

CHAPTER 1

New practices in journalistic work

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New practices in journalistic work

1 Introduction

Media industries are similar to other industries as they produce commodities for consumption, but media commodities are also symbolic in nature and influence the society deeply. This makes work processes an important object of study in order to understand how media producers “practically manage and mediate a complex of forces (economic, political, regulatory, technological, professional, cultural, normative)”^{1 p.4}.

We analyse journalism, media products and media organisations like Hartley as being at the crossroads of a contradictory and historically changing field of powerful forces. For Hartley “the idea of creative industries seeks to describe the conceptual and practical convergence of the creative arts (individual talent) with cultural industries (mass scale), in the context of new media technologies (ICT’s within a new knowledge economy), for the use of newly interactive citizen-consumers”^{2 p.5}.

Media changes as society and audiences change. Technological innovations are not the only reason for evolving products and media habits of audiences. The level of citizens’ education is rising, there is more money to spend on media products and more time for leisure. This has led to the segmentation of printed media and advertising, and the development of new marketing practices³.

In this chapter we discuss two major trends in modern print journalism: first the increased competition for readers’ time and money has increased the need to focus and adjust the content of each medium towards meeting audience needs. This has in turn meant a change in the newsrooms from an individual way of working towards a centralised planning and editing work process with more emphasis on continuous quality both in the content and visual outlook. It can be seen as a manifestation of mass customisation⁴ or reflexive production^{5,6,7} in which consumer habits are constantly monitored and products and production processes are flexibly adjusted according to consumer preferences. Opponents of this change trend, especially in newspapers, use a derogatory term “news factories”^{8,9} or market-driven journalism for such development^{10,11}.

The increased emphasis on planning and editing in journalistic work processes is the result of paying constant attention to the preferences and media habits of audiences and the changing media environment. It is based on building a clear media concept (see Chapter 17) as the first step. A media concept includes the goals and values of the publishing organisation or a citizens’ group, understanding the customers/users and organising the content and work practices in a systematic way by building page plans, story types and visual guidelines. To maintain quality, the

media content is carefully planned and kept in check by systematic editing and feedback processes.

In Section 3 we discuss the historically evolving journalistic work practices mainly in newspapers. In Section 4 two main models of organising journalistic work are presented: the individual/holistic and the planning and editing/ centralised model, with examples mainly from Finnish magazine media. The new individual/holistic way of working, which originates from the Anglo-American tradition of organising journalistic work¹², has emerged first in magazines and is now spreading to newspapers in Europe and Finland. It is closely tied to the second major transformation in journalistic work: “the new visual order” which emphasizes the outlook and style of media products, not only the textual information. In Section 5 the role of the art director (AD) in controlling the visual outlook of a magazine is shown to be increasing as a new visual order is emerging. In Section 6 new planning and editing practices are described. Section 7 depicts some future trends in newsroom work processes with the emergence of digital and hybrid media and online publishing.

2 Changing journalistic work

Journalism — the content, outlook and work processes of media — evolve with changes e.g. in politics, technology, law, art and business. In this section, we discuss historical changes and the present challenges of journalistic work in newspapers and magazines.

Looking back, one can discern several trends of how journalistic work has been changing. They are:

- professionalisation of journalists
- increasing division of labour in newsrooms
- paradoxically, also increasing co-operation between persons and phases of production
- central role of visual appearance in media products
- emphasis on engaging readers
- emergence of digital publishing platforms
- multiple new skill demands for journalists.

In the past two decades, Finnish media have seen the emergence of the Anglo-American type of centralised model of newsroom work which has meant increased planning and editing of content. The second trend we have named “the new visual order” which emphasises the central role of visualising the content, and the role the art director both in newspapers and magazines. The third trend, digitalisation of media

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content, has led to internet and mobile publishing which can also contain audio and moving images. A number of new phenomena, called convergence, cross media or hybrid media, have changed the skill requirements and organisation of work of many media organizations, not only in the newsroom. Relations between the newsroom, marketing and technology have become more integrated and at the same time many journalists have had to learn to work for multiple publishing platforms. However, the question of the best practices in online news work remains open, as there are two main ways in which the work process have been organised: separate print and digital news organisation or integrated newsrooms.

Journalism and journalistic work has traditionally been defined as work done by journalists in media organisations like newspapers, magazines, TV and radio. There are no formal legal qualifications for journalists like for attorneys or medical doctors. Anyone can call oneself a journalist, e.g. on the web. There are no commonly shared detailed organisational practices or even comparable work titles, because they differ from medium to medium and between countries. An “editor” may in one context mean a sub-editor (who edits text produced by reporters) and in another an editor-in-chief (in charge of the production of journalistic content).

In a news organization the five basic phases of production can be described as: 1. gathering news material, 2. choosing news topics, 3. editing news material, 4. laying out the material and 5. producing pages for the printing plant. This generic model can also be applied to magazines by replacing news with the word features or stories.

The generic model of news production in a Finnish newspaper has been modelled with the IDEF notation¹³ as depicted in Figure 1¹⁴. This basic figure can be divided to contain many levels in more detail.

The model tells us a fairly simple linear story of work in the newsroom. There is raw material for news/features outside the media company, and news criteria determine the choice of news material to be processed further. The perceived audience also influences these decisions. Next, the news topic is processed into a news item with a certain angle and emphasis. The story may consist of several elements of text, pictures, headlines, graphics and so on. The texts are edited either by the journalist him/herself or by a subeditor (copyeditor). The story elements are combined into a coherent story in a layout program on the screen, where also the ads have been placed beforehand. Then the pages are processed and sent to the printing plant.

In the newspaper newsrooms studied, photographs were subordinated to text. There are feedback and feedforward connections in the workflow, especially in the making of the story idea into a finished news story (ibid.).

