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Multimedia and transmedia dynamics in local press: utopia or fact? An analysis of the Catalan case

Las dinámicas multimedia y transmedia en la prensa de proximidad: ¿utopía o realidad? Un análisis del caso catalán

Abstract

The local press plays an informative and representative role contributing to social cohesion at the local level. This article analyses the adaptation of these media to the digital era, examining the integration of multimedia and transmedia dynamics in informative projects. After a rigorous review of the literature, the study combines qualitative (tables of analysis) and quantitative (semi-structured interviews and focus-group) methodology applied to a Catalan media sample as a paradigmatic study-case. The multimedia stage is defined within three parameters (medium, format, and narrative), understood as a necessary step to integrate transmedia narratives in which content is expanded and evolved via different platforms with a coordinated editorial strategy. The results reveal only a very limited use of multimedia dynamics and a lack of transmedia narratives, and an ignorance of these processes in the media studied. Hence, this study analyses the situation of digitalisation in the local press, with an innovative perspective with regard to two parameters (multimedia and transmedia), contributing to fill a gap in the existing literature regarding the adaptation of traditional media to virtual environments, considering the local sphere. In order to maintain its position at the local level, it is vital to examine the existence of these media in multiple on-line platforms and the introduction of digital narratives.

Resumen

La prensa de proximidad juega un rol informativo y de representación del territorio que contribuye a la cohesión social de la esfera local. Este artículo examina la adaptación de estos medios a la era digital, analizando la integración de dinámicas multimedia y transmedia. Con una revisión exhaustiva de literatura, el estudio combina la recogida de datos cuantitativos (tablas de análisis) y cualitativos (entrevistas semi-estructuradas y grupo focal), sobre una muestra representativa de medios catalanes como study-case paradigmático. El estadio multimedia se define en base a tres parámetros (soportes, formatos y narrativas) y se concibe como un paso necesario para que puedan integrar las narrativas transmedia, de forma que el contenido se expanda y evolucione por las diferentes plataformas, con una estrategia editorial coordinada. Los resultados muestran un uso muy pobre de las dinámicas multimedia, que se traduce en una prácticamente nula utilización de narrativas transmedia, así como un elevado desconocimiento de estos procesos en los medios. El artículo analiza, por tanto, el estado de digitalización de la prensa de proximidad, con un enfoque novedoso en base a dos parámetros (multimedia y transmedia), que contribuye a llenar un vacío en la literatura sobre adaptación de medios tradicionales a los entornos virtuales, considerando su aplicación a escala local. Para el mantenimiento de la función que estos medios juegan a nivel local es inevitable analizar su presencia en múltiples plataformas en línea y el uso de narrativas propias de la digitalización.

Keywords

Local press; proximity media; digitalisation; multimedia; transmedia; convergence

Palabras clave

Prensa local; medios de proximidad; digitalización; multimedia; transmedia; convergencia

1. Introduction

Proximity media are those actors that represent the territory and the local sphere. They help to make towns and cities more dynamic and cohesive (Aldridge, 2007; Franklin, 2006; Costera, 2010); they bring people, organisations and associations closer together and give them a voice; and they provide follow-up and contextual news stories from the perspective of the identity closest to the citizens (Straubhaar, 2007). The local press gives visibility to local communities and helps to create public opinion and hold public authorities to account, while also conveying the daily life of the territories.

Catalonia is a territory that has a wealth of proximity media (Martori, 2020). Within it, tens of local-coverage television, radio and press outlets have proliferated, and these have been analysed by numerous authors (Prado & Moragas, 2002; Guimerà, 2007; Corominas et al., 2007; Guillamet, 2002). Proximity media in Catalonia constitute a unique case study at an international level due to the high number of media outlets within the territory and their social cohesion function, which cannot be decoupled from Catalan language standardisation.

