CZU: 070.43:004 **https://doi.org/10.59295/sum11(4)2024_11**

THE OPTIMIZATION OF EDITORIAL PROCESSES THROUGH CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

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The application of software mechanisms in editorial activities represents the cornerstone of practicing journalism in the context of digitalization and technologization. In this context, this scientific endeavor aims to highlight the most important directions of transformation and development within the media sector through the adoption of new policies for communication, data collection, processing, formatting, and publishing/distribution of information in the public space. In our study, we aim to present examples aligned with the digital context for optimizing hierarchical structures and improving interaction between stakeholders of the media institution. The presence of specialized software for editorial offices leads to better task management and helps coordinate editorial teams in real-time, reducing delays and communication errors.

Keywords: *digitalization, work organization, software platforms, editorial tasks, adaptability, CMS.*

OPTIMIZAREA PROCESELOR REDACȚIONALE PRIN SISTEME DE MANAGEMENT AL CONȚINUTULUI

Aplicarea mecanismelor de software în activitățile redacționale reprezintă pilonul de bază al exercitării profesiei de jurnalist în condițiile digitalizării și tehnologizării. În acest context, acest demers științific vine să puncteze cele mai importante direcții de transformare și dezvoltare a sectorului mass-media prin adoptarea politicilor noi de comunicare, colectare, prelucrare, formatare și publicare/distribuire a informațiilor în spațiul public. Ne-am propus ca în studiul nostru să arătăm și exemple pliate la contextul digital pentru optimizarea structurilor ierarhice și pentru o mai bună interacțiune între subiecții instituției media. Prezența unor softuri specializate pentru redacții conduc la gestionarea sarcinilor și ajută la coordonarea echipelor editoriale în timp real, reducând întârzierile și erorile de comunicare.

Cuvinte-cheie: *digitalizare, organizarea muncii, platforme de software, sarcini redacționale, adaptabilitate, CMS.*

Introduction

The constant developments in the media sector largely require a readjustment of the functioning mechanisms of press institutions. These transformations stem from the process of technologization of editorial activities, through the adoption of new principles for collection, processing, formatting, and publishing/distribution of information in the public space, on one hand, and a rethinking of the strategic management model of the media institution, by assigning new tasks and roles, on the other hand. Strategic changes within media entities contribute to reshaping the ecosystem in which press entities operate, thus being tailored to the digital context for optimizing hierarchical structures and improving interaction among all stakeholders of the media institution.

Researcher and university professor Georgeta Stepanov considers that „the introduction of new information and communication technologies in the media sector has seriously affected traditional operational activities and practices in this field, both in terms of content and process" [1, p. 39]. In these conditions, new operational rigor is required for editorial offices, and the roles or tasks of the teams become different: either they are synthesized into a few summary activities, or the same responsibilities are redistributed to multiple individuals within the same department or different departments/editorial offices. With technological progress, each press entity has focused its efforts to cope with possible editorial, human resources, or digital challenges. Today, one of the priorities in any institution is the transparency of activities, and their management is part of the managerial aspect, which outlines the directions of development and operation.

The university professor, PhD in Journalism Faculty at Hyperion University in Bucharest, Romania, notes in the work Stringencies of communication improvement in organizational management that ,,management is, fundamentally, a series of formal interpersonal relationships, which presupposes the existence of a common communication system. Transmitting ideas, data, feelings, decisions, emotions, orders, motivations, commands, and receiving emotional-sentimental reactions, attitudinal-behavioral reactions, and volitional-effectual reactions requires the perfect functioning of this complex dialogue mechanism, through which the manager and subordinates identify each other, converse by combining the possible verbs of work effectiveness in the organization, according to the pre-established purpose" [2, p. 98].

Context

Managerial processes are planned in advance, with indicators on the basis of which the design of editorial activities takes place, on the one hand, and the operationalization of the framework for strategic functioning of the positions and roles that employees occupy in newsrooms/departments/sections.