This deceptively simple linear model hides a very complex practice, which varies e.g. according to the size of the medium. In small provincial newspapers or small hobby magazines there might be only 1-3 reporters who also take photographs, do the layout, send the pages to the printing plant and finally produce an electronic version of the newspaper for the website. In large national newspapers or magazines there might be hundreds of journalistic personnel with a clear division of labour into reporters specialised in different topics, fact checkers, sub-editors, producers,

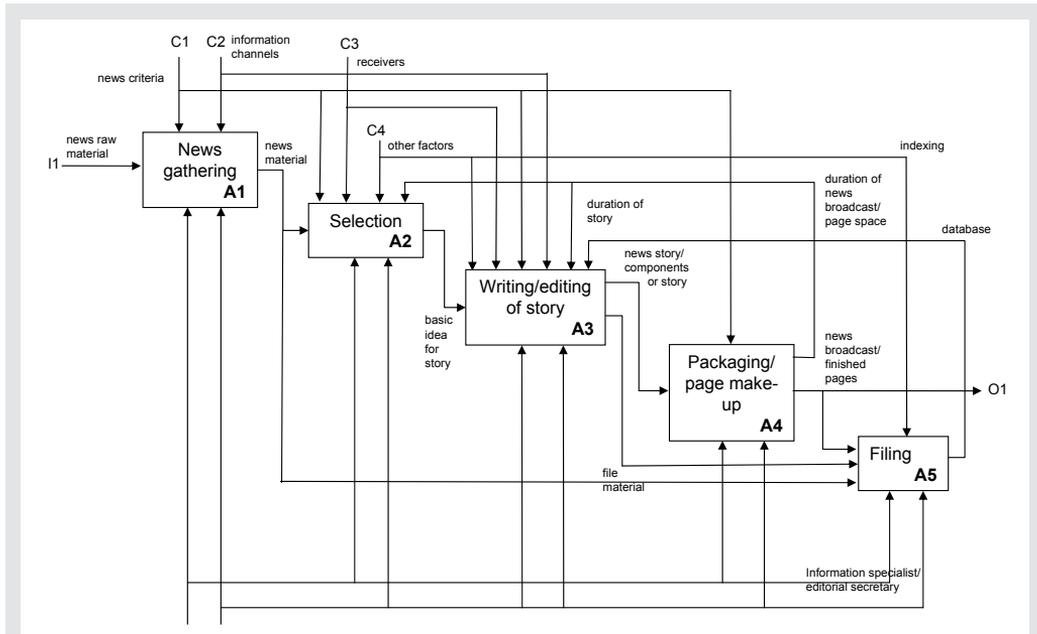


Figure 1. News production, hierarchy level 1 of IDEF notation.

photographers, picture editors, photographers, graphical artists, page designers and layouters, technical personnel, separate web reporters and editors and so on. All are working for different departments of the media in question. There is a hierarchic structure of management for this complex process and the management levels can be seven layers deep, with several daily meetings of the news editors.

Comparing the model in Figure 1 to the emerging work process, the linear model would need to be redrawn in many newspapers and especially in magazines. The role of visuals, packaging and page makeup (A4 in Figure 1) would be moved into the beginning of the work process, strongly influencing news gathering, choice of news/story materials as well as writing, editing and layout of pages. In the era of the design revolution¹⁵ the visual possibilities are often explored first and the placement of a story on the pages is determined largely by visual decision-makers like an art director.

Also another major and complex issue needs more detailed ethnographic research. In Figure 1 the work process starts with the concept of news material “out there” and then the choice of news items follows. Out of the millions of events and people, what to choose, how to display it and why? It is indeed a contested field of negotiations where the interests of owners, newsroom management, reporters, sources, readers, advertising and marketing are negotiated on a daily basis¹⁶. Therefore, the importance of understanding the medium’s media concept (see Chapter 17 in this book) should be widely discussed and recognised in media organisations and newsrooms. Unfortunately, this is not always the case as journalists in the same newsroom often have different ideas about what should be done and why¹⁶⁻¹⁸, but the differences are often not talked about.

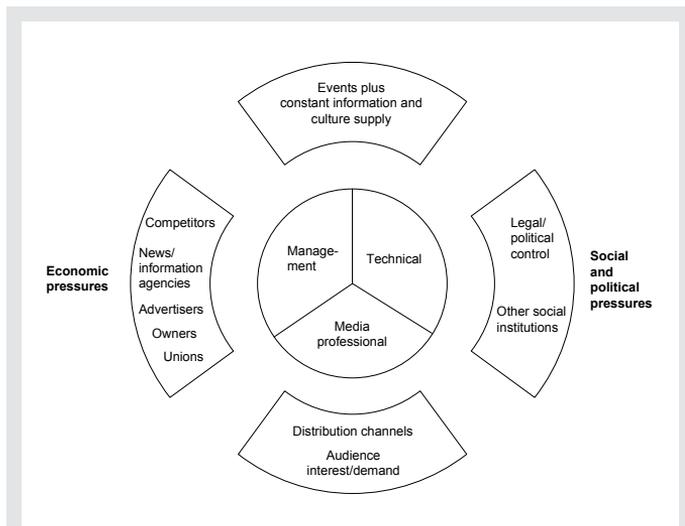


Figure 2. Journalism as a social field^{20 p.191}.

The position of journalism and journalistic work as a societal practice and the inherent tensions in choosing what to publish and from whose viewpoint is illustrated in the figure by McQuail^{19 p.191} in which he depicts media organisations as social fields at the intersection of economic, social and political pressures, events and information supply as well as publishing platforms and audience interests and needs.

McQuail suggested already in 1994 that we should start studying media from the viewpoint of practical media realities. This would mean researching media as locally constructed, diverse and concrete everyday activity.

However, too little is still known about the work practices and processes in media organisations and newsrooms. Media researchers have not in general been interested in organisational or ethnographic research in recent decades. Online news production seems to be an exception and has sparked a new interest in journalistic work process research from the turn of the century²¹⁻²⁶.

