of staff budgets. As experience has shown, the newsroom is not a savings program when implementing new forms of integration. But continuous national and international processes of editorial integration have taken place under the constraints of economic crisis after 2008. In 2010, after 15 months of planning and an investment of more than € 11 million into the implementation of a new integrated newsroom, *Ringier* proceeded to cut 15 per cent of personnel.

While the editorial staff is learning new processes of gathering, editing and distributing on different platforms *convergent media management* has to define new value chains. Cross-media income - slowly - shifts from traditional sources such as newspaper subscription and ad-selling to new digital business-models. Germany's largest print company *Springer-Verlag* with its turnover of more than 3 billion Euro in 2011 reported this as a new record mainly because of 40%-growth of income from digital media activities in just one year - whereas national print income is still main contributor to the group's success but showed a small minus in business volume. The media management's key questions when converging newsrooms is how to convert editorial reputation and shrinking income from traditional media sales to find new revenues cross-media. Managers are challenged not only to find the right fields of activity for their innovation processes but also to define the adequate speed for change processes and how to divert income to different channels.

According to an estimate, half of German newspapers had adapted their premises to the new editorial structures and workflows by 2005 (Landtag NRW, 2006); this number has probably increased dramatically. Furthermore, news agencies like the German *dpa* (Deutsche Presse Agentur) and *epd* (Evangelischer Pressedienst) or the Austrian *APA* (Austria Presse Agentur) use integrated newsroom concepts (Meier, 2007). Broadcasters experiment with newsroom or news-desk ideas in order to better cross-link their media,

too. Thus, in 2006, *Saarländischer Rundfunk (SR)* implemented a newsroom serving as a joint planning centre for radio, TV and online editors. Five years later, *SR* states that the concept “has become accepted and is considered best-practice in media innovation” (*Saarländischer Rundfunk*, 2011). Approximately at the same time, public Danish broadcaster *DR* had already moved its central editorial departments into a new tri-media newsroom at *DR Byen*, a newly built, dedicated village in former wetlands on the outskirts of Copenhagen. *Bayerischer Rundfunk* plans to develop its comprehensive, tri-media strategy called “*BR hoch 3*” [“Bavarian Broadcasting to the power 3”] from 2012 (Lierheimer, 2011; for further examples: Meier, 2010). Austria’s public broadcaster *ORF* (Österreichischer Rundfunk) is discussing a future tri-media newsroom especially for its news-department, whereas Swiss *SRG* (Schweizerische Radio- und Fernsehgesellschaft) explicitly keeps news-teams of radio, TV and Internet separated - but integrated other sectors, e.g. sports, where every journalist is working for all three public platforms now.

Editorial convergence uses technological innovation to reach specific targets under particular conditions. Accordingly, every convergence project has its very specific, individual result. To date, the way cross-media newsrooms affect journalistic quality has only rudimentarily been researched. Case-studies suggest that the quality of individual titles or platforms can remain stable or even increase, but that media diversity – for instance on a regional level – decreases by merging formerly discrete editorial offices (Rinsdorf, 2011). Factors conducive to cross-media newsroom success are training for journalists, as well as systematic change management (Meier, 2010).

#### **4. Case study: News Integration in El Mundo (Spain)<sup>1</sup>**

El Mundo was founded in 1989 and its online edition, *Elmundo.es*, was launched in 1994. In December 2012, it had an average print circulation of 188,000, while

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<sup>1</sup> Data for this case-study come from interviews with editors and journalists at *El Mundo and Elmundo.es*, and a one day period of observation in their Madrid newsroom in February 2013. Key interview partners for the visit of the international team were multi-media director Miguel Gómez, assistant editor Iñaki Gil and head of science section Pablo Jauregui. Field notes were made on site and relevant documents collected. Documents gathered provided data on website visitor numbers, reader demographics, revenue streams and advertising rates.