Today, a decisive role is played by digitalization and the transposition of the institution's media activities into the global virtual network. In this context, communication between the stakeholders of the press entity takes on new dimensions and adapts to the rigors of technological impact. ,,,For effective management and efficient organizational culture, those who lead media institutions open to the virtual space and ready to face all the challenges characteristic of the constant process of informational digitalization must set long-term goals and assume responsibilities of any kind" [3, p. 35]. From this perspective, the leaders of media institutions (newspapers/tv/radio/online press) establish the objectives and policies necessary for the organization/company's press image to be successful, and for this, it is necessary to profile a digital plan based on several essential components that facilitate the management of activities within a newsroom. Ultimately, we can identify the following elements:

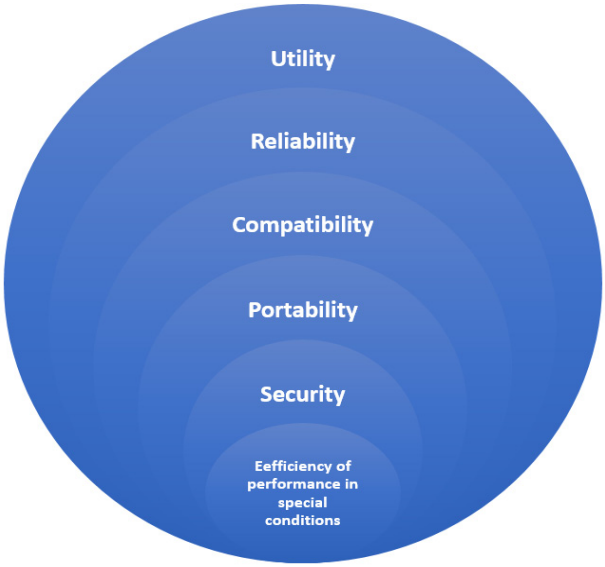
- centralization of information/data and its valorization by each employee of the media institution's department;
- application of collaboration/communication tools among colleagues reporters, as well as with the chief editor/text editor/producer/image editor, content creator, play-out director, etc.;
- using online platforms to optimize the work process;
- identification and planning of tasks for each subject in the newsroom in a common and accessible space at any time and from any location;
- increasing and improving editorial content through the use of applications specific to this type of activity.

In this scientific approach, we will insist on detailing these elements that support the idea that newsrooms of media institutions concentrate their activities today in such a way as to meet the requirements for usefulness, flexibility, accessibility, time efficiency, and adaptability. Thus, in the competitive market conditions, the media market becomes increasingly attractive to consumers/users, and media entities must meet their needs. The result only comes after the managers of media institutions are aware that integrating all the elements specified above in the work can contribute to the sustainability of editorial content or journalistic products and to offering a longer life span to the newspaper, television, radio, or online platform.

,,A media product manager must know the customer (reader, listener, viewer) better than others. Now, in the era of technology and social networks, this can be found out through monitoring (for example: reading comments under TV channel posts, etc.). It is necessary to know everything about the media consumer: their problems, desires, way of thinking, public and personal life, work and decision-making methods" [4, p. 205].

In this context, we note the necessity of standardizing these options by concentrating them in the form of software - an information system that reflects the functionality of editorial activities. The conceptualization of software adapted to editorial work starts from a few fundamental aspects that entail an application of that kind. Below, we will project one of the examples that encompasses and, at the same time, secures the quality of software applications. This allows, in this line of thought, to increase the efficiency of work in a newsroom and improve the qualitative aspects of editorial content.

Fig. 1. Developed by the author based on the „Abstracta" concept.



The American company Abstracta has identified the seven most important elements of software that allow any institution to streamline its activities, secure them, and become compatible with the values and mission of the entity. Referring these characteristics designed by the American company to the mechanisms of a newsroom in the conditions of digitization, we can establish relevant aspects of the context:

- **utility** - an important segment in the work of a reporter/journalist/editor/producer, etc. All information (from the description of the material to the tasks set by the EOD (editor of the day), but also the communication axis between the newsroom employees) must naturally adapt to the „User Interface", which helps employees operate quickly and control the system they are working in. Additionally, the software interface can protect and prevent the user from making mistakes through alerts or task completion messages.