In this ecosystem, besides the 50 local television channels (out of a total of 82 digital terrestrial television [DTT] channels broadcast by providers at State and Autonomous Community levels) and the 231 local radio stations (in addition to the 13 Autonomous Community and 18 State stations received in Catalonia [CAC, 2022]), the local press plays a key role, with a total of 138 digital and paper publications grouped under the Catalan Association of Regional Press (ACPC). It is a diverse field that encompasses both regional and supra-regional editions, as well as strictly local or hyperlocal gazettes. The functions of local media include raising local awareness, providing background information, reflecting society and giving it a voice, and fostering social integration (Costera, 2010).

Taking into account the dynamics governing the digital era, and above all the specific features of proximity media, this study analyses the point at which the local press finds itself in terms of digital adaptation. Specifically, the study focuses on the role of the local press in relation to multimedia and transmedia dynamics, discusses whether such dynamics are a reality within it, and examines the optimisation possibilities within this field.

It is a cross-sectional study because it takes into account content dissemination (platforms and formats) and the internal structure of the media, work dynamics and ways of creating online content. In sum, it assesses the extent to which these media outlets are multimedia and/or transmedia ones, and it also considers the possibility and viability of incorporating these narratives into projects to inform the audience. The adaptation to digital dynamics and the analysis of how these ways of working permeate the local press are both seen as part of the evolution that local media outlets have had to cope with over the years in order to become resilient projects.

2. Convergence, multimedia and transmedia: an evolution

Like journalism in general, local journalism is changing as part of a structural transformation of the media environment (Kleis Nielsen, 2015). That author refers to the unfinished process of the media revolution, which involves an increase in digital media and changes in how we communicate with each other, share content, inform ourselves, are advertised to, and even entertain ourselves. Adaptation to the digital era and the incorporation of dynamics particular to the online space into the media – proximity media in this case – is linked to the viability of media outlets and their endurance as go-to news sources in different local areas, bearing in mind today's methods of communication. Despite trends towards globalised consumption, citizens still need to get up-to-date news about the areas where their daily lives play out, mainly via a variety of digital channels, so the local press's mission of providing them with high-quality information and being the Fourth Estate at a local level remains intact.

Digitalisation has led to the adaptation of the internal structure of the media and their newsrooms; they are no longer disseminators of messages via a single window. Digital convergence in the press is a process that has been taking place since the 2000s, and it has subsequently been the object of analysis in scholarly literature. The concept's boom began around 2005 and took off particularly from 2010 as a result of the dynamics within the media sector (Kolodzy, 2013; Jenkins & Deuze, 2008; Salaverría, García-Avilés, & Masip, 2010; Casero-Ripollés, 2010; Dwyer, 2010; Jensen, 2010). Convergence is understood as:

> A multidimensional process that, facilitated by the generalised implementation of digital telecommunication technologies, affects the technological, business, professional and editorial spheres of the media, thereby giving rise to an integration of previously separate tools, spaces, working methods and languages, and enabling journalists to create content that is distributed via multiple platforms in languages particular to each one [Translated from Spanish] (Salaverría, García-Avilés, & Masip, 2010: 48).

This process has affected almost all spheres of journalistic business. Moreover, it means that content is presented in different formats and disseminated via a variety of media, so the media outlets become multi-platform ones.

Although the study of convergence has piqued a number of researchers' interest, particularly since the 2000s, it is not yet possible to assert that the process is complete. Technological developments have enabled the media to incorporate new tools and narratives, which mean that the convergence process may go even further. Murdock (2000: 36) refers to convergence in the media, determined by the digital evolution, and sets out three levels: (1) technological (media systems), (2) content (cultural forms) and (3) economic (in relation to businesses, businesspeople and the media market).

García-Avilés et al. (2009) assert that journalistic convergence should not be referred to as a technology-based process, but instead as a process that utilises technological innovation to achieve specific goals in certain settings. Thus, every convergence project may lead to a different outcome. According to those authors, media professionals should learn to take into account the changing demands of the public.

Convergence is a process that has taken or is taking place in the media, and some authors have already analysed it in relation to proximity media (Masip & Micó, 2010). Among the local and commercial press, convergent or integrated newsrooms can be found. These work in a unified manner and produce content for more than one platform, generally a paper (which has traditionally been the main medium and, in many cases, continues to be the priority one, around which work dynamics are articulated), a website and some social media.