Stuart Hall's²⁷ influential model divides journalism research into three main components: production, content and reception. Content (textual analysis and reception (audience research) have been far more popular subjects of research than production which has emerged under the term of sociology of work^{28,29}. The golden age of ethnography of news work in the late 1970s and early 1980s produced several landmarks of newsroom ethnographies which studied journalists as part of a news organisation like newspapers, magazines and TV³⁰⁻³⁴. But interest in how journalism is produced in media organisations waned after the textual turn in media research in the 1980s. Cottle's^{35,36} ethnographic studies in BBC and Ericson, Baranek and Chan's trilogy³⁷⁻³⁹ of news production being some of the notable exceptions.

It has often been noted^{3,40,41} that there are only a few studies of magazines and their work process. However, for example women's magazines have been the subject of extensive research in different disciplines like home economics, sociology etc.⁴². Usually, the main research topics deal with textual analysis or how the magazines connect with their readers.

A few researchers have also dealt with work processes in magazines. For example Ferguson shows how in women's magazines work in newsrooms proceeds according to pre-determined categories, pre-determined story types, angles and

balance between topics⁴³. This way of working has been prevalent in Anglo-American magazines for centuries.

Work processes are also described in Anglo-American study books aimed at students of magazine journalism^{3,44,45}. The literature shows a centralised planning- and editing-based division of labour where the editor-in-chief and art director (AD) guide the production.

Traditional news media also apply some of the lessons learned in the magazine business. An almost desperate need to understand audiences and their media use and preferences is emerging, as can be seen in the appropriation of the RISC monitoring system and other marketing tools in newspapers in the effort to help create interesting content⁴⁶⁻⁴⁸. Newspapers are adopting from magazines content, outlook and the idea of addressing different target groups. There is a new emphasis on storytelling, visual outlook and capturing the interests of the audiences, instead of just focusing on delivering important information. There is strong interest in engagement with the audiences as a basis for creating lasting readership relationships both in the print- and web-based news media.

Magazines differ from newspapers as they are published less frequently, often have a smaller workforce and do not normally contain daily news. Opinions and facts are often intertwined, because magazines are trying to attract readers with engaging story-telling and personal styles of writing. In Finland, a magazine's circulation is based on subscriptions (90 %) and newsstand sales (10 %). The circulation consists of individual subscriptions and there is usually no locally focused coverage like in newspapers. Therefore, the need to address, attract and keep individual readers engaged is of crucial importance. We characterise readers' interests as including the following: 1. need for information and knowledge, 2. need for belonging to a group, 3. need for entertainment, 4. need for analysis to understand and influence social and personal issues, 5. need for building identity⁴⁹.

There are over 3 000 magazines in Finland and about two-thirds of them are magazines published by different organisations and societies which have their own targeted readership groups, many of which receive their magazines as a part of the membership of the organisation. Less than 200 newspapers are published in Finland and of these less than 10 have a nationwide circulation.

The main difference between news work and magazine journalism has been in the relationship to their audience, which in turn has influenced the content and organisation. Magazines have a clearly targeted audience. They are not mass communication in the sense of covering a whole nation or large geographic area or several different demographic groups. Information is not the main product; instead, entertaining, informing, advising, forming communities, solving contradictions in their readers' lives are an important part of their media concept. From their early days, magazines started developing their visual outlook and used photographs, when newspapers still crammed their pages with text⁵⁰.

The division of labour between different tasks and sub-editors, photographers, graphical designers, art directors, and producers of sections has been developing in magazines and then mutated to newspapers. In a magazine the reporter is part of a

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story team, not in charge of selecting topics or story development. In large magazines big stories are often discussed in a starting a story meeting where a group consisting of e.g. the AD, editor-in-chief- or managing editor, reporter, sub-editor, photographer and page designer can participate, discuss and decide the angle, length, placement and layout of the story before the reporter starts working. The texts and pictures go through a thorough selection and editing process, which we describe in more detail in Section 5. Newspapers nowadays have several magazine-like sections, like food, gardening, health, and a more visual emphasis is becoming visible also on news pages.

3 Emergence of a planning and editing way of working

3.1 Types of newspaper and their organisational principles

Media historians have produced detailed knowledge about the context and processes of media production in news media, especially newspapers in the United States, and the influence they have had in other countries as well. They show how the changes in society, art, advertising, politics and technology have influenced the content and organisation of media. The changes in society influence the content of media, and with the passing of time the ideological and professional preferences become inscribed into the work processes, rules, routines and story genres.

The historical interplay of society, markets and technology affects the organisation of media work and its content. This is illustrated in detail by Nerone and Barnhurst who have studied the changes in American newspaper types and ideals^{50,51}. The way of organising work has changed during six historical phases of newspaper types. The researchers propose a historical typology^{51 p.436} where type refers to the mode of production and ideal to the dominant metaphor of the newspaper. The outlook, content and ways of organising work also change within the types of newspaper.

Table 1. Timeline of US newspaper types and ideals^{51 p.436}.

Year	Type	Ideal
1770	Printer's paper	Coffeehouse
1770		Town meeting
1820	Editor's paper	Courtroom
1850	Publisher's paper	Marketplace
1880	Industrial paper	Department store
1910		
	Professional paper	Social map
1950		
	Corporate paper	Index
1980		

In the colonial era in the United States, the so-called printer's paper printers produced content which was culled, copied and pasted from different texts at hand from letters and newspapers.

In the 1820s, the rise of mass politics, commercialisation of society and daily newspaper publishing produced an editor's paper where the editors wrote editorial material including e.g. opinions about political issues and copied material from other newspapers. The emergence of commercial goods and transport systems brought advertising into newspapers. This meant more frequent publishing and a demand for more content to attract readers. In the 1840s reporters appeared in newspapers and a publisher's paper emerged. The production of content, management and printing became separate functions and the first newsrooms began to take shape.

