

# News Reporting On Different Platforms, In Terms of Newsgathering and Distribution: Examining The Case of “The Independent”

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## Öz Abstract

20. Yüzyılın sonlarında bir iletişim aracı olarak ortaya çıkan internet, hayatımızın hemen her alanına girecek şekilde yaygınlaşmış ve gelişmiştir. İnternetle birlikte ortaya çıkan yeni gelişmelerle etkileşimli olarak ses, hareketli görüntü, metin ve resim gibi içerikler taşınabilir duruma geldi. Özellikle de son yıllarda, zaman-mekan kavramını ortadan kaldıran internetin, bilgiye ulaşma-yayma konusunda sağladığı imkanlar ve getirdiği kolaylıklar sayesinde, bu yeni teknoloji habercilik sektörü için vazgeçilmez bir araç haline gelmiştir. Bu hususta, gerek yazılı basın, gerekse görsel medya bağlamında yapılan habercilik formatı bu yeni kitle iletişim türünden

etkilenmiş ve internet haberciliği kavramı ortaya çıkmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında, habercilik formatının yazılı basın ve internet ortamı üzerinde nasıl şekillendiği, ‘The Independent’ örneği üzerinden analiz edilmiştir. Bu hususta, ‘The Independent’ gazetesinde 2 Mayıs 2014 tarihinde yayımlanan “Ukraine crisis “ başlıklı haberin, gazetenin basılı versiyonunda ve internet sitesinde nasıl ele alındığı karşılaştırılmış, geleneksel gazetecilikle internet gazeteciliği arasındaki farklılıkların neler olduğu tartışılmış ve internet gazeteciliğinin geleceğinin ne olacağıyla ilgili olarak bir tartışma sunulmaya çalışılmıştır.

## Haber Toplama ve Dağıtım Açısından Farklı Platformlar Üzerinde Haber Sunumu: The Independent Örneği Üzerine Bir İnceleme

Internet has emerged as a communication tool by the 20 th century. It has fast become widespread and spread into all areas of life. Thanks to the developments appeared with internet, content such as audio, moving images, text and pictures have become easily reachable. Especially in recent years, there has been remarkable improvements in terms of accessing to information and dissemination of the internet which has eliminated the concept of space-time, this new technology has become an indispensable tool for reporting industry. In this regard, reporting format made through either print media or visual media has been influenced by the new

type of mass communication and it has emerged the concept of internet journalism. In the context of this research, it has been analyzed how the reporting format has been shaped on the print media and the internet, in case of the newspaper of ‘The Independent’. Therefore, the report titled ‘Ukraine Crisis’ published on 2nd May, 2014 has been compared how to handle in the printed version and on the website, and it is discussed what are the differences between traditional journalism and online journalism, and also it is attempted to provide a discussion about the future of online journalism.

## Anahtar Kelimeler Keywords

Haber, Haber Toplama, Okuyucu, Çevrimiçi Gazetecilik, The Independent

News, News Gathering, Online Journalism, Traditional Journalism, The Independent

## Introduction

Throughout history, great advances have been shaping human lives. One of the key advancement is the information revolution based on the technologies such as writing, printing, tv, computer, internet etc. Also, social and cultural phenomena are shaped by technology over and over again. In this regard, the information revolutions have re-shaped human lives over and over again. As McLuhan (1975) mentioned “Medium is the message”. In other words, every new form of media transforms (message) influences our experience and society. This influence is more important than content. For instance, it doesn’t matter what you say on the telephone, the telephone has become a service of huge environment. Although what you say on the telephone affects very few, the medium and environment affects everyone. Likewise, it is the same with radio, television, internet or any other medium.

As Lawlor (2007) states, the advancements on technology has also been influenced by the information technology for the last decades. According to Breverton’s Encyclopedia of Inventions (2015), one of the major information revolution was the invention of writing which began in Mesopotamia by the Sumerians around 3200 BC. It began as record keeping information and evolved into the use of symbols for writing down stories. Invention of writing had enabled people to store information. In this period, people learned how to read and they exchanged an ear for an eye as a dominant sense. When people learned to read, they became independent thinkers and they started to be not a part of the collective society.