Elmundo.es reached 7,7 million unique monthly users. The company is owned by the Italian group RCS Rizzoli. In February 2007, Rizzoli bought the Recoletos Multimedia Group which publishes the leading sports daily Marca and the business daily Expansión. The new multimedia group, known as Unidad Editorial, moved to a new building in December 2007, which currently houses one of Europe's largest newsrooms, along with 300 El Mundo, 90 Expansión and 200 Marca journalists.

El Mundo's newsroom initiated its integration process in July 2007, which was culminated in all sections by 2009. The move from an old building to the biggest single-level office space in Madrid was a "crucial change", according to El Mundo's assistant editor, Iñaki Gil. Throughout that summer, print and online journalists from four sections (Science, Communication, Info-graphics and Sports) moved in together in order to produce content across media boundaries. They gradually expanded the initiative to other sections. There was no single model of cross-media integration. Newspaper journalists showed a greater reticence towards working for the web as well, because of the traditional weight of the print edition in terms of prestige and relevance. A section chief, Miguel Gómez, argues that this attitude changed, as print journalists realized the importance of the website to reach a larger audience, to receive more visibility and instant feedback.

The Science editor, Pablo Jauregui, emphasizes how much overlap there is between each of these integrated teams, where reporters and production staff sit side-by-side and produce stories both for print and online. "Curiosity and looking over each others' shoulders are the order of the day," he said. Bringing decisions at the beginning of the processes allowed managers to solve issues that should have been addressed in the planning stage. Unless they correct their work flow before totally merging operations into a new setting their problems will only multiply.

El Mundo's newsroom integration has blurred the lines between print and online operations, since newspaper journalists are expected to work on online projects and new-media reporters to work in print. Multi-skilled journalists gather information using multiple tools and skills (such as audiovisual recording, still photography, note taking, database mining) and combine multiple-format elements into a story or adapt the materials to different outlets. Multi-skilled roles may give reporters more control over the final products of their work, but may also overload them with technical procedures,

leaving less room for journalistic interpretation. Journalists are expected to collect information that has been generated in multiple formats. Thus, the traditional boundaries between media channels are dissolving and the daily working process is changing. Already, there is no difference any more between online editors and print editors.

El Mundo's assistant editor, Iñaki Gil, stresses the need for newspapers to integrate with caution: "If the goal is to create a stronger, more flexible organization, it only makes sense to move with care in bringing such disparate operations together", said Gil. In fact, the integrated newsroom has not drastically changed the principles of the editorial process. Instead, integration has changed the way staffers think about the process and they are now learning to think in terms of the content rather than the medium (more precisely, in terms of content's suitability for a medium). All print and online sections are integrated. There is a central desk of "breaking news", from which all the information is centralized and is derived to the various sections, and also the demands for specific stories are made. From that central desk is decided the breaking news as well as the home, for it sets the news priorities in each given time. According to Gil, the work process has been optimized and the coordination between the web and print editions is smooth.

The difference between print journalists and their web counterparts has disappeared: they all now belong to the same company under similar financial conditions. Print and online journalists have been grouped together by area of specialization such as health, education, politics or media and technology, into so-called sections which can then publish autonomously straight onto the Web site. The sections range in size from five people to 20, and usually include reporters, sub editors for the paper, site editors for online, and a head who is platform neutral. It has not been just the younger staff who showed most enthusiasm; according to Gómez, "some of the people who have been the best exponents of different styles of journalism have been some of the more experienced journalists and correspondents". The picture desk is now fully integrated, and most of the photographers are trained in video.

The work of the online newsroom is linked to the technical and multimedia departments, and the directors of both departments attend the newsroom meetings. The process benefits both print and online platforms. Prestigious journalists from the

newspaper publish online, with added value; on the other hand, some journalists benefit of publishing exclusive information online first, beating the competition. By doing so, readers identify the same brand online and in print.