In those cases where audiovisual media – radio and television – exist within the same business project, real integration of newsrooms is not a generalised feature in the local press, though in some cases they do share spaces: journalists tend to create news stories for a single medium, which sets their work routines. Despite that difficulty, attempts are made to establish mechanisms of coordination between newsrooms, which may be more or less institutionalised, such as coordination or multimedia boards. Masip and Micó (2010) assert that, at the heart of local or regional media outlets, the relationship between paper and Internet media has traditionally been problematic.

Despite the difficulties highlighted by the literature in regard to establishing convergent newsrooms in the local press, doing so is a necessary step towards structuring media outlets on the basis of a multimedia dimension. Convergence has often been associated with multimedia (Drulă, 2015; Thurman & Lupton, 2008; Quandt & Singer, 2009), it being understood that convergence is a condition that needs to be met so that a media outlet can become a multimedia one. Drulă (2015) asserts that, in multimedia outlets, journalists need to produce content and broadcast it via multiple digital channels. Content is distributed via various platforms and devices, whilst at all times upholding standards of good journalism in the creation of news stories (regardless of their format).

Media convergence represents the unification of a variety of technologies and content. Meanwhile, multimedia storytelling represents a form of convergence between text, audio, photos and video. However, multimedia is more than that, since it also includes the hypertext structure of information, and on-screen graphic and visual representation (Drulă, 2015: 134). For García-Avilés et al. (2009), the multimedia model is that in which journalists work in separate sections for different platforms but are interconnected through coordinators and work routines. Production-related cooperation can range from information sharing between journalists whose work is for different platforms, to reporters who produce content for more than one platform and even to various ways of reproducing content for different platforms. In the most advanced models, the various platforms serve different purposes for total coverage, which implies a move towards the definition of a multiplatform concept.

In order to develop the multimedia concept on the basis of the cited literature and to apply it to the object of study in this research, three dimensions have been established:

A. Medium: media or platforms used to transmit content (a paper, a website, social media or other media, such as television or radio channels).

B. Format: different ways in which content can be presented (text, video, infographics, images, audio, etc.).

C. Narrative: ways of presenting content, which are related to the digital environment (the use of hyperlinks, the creation of a short version of a piece of content for social media and a long version thereof for a website/paper, the use of online content teasers, which are developed further on other media or vice versa, etc.).

If convergence has been identified as a necessary step for integrating multimedia dynamics, then the latter must be in place for journalistic projects to become transmedia ones. For storytelling to be

deemed transmedia, it must display a series of characteristics: production must involve more than one medium, and all forms of production must be integrated in accordance with the specific potential of each medium; content must be distributed and accessible from several types of device, such as personal computers, mobile phones and televisions; and the various media platforms must be used according to the needs of the topic, story or message (Scolari, 2013).

Jenkins (2003) maintains that, when it comes to defining transmedia narratives, it is necessary to distinguish between adaptation and extension. An adaptation consists in having the same story on different media, whereas extension aims to add new information or plots to the original one. An adaptation can be deemed transmedia if the story is told from different perspectives. Jenkins (2007) also defined transmedia storytelling as a "process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience" so that the content makes sense not only across all the different platforms, but also individually on each platform. Transmedia imply the use of new technologies and the adaptation of a media outlet to the technological paradigm through the use of innovative resources, and they have an impact on the journalistic sector (Martori, 2018).

Moloney (2011) found that porting transmedia storytelling methods to journalism could better attract audiences. Thus, by looking at one window, their interest in looking at another could be piqued. At the multimedia stage, content is distributed via different platforms, with the format being adapted to each medium. At the transmedia stage, however, multimedia dynamics are assumed, and a further element is added: content that evolves across the different platforms thanks to a coordinated editorial strategy. This concept, often employed in entertainment, still has some way to go in the news sphere.

Transmedia storytelling is a communication strategy that divides the story being told into several parts, with each being conveyed via a different medium according to its potential for exploring a particular part of the story (Campalans, Renó, & Gosciola, 2014). So, a feature of a transmedia message is that it is distributed in a fragmented way via several platforms, including social media.

