

THE DATA AND THE PRESS

How serious news organizations see data and its impact on the public sphere

PERSONEWS

ERC STG project to study the process, and societal impact of news personalization

1. From the users' perspective (uses, attitudes, fears)
2. From the news organizations' perspective (design, parametrization, implementation, control of algorithms)
3. From the societal perspective (impact on the public sphere, democratic debates, filter bubbles, polarization, radicalization, etc)

CHANGES IN THE NEWS BUSINESS

1. Quantification of consumption /
dataification of production
2. Decoupling of news production and
news distribution

QUANTIFIED NEWS

Quantification of news consumption revealed the gap between

what newsrooms think is
important, societally
relevant

what people prefer to
read



Kamila Shamsie Is the only criterion for becoming British the size of your bank balance?

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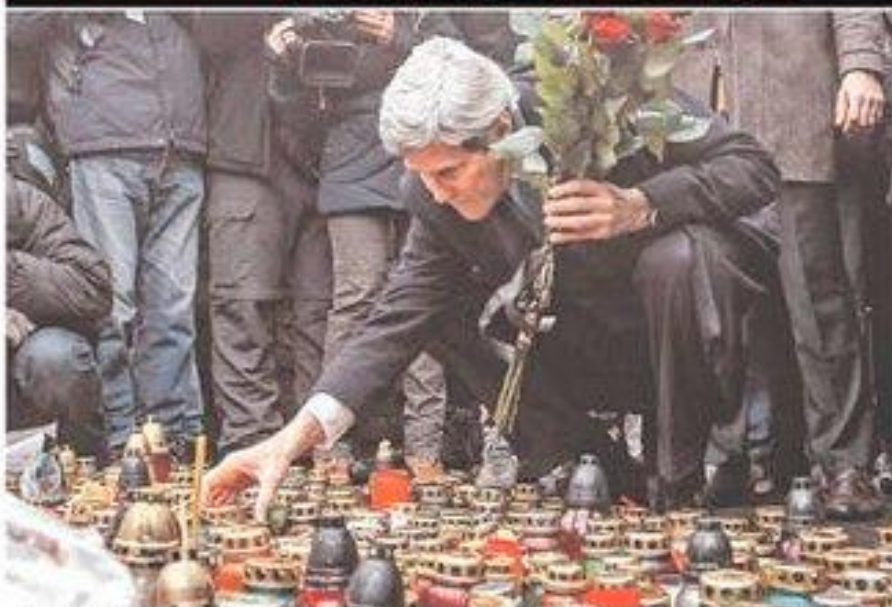
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Lagerfeld's show sweeps up in Paris
... plus 10 of the best from fashion week

Chanel in the supermarket



Hodgson's World Cup mind games
England bring in top sports psychologist



John Kerry lights a candle and lays roses to rest at a shrine honoring the nearly 300,000 victims killed in Christmas

Putin and Obama's war of words

US hits back after Russian leader says Crimea land grab is 'humanitarian'

Ian Traynor
Europe editor

Speaking from his country residence in Moscow, Putin gave a robust performance during which he portrayed Kim as being in league with "terror, extremism and terrorism" regarding the rebels. Putin described what is broadly seen as a Russian land grab in Crimea as

offered John to raise questions with the new Russian government. Kerry accused the Kremlin of "taking its hands off the wheel" and "not listening to the people". "Regarding the deployment of troops, the use of force, the fact there is no need for it, but responsibility remains," he said. "What are your numbers from the armed forces?" Such a question would

see Ukraine's president toppled, a new government and interim head of state installed, and a humanitarian crisis in Crimea. Putin said Moscow did not want to annex the territory. "Regarding the deployment of troops, the use of force, the fact there is no need for it, but responsibility remains," he said. "What are your numbers from the armed forces?" Such a question would