The advantages of open space also were important. Offices have traditionally been associated to hierarchy: the larger the office the more important the boss. Still, the fast world of cross-media needs to provide for easy, frequent, informal interactions among the staff, beyond their own section or working group. Just by going open, El Mundo's newsroom minimized barriers and provided a more stimulating setting for the exchange of ideas, among journalists from print and online, with open meeting rooms, places where workers can congregate and interact informally. By tearing down many walls, El Mundo's managers opted for transparency and cooperation. The quest for transparency eliminated internal isles and pushed the company away from comfort zones.

The fast pace of work in the 24 hour news cycle makes it impossible to find a single piece of software that is able to handle all editorial needs. In order to build the right technological architecture, a strong technical department advised El Mundo's journalists throughout the process. News production for several platforms is changing the conditions of newsroom organization and journalistic work. As the need for coordination and cooperation grows, media professionals are learning to take into account the changing demands of audiences, the consequences for their news companies and the effects on their work. According to Gómez, reporters' special skills should be enhanced: "Our journalists use their strongest skill set and build upon their knowledge and training with new platforms, using Twitter and blogging".

Multi-platform delivery is clearly an important strategy for *El Mundo*, as they seek to maximize the value of the content they produce by publishing it to platforms they control. Multi-skilling leaves journalists less time to fulfill traditional journalistic practices, such as double-checking of sources and finding contextual information. The newly established routines tend to emphasize the importance of speed, which sometimes raises concern about the quality of output. In addition, the fact that technology allows for faster processing of news increases the pressure to be first with the story and to provide more on-the-spot, live news.

Journalists get turned on by the possibility of having greater control over their work. When these teams work well, they are creative, fun and productive. "We have tried to

implement change by infecting staff with our own enthusiasm and leading the process. For example, Pedro J. Ramírez, El Mundo's editor is our own community manager, for he is very active in Twitter", argues Miguel Gómez.

A positive side to the El Mundo's integration process is that unlike, unfortunately, many other integrating newsrooms, the merger of print and Web teams has not resulted in layoffs. There have been some voluntary redundancies, but total staff numbers have not been reduced. "It's not a cost-cutting exercise," Iñaki Gil stressed. He explained that "we wanted to make this change within budget, without cutting our headcount". Rather, the strategy has been to maintain "journalistic excellence, and to free up some resources to focus on getting our work on several platforms".

## **5. The Welt–Morgenpost–Abendblatt Group, Berlin/Hamburg<sup>2</sup>**

Three dailies (*Welt*, *Welt kompakt* and *Berliner Morgenpost*), a weekly (*Welt am Sonntag*) and their associated online publications have been centrally coordinated from a single, integrated editorial department and a single newsroom since as early as 2006. True to the motto "online first", the online department uploaded all articles onto the web as soon as they were completed.

The scope of products offered has since undergone significant diversification: a compact print edition of *Welt am Sonntag* has been issued since February 2011; in October 2012 the daily *Hamburger Abendblatt* was integrated into the editorial structure of the group; furthermore, 'digital' has replaced "online" over the past three years, with an independent mobile browser range rounded off by various apps for smart phones, tablets and internet-enabled TVs. The publishing group boasts an aggregated daily issue of approximately 570.000 copies; the Sunday editions amount to 400.000 copies, while its internet reach exceeds eight million unique users per month. They all belong to

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<sup>2</sup> Data for this case-study come from discussions and various background interviews and observations of change processes in *Die Welt* throughout more than a year. Key interview partners for the visit of the international team in December 2012 were editor-in-chief Jan-Eric Peters, deputy editor-in-chief Oliver Michalsky and General Manager digital Romanus Otte. Documents and data have been gathered analysing visitor numbers, reader demographics and advertising rates.

Germany's largest publishing house, *Axel Springer AG*, which calls 18,8% of the daily newspaper market its own (Röper 2012).