Other key revolution on information technology included the invention of the printing press. Carrying the information and portability has become possible due to the invention of the Gutenberg printing press and it made reading and writing widespread. According to Hill (2013), the invention of printing press around 1440 gave vastly increased numbers of people access to book and it took a while for printing technology to become widely available. According to McLuhan (1975), the printed book glorifies individualism and written media (print) is the technology of individualism. If you modify written technology by an electric technology, individualism would also be modified.

In the past few decades there has been a revolution in communication area, and it has indicated that technological progress and use of information, technology is highly likely to continue at a rapid pace. It is mentioned as final information revolution has been the development of communication technology that is called digitalization. Compared to the other revolutions, information had not been distributed at this speed. Information has been distributed with electric rate and the way of communication has changed fundamentally due to the advancements of digitalization. According to Kerschner (2015), The last “Information Revolution” began with the digitization of individual enterprises, which created networks of increasingly ubiquitous computers such as mainframes in the 1950s-1960s, mini-computers in the 1970s-1980s, and PCs in the 1980s-1990s. Especially, by the beginning of 90’s, it has combined different media services easily that many media services have become convergent and users can access the many media services at the same time. The developments of technological devices have based on the Internet connections which point out the WIFI or the 3G network via mobile can stay connected anytime and anywhere. As Jenkins claims (2002) “Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other. Jenkins shows that the production and sharing the content are easier from the past. Due to digitization, more and more people are connected to each other in recent years. As Lister and et al (2009) put up, digitization creates the conditions for inputting very high quantities of data, very fast access to that data and very high rates of change of that data. Today, it is offered to individuals as a new media in the field of internet.

In our modern times, with the emergence of internet media, it has changed the way people would be informed with everyday news. Then, news was delivered through day to day basis through newspaper but now, almost every hour, there are new updates on the latest news. It cannot be avoided for news delivery to be altered in different platforms.

The main purpose of this research is to analyze how the news reported differently on different platforms based on the comparison of broadsheet edition of The Independent and its online reporting style. Moreover, in this paper, I examine how news gathering and distribution has been influenced by the technological developments and I will also investigate the wider processes through in which way information of media is distributed, received, consumed by internet users.

Not only the way journalists are presenting news is changing but the devices on which the content is viewed has also been changing. Mobile platforms are the latest innovation in a society increasingly on the move, news content and social media can be found through personal devices such as through the Internet, Net Books, Kindle and the latest embodiment of this rapidly growing area of mobile development interactivity, the iPad. This increased connectivity forced news providers to change and adapt their content delivery to meet the demands of the digital community and changing requirements of the online life of society.

In order for journalists to write for the web it is vital to write short sentences instantly put across the information of the main points in a clear and concise manner. As Glebas (2009) has explained in his book, some online content employ a way of presenting stories known as the rule of TWOs, suggesting that the first two sentences of the story should give an immediate sense of what is about to come. In addition to that, best practice suggests that the first two paragraphs should largely cover everything on the page. Moreover, due to the modern reader's skimming through nature of scanning the news content by readers the first two words of a paragraph need to have the power to grab the reader and persuade them to read.

It is important to note that some software generate news stories for the media organizations. The programme takes the copy from print editions and then using a framework creates a web version. This inevitably leads to the homogenized content with each story read in much the same way. This approach can dissuade a reader who seeks a deeper reading experience. The first two-word approach is commonly called frontloading a web page and has led to a proclivity for sensationalism to dominate news reports. There is still an enormous desire for this more analytical, views-based content and it is easily accessible on the news site blogs that allow readers to comment and connect with a story in a more direct manner.

## **Methodology**

According to Stake (2010), qualitative research methods are described as a mode of research aiming at clarifying ideas and enhancing insight regarding the research findings since they allow the exploration of a thorough depiction of phenomena. The main target for applying qualitative methods is to ensure more detailed understanding and enhanced perception of social communications and associations. In this regards, in the research, the study was conducted in the lights of the provided literature as a qualitative research method. Books, articles and news related to journalism, online media, printing press and etc. are used as a source of information to be collected as a research data.

The study has mostly used the official website of The Independent and its printing version which issued in May 2, 2016 in order to obtain that information with comparison of news

gathering and distribution in different platforms. As a case study, because of its accessibility and also popularity, the newspaper of The Independent has been purposefully and analytically selected in order to analyze the issue, in detail. Case study methodology has been applied the study as a qualitative research method. According to Ragin and Becker (1992), the concept of case may be a relatively bounded object or a process; it may be theoretical, empirical, or both. With a simple perspective, a case is a phenomenon specific to time and space. As Johansson (2003) has specified, a case study is expected to capture the complexity of a single case, and the methodology which enables this has developed within the social sciences.