Within the context of transmedia content production, where social media are windows for citizens, distribution must rely on mobility. This aspect is also important for content production (Renó et al., 2014: 13). For production, mobility means streamlining processes, such as being able to create content from a mobile phone or making the structures for producing news stories more flexible. Journalist would therefore be able to do their work as quickly and independently as possible, without necessarily having to go through their newsrooms. This also includes posting teasers of news stories on both the media outlet's and their own social media, thus helping to create a narrative that evolves across the different platforms in various formats.

Renó et al. (2014) define transmedia journalism as a journalistic language that includes, at one and the same time, different media with various languages and narratives. According to those authors, audiovisual assets, mobile communications and interactivity are therefore resources that are adopted in content distribution in order to connect with, attract and engage users.

Moreover, the Internet is a highly significant side of transmedia, which may also be related to the involvement of a media outlet in in-person activities that foster social cohesion. Anguita, de la Iglesia, and García (2018) link transmedia to analogue and digital communication and see them as two sides of the same experience. Indeed, they attribute qualities such as 'fluid', 'mobile', 'changing' and 'dynamic' to it in order to understand the relationships between the virtual and in-person aspects, with the latter being a mixture of analogue and in-person life. Corona Rodríguez (2019) also refers to the face-to-face dimension when analysing transmedia narratives combined with virtual media practices. The in-person dimension is applicable to public events and acts, such as talks and educational or cultural activities organised and broadcast by local media outlets. Face-to-face activities enable brand value and links with the audience to be created, and they generate content to feed the different digital windows of media outlets (On-Off-On strategy).

3. Objectives and methods

This article has two objectives:

1. To analyse the stage at which the local press finds itself in relation to digital and multimedia dynamics.

2. To analyse the degree to which the local press has adopted transmedia dynamics, and how far it still needs to go in this area.

To those ends, the extent to which convergence had been implemented as a prior step towards meeting the multimedia goal – as detailed in the theoretical framework – was observed.

In order to conduct the study, a methodology combining qualitative and quantitative data collection was applied to a sample of Catalan media outlets with a major local press presence as a case study, as detailed in the introduction.

A representative sample was selected in accordance with criteria of territorial balance, thematic variety and media diversity. Moreover, in the case of paper media outlets, publications with varying periodicities and different geographical reference areas were included (local, regional and supra-regional).

The sample included the following eight media outlets (two per province): *Semanari de l'Alt Empordà* and *Revista del Baix Empordà* (Girona Province); *El 9 Nou* and *Diari de Sabadell* (Barcelona Province); *Som Garrigues* and *Segre* (Lleida Province); and *El Vallenc* and *Semanari L'Ebre* (Tarragona Province). They are traditional media outlets that have used paper as the main medium for years, and their adaptation to the Internet is studied.

Data collection through quantitative methods consisted in analysing three dimensions – (1) medium, (2) format and (3) narrative – as described in the theoretical framework, using the tables shown at the end of the document[1].

Qualitative methods were combined with semi-structured interviews[2] held with the directors of the media outlets, and a focus group[3] held with eight directors of the local press in Catalonia.

4. Results

The local press finds itself at an incipient multimedia stage. What emerges from the analysis is that the media outlets have a variety of platforms via which they distribute content (including a paper, a website, social media and, in some cases, other associated traditional media). Regarding the multimedia stage and taking into consideration the three dimensions detailed in the theoretical framework (medium, format and narrative), a fairly satisfactory use of different platforms was identified in the first (medium), and content was found to be presented basically in the form of text (with or without photos) in the second (format), with little format variety in the news stories as a result. Regarding the third dimension (narrative), it was observed that there was still some way to go, bearing in mind that social media are basically a news repository.

What emerges from the data obtained from the qualitative analysis is that the local press has various content distribution platforms, with the media used by the media outlets ranging in number from four to eleven. These include a paper and a website (present in all the cases analysed), other traditional media (especially television channels, existing in half of the projects), and social media (particularly Twitter and Facebook, which are used by all the media outlets, whereas other platforms that are gaining in popularity among users have yet to be used). Despite the number of platforms with accounts, some are not operational and, in many cases, these media serve solely to replicate content from a paper and a website. The content is therefore not expanded by employing different formats or using such media as windows in which to further 'progress' news stories (e.g., content teasers on social media are rarely used). A lack of platform updating was identified, with some accounts having been neglected.

