Tạp chí Lý Luận Chính Trị Và Truyên Thông

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1. Assessing the advantages and disadvantages of multimedia news packages in online newspapers

Multimedia news package in online newspapers is defined as: A new and complete type of journalistic works published in an online newspaper, or a collection of news and articles on the same topic, in order to reflect a large, complex, multi-faceted and data-rich topic; with linear or non-linear structures, vivid and realistic storytelling with multimedia elements such as texts, images, audios, video formats, infographics, interactive elements, referential communication and social media, etc. creatively assembled with smooth transition, they become a unified whole, closely and organically linked.

The topics of multimedia news package are very diverse, covering all contents from politics - society, international politics, economics, sports, science... Among them, articles on socio-political topics are the largest. The topics of multimedia news package are selected very carefully, often referring to people, things, and events that have an impact on the community. That could be 1. individuals, groups of people with unusual talents, special stories, 2. famous characters; individuals or groups of people facing large, complex problems; 3. recreating events, complex problems or dramatic, interesting real-life experiences; explaining things, events, phenomena that are difficult to imagine.

The digital elements in most of the multimedia news package include: text, photography, slide show, audio video, looping video, infographics, animations, animated descriptions, maps, and quotes. Usually, each works uses only a few media

to convey the content, with one medium playing the main role to lead the story in a flow. Other multimedia elements are often interspersed during the narration.

However, unlike normal multimedia journalistic works, in multimedia news package, the appearance of multimedia elements is not mechanically assembled, but each element carries a complete content, combined together to highlight the main theme, and to create a unified whole. The design technique in the news package is the key to make it more vivid and valuable than ordinary online articles.

The three electronic newspapers studied in this survey are The New York Times (NYT) at nytimes.com, The Guardian (TG) at theguardian.com and VnExpress (VNE) at vnexpress.net. They are among the pioneer innovative newsrooms in their segments. The content of news package is extensive, has high social value and exist in diverse and creative forms. Successful news package is a powerful tool to strengthen and spread the newsroom's brand. These newsrooms move towards standardizing the process of producing news packages to minimizing the cost of time, human resources, finance, thereby meeting the audience's expectations in receiving high-quality press information, creating more opportunities for audiences to interact.

However, these newsrooms still have some limitations. News packages have been designed for website format only, and there is no mobile version; not many breakthroughs in the VNE's production of news packages have been made. The limitations on the website infrastructure will reduce the creativity of designers, especially for the domestic newspaper VNE. At TG and NYT, there is a contradiction between the ambitions of journalists and newsrooms in conveying large, complex content and the readers' receiving ability. The factors of financial issues and personnel pressures greatly influence the quality press choices, especially at the domestic newspaper VNE.

2. The trend of using multimedia news package in online newspapers in the coming time

2.1. Packaged reporting continues to be a trend promoted with increasingly advanced technology, actively supporting press content

The Media Consulting Group's 2017-2018 Global Report on Innovation in Press and Media announced that "The media industry continues to change and transform - from print to digital, from digital to mobile, from mobile to chat platforms - and behind all that shifts is technology." The report stated "Readers today are no longer impressed by the devices. They have higher expectations about the content, the news packaging and the release form of the content they consume. The data shows that one of the leading functions of digital media is to build relationships and communicate - now more clearly than ever due to the strong growth of handheld devices".(1)

In the report(2) of the Reuter Institute of Journalism at the University of Oxford in 2016 and 2017, Nic Newman confirmed that videos and podcasts (audio files posted online) in online newspaper continued to be promoted. About 78% of digital companies' leaders said they would invest more heavily in online videos this year as mobile video viewership was expected to grow. Video formats that media companies will focus on developing (since 2016) include 360-degree videos and live streaming videos to enhance the authenticity of the conveyed stories; vertical format videos suitable for mobile phones; and virtual reality videos.

Audio news packages would continue to be popular in 2016 in line with the growth of streaming culture. Some big tech companies like Spotify and Clammr have developed tools to make it easier to share pieces from long-form audio news on social networks, allowing more people to access information.

Multimedia journalism, social journalism, data journalism, mobile journalism, virtual reality technology, artificial intelligence, online chat platforms... are the prevailing trends in the flow of the world's digital media journalism today. The journalistic products are changing in both content and form, and the process of creating media journalistic works is also changing. The method of distributing digital media journalistic products is changing day by day.