The editorial staff in Berlin and Hamburg consists of approximately 550 journalists. With its 50 positions, the Berlin newsroom has been the coordinating nerve center since 2006. A novel Content Management System was set up in 2012, which the chief editor Jan-Eric Peters calls all journalists' 'virtual newsroom': "It's the really big newsroom. Now we all sit in the newsroom, so to speak, and everyone can see who is working on what and, above all, we can cooperate." The complete information, texts, illustrations and multimedia items available on a topical issue are collected in a 'story folder'. All print and online platforms can utilize the content of the story folder in a transparent and centralized manner, which offers the added advantage of precluding redundancy. Any master text updates are transferred by the story folder onto all text packages.

The motto 'online first' gave way in 2012/2013 to the 'online to print' strategy: though since 2006 all articles had been published online as well, they had, as a rule, initially been written for the print media. "We now work for online publishing and also produce newspapers out of what we had initially written for the web", says the Chief Editor. The conferences do not focus on applying printed page logic to newspaper production any longer; instead, it is the topics that take center stage. Every item is logged as an online article, while the daily newspaper is only compiled in the evening, out of the existing materials. "The editorial department works in a topic-oriented manner, which engenders a multitude of new products", says General Manager Romanus Otte.

A task force consisting of a dozen seasoned editorial journalists developed, in more than a year's worth of mock editors' meetings, the new workflow patterns. "We have remodeled all our workflow patterns", says Deputy Chief Editor Oliver Michalsky in charge of the website. Chief Editor Peters refers to it as a 'change of paradigm': all former print medium journalists need "not merely to make something available online, but rather to conceive their entire text, their entire story, digitally". Next to technical training on the new Content Management System and to elective digital story-telling seminars, mandatory change management seminars have been organized for this purpose. In the Chief Editor's opinion, the digital approach already inhabits most journalists' minds, but not – as yet – their hearts.

In this new structure, departments' sizes vary. According to the Deputy Chief Editor, the sports desk notably works exclusively for the online edition and “ends up quickly making a newspaper out of that”.

The business model change is at the root of the change in approach: online publications should reach quality standards so high as to loosen the users' purse strings. December 2012 saw the introduction of the ‘metered paywall’, a purpose-made payment model for *welt.de*. The aim is to create a viable business model for digital journalism, financed, next to advertising earnings, by sales revenue. “We are hell-bent on and fired up about finding a digital business model for journalism”, says General Manager Otte.

The daily print edition is losing significance within the brand realm of *Die Welt*: digital products (the website, the mobile platform and the apps) and the weekly print publication have made it to the top spot. In terms of circulation and reach (on the web, as well as on the app and iTunes store distribution platforms), this strategy has earned *Die Welt* market leadership, while its print edition holds steady in third position of daily newspapers in Germany. This strategy of putting digital products on the front burner is being implemented not only in the editorial office, but in all departments of the publishing house, most notably in the sales and advertising departments.

Since there is only little overlap between print and online readership, the Chief Editor has no difficulty publishing the same topics and content on both platforms. However, one aspect in particular is becoming incrementally challenging: the online reader target group is much wider and requires more ‘soft news’ than the print edition of *Die Welt* offers, which – with its political and economic topics – caters to an elite readership.

The new ‘online to print’ strategy called into existence a new actor: the Multi-Channel Manager (MCM) deals exclusively with the three to six most relevant stories of the day in her or his department. According to the Chief Editor, the MCM does not actually write or redact, but rather “makes sure that these topics are given the appropriate importance throughout our channels, that everything is well organized”.

The editorial board does not differentiate between print and digital journalists; rather, in the board's view, topic-oriented journalists generate articles which get published through various channels. Only ten purely online journalists ply their work at the online

desk in the newsroom. Their task mainly consists of feeding and coordinating the website.

The Chief Editor states that – in contrast to the streamlining of 2002 and 2006 – the editorial staff had to be boosted by between ten and twenty new journalists, to accommodate the new processes and role allocation. Journalists no longer required in the print production are now migrating towards new roles in digital production.

Introduced in 2006, the video production department has been stagnating ever since, with only one video editor and a couple of moving picture offerings.