In the local press managed by private firms, which has advertising as the basis of its business model, the financial resources of the managing firms are limited. Directors and employees alike are more geared towards content production than innovation or multiplatform distribution. The lack of training among proximity media staff in using new platforms in an effective way is one of the identified causes, as is the lack of partnerships with actors within the territory (such as local influencers) who could collaborate with these media outlets and become content advisors. Moreover, new media that are gaining in popularity among younger users, such as TikTok and Twitch, are not being taken into account.

When analysing the format dimension, there was found to be very little use of video (used by only two of the media outlets analysed), while infographics, audio and GIFs were non-existent in the local press projects analysed. This highlights the fact that news stories are not presented in audiovisual formats despite there being several active platforms for content dissemination.

Thus, the results of this study show that the diversity of formats in the local press is limited (basically to text and images). In this dimension, news stories are not presented in the most appropriate way according to the content and the distribution medium. Moreover, in regard to text, the techniques particular to the digital realm are neither widely nor optimally used. In this instance, the use of bold and highlighting was identified as lacking, bearing in mind that online reading patterns require text to be structured into pieces that enable it to be read in an exploratory way.

Video is used in a very anecdotal way despite being especially viable in business projects that have associated television media, since audiovisual assets could be integrated into digital content with

relative ease, with convergent work routines in the media outlets. It was observed that there was a minority use of short format video in the form of clips created simply and quickly – even on a mobile phone – that could complete news stories and/or feed social media. Meanwhile, there was found to be a lack of creation of audio content and podcasts, a format that is on the rise in terms of digital media consumption, especially among younger people.

And while the use of photos is notable, infographics are a rarely used component. The use of other visual resources such as graphics or interactive assets to illustrate data-related journalistic pieces and/or draw the attention of readers is not explored either. These resources can be used not only to complete the information within a news story on a website, but also as materials to feed social media, thereby bringing distinctive value and offering adapted content that is presented in accordance with the particularities of each platform.

Regarding the third dimension, it was observed that narratives particular to the digital environment were not duly explored. In many cases, texts in the digital environment are brief and do not go into much detail (they are generally adapted from press releases).

Regarding the adaptation of content to the different platforms, the dynamics analysed consisted in posting news stories from a website to social media. In the majority of cases, the news stories on social media are linked and these channels are not used as a tool to post news story teasers or present such stories in a different way, or as spaces to create narratives beyond links to news stories (which usually have the same text and photo format, or a text and media outlet logo format in some cases). A recurrent practice is that of one news story being linked more than once, with little variety in the way topics are presented. Most of the content available on social media consists of news stories that are linked on Twitter and Facebook after being published on a website. These stories are often presented with the same text as the original piece. Only one of the media outlets analysed used social media to post teasers of news stories before they were published in its paper or digital newspapers, and only two media combined more than one format (text and video).

Instagram Stories are becoming a resource used to reach the audience in an approachable and original way, and good practices were found in this respect. Using a video posted as a story last thing at night, one of the analysed media outlets presented the headlines or highlights of news stories that readers would see in the newspaper the following day, with a review of the front page and the main topics as a way of gaining the public's loyalty and reaching a younger audience.

Even so, in the local press analysed, social media were still being used as a repository for news stories published on websites instead of tools to create two-way conversations with users in accordance with what the audiences seek on, and the formats particular to, each platform. Contact with the public is one-directional, without any methods for getting to know about the users and consequently being able to personalise the content offered on each medium. For example, Twitter is not used by journalists working in situ to post news story teasers; photos and videos are not posted on Instagram when topics are being prepared (as a first look for the purpose of interacting with the audience); social media are not usually a space where the audience can suggest questions to put to interviewees; and so on.