With the onset of industrialisation and mass production, newspapers also changed. Industrial newspaper and printing technology produced mass communication on a new level of efficiency. New monumental buildings were built for media companies with more staff and division of labour. Before the professional paper in the early 20th century, there was a strict division of labour between reporters and correspondents. Reporters were pieceworkers, voiceless writers who recorded public events and happenings. Correspondents in turn had a distinct voice and analysed, commented and had an opinion on the meaning of events.

In the professional paper before and after the Second World War the reporters combined the previous roles of reporter and correspondent into an expert and authoritative profession. The newspaper was streamlined in appearance and displayed a clear hierarchy and segmentation in appearance and organisation. Reporters had individual freedom to choose their stories and approaches within their own departments and objectivity became the professional norm⁵². The newspaper presented an authoritative representation of the world to a mass audience.

The ownership structure began to change from family-owned or locally independent newspapers into commercial ventures and corporate papers owned by publicly held corporations in the latter half of the 20th century. Newspapers became more focused on targeting specific audience segments and selling these to advertisers⁵³. This meant more attention to the form of the news and visual outlook. Page plans, story formats and visual guidelines set the goals and boundaries for journalistic work. The role of planning and editing to create interesting content and visual outlook became more important. The new visual guidelines were influenced by advertising and magazine design.

In the structuring of media organisations and the division of labour, two key moments are highlighted by Nerone and Barnhurst: First, the separation of mechanical work from editorial work at the end of the 19th century. And second, the separation of the business office from the newsroom, as the separation between sales and marketing vs. newsroom was accomplished in the 1920s. Editorial structure became more complex and structured into departments according to different topics like editorials, culture, foreign news, sports etc. Different departments had their own news editors and news desks. Sub-editors polished the texts produced by reporters.

Photographs became popular in newspapers when lightweight cameras were

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developed in the 1920s and news photography emerged as a profession. Previously, engravings depicting news events and important people dominated the pages, but with the advent of cameras ordinary people and their lives became more visible on newspaper pages.

The new division of labour in the newsrooms was based on the telephone, the typewriter and the portable camera and emerged in the roles of reporters, picture editors, photographers and layouters. Now a single journalist can accomplish these tasks with the help of laptops, digital cameras and computers.

These historical trends towards a more complex division of labour and specialisation can also be observed in Finnish newspaper media. Keränen⁵⁴ has characterised the change as a differentiation — a division of labour in which different functions are accomplished by separate units whose work differs from the work of other units. According to his analysis of 53 newspapers from the 18th century until 1983, the differentiation process gained momentum in Finland in the 1960s when the numbers of reporters doubled in the main local newspapers⁵⁴. A hierarchic structure of managing-editors, news editors and specialised reporters emerged. Different departments like national and local politics, foreign news, culture and sports were also established. Keränen also examined the side effects of hierarchy, stating that the coordination of different tasks and departments leaves much to be desired⁵⁴.

The newsroom became the central hub also in the production of newspapers and magazines, as journalists began to write on personal computers in the 1980s and page layout systems were introduced in 1990s — when also ads and pictures materialised in digital form. Now all the material in a newspaper or magazine is in digital form, which has made it possible to publish content across different media platforms.

4 Individual vs. planning and editing work process

The basic structure of how work is organised in magazines and newspapers can be divided into two different historical traditions. Esser⁷² describes how e.g. in German, French and Italian newspapers work is arranged according to different principles compared to Anglo-Saxon practices because of different historical traditions. The two different traditions are described by Esser as the 1) holistic and 2) centralised model. The two traditions contain differences in job profiles, tasks and responsibilities, organisational and hierarchical structures, work processes and routines. The different traditions have different relations to the audiences and also different spatial arrangements: open-space offices for the Anglo-Saxon model and private rooms for reporters of the European tradition. Instead of Esser's holistic and centralized terms the words individual and planning/editing way of working are used in this paper.

The Anglo-American tradition has focused on capturing readers' interest and has been dominant especially in magazines but is also becoming the way of working in many European newspapers. This change is also happening in Finnish magazines⁵⁵ and newspapers^{13,14,17,46}.

4.1 Individual model

The individual model emphasises the reporter's work. In German regional newspapers the reporters have edited their own stories and planned and layouted the pages¹². In many small or medium-sized local newspapers this is still true in Finland. The reporters also take photographs. Reporters are thus in control of the whole work process, the content and outlook of the newspaper. So these newspapers could still be called reporters' newspapers.

The individualistic newspapers do not have structured story types, page plans or other systematic guidelines. The inverted news pyramid is a dominant form of presentation with the most important facts placed in the beginning of the news item. The individual way of working means that the quality and content can vary from day to day and issue to issue — depending on the preferences and competences of the people working on different days of the week.

In magazines also reporters have a central role in the individual model. They can choose their own topics and style of writing. There is little cooperation between editor-in-chief and reporters, photographers and layouters. Each issue is stitched together from available material, sometimes in the heroic last hours of the last night before the deadline. The page designers and layouters have great freedom to compose pages and spreads. Accordingly, the magazine does not have a very consistent structure or content.

In our research covering Finnish magazines and newspapers we found six issues characterising the individual model:

1. The division of labour is arranged according to a low degree of specialisation in work tasks and a low hierarchy. There is little editorial control or feedback.
2. The object of work is individual. Each person focuses on his/her own work tasks: my text, my photos, my layout. Editing of texts does not exist or is understood almost purely in terms of grammatical corrections after a story is finished by a reporter.
3. The layout can be characterised as an art gallery model. Individual stories are pieces of art which are hung on the pages of the newspaper or magazines in a more or less unique way in every issue. What has been gathered is composed on the pages. Decisions about the content and visual outlook are made as late as possible and the content and its composition can be changed at the last moment.
4. Feedback about the content is minimal or nonexistent. Each day or issue is planned "from an empty table", which is also seen as an ideal as news are conceptualised as non-planned events.
5. There are few tools for planning the content or following the production process. Content focuses in newspapers on events like elections, city council meetings, and in magazines on the cyclic calendar of everyday life. Events like the start of the school term, Christmas, first snow, summer weather and so on appear year after year on the pages of printed media.
6. There is little knowledge about the readers, their interests, lifestyles and media use.