The topic of social media is, in the Chief Editor's view, overrated: merely one to five percent of the traffic that hits the publishing house's websites originates from social networks like Twitter or Facebook. He does see potential in social media though, which is why a social media editor has been in situ for two years, soon to be joined by a second; furthermore, a Public Editor's position is in the pipeline, whose task it will be to seek direct contact with readers via social media, among other avenues. Approximately two dozen editors – among them members of the editorial board – use social media intensively. There are elective workshops on this topic. Yet when it comes to interacting with editors, readers seem to prefer the public comment fields following the articles to networking via social media. With a view to purging abusive and illegal content, pre-moderation of users' comments was introduced last December.

## **6. Case-Study: Der Standard - derstandard.at<sup>3</sup>**

The editorial departments of *Der Standard* and *Der Standard.at* moved to new, common premises at the turn of the year 2012/2013. After years of separation spent in various stately buildings throughout the historic center of Vienna, the print and digital editorial departments are thus reunited at yet another central location–this time in the 3<sup>rd</sup> district. The co-publisher and Chief Editor of the print edition of *Der Standard*,

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<sup>3</sup> Data for this case-study come from several years of following market developments of Der Standard / DerStandard.at. Many background talks with editorials leading staff and print- and online-journalists discussing the newsroom-development have been made throughout 2012. Key interview partners for the visit of the international team in March 2013 were editors-in-chief Alexandra Förderl-Schmid (print) and Gerlinde Hinterleitner (online) and the managing editors Eric Frey (print) and Rainer Schüller (online).

Alexandra Förderl-Schmid, declared at the inauguration of the new premises that the guiding principle and purpose of the move was “cooperation, rather than merging”<sup>4</sup>.

*Der Standard* was founded in 1989; its web edition was launched in 1995 as the first German-language online-newspaper and became an independent company in 2000. Fully owned by founder and publisher Oscar Bronner, the print and online edition now share the same premises again – as corporate entities, as well.

The policy of forbearing editorial integration in spite of the office space integration, while only cautiously harmonizing journalistic lines of communication, can be attributed, to a large extent, to the specific situation of the online *Standard*. The publication employs in excess of 50 journalists – on payroll or freelance – constituting the largest internet editorial staff in the Austrian mass media landscape. In March 2013, the publication boasted a total of 3,5 million unique users and roughly 17 million visits (according to ÖWA)<sup>5</sup> and has been reporting, as an independent digital enterprise, net profits for over almost a decade – amounting to approximately 2 million Euros in 2012. The print edition with five times the turnover yields similar earnings, not more than its online-sister. The daily has a readership averaging 358.000 in 2012, according to *Media-Analyse*.<sup>6</sup> *DerStandard.at* thus represents an exception on the Austrian media market and, at the same time, a rare case internationally. Within the German-speaking region, *DerStandard.at* can be compared to the economic success of the *Spiegel* and *Spiegel online* (SpON), which operate separately as well.

These characteristics of *DerStandard.at* led, according to Alexandra Förderl-Schmid, to the logical decision of adhering to the policy of discrete editorial departments: “We have an existing work flow on the online side and we said it is important to save this form which was developed over years. “

Here is what members of the online editorial staff already said before the newsroom moved to the new premises: “In discussions, we meet on a level playing field.“ After moving to the new building, Eric Frey, managing Editor of the print edition, does not shun irony when analysing the level of discussions of print- and online-journalists: “We

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, a video for „*Horizont*“, a month after moving:  
<http://www.horizont.at/home/detail/horizont-video-der-standard.html>

<sup>5</sup> For updated data, please visit [oewa.at](http://oewa.at)

<sup>6</sup> For updated data and details, please visit [media-analyse.at](http://media-analyse.at)

share a kitchen. That is working out OK. But there is no huge amount of coordination, cooperation, communication. For example, I must admit that there are still a lot of colleagues who don't know each other's names.”