As an example, it should be mentioned that one of the media outlets analysed had a section on its website called multimedia, within which there were only photos. The embryonic multimedia dimension is evident since multimedia is not used in a way that makes the most of the options offered by the virtual space. It was also observed that some media outlets held chats with experts from their regions, which took place synchronically (they were announced for a particular date and time), and readers could send questions to the interviewees. Although this method gives users a voice, it could be further explored by making the most of digital resources and using social media, which allow live video streaming so that swift feedback and more direct contact with the audience can be offered. Meanwhile, there are tools that could encourage user engagement, such as surveys or competitions, that despite being present as tags, were actually empty or inactive in the media outlets analysed.

There is widespread use of hyperlinks by some media outlets (not only for introducing external links, but also for linking related news stories published on their websites or on social media) but not by others, where their presence is rare or non-existent. Only half of the media outlets analysed regularly used hyperlinks to enhance navigation within texts.

Transmedia represent a stage that can be explored once the media outlets have integrated multimedia dynamics, enabling formats, media and narratives to be used optimally while including content that evolves across the different platforms, with complementarity between them. It was found that transmedia dynamics are rarely, if ever, used by the local press. For the moment, neither expansive narratives nor conversations with the audience are being created using the different formats and media. Website content is not spread (before and after posting a news story) across different social media in an original way, using the tools that each of them offers to reach active users (prosumers).

Besides the scant use of platforms for transmedia purposes, it was not possible to identify any presentation of news stories on websites in a transmedia format, i.e., pieces that include text, images, audio and video in the same post, encouraging as much user engagement as possible, asking users to interact or even create content to achieve a two-way relationship. Social media were not identified as part of a coordinated content strategy with a content journey across different platforms (where it is posted as a teaser or extended or completed on the different platforms, even by users themselves).

Besides the fieldwork showing that the use of transmedia narratives was low, what emerges from the interviews is that the sector has very little knowledge of what the transmedia concept means. The majority of the interviewees either did not know the meaning of the term or had defined it mistakenly or inaccurately. Specifically, 64% of the interviewees said that they did not know about the concept or did not know the difference between multimedia and transmedia, and just 30% dared to give an answer, albeit fairly vague.

Regarding the in-person dimension of transmedia, the local press does indeed carry out actions but, as yet, they are not articulated as part of a broader, coordinated transmedia editorial strategy.

5. Discussion

In the multimedia dimension, there is a need to adapt local press format strategies to: (1) the platform used and (2) to what it wants to communicate. In media outlets with scant financial resources, exploring video and audio (Renó et al., 2014) as resources that have very low creation costs is crucial. It also allows media outlets to adapt to new consumption habits and to reach segmented audiences, ultimately gaining their loyalty to those outlets. Besides exploring new formats, there is room for improvement when it comes to constructing narratives that make efficient use of digital resources and being seen as true multimedia media outlets (Drulă, 2015; García-Avilés et al., 2009).

Such multimedia adaptation is necessary for the local press to progress towards the transmedia stage, in which the content evolution element is added via different media thanks to a coordinated editorial strategy (Jenkins, 2007). Without an optimal use of the different platforms (multimedia stage), it is unlikely that the media outlets analysed will become transmedia ones.

Transmedia storytelling is therefore one of the challenges that the local press faces in order to adapt to changes in its environment. At this stage of digitalisation, stories will journey across different content distribution windows instead of being concentrated in a paper and on a website as they currently are (even though they may be reposted to other platforms). In the analysis of multimedia and transmedia dynamics, the complex relationship noted by Masip and Micó (2010) between a paper and the Internet in the local press is confirmed. Moreover, the in-person aspect of transmedia (Corona Rodríguez, 2019) is embryonic yet more developed than the virtual part.

6. Conclusions

The local press has not consolidated multimedia dynamics or used digital media in accordance with the potential that each of them offers. There is, therefore, still some way to go when it comes to establishing work routines guided by online content distribution and consumption, which has an impact on the internal organisation of journalistic projects (newsrooms) and on how news stories are presented.