- **reliability** - refers to optimizing time both within the newsroom and with the journalists in the field. Accessibility.

- **compatibility** - an element that manifests itself through the fact that „a software is compatible with the hardware for which it is designed, with the browser, operating system".

- **portability** - it is about how flexible a software can be and how it can be adapted to various devices: both for the equipment in the newsroom and for the employees' phones, so that wherever they are, they can be connected to the internal working system of the media institution. To achieve this, software specialists state that it is necessary to have „the ability to install the application: how well it can be installed or uninstalled from a certain environment; the ability of an application to be used instead of another, but for the same purpose and in the same environment and the quality of the application to adapt to different environments".

- **security** - in the current conditions, this integrator represents the level up to which it can protect the information and data held by a newsroom in order to provide users of this system (the employees of the media institution) with the appropriate authorization, depending on their level of access to information. Here, we must emphasize that by securing the editorial work system, the confidentiality component is ensured (each reporter, editor, or producer has their own personal box or cabinet within the software. Thus, all the information they need is stored there and no one can access it because it is encrypted).

- **efficiency of performance in special conditions** - refers to the aspects of simultaneous and constant operation of the software, its capacity to perform functions, regardless of the number of users entering and working at the same time.

In the current context, it is necessary to point out that automating the work process within a newsroom certainly fits into the development and skills of ICT (*information and communications technology*). Authors Andreas Veglis and Andreas Pomportsis, from the „Aristotle" University of Thessaloniki, in their study *Journalists in the Age of ICTs: Work Demands and Educational Needs*, group journalists/employees in newsrooms, in the context of digitization, into several groups.

1. Journalists with basic skills - have the ability to work efficiently with office processes (which include text processing, descriptions, presentations, databases), and with basic Internet services (browsing the web, email, etc).

2. Digital segment work skills - efficient management of a CMS (computer program running on a web server that allows publishing, editing, and modifying content. More specifically, the journalist must have an understanding of basic HTML concepts.

3. Web 2.0 skills - press editorial employees must know basic tools such as RSS and social bookmarks, in order to stay informed with the information they need for their work.

4. Webcasting skills - include the ability to create and publish podcasts and video broadcasts, independently. The journalist must be able to record an interview, conduct simple editing of the audio or video recording of that interview, and upload it to the centralized system managed by the media entity.

Thus, perspectives show that press editorial offices increasingly use a content management system. This provides automated processes for managing and creating collaborative digital content, using integrated (or designed) workflows. Depending on roles, employees or internal users are granted different privileges and responsibilities. For example, authors can post and save their materials, but editors can modify and publish them. Administrators can do all these things, but can also grant permission to other people in the organization to update or review the content.

Conclusions

Introducing software mechanisms into the editorial process is an imperative of the moment. Today, media institutions are increasingly trying to operationalize tasks for both the editorial staff and the management team. This allows for better and optimized communication between team members, a prompt response, and a permanent connection to internal processes through instant access to the necessary resources of the media entity. This way, the editorial offices that use software applications become more flexible and in the same time – competitive. The presence of specialized software for editorial offices leads to task management and helps coordinate editorial teams in real time, reducing delays and communication errors. Furthermore, we will highlight some recommendations in this regard:

- developing digital skills for creative, technical, and managerial staff, especially in the use of CMS, online tools, and the production of webcasts;
- investing in and constantly updating content management systems, which would allow collaboration between different departments/editorial offices and provide mobility in managing workflows, depending on the skills and roles assigned to each employee;
- developing a strategy for digitizing editorial processes, which includes training staff, implementing up-to-date technologies, and constantly adapting to IT developments.

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Presented at 29.09.2024