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The individual model has a long history in Finland and it is still in use in many Finnish newspapers and magazines. It has the support of magazine and newspaper professionals as it has been the model taught to journalists in the universities. In the teaching curricula of Finnish journalism schools as well as in newspaper newsrooms, the individual tradition has remained the main principle of organizing work⁵⁶⁻⁵⁸. It has become ingrained in the invisible “black boxed” rules and assumptions of how journalistic work should be arranged as well as a cornerstone in the formation of the identity of a professional journalists⁵⁹.

4.2 Planning and editing model of work

In the planning and editing model (plan/edit), capturing readers’ interest is of utmost importance. The division of labour is more complex than in the individual model because of the emphasis on planning the story topics and angles as well as the visual outlook before the reporter starts his/her work. The copy moves from reporters to editors but also back to the reporter for corrections. In some American magazines reporters are just data gatherers who deliver information from sources and events to editors who write the final story. The editor is responsible for the quality of the media concept and gaining the interest of the readers and edits the texts accordingly.

The plan/edit model has helped magazines survive the change from mass product markets to fragmented niche markets³. In this work model the goals and values of media companies are set by the publisher (commercial or public) with a certain audience in mind. The societal situation, journalistic culture and work processes also have an impact on the production and product. This is a dramatic change from the reporters’ newspaper which is still an ideal in many journalism schools, and it has caused many arguments and dissatisfaction among newspaper journalists^{10,11,60,61}. Magazines have always targeted special audience groups and thus the idea of audience interests as the focus does not raise so much resentment and resistance.

The plan/edit model has six characteristics which distinguish it from the individual model, according to our analysis:

1. A strong division of labour, high editorial control.
2. The object of work is to improve the quality of the media product, so that the targeted audience is attracted by it.
3. The visual outlook is emphasised and is based on rigorous planning and story types and visual guidelines. Story guidelines mean permanent formats for story types and include both textual and visual guidelines. The page plan is the guiding architecture of the whole media product.
4. Editing is a central process cutting through the whole production process from planning stories to giving feedback. Feedback is systematic and based on commonly shared goals depicted in the media concept, page plan and story types.
5. Planning and editing tools and concepts are essential elements in guiding the work. The primary one is the media concept and the implied reader (see

- Chapter 17 in this book), followed by guides for editing and the visual guide books pulling together page, plan, topics, story types and visuals⁵⁵.
6. Audience needs and media use are well researched and known to the newsroom.

The work process and its phases are clearly modelled in the plan/edit way of working and the division of labour and authority are well defined. The strong division of labour has two functions. First, there is a hierarchy between editors and writers as well as between the art director and visual designers. The editor-in-chief, managing editors and art director focus their work on the early stages of the work process, on planning and on generating ideas, and they work as a team, or as a “desk”. Second, there is a distinction between the text and the visual work processes performed in the daily work.

In the individual tradition journalists were independent within their own, often multitasked work. As one reporter described it in her interview: “Nobody (at work) reads my articles. What we write is printed”. This was in striking contrast to the centralised model where a journalist’s “own work” was seen as only raw material for the magazine. This was emphasised by one interviewee who said “So, each story was often rewritten five, six or even seven times”.

Table 2 is based on modelling work processes in about 40 magazines with the help of managing editors and AD’s. Together with the AD, editor-in-chief and/or managing editors-in-chief, and a reporter, we traced the process of a typical large story in a session that lasted 2–3 hours. We also analysed the phases where disturbances occurred and discussed them in relation to the whole model. The process chart was presented to the whole newsroom for further discussion and clarification as a prelude to development efforts.

On the horizontal level of the model the work tasks were listed in chronological order starting with the media concept and planning. The planning column could be sub-divided into smaller segments like yearly planning, seasonal planning, monthly planning and issue-based planning events. The basic architecture of the paper consists of the page plan which shows the sequence of sections and story types of the magazine. When choosing story topics to be worked on the focus is also on the visual outlook, pictures and graphics. The subeditors also take part in the early planning meetings. In many magazines major stories begin with a story start-up meeting in which all the following persons or some of them participate: editor-in-chief, managing editor, assistant managing-editor, sub-editor, AD, reporter(s) and photographer. After planning, the reporter and photographers are briefed unless they have attended planning meetings. The writing of a story involves several feedback phases with the sub-editor, AD and maybe the managing editor. The AD has a central role both at the beginning of the work process and at the end when she approves the final layouts to be sent to the printing plant.

The main characteristics of the individual and planning/editing model are presented in the following table.

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Table 2. Editorial structures and main work principles in the individual and plan/edit model.

	Division of work	Work principle	Newsroom plan	Object of work
Individual	Multitasked work profiles	High journalistic autonomy	Own room	Individual stories “my own story”
Plan/edit	Clear division of labour and boundaries between reporters and editors	Editorial control through planning and editing	Centralised production table “desk” Open-plan office	Increased quality and new readership contracts with engaging stories

The move towards a plan/edit model of working can be compared to team-based production models. Within the conceptual framework of Activity Theory, Engeström⁶² compares two leading theoretical models of teams in research of work and organisations. They are sociotechnical teams and lean production teams. The sociotechnical teams resemble the old organisation of newsrooms, which could have e.g. a layout team of graphical designers, whereas the lean production teams are closer to the plan/edit model. According to Engeström, in sociotechnical teams the object and motive of work are centred inward, around the teams own autonomy. In the lean production teams the goal — instead of being directed outward — is focused around quality. Semi-autonomous, self-managing sociotechnical teams function well and survive well in a stable, almost static environment but not necessarily in a more turbulent and innovative environment. Lean production teams are better equipped to take on new challenges in their work.