In the new newsroom, it is notably the managing/duty editors who function as interfaces between print and digital. Their desks have crept closer together in physical distance, as have those of the Chief Editors of the print and the online editions, Alexandra Förderl-Schmid and Gerlinde Hinterleitner. Time and again, further communication takes place ad hoc between heads of departments, says Rainer Schüller, online Managing/Duty Editor: “This eliminates the risk of doing the same interviews as someone on print, for example. Or that we concentrate on the same stories. This works pretty well. We communicate a lot, but at the moment we do not work together a lot. There have been only a few situations where we have done stories together.

Indeed, by moving to shared premises, *Der Standard* and *DerStandard.at* have well-nigh developed into a showcase of the convergence model we had described in our previous studies (Garcia et al., 2009) as “coordination of isolated platforms“. Both entrepreneurially and editorially, strategic debate occurs at the top level. Commercial and editorial communication is significantly facilitated by the new infrastructure. However, each respective editorial distribution platform is required to primarily protect its own interests, workflows have barely been modified, and editorial conferences still take place separately, while the sensitive issue of “online first” on important news items is resolved in a case-by-case manner and, sometimes, fortuitously.

While possible, blurring the borderline between the print and digital realms is not actively pursued and is perceived as the exception, rather than the rule. Thus, the head of the online political desk regularly collaborates with a political editor of the print edition, who, in turn, used to work for the digital edition. The *Standard* media editor has been working for many years in both print and digital and his reporting is increasingly geared towards the web platform (etat.at), which offers more topicality, not to mention a lot more column space than the daily media page of the newspaper. One of the senior commentators of the paper, on the other hand, publishes a series of interviews on *derStandard.at*.

However, multiskilling is currently not a pre-requirement for working for the *Standard*, though it has been included in further education and training measures. A common topic of such workshops has been the development of social media, for example. Leveraging their novel possibilities has been *terra incognita* for many members of both the print and the online staff, and thus a subject area appropriate for creating nexuses between the two disparate editorial departments. The Chief Editor of the print *Standard* had, very soon after having created a Twitter account in 2013, more than 2,000 followers. The total number of tweets to approximately 26.000 *Standard* readers originated equally from the editorial staff of the print and the online edition (as of March 2013).

A common grasp of quality is regarded as a further precondition for enhanced integration and the development of a shared newsroom culture. A task force comprising both print and online journalists was created to this end. “There will be a definition of what quality is for both, and what is specific to online and what to print”, says Duty Editor Schüller on the aim of the above-mentioned task force. In open fireside chats every Friday, print and online journalists are encouraged to brainstorm common future topics.

An important pre-requisite for more cooperation between print and online journalists is to be implemented in 2013: the new collective bargaining agreement will establish a common set of labor law provisions. The journalists working for the digital edition of the *Standard* – thus far employed under contract as IT workers – will, in accordance with the owner’s commitment, be granted new status under said journalists’ contracts.

The enterprise will have to develop common prospects, says print Duty Editor Frey pragmatically: “The whole newspaper market is under enormous pressure and we need to prepare for a future in which at least one model is not going to work. Before that we have to look for ways to cut costs or to increase synergies.”

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## Planned Presentations and Publications of the Research Results

The present document is an interim report on the progress of the research project “Newsroom Revisited” as of the end of March 2013, drafted for the benefit of the sponsor RTR/KommAustria.

The international team will subsequently process and update the matrix model with convergence descriptors of newsroom development, which has, since its publication in 2009<sup>7</sup>, been the subject of extensive comments and acceptance.

The first official presentation of the research findings is planned to be delivered at the international conference “Future of Journalism“ in September 2013 in Cardiff, followed by publication in specialized journals. The part specific to Austria, dealing with the survey on the acceptance of digitalization strategies and on newsroom integration, is planned to be published as a chapter of *Journalisten-Report IV*.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Most important publications re. the newsroom models:

- García Avilés, J. A./Meier, K./Kaltenbrunner, A./Carvajal, M./Kraus, D. (2009): Newsroom integration in Austria, Spain and Germany. Models of media convergence. *Journalism Practice*, 3(3): 285–303.