### **Review Of Online Reporting And Broadsheet Edition Of The Independent:**

This research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of comparative communication research. According to Esser and Pfetsch (2004), comparative analysis is characterized by several advantages that explain its growing prevalence. For instance, as Mancini (2012) states, comparative research draws our attention to different “models of journalism,” and also to the clear differences in how journalism is currently undergoing change in societies around the world. In this regards, I’ve attempted to analyze the changes in news reporting based on the case of “The Independent”, one of the leading newspapers in the UK which also enjoys worldwide recognition based on the shapes of journalism which is made online and broadsheet version. The newspaper launched in 1986, has printed its last daily title on 26 March, 2016. I will also highlight the fact that the newspaper indeed has reported differently between their two distribution channel of newspaper that is based on the printed edition and internet or online version. Not only about the journalistic ways, also based on the economic dimensions of the situation, changes in the journalistic field will be under debated in the study.

The first argument is on the economic aspect of the issue. A vast majority of people believe that news content can be free at the access point, and if the content is placed on the web the readers can be able to view it in its entirety and, by everybody who wishes to get access to information. However, as Williams (2014) states, media groups and content providers have believed that people should pay for certain types of online content. The hierarchical nature of news production has changed radically. The old concept of major media group’s collection and dissemination of news is a thing of the past. Readers can now customize the news they want to see which obviates the need of hitherto dominating nature of news delivery of previous stories, thus creating a narrowcast style of giving news rather than broadcast.

Some people who lack knowledge of using technology are more likely to prefer the old way of reading news than opting for modern gadgets like iPad etc. Nonetheless, news gathered by newspaper does not necessarily change, all stated or reported details are facts for the particular moment. As Bromley and Bowles (1995) point out, “At the same time, it cannot be argued that news tend to change overtime and with the intervention of online media, some online channel would instantly update the current news thus making the published newspaper content a bit belatedly for readers”. For a newspaper to be published; initially it would wait for the current day events and happenings; these include the politics, sports and entertainment news among others. Having gathered all the news and events until 9 to 10 pm publisher then gets in a position to give final shape to stories. It would then signal the start of publishing the newspapers that would be distributed early in the morning. On the other hand, online publishing publishes news overtime. Moreover, it could take advantage of other social media tools such Twitter and Facebook to further distribute its news bulletin, making them the faster media platform than traditional approach of newspaper.

I will endeavor specifically to review the news story which appeared on 02 nd May, 2014 edition of The Independent reporting about the current crisis in Ukraine which it titled as “ This is the people’s property now”, whereas in the website of the newspaper linked as <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-crisis-this-is-the-peoples-property-now--riot-police-unable-to-stop-prorussian-activists-from-storming-another-symbol-of-ukrainian-state-power-9313986.html>, the same news has titled in detailed and quite different from the printed version. In the website of The Independent newspaper (2014), it has reported as the headliner “Ukraine crisis: ‘This is the people’s property now’ - riot police unable to stop pro-Russian activists from storming another symbol of Ukrainian state power”. Apart from a lengthy headline there was not much difference observed in the reporting pattern. Both website and broadsheet detailed some pro-Russian protesters who gathered up to protest against the latest action of Ukrainian government. The newspaper source also featured how pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine’s second largest city Donetsk fight off against Ukrainians in the streets causing large scale damage to government installations as well as in the streets. The London-based newspaper also mentioned how the protesters sung hymns of Great Patriotic War in the streets of second-largest city of Ukraine. Similar pattern has been adopted to report the ransacking of prosecutor’s office in Donetsk. There was not a disparity in reporting the major events between the two versions of the newspaper i.e. online and broadsheet. Similarly, takeover of the government buildings and destruction of important files and data was reported without any discrepancy: similar detail was found both online as well as paper sheets of The Independent of 02 May 2014.