It seems that the plan/edit way of organizing work is more effective in the turbulent competition for readers. Magazines produced in this way seem to be more successful and have a larger circulation, which is why they find favour with publishers and editors-in-chief. Hence, the pressure for a shift to the new plan/edit model comes from publishers, not journalists.

5 New visual order and central role of the art director

The transition to an plan/edit way of working highlights the changing role of the art director (AD) as the central figure in the visual work process from start to finish. He/she is no longer just a plain layouter or a mere consultant for the newsroom, but becomes a main figure besides the editor-in chief- and managing editor in the daily work.

The growing role of visual quality in magazines has made the art director’s role equivalent to that of a quality manager. The art director is in charge of planning visuals and layout and is also the foreman of visual designers. This changes the decision-making in the textual work process of a newsroom as AD’s guidelines determine the length and size of stories and the text’s relationship to pictures and layout.

Oral information or handwritten notes are no longer enough for managing the complex process of newspaper or magazine production. Therefore, different formal guidebooks like a visual style book are needed as well as some sort of database management for the workflow. The visual style book aims to sustain quality from one page to the next and from one issue to the next. It is also the basis for feedback. The

visual style book leads to a more standardised form and structure of magazines or newspapers, but at the same time it also can provide time to apply novel solutions to layout within a certain framework. With time-saving layout programs and ready-to-use, pre-designed story types it also save time in whole work process — especially in the final stages of layout work.

In our research covering 40 Finnish magazines during 2004–2007 12 commercial magazines were analyzed in more detail. We found that the transition from the individual model to the plan/edit model is under way but is also being questioned. In our questionnaires to journalists in magazines and in interviews the participants were asked to describe their daily work and work process. They were asked to give concrete examples of work situations. They were also asked how they saw their object of work — what their goals are and how they define the purpose of the magazine. We found three different models, which show that a transition from the individual to the planning and editing model is underway:

1. Individual model (4 magazines)
2. Plan/edit model (3 magazines)
3. Mixed model (5 magazines).

Mixed-model work practices were found to be in a transitional phase between old and new practices. It meant that two different sets of objects were present at the same time in the same newsroom. The main issue that set the individual and the plan/edit model apart was the different understanding of the goal of work. In the plan/edit model the journalistic object was the creation of readership contracts and this common aim was achieved through tight editorial guidance. In the individual model high journalistic autonomy was respected and the focus of each individual was “only my own work”.

Differences were found between individuals but also between different participants in the work process. First, a difference was apparent between publishers and editors-in-chief. However, this kind of conflict does not last for long if financial indicators such as circulation figures and advertisement revenue are declining. The situation may in some cases end with the replacement of the editor-in-chief. This had occurred in three of the magazines in our study.

The different understanding of the goal of work, and of the division of work required to achieve it, can be an area of conflict between the editor-in-chief or managing director and the art director, who are the most powerful people in modern magazine newsrooms. Such a conflict situation may end with the replacement of the art director, as had actually happened in three of the magazines in the study. We have found that the reporters also have different ideas of whom they are writing for and how, but these issues are not often discusses openly.

The central issue and focus of debate in the mixed model situations revolved around the question: Was it the art director who decided the layout (according to the visual style book) or the managing editor, or each visual designer who had previously had a lot of freedom in designing the layout? That debate was based on questions like: Who gives the work tasks to the visual designers? Could they choose their own layout,

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according to their own preferences, as they were used to doing? Were the visual style book guidelines to be followed precisely? How much leeway was to be given to deviate from the guidelines? Who chooses photographs? How was quality to be maintained from one page to the next and from one issue to next? What was the definition of quality? How was the feedback system to work and who was going to maintain it?

The move from the individual towards the plan/edit work process is going on in Finnish newspapers and magazines. In newspapers the emphasis on visual planning and quality has gained ground, but much more slowly than in magazines. There has also been a lot of resistance among reporters worldwide to paying attention to the visual outlook of the journalistic products, as an interview quote illustrates: “All the time that’s spent on planning and packaging and detail work is time that is taken away from the news and the substance of news. It’s a very corrosive thing. My mother didn’t raise me to become an interior decorator. I was interested in news”^{61 p.29}.

However, the need to stop the tide of diminishing circulation figures has forced newspaper managers to follow strategies employed by magazines. More pictures and infographics, increased use of full colour, attention to headlines, more and more magazine-like supplements and sections are an integral part of modern newspapers.

Newspaper technology development has made the change possible. Full colour on all newspaper pages is a reality, as well as inputting several supplements at the printing plant. Layout systems are turning into full scale database management systems and new layout programs have made more creative freedom possible in composing stories and pages.

An ongoing trend in newspapers is also the hiring of art directors and redoing the outlook and page plans to attract more readers. This has also meant specialisation and division of labour in newsrooms. Professionally trained graphical designers and picture editors are employed by bigger newspapers. New pagination systems allow much more planning and control of the news flow and work process of journalists.

There is an increasing need for newspaper and magazine design to be more consistent. New layout programs make it possible to compose the page plans and placement of news stories days before the actual reporting. Dozens of story plans can be composed in advance by the AD and they can be dragged and dropped on the page in the desired places. After reporters finish their stories and photographs have been chosen, these elements appear on the pages automatically. This saves a lot of time and work especially on the news pages, maintains consistent layout quality and the graphical designers have more time to concentrate on demanding feature pages.

6 New editing practices

In the plan/edit model the visual layout of a magazine or a newspaper is planned earlier than before. Content for the next 3–4 issues of a magazine is planned by the editor-in-chief and AD. Editing is seen as an essential tool in maintaining the quality of textual and visual elements and their combinations. Editing is successful only if there is a common understanding of the media concept and texts and visuals can be aligned with it.

There is a multitude of guides for editing and planning stories. They can emphasise coaching writers⁶³, understanding magazine concepts and publication practices⁶⁴ and describe editing in minute detail⁶⁵. Editing should have clear goals understood by both the editor and reporter as editing is a central process in maintaining the quality of a media product.