- García Avilés, J. A./Meier, K./Kaltenbrunner, A./Carvajal, M./Kraus, D. (2009): Newsroom-Konvergenz in Tageszeitungen im internationalen Vergleich. In: Stark, B/ Magin, M. (eds.): *Die österreichische Medienlandschaft im Umbruch. Relation: Beiträge zur vergleichenden Kommunikationsforschung*, N. F., Band 3. Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

- Carvajal, M./García-Avilés, J./Meier, K./Kaltenbrunner, A./Kraus, D. (2009): Integración de redacciones en Austria, España y Alemania: Modelos de convergencia de medios. In: *Anàlisi: quaderns de comunicació i cultura*.

- Kaltenbrunner, A./Meier, K. (2013): Convergent Journalism – Newsrooms, Routines, Job Profiles and Training. In: Diehl, S./Karmasin, M. (eds.): *Media and Convergence Management*, Springer.

<sup>8</sup> Kaltenbrunner, A./ Karmasin, M./ Kraus, D. (to be published July, 2013): *Journalisten-Report IV: Medienmanager in Österreich*.

## CVs

### Research team

**1. Dr. Andy Kaltenbrunner;** Studium Politikwissenschaft und Pädagogik in Wien, ab 1981 Ressortleiter und Redakteur bei Neue AZ und ab 1990 in der Politikredaktion von profil. In den achtziger Jahren parallel Mitbegründer und Leiter des „Medienzentrums der Stadt Wien“. Von 1995 bis 1999 leitend in der trend/profil/Orac-Magazingruppe u.a. als Chefredakteur und Entwickler mehrerer Verlagsprodukte tätig (z.B profil extra, trend online, profil online, u.a.m.). Seit 2000 im Rahmen der Kaltenbrunner-Medienberatung Durchführung von Marktstudien und Entwicklung von Konzepten für Medienunternehmen im In- und Ausland. Wissenschaftlicher Beirat der „Österreichischen Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft“ sowie der „Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Kommunikationswissenschaft“. Unterrichtet Medienpolitik und journalistische Praxisfächer an mehreren europäischen Universitäten und Journalismusakademien. Director des executive MA Programms „International Media Innovation Management“ der DUW Berlin. Initiator und Entwicklungsteamleiter des Fachhochschul-Studiengangs „Journalismus“ in Wien (Start: 2003) sowie des FH-Studiengangs „Film-, TV- und Medienproduktion“ (2011); Seit 2005 Gesellschafter der Medienhaus Wien GmbH, in diesem Rahmen u.a. Koordination des Studienprojektes „Mediencampus Wien/ Mediencluster Wien“ im Auftrag der Stadt Wien, Mitarbeit an zahlreichen wissenschaftlichen Projekten.

**2. Dr. Klaus Meier** hält den Lehrstuhl für „Journalistik I“ an der Katholischen Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt (Deutschland). In seiner Forschungsarbeit beschäftigt er sich mit Redaktionsmanagement, Innovation in Newsrooms, Konvergenz, Online-Journalismus, Wissenschaftsjournalismus und Journalistenausbildung im digitalen Zeitalter. Von 2009 bis 2010 hielt er den Lehrstuhl für cross-mediale Entwicklungen des Journalismus an der Technischen Universität Dortmund; von 2001 bis 2009 war er Professor für Journalistik an der Hochschule Darmstadt, dort auch Studiengangleiter der Programme „Online-Journalismus“ (2003 bis 2005) und „Wissenschaftsjournalismus“ (2005 bis 2007) sowie Studiendekan für den Fachbereich Media (2007 to 2008). Von 1996 bis 2001 war er Assistenzprofessor an der Katholischen Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, wo er in Kommunikationswissenschaft promovierte. Seine aktuellste

Publikationen ist das Textbuch “Journalistik” (2. Auflage 2011); außerdem gab er die Bücher “Internet-Journalismus” (3. Aufl. 2002), “Ressort, Sparte, Team” (2002) und “Experten im Netz” (1997) heraus. Er hat als Coach und Berater in Deutschland, Österreich, der Schweiz, den Niederlanden, Singapur und Bangkok gearbeitet. Er ist ein ehemaliger Zeitungs- und TV-Journalist (1989-1993).