2.2. The trend of increasing news package production on mobile phones

According to a Pew Research Center report, today long-form articles retain readers twice as long as their short-form counterparts, and attract the same number of

readers as other types of short-form articles. According to the Pew Press Research Center, long-form articles retain readers for an average of 123 seconds, compared with 57 seconds for short-form articles, and the numbers of the two types of readers are 1,530 and 1,576 respectively. Therefore, the author predicts that multimedia long-form articles, presented in news package form, will frequently appear on mobile phones in the near future.

2.3. The trend of newspapers depends heavily on the algorithms of social networks, especially Facebook and Google

Globalization of communication is strongly reflected in the fact that one third of the world's population uses the same connection tool, Facebook. The connection, exchange, inter-personal communication, inter-organizational and transnational communication have never been easier. With 1.7 billion monthly active users globally, Facebook has become the world's largest source of news. In a recent survey in 26 countries around the world by the Reuters Institute for Journalism at the University of Oxford, 44% of the respondents said they considered Facebook as their primary source of news. The percentage of print newspaper readers dropped to a very low level of 24%. Facebook-owned platforms - including Instagram, Messenger and WhatsApp - reach 86% of Internet users between the ages of 16 and 64 in the 33 countries surveyed by GlobalWebIndex(3). Newspapers and social networks are on two opposing fronts, but newspapers often have to rely on social networks to interact strongly and deeply with the audiences.

2.4. News packages will be produced to be more and more personalized

According to JD Lasica,(4) personalization in digital media manifests in three aspects:
- Personalization of news content: refers to users' ability to control the content selection process; Personalization of the news experience: readers will decide when, where, and how to experience; and Personalization of news services: the audiences choose appropriate news, select the community to participate according to their interests and make life more convenient.

These three approaches have intersecting meanings, and the biggest thing in common is greater empowerment of the audiences. The multimedia news packages

will be produced in the direction of serving this need for audience personalization. Newsrooms will penetrate as many markets as possible.

2.5. Highly personalized, specialized news packages require creativity and better cooperation in all stages of the production process

The role of reporters and editors in building the story board of news packages, and the role of coders and artists increases in product design. The process of producing a multimedia article is as follows: selecting the topic; building the story board; fieldwork; news package implementation; and editing the content. In the past, technology ran after information and served information, but today these two fields are intertwined and help each other raise their levels. In this particular type of article, in addition to the script idea, the hardest thing is the technology. Programmers will have to write many commands, implement many different protocols, on html 5 or html 6 on the basis of CSS (open source) so that readers can access this news product on many different formats, from desktop computers, laptops, iPad, iPhone, and smart phones, etc.

2.6. The trend of producing paid content or coordinating in production based on the principle of mutual benefit

In the article "Story First - Publishing Narrative Long-Form Journalism in Digital Environments)"(5), Maria Lassila-Merisalo asserted that agencies publishing multimedia news packages cannot expect to make a profit if they produce a one-year news package, but rather they need to find additional sources of revenue, such as sponsorships, software services, attracting community investment, organizing courses or events and above all they have to publish stories with high quality content.
Not every newspaper can do it like NYT - with a strong focus on paid content and generating big revenue - but it seems to be the trend in the near future.

Forecasting the future, Mr. Mark Thompson, executive director of NYT believed that the number of subscribers of digital accounts will continue to increase. In the second quarter of 2018, NYT continued to record high growth in the digital content segment when it reported 109,000 more digital account subscribers. And while the revenue

from the NYT digital content segment increased, the print advertising decreased significantly.

2.7. The trend of storytelling in the direction of increasing interaction

Sometimes words, videos or images aren't enough to tell a story in the most compelling way. Robbie Richards, director of digital marketing at the software development company Joyal Jay in the US, wrote on the blog of marketing company SnappApp that interactive storytelling uses technology to engage users at multiple levels, evoking as many senses as possible, creating a unique experience that stands out from the traditional forms of content delivery.

The most powerful form of interactive storytelling is the online graphic story format. Over the past few years, online graphic stories have demonstrated the emotional impact of combining multiple media with interactive opportunities to fully engage readers. The multimedia news packages in the coming period will be an ingenious blend of artistic, sound, photographic, motion and pacing elements that are wonderfully illustrated and cleverly combined.