(Source: The Independent, published in 2nd of May, 2014)

It can be understood that the newspaper put a good deal of emphasis on explaining the story in relation to the headline it carried i.e. people’s property aspect. There is a visible reference to the taking over of the Ukrainian government offices by protesters. Both of the versions even seem to go to the extent of naming individuals like Nicolai which has appeared twice in the



story whether it was online version or paper edition. This appears to be an effort firstly, to stress the point how every individual taking part in the storming of government buildings behaved. Secondly, it shows that the paper seems to have emphasized that it had firsthand account of the events that even the reporter was able to name the individuals in the mob.

Similarly, the stories also carry the mention of “There were smudges of blood on the walls and the floor” while the story alluded to the storming of a police station. At the same time there is no reference to any casualties despite reporting smudges of blood in both versions of 02 May 2014. Thrust of the story is how successful the protesters had been on that particular day and how hapless the Ukrainian authorities seemed to control the unrest.

Conspicuous by its absence in both versions of The Independent is the details about sanction on Russia. This only explains why the newspaper publication is based only with a specific timeframe depending on the editor’s decision while website sources provide the latest live events. As Johnson and Kaye (1998) state, “Nonetheless, this does not necessarily indicate newspapers are less important in our society in fact, newspaper sources are far more credible than websites”. This statement can be proven with the observance of other websites that claims of their news to be authentic but the reality is that they may lack the expertise to operate such obligation and as a matter of fact, some would do everything just for the readers to visit their website causing news to be non-credible as they rush their story. Some websites also copy content from other online sources making them nuisance to other website that are operating legally. Meanwhile, newspaper organization employs real experts in giving opinion about current situation, making them a likely option for rational readers than choosing online news. Sources coming from Washington Post, CNN, BBC and Al-Jazeera or local news group are some credible news makers in online world while newspaper can be considered credible in a sense that they would be in trouble if they distribute false news. In the final analysis, it is safe to state that The Independent confined the story to the unrest without any reference to major developments related to Ukrainian crisis. Redeeming feature appears to similarity between the two versions of the paper.

## **Influence Of New Technologies On Newsgathering, Dissemination And Distribution:**

The business of news gathering and distribution has been in a state of flux for quite some time. There is an ever increasing number of different sources and outlets, providing immediate access to current and archived reports. The global Internet connectivity is considered responsible for the current state of uncertainty. In addition, changes in consumer demand, new online platforms, increased social networking and search engines put strain on news distribution. On the other hand, all these factors merge to create a real sense of opportunity; a *fertile* ground for innovation and experimentation, set against the large groups such as The Guardian Media Group, News Corporation and the need for the Mirror Group to financially viable, online platforms.

## **Media Ownership And How It Affects News Gathering:**

As Dee (2010) mentioned, “At the end of March 2010, having suffering massive losses, The Independent, a broadsheet which began its life in the eighties, was bought for a ludicrous price”. Understanding media ownership is essential therefore, to understand the evolution of

the sector. It is important to examine the idea of media ownership and how that ownership affects the way stories are covered and presented to the reader. Where media groups belong to large multinational corporations and groups, perhaps they can only derive income from advertising. This dependence on outsider's interests could influence what stories are covered to avoid conflicts with the interests of the client.

Hegemony in the media is being gradually taken over by Internet users as an increasing number of content is created by the users themselves. Blogging sites where the content is produced and controlled by the user and sites like Youtube support this idea. Media groups are trying to take back that control by using new technologies and platforms to keep their hold on the user. According to Dee (2010), "Negroponte in the book *Being Digital* foretold a time when people would be able to receive news that they considered important and filter out others. News distributors would provide what he termed the "daily me" for each person who searched for information. The information would then be sent to the person's home computer and viewed at leisure. It is more interesting to note that he wrote about, news content tailoring and delivery, before the internet boom in 1995".