Meat-rich diet may be as harmful as smoking

Tom Scoble
Science correspondent

A diet rich in meat, eggs, milk and cheese could be as harmful to health as smoking, according to a study that has questioned the impact of protein consumption on people's longevity. High levels of dietary animal protein, when by people under 65 is linked to a twofold increase in risk of death from cancer or diabetes, and to almost double the risk of dying from any cause over an 11-year period, researchers said. The US study, which generated some criticism, cast doubt on the long-term health effects of the popular Atkins and Paleo diets that involve a lot of protein consumption. Victor Liang, director of the Longevity Institute, at the University of Southern California, suggested that, on the basis of the study and previous work, people should restrict themselves to no more than 1.5g of protein a day for every kilogram of body weight, equivalent to about 100g of chicken, 100g of beef, and 10g of fish per person. "People need to read this paper when they are 60, 70 or 80, or their values are just lower," Liang said. He added: "If we are eating, there is no harm done. But if we are right you are looking at an incredible effect that is generally not as bad as smoking."

"Need a simple 10-minute looking at the labels on your food. There is a lot of protein consumption. If you eat a lot of you might get up protein, but appear of studies for health may have implications," he said. "However, Victor Liang, a health and nutrition scientist at USC, said: "It is not as simple as 'eat less meat' and 'eat less dairy'." "It is important to consider the effects of smoking with the effect of meat and cheese in the study did. "Speaking from his country residence in Moscow, Putin gave a robust performance during which he portrayed Kim as being in league with "terror, extremism and terrorism" regarding the rebels. Putin described what is broadly seen as a Russian land grab in Crimea as

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OPINION:
Ukraine has revealed the new world of western impotence

Behind the self-righteous bluster on Russia, all our leaders can do to punish Putin is cancel meetings, school places and shopping trips



BBC3 to be axed under director general's plans



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Diets high in meat, eggs and dairy could be as harmful to health as smoking

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DISRUPTED DISTRIBUTION / 1

Physical distribution was

- **Separate** from the content production, (no need for a “great wall” between the newsroom and distribution,
- BUT, often **vertically integrated** with the publisher,
- If not, the distribution market was content **neutral**, and had rules for a level playing field was (must carry, etc.)
- Financed as **infrastructure** (cost-based approach)

DISRUPTED DISTRIBUTION / 2

Digital distribution:

- is often closely **integrated** with content production (dashboards)
- Requires new expertise from publishers, which are hard to integrate
- Increasingly **dependent upon** independent 3rd parties (**platforms**)
- Who make money on ads, and thus directly **compete** for revenues
- And **do not offer a level playing** field for content producers

2 PATHS FORWARD

1. **Tight coupling**: being more responsive to audience demand, market pressures, competition from social media, entertainment, video, etc.
2. **Loose coupling**: focusing on the traditional ideal of news production, stressing public service, reinforcing the wall between the newsroom and the commercial operation

TIGHT COUPLING

- Demand driven production
- value is in user engagement: clicks, traffic
- Time horizon is short term: immediate feedback loop
- Business model: ad-financed
- Audience metrics shape
 - journalistic production in terms of content, form, selection, headlines, titles, etc.
 - editorial decisions by pushing well doing stories, and de-selecting unpopular ones.

NEWS PERSONALIZATION IS KEY

Algorithmic personalization

- Detects and **responds to audience demand**
- **Scales** well: serves more people, with better content, cheaper.
- **Proven**: just look at the platforms

Threats:

- Filter bubbles, polarization, fragmentation of public sphere, etc.

NEWS PERSONALIZATION IN PRACTICE

- 16 interviews with 12 European news organizations
 - Public service and private
 - Broadcast, print and digital native
 - Journalists/editors, product managers, technologists, lawyers
- On how personalized services were designed and implemented:
 - What were the key challenges identified
 - How they were translated into specific KPIs
 - How personalized services were fitted into the wider news service

CRISIS IN NEWS: A SEARCH FOR VALUE

Where is the value in news? What is the source of worth?

- Clicks, traffic, engagement?
- Professional editorial value?
- Trust, integrity, professionalism?
- How can multiple sources of worth co-exist?

Are there different short and long term worths?

- Are short (increased traffic, engagement) and long term goals (survival, legitimacy, trust, etc.) compatible?

How does technology help news organizations survive the crisis?

THE AD FUNDED DEAD-END

The ad-funded free news business model has lost its appeal.