**3. Dr. José A. Garcia Avilés** ist Leiter des Journalismus-Instituts der Universität Miguel Hernández in Elche (Valencia/Spanien) und Professor für Journalistik und Informationstheorie. Studium der Kommunikation und Journalistik an der Universität Navarra (Promotion), BA der freien Künste an der Universität Dublin. Gastprofessur am Media Studies Center am Journalismus-Institut der New Yorker Columbia-Universität (1992/93). Beschäftigungen als Journalist und Berater in Medienunternehmen in den USA und Spanien. Schwerpunkt seiner wissenschaftlichen Studien ist die Konvergenz, zuletzt z. B. internationale Auswirkungen der Digitalisierung in Newsrooms audiovisueller Medien im Laufe der vergangenen Dekade. Er nahm an verschiedenen aus EU-Forschungsmitteln finanzierten Projekten teil, etwa „Incidence of Digital Technology in the Production of News Programmes and Online Services“ oder „Globalisation of the Media and Threats to Cultural Diversity in the European Union“. Außerdem war er Mitglied der vom spanischen Bildungsministerium finanzierten Arbeitsgruppe zum Thema „Digital Convergence in the Media“. Er hat über vierzig wissenschaftliche Artikel veröffentlicht, zuletzt etwa: „Globalization and Pluralism. Reshaping Public TV in Europe“ (2010).

## Assistance

**1. Mag. (FH) Patricia Käfer** hat an der FH Wien Journalismus studiert sowie an der Wiener "Graphischen" ein Kolleg für Druck- und Medientechnik absolviert. Ab 2005 war sie - nach mehreren journalistischen Praktika, u. a. bei profil, ProSieben Austria, Horizont - für die Tageszeitung Die Presse tätig, zuletzt als Redakteurin im Ressort Feuilleton/Medien. 2008 war sie Autorin des Handbuchs "Medien und Politik" aus der Reihe "1x1 der Politik". Seit September 2010 wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin im Medienhaus Wien, insbesondere um das Executive Master-Programm "International Media Innovation Management" mit zu entwickeln und zu koordinieren. Seit Oktober 2011 Lektorin an der Fachhochschule des BFI im Bachelor-Studiengang "Film-, TV- und Medienproduktion".

**2. Mag. Sonja Luef** hat an der Universität Wien Publizistik und Kommunikationswissenschaft sowie Deutsche Philologie studiert. Von 1999 bis 2009 war sie journalistisch erst für die NÖ Rundschau, wo sie das Kultur-Ressort leitete, dann für das NÖ Pressehaus tätig. Sie schrieb vor allem über regionalpolitische und kulturelle Themen. Für Medienhaus Wien arbeitet sie seit Anfang 2011 in den Bereichen Administration, Organisation der Forschungsprojekte und Kommunikation.

**3. Prof. Miguel Carvajal Prieto, PhD,** ist Professor am Journalismusinstitut der Universität Miguel Hernández, Elche, Spanien. Er promovierte 2006 an der Universität Navarra und war auch für die Katholische Universität San Antonio als Lehrender tätig. 2010 war er als Forschungsstipendiat am Donald Mc Gannon Center der Fordham Universität in New York, um neue Business-Modelle für lokale Nachrichtenproduzenten sowie den Einfluss von user-generiertem Content auf Zeitungen und die journalistische Praxis zu untersuchen. Carvajals allgemeine Forschungsschwerpunkte sind Medienökonomie, Medienkonzentration, Konvergenz und Newsroom-Integration, zu welchen er auch Bücher und wissenschaftliche Artikel (mit-)publiziert hat.

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