It was observed that the local press did not place importance on social media as a content distribution strategy, and simply replicated content on such platforms after it had been posted to a newspaper's website. These media serve as a news repository, without making the most of their potential to be used as spaces where news story teasers can be posted or as tools for getting to know about and engaging the audience, linked to a coordinated editorial strategy. In the projects in general, innovation strategies are poorly integrated due to difficulties surrounding the ability to allocate resources to innovation, and also to some reticence and lack of awareness displayed by the media outlets' directors.

A local press multimedia strategy must take into account the audience it wishes to reach by considering the most appropriate platforms, formats and narratives. This implies that media outlets should be capable of distributing content via a variety of media and of offering video, audio and visual resources combined with text. Moreover, the new platforms may be an opportunity for the local press in terms of bringing it closer to audiences whose loyalty to it has yet to be gained, such as younger people. By making the most of such platforms, the projects could function with different windows and formats to communicate with their audiences.

The incorporation of multimedia needs to be furthered with the adoption of transmedia, which would represent the next level for the modernisation and digital adaptation of the local and regional press. It is a matter of managing to get content to evolve across different platforms, creating narratives that integrate the different media and formats so that content can be circulated across various channels

(using one platform or another depending on the potential each one has and what story the content wants to tell) that feed back to each other, i.e., stories should be constructed based on a journey across the platforms. Besides encouraging user engagement, transmedia narratives have an in-person dimension that therefore allows them to be linked to activities carried out within the territory in order to create content for virtual channels and, at the same time, increase the value of the brand within the local community.

The establishment of multimedia and transmedia dynamics in the local press faces a number of challenges that need to be overcome as an indispensable step towards these media outlets' modernisation and integration into the digital era, such as incorporating new production dynamics and forms of news consumption. All of this would help these actors – who have been the go-to news sources for many years (especially as offline media outlets) – to integrate into the virtual era, keeping their territorial representation functions intact while adapting to digital dynamics (in terms of both working methods and the way in which content is presented) in order to carry on playing a predominant role in the local sphere.

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9. Conflicts of interest statement

The author certifies that she has no conflicts of interest.

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Notes

[1] Qualitative data collection tables:

Medium dimension

	Media 1	Media 2	Media n…
Paper	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
Website	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
Other traditional media (television or radio)	yes/no/which	yes/no/which	yes/no/which
Twiter	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
Facebook	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
Instagram	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
Youtube	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
Telegram channel	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
Whatsapp channel	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
Linkedin	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
Other	which	which	which
Total			

Format dimension

	Media 1	Media 2	Media n…
Video	number	number	number
Infographics	number	number	number
Cardboards	number	number	number
GIFs	number	number	number
Audios	number	number	number
Other	number& typology	number& typology	number& typology

Narrative dimension

	Media 1	Media 2	Media n…
Hyperlinks	number	number	number
News posted on social media (after the website)	number	number	number
Teasers of news stories posted on social media first	number	number	number
News containing more than one format	number	number	number
News in which more than one medium are used (multimedia news)	number	number	number
News in which more than one medium are used and the content evolves (transmedia news)	number	number	number
Content linked to actions promoted by the media (with or without other actors implication)	number	number	number

[2] Interviews were held with: Carles Ayats, editorial director *Setmanari de l'Alt Empordà*; Gerard Xarles, editor *Revista del Baix Empordà*; Víctor Palomar, editor-in-chief *El 9 Nou*; Toni Cortès, director *Anoia Diari*; Marc Basté, director-editor *Diari de Sabadell*; Miquel Andreu, editor-in-chief *Som Garrigues*; Joan Cal, executive director *Grupo Segre*; Francesc Fàbregas, director *El Vallenc*; Ximo Rambla, editor-manager *L'Ebre*.

[3] The focus group was held with: Agustí Danés (*El 9 Nou*), Carme Paltor (*Setsetset*), Joaquim Rambla (*Semanari L'Ebre*), Joan Carles Codolà (*Llumiguia/Cassà Digital*), Josep M. Rué Rubió (*El Cèrvol*), Francesc Fàbregas (*El Vallenc*), Marc Basté (*Diari de Sabadell*), Núria Piera López (*La Portada/Gol Esports/Puntvallès*).