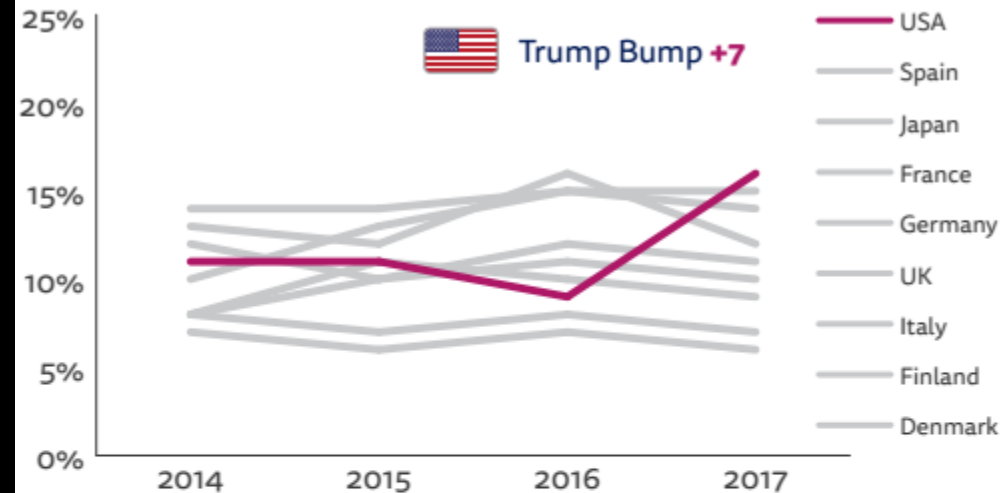
- Data is not the publishers core competence
- Platforms captured the majority of ad revenues
- and user data
- Chasing engagement put pressure on content quality
- Increasing user resistance (ad – blockers) against ads
- More (traffic) is not more (value)
- Audience emancipation is a dream turned into nightmare

NEWS REVIVAL

- Trump, brexit,
- Fake news,
- Messy editorial policies of platforms

Created a premium for verified, trusted information news sources and **made subscription-based models attractive** (again)

ONLINE NEWS PAYMENT REMAINS FLAT BUT THERE HAS BEEN AN UPSURGE IN THE USA - SELECTED COUNTRIES



Record growth since November 2016

The
New York
Times

+500,000
digital
subscribers

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
WSJ

+200,000
digital
subscribers

THE NEW YORKER

+250,000
digital
subscribers

PERSONALIZATION AND SUBSCRIBER ACQUISITION

- Personalization automates the interpretation / translation of audience metrics
- It requires the formalization of editorial decisions into formal KPIs

YET

- Newsrooms stress they're data informed and not data driven, and
- maintain a strong separation of distribution decisions from editorial decisions

The use of audience data, and data based algorithmic recommendation systems is not separable from the journalistic mission and the particular business challenges an organization faces.

PERSONALIZATION PATTERNS

- The value of the news site lies in its ability to inform on the shared societal issues, and provide news in context.
- Personalized news is never the main product, it is always in a secondary/ supplementary role
- Breaking / latest news is what makes people visit, personalized news is what may make them stay.
- Personalization creates value via personalized content -> more relevant content -> more satisfied user -> more subscribers
- Filter bubbles are not an issue, because the underlying content from which the recommender works is of high quality. In fact because of this logics (of breaking news as an audience entry), filter bubbles are not resisted, but sometimes even encouraged.

PERSONALIZATION LOGICS

- Showcase the hidden richness and diversity of content
- Push stories that didn't reach enough people
- Serve underserved audiences with specific interests,
- Steer demand to pay-per-article sales, and subscriptions, sell stories to potential buyers, rather than potential clickers.
- Re-aggregate disaggregated news and recreate context
- Pushback against platforms
- Regain control of distribution through better targeting, having user data in house.

THE CONTROL REVOLUTION

Algorithmic news personalization technology is not seen as a tool to better serve audience demand, but to better control it.

Personalization can steer demand in a way that serves the goals of the organization:

- selling serious information,
- justifying public investment, or
- maintaining journalistic authority and reliability in the age of fake news.

The credibility of, and users' trust in news organization emerged as the key long term asset.

THANK YOU

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<http://www.ivir.nl/>

<http://personalised-communication.net/>