Finnish newspapers began to pay serious attention to the planning of content and news stories in the 1990s. For example, weekly news meetings, yearly theme planning sessions, appointment of a news editor in charge of planning long-term projects, and team work in producing analytical or investigative stories were introduced e.g in the national news department of the country's biggest daily, Helsingin Sanomat in 1996¹⁷.

The purpose of editing practices is to sustain the shared media concept and its quality. Editing aims at serving the story in a way that the readers find interesting. A professional and competent (sub)editor is involved in the whole work process of producing stories⁵⁵.

In Finnish media “editing” has traditionally meant several different things, often understood as work done at the end of the production process like making headlines to fit the layout on the screen, checking the language or changing the story length to fit the layout. However, the modern editing process cuts through the whole journalistic process from planning to feedback.

Many modern newspapers and magazines have specialised subeditors. Editing can also be done by the editor-in-chief, managing editor or reporters. Several different people can participate in the editing process of a story*. At the beginning of the work process an editor takes part in planning stories. Along the way, the editor helps the journalist to produce the best story possible for their magazine or newspaper. To be able to catch readers' interest dramaturgy is essential. It is needed in the page plan as well as in individual stories. Of central importance are also decisions about how the magazine addresses its readers⁶⁶ as it creates the first impression of the media product for them.

The editing process can be divided into five consecutive phases in the work process⁵⁵:

1. editing as planning
2. editing as coaching
3. editing as improving structure, content and language
4. editing as finalising the story in the layout
5. editing as feedback after publication.

* Because editing texts can be performed by many different people with different titles, we use in this section the generic term “editor” for persons who edit reporters' texts.

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After planning and briefing the story idea, the editor works as a coach with the writer — when needed. The editor assists in ensuring that the story fits the planned story format and style. This does not necessarily mean removing the personal voice of the writer. In some magazines and story types it can be an essential part of the media concept.

In the third phase of editing, the focus is on checking the structure, content, language and facts of a story. The story can be shortened or made longer, grammatical errors corrected and the ways of addressing the readers worked out. Finalizing editing means adjusting e.g. the headlines or picture captions or shortening the text by a couple of lines on screen to fit the designed layout of the story.

The last part of the editing process — giving feedback — is often a neglected process in the newsroom. In a recent study of Finnish journalists more feedback was the most popular suggestion for improvements in newsrooms. Only 9 per cent of the respondents did not see a need for major improvements in feedback. Only 14 per cent got feedback from their direct superiors once a day or several times a week⁶⁰.

Feedback needs to reflect on the original purpose of the media concept and individual stories. Feedback is needed by writers, photographers, editors and visualists — all the people who participate in the production process. It has two aims: to give credit to products and jobs well done and to develop working processes and content that do not fulfil the desired quality requirements. If the media concept is unclear, feedback is difficult to give and it has little value for improving the content. Feedback should be given by the editorial management but it can also be given by colleagues, readers and sources. It is necessary to sustain or improve quality of content.

Feedback is also essential for the identity and self-esteem of journalists, as can be seen in two quotations from a Finnish study: “Feedback, feedback, feedback!! Criticism, but most of all support, which almost never is given.” Another journalist cried out “Value me, for heaven’s sake, even if just once”⁶⁰.

7 Cross media: Flash news or nurturing stories?

A new wave of change has surfaced with the digitalisation of media content and the emergence of digital publishing platforms like the web or mobile phones or electronic books. This phenomenon is fundamentally challenging every aspect of media organisations, such as business models, organisational structures and work processes. New business models are being explored, deadlines in the web have disappeared and have been replaced by a 24/7 flow of news. Even the very conception of what is ‘news’ and who is a ‘journalist’ is being re-examined⁶⁷.

Publishing content across different technological platforms of print, internet and mobile media means that the same news stories can be shared across printed, web, mobile and other kinds of digital media. Digital media can also incorporate audio and video. Media platforms can also be crossed when print journalists appear on TV news or TV shows or read their stories in radio programmes or podcasts. With technological innovations in mobile media, especially smart phones, wifi, cheap phone calls and broadband connections, an era of ubiquitous media use is looming ahead.

Despite the hype of web and mobile publishing and the glorious visions of the future, ethnographic research does not present a very rosy picture. Deadlines have disappeared, but usually with negative implications for the quality of news. Technical barriers for online journalism have eroded, but this does not necessarily mean more convergence between print and online media. Also, online journalists still remain second-class citizens in some media organizations. Chris Paterson is dubious about the claim that online journalism with its interactive features and in-depth potential is better than printed news journalism. He claims that online journalism is still mostly “shovel ware”, repackaging content produced for other media or him it is an example of “passive journalism”⁶⁸.

Digitalization does not necessarily lead to cooperation across media platforms, but it can make it easier⁶⁹. We need more research on what happens in newspapers and magazines which are trying to use digital technology to publish content on the web or in mobile media. The nature of the story, e.g. short news or a narrative report, defines how it can be used and portrayed across publishing platforms. However, even more important issues affect the other future of digital publishing like the structure of media organisations and newsrooms, internal power struggles media organisations, journalistic resources, relationship to audiences/users and user created content and so on.

The relationship of journalists with the audience is fundamentally transformed when readers can comment on the accuracy or viewpoint of the stories, can challenge the interpretations made by journalists and produce their own content, sometimes as live participants in events or as better experts than journalists on a singular issue or fields. Audiences, readers, users are no longer dependent on established media for their information but can search the web for multiple sources and viewpoints. The content on the web is also mostly free, which has caused financial difficulties especially in the newspaper business where layoffs in newspapers is common news⁷⁰.

The concept of a ubiquitous newspaper was introduced in 2006, emphasising people’s need for different kinds of news services online⁷¹. The authors differentiated between work and leisure situations for media use. According to them “the ubiquitous newspaper is a multimedia product on different platforms so the products are technologically and content-wise linked with each other”. As an example they depicted four content entities.