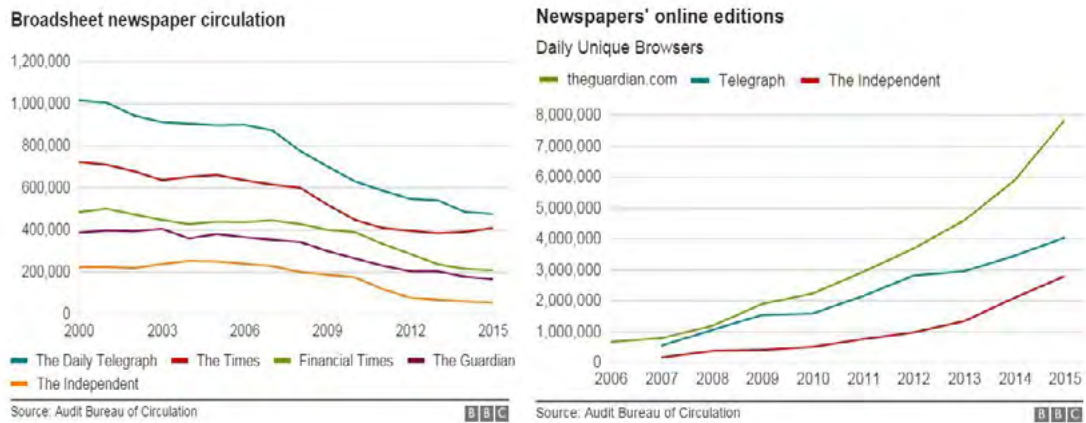
## The Blog World

The number of individual blogs has increased dramatically and the number of people who follow these blogs has also risen accordingly. As this research makes inferences from the data-crunching crowd, it is possibly more reliable figure to measure by the number of total blog posts per day -- presumably because some blogs still online are in fact dormant or abandoned. According to the counter based on the latest statistics on worldwide blog activity published by Technorati, *Blogging Statistics Worldometers* (2016), about 5 million blog post has been written today for 21 April 2016. People reach these blog posts with following blogs using RSS feeds and widgets on blog pages linked to social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook and stay in touch with that individual bloggers say. Many of these bloggers pick up on current reports and discuss them in detail to put across their own point of view and links to other web pages on this topic. The new mode of spreading news of bloggers removes any sense that the person is an authority on a subject. They simply take what they see as the important issues and expanded on them. They then invite and encourage their blog users to engage in digital conversation via comments facilities. Followers can in turn use hyperlinks to link to their own and other people's blogs and more Web pages, creating an online community around a particular story.

The blog world is not just dominated by user generated content. There are a lot of blogs by journalists, some of whom write for major newspapers. These journalists are often reuse and rephrase the content for use in various media. Initially, the basic facts of the news can be published and used for print and web versions, using the method of TWOs described above. However, to bring life, vibrancy and detail to the story, journalists have begun to create and manage their own blogs to give a story background and depth. They can bring in other relevant stories by links; link to other blogs of journalists as well as those of professionals they believe have knowledge of the subject. This still allows time for discussion and analysis to take place within the blogging community, and perhaps most importantly for journalists which in turn enhances the ability of the community to disseminate electronically through social media such Facebook, Twitter, etc. According to Dee (2010), "This inclusive way to share news content bypasses the control of major media groups and allows the blogging community to interact with each other around a particular story".

## Conclusion

It could be mentioned that in the future, there will be more technological development and news gathering would improve, leaving newspaper approach less attractable to our society. Moreover, newspaper would no longer have the same magnitude of credibility as before, in fact, even as today, there are many people realizing the importance of shifting from reading newspaper to reading news through mobile phones or other technology. There is no changing or difference of news in different platforms, however, online approach is proactive and quick to adapt to the latest events. If there is an advantage of reading newspaper, it would be found on the opinion page where we will learn the opinions of other interest groups which are not available in online sources. But this factor may not be enough as generating newspapers are costly and credible writers could also obtain their own website to share their views therefore there is a likely change of culture in the future regarding news reporting and getting news for readers.



Sources: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-35561145>

As it is mentioned above, whereas the broadsheet newspaper circulation has been fallen between 2000 and 2015, the usage of online editions of the newspapers has risen over ten years. Specifically, as BBC media correspondent David Sillito (2016) states, at the Independent's peak sales hit around 428,000 copies a day. Twenty-five years later, the number of copies being sold on a weekday in newsagents is rather closer to 28,000.

According to the owner of ESI Media, Evgeny Lebedev (2016) pointed out, the newspaper industry is changing, and that change is being driven by readers. In this regards, the Independent and Independent on Sunday newspapers were to cease print editions in March, leaving only an online edition. Lebedev goes on to say, readers indicate that the future is digital. This decision preserves the Independent brand and allows them to continue to invest in the high quality editorial content that is attracting more and more readers to The Independent's online platforms.



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