3. Recommendations to improve the quality of multimedia news packages in online newspapers in Vietnam today

3.1. The research and development teams at newsrooms need to develop templates and tools for journalists and readers to create news packages or restructure content

Newsrooms need to develop tools that reporters, journalists, and even readers can "drag and drop" content to create products. Researchers at the NYT also realize that investing too much labor into a product like Snow Fall (considered the most prominent news package of NYT) is too time-consuming and labor-intensive and it is very difficult to remake similar versions. Instead, they determine to build tools and fixed templates. NYT experts say they underestimated these fixed versions, although it is less vivid, less attractive, it needs to be more journalist-friendly for a daily use.

The users' impression is the first factor that determines the success or failure of a works. If the presentation of the layout and arrangement of the sections ensures aesthetics, it will immediately receive the attention of the readers. The above survey and research results show that they have not really been invested and widely applied. The audiences expect that they can interact with multimedia products more quickly and intuitively than in other media.

3.2. Setting up a larger content database to have resources for big topics

Data on major topics should be established for gradual use. The pressure of change for development is increasing on press agencies, especially for online newspapers. This requires online newspapers to have new directions to attract readers to click on their works.

Facing those challenges, news package content needs to be really creative, in terms of content presentation. Online newspapers may change font sizes, font styles, and font colors in each particular work. This makes online newspapers more attractive and beautiful than ordinary works. For still images, when put into exploitation, it is necessary to choose the photos that is both informative and artistic. For videos, the content doesn't need to be too long, but it has to be really deep. The graphic elements appearing in Vietnamese online newspapers currently arrives at adding additional information, or only do it when required.

3.3. Recruiting human resources to meet the requirements of multimedia journalism

Currently, due to limited funding, most Vietnamese press agencies have not paid much attention to the human resources to perform their technical works. Major online newspapers in the world, such as TG, have a team of specialized technicians for specific positions. Although it takes a lot of manpower and money, the development of a designers' team will make the quality of press products significantly improved.

Visualizing news and promoting digital applications are an important management strategy that the leaders of multimedia newsrooms steadfastly pursue. NYT and TG have strongly developed the multimedia news package genre and won many

prestigious journalism awards, as well as won the trust of readers in the global 4.0 technology era. VNE on a smaller scale has also achieved certain successes. Although in its annual report released in January 2017 entitled "Journalism That Stands Apart", the NYT, although assessing that they "have significantly innovated, but need more acceleration" and "need to change faster than ever", what the NYT has done is actually the "dream" of many newspapers. What NYT pursues is the driving force and goal of newsrooms around the world, but the concerns of the leaders of the NYT are not unfounded.

3.4. Changing the training model for reporters

In today journalism schools, the study programmes have not yet focused enough on training the skills related to graphic design or the use of technical equipment. Because of this, young journalists/reporters create only textual content, and when they want to upgrade the news packages, they have to depend on the designers team, who takes long time to create the works, reduce the topicality, and sometimes create an incomplete journalistic product as the two teams do not understand each other.

Each online newspaper agency also needs to encourage their reporters and editors to regularly update trends, to gain knowledge about the use of new technology in the journalistic production in general, and news packages in particular.

3.5. Investment in equipment in the innovative journalistic production

Besides the human factor, the technical factor is also important. It is necessary to change the computer configuration in the newsrooms, so that they are powerful enough to install video editing and graphics programs to serve the design of creative multimedia journalism products.

Journalism is constantly evolving and in today digital era, journalism is changing even more. Since 2015, WAN-IFRA has summarized multimedia news package as one of 10 modern journalism trends. News packages offer a visual presentation of articles, and readers really need that. In the journalism of the industry 4.0 era, when robots are programmed to exploit big data to write articles in just 3 minutes, the question becomes "Will human journalists soon be replaced?". The answer is "not yet" due to

the fact that although robots can produce news and articles with high speed and accuracy, the articles needs analysis, expression of opinions, feelings, and comments, or other types of news features have not been written by robots, so human journalists are still needed. Therefore, in order to fulfill their role, journalists need to provide great journalistic products that are investing, deeply analytical and highly attractive. Newsrooms also need to build high-quality, distinctive and exclusive journalistic content to attract and retain readers' trust. In addition, they need to promote interaction with readers by using the power of social networks/media to give their articles to the audiences.

Tài liệu tham khảo

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