1. early news traditional edition meaning the printed newspaper
2. early news audio edition, e.g. an audio version of the newspaper
3. late stock audio edition, listening to audio on the way home
4. late night video edition, streaming an internet newspaper, video clips or longer videos via HDTV.

The rapid advances in digital technology and audience media use can make predictions about future media use obsolete fairly quickly. Mobile phones have turned into mobile computers and can be used to watch and listen to audio, online news, TV, internet, audio books, podcasts and texts like newspaper stories or books. There need not be a difference between work or leisure, nor time or place for using media of

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one's choice. Media can in the future be used anytime anywhere in phones, laptops, internet tablets, electronic books etc.

There are still several unanswered questions about the future of web based publishing for newspaper and magazines. No work process model has triumphed or become a benchmark practice. The management of digital content (assets) has not been standardised. The third issue concerns the possibility of mastering both printed and digital media logics and modality by journalists. Different media have different formats and logics and the content cannot always be copied easily from one media platform to another.

The change has not been easy for print media organisations. Magazine publishers are beginning to realise that in order to move from producing a print magazine towards producing multiplatform brand concepts, a different strategic approach is needed for the web. Researchers predict problems because media companies have favoured consistency and limited changes rather than encouraging innovative behavior^{40,68}.

The future is hard to predict. Combination of printed bar codes and RFID chips imprinted on paper pages will allow readers and users to switch easily from one media platform to another to combine print media, internet and mobile phones and to get more information on the topic at hand. In the future "electronic paper" will make it possible to utilise the format of newspapers and magazines, but also sound and video could be downloaded and accessed through an electronic "paper" sheet.

Being able to use different publishing platforms and distribute content across them also means different ways of organizing media production²¹⁻²³. New job positions like production editor, technology editor, web news editor, content manager etc. will appear in the newsroom and work process⁷². The journalistic staff of cross media production becomes smaller, younger, more tech-savvy and oriented to serving the demands of both print and digital publishing. Planning and editing stories for different media is of utmost importance. Cross-media staffs are often also under greater pressure and have less institutional coded memory, often less knowledge of the audience and there are fewer editors to catch mistakes. Therefore tools to help organise work and content production will have a central role.

The old newspaper industry still defines in many ways what is published and how on the internet. The co-existence of different publishing platforms still challenges media organisations⁷³. There is little research on how the digital technology is changing the organizational structures and division of labour in newspapers. There seem to be two main models for organising online or ubiquitous media²⁵. One is to establish a separate online newsroom which produces online content⁷⁴. There can also be a separate technology, marketing and technology departments or print and web like in Norway in Verdens Gang (www.vg.no), the country's biggest daily newspaper and website⁷⁵. The argument for separating print and web newsrooms is that different media platforms require different journalistic and production skills⁶⁹.

The other model is to combine print and online newsrooms into one, maybe even build a news house to make it possible for the newsroom to sit around an integrated central desk for both the print and online production — like in the Daily

Telegraph in England (www.telegraph.co.uk), which built a new house and an integrated newsroom in 2007.

It is too early to predict which model for organising online media work processes will work best. The way of organising the work also depends on the fundamental media concepts of what is news in print and online media. A common understanding is that online news are flash news whose main virtue is their almost real-time delivery. The printed newspaper is seen as providing depth and analysis for the fast-paced online news flashes which are short and consist of short paragraphs and plain facts. This way of thinking about the web could be called “flash journalism”.

Another view on online news is the story development we call the “nurturing news stories” approach. It is applied e.g. in The Daily Telegraph where big breaking stories are given to individual editors. They are called story owners and they are responsible for regular updates, broadening of stories by adding analysis and background, multimedia and user-generated content. For really big stories the paper can create large web pages dedicated to a single topic⁷⁶.

The Daily Telegraph’s nurturing work practice is described below:

1. When news breaks immediate alerts to sms, email, desktop flashes.
2. After 10 minutes produce 150 words on the website and solicit reader-produced content like videos, pictures, own accounts.
3. Within an hour update story to 450 words and add images and videos.
4. Commission analysis, and opinion pieces, maybe develop a topical page with multiple angles and multimedia.

The argument in favour of a separate newsroom for online news has been forcibly presented by the editor-in-chief Espen Egil Hansen of Verdens Gang in Norway: “First and foremost; newspaper and internet are by nature so diverse that they demand completely different working methods and organisations in order to succeed. This applies at all levels: in the editorial department, sales, distribution and management. To argue that “newspaper” and “online news” are the same because both are news, makes as much sense as saying that a roaring river and a glass of water are the same because both are water”⁷⁵.

Hansen also refers to the importance of nurturing audience relationships because “the strength of the online journalism is the possibility to develop the product minute by minute, interacting with the readers. Their experience and presence (the readers are where we aren’t, they know what we don’t) becomes an integrated part of the continuous journalistic working process. An article does not have a deadline, the readers submits comments, we ad links and so on” (ibid.). Hansen thinks that specialists will win in the entirely new mediascape. The traditions and strengths of publishing houses are becoming weaknesses (tradition, position, stability and financial security). However, he emphasizes that in Verdens Gang they have constantly evaluate whether their present model is optimal.

In their research in two Spanish multimedia organisations Avriles and Carvajal point to two important and different strategies in developing online work²⁵. First of all convergence as a top down strategy, which makes all personnel accept convergence

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and a common newsroom and leadership. Second strategy sees convergence as a tool, more like a wait-and-see attitude with little initial convergence.

It is difficult to predict how media products, journalistic work processes and audience relationships will develop in the next years and how the work across media platforms will be organised. To keep up with the changes, more research on both audiences and media organisations and their practices is needed. Printed media can stay alive by paying close attention to audience needs and media use, and the focus on audience relationships and work processes will also continue to be crucial in the convergent age of printed and hybrid media.

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