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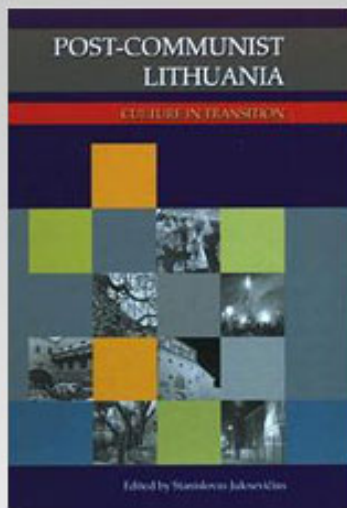
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## TRANSFORMATION OF A NEWSPAPER INTO AN INTERNET TV: A CASE STUDY ON HURRIYET TV

ALAADDIN F. PAKSOY\*

**ABSTRACT.** This study is interested in transformation of printed media in recent years and how the academic discussions on media convergence can help us to understand the change. As a case study, the research focuses on a Turkish media giant *Hürriyet* Newspaper and looks at how it created a new online TV in order to adapt itself to the new media order. *Hürriyet*, the Turkish flagship newspaper, strategically positioned itself to be active in online media and to meet Turkish youngsters' expectations of how to follow the agenda. The newspaper is one of the best media organisations in its initiative and receives millions of clicks every week. The media group that *Hürriyet* belongs to already has a news channel and it is also active on the Internet. However, *Hürriyet* TV is a new realm where the paper's area of expertise -namely news writing- is presented together with news videos that should bring more information to the news story. The study will be mainly focusing on the differences between the main news bulletins on *Hürriyet* TV website and the newspaper's printed version. All in all, the paper will seek to answer the main research question: "How does the main news bulletins on *Hürriyet* TV differs from the printed *Hürriyet*?" The study will employ content analysis method.

**Keywords:** Online news, Internet TV, Turkish media, *Hürriyet* newspaper, *Hürriyet* TV

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\* Dr., Department of Journalism, Communication Sciences Faculty, Anadolu University, Turkey, [afpaksoy@gmail.com](mailto:afpaksoy@gmail.com)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, news is in continuous flux (Pavlik, 2001). People are surrounded by different channels that conveys uncontrollable amount of information. The new circumstances bring new models to news media. We have arrived at a point where convergence of media is continuing by the impact of the intersection of media industries, audiences, content and technologies (Jenkins cited in Kolodzy, 2006). Among the elements of this complex structure, this paper is interested in how technological changes influence the content. Therefore, as a case study for the empirical part of the research, the paper seeks to unveil how a traditional newspaper adapts itself in the new media order and how it transforms itself into a news portal and accordingly an Internet TV. This empirical work will be based on *Hürriyet* newspaper and *Hürriyet* TV website.

In an environment where news has become more fluid compared to the past (Pavlik, 2001), *Hürriyet* newspaper of Turkey also employed new technological developments and prepared itself for the expectations of the new audience generation. This paper seeks to unveil the changes *Hürriyet* adapted and the differences that can be observed between the Internet TV news and traditional newspaper version of the same media company. In brief, the research aims to answer the main research question which is "How does the main news bulletins on *Hürriyet* TV differs from the printed *Hürriyet*?"

The section below will be dealing with what is meant by the notion of media convergence and its impact on journalism. Then, some information about the historical development of *Hürriyet* newspaper and its Internet TV will be presented together with discussing the importance of *Hürriyet* in Turkey. In the fourth section, the method that was employed in the analysis will be explained. Finally, the findings and conclusion will be presented in the last two sections.

## 2. MEDIA CONVERGENCE

According to Jenkins (cited in Kolodzy, 2006: 5), media convergence is an ongoing process and it is about the intersection of content, technology, audience, and industries. Even though it is a new term and its definition has not been totally clarified yet, the possible emergence

of the phenomenon was predicted and highlighted long time ago. Nicholas Negreonte, who founded MIT's Media Lab, claimed in the late 1970s that computer, broadcasting and printing technologies would become together at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Brand cited in Kolodzy, 2006: 5).

Negreonte's prediction was correct. Today, media convergence forces us to rewrite what we all know about media, and journalism in particular. It might be claimed that the Internet had the biggest role in this enormous change. Journalism has been experiencing radical changes since the invention of the Internet. This is probably the most radical change ever compared to the period since journalism came into existence. The new form of journalism consists of omnipresent news, access to information coming from all around the world, instant reporting, interactivity, enriching the content with multimedia sources and more importantly a new realm where content is customised according to readers (Pavlik, 2001: xi). Thanks to the invention of World Wide Web, these all provide new facilities to improve the quality of journalism. Pavlik argues that new media transforms journalism in four different aspects:

“First, the nature of news content is inexorably changing as a result of emerging new media technology. Second, the way journalists do their work is being retooled in the digital age. Third, the structure of the newsroom and news industry is undergoing a fundamental transformation. And, fourth, new media are bringing about a realignment of the relationships between and among news organizations, journalists, and their many publics, including audiences, sources, competitors, advertisers, and governments” (Pavlik, 2001: xiii).

Even though the Internet can be seen as the most important contributor to these developments, there is a point that the Internet should be seen just as a 'product' or a 'symptom'. According to Pavlik (2001, xii), there is

“[...] a more fundamental technological change that has been under way for the past half-century and only now is beginning to crystallize: the convergence of tele-communications, computing, and traditional media. Together, this new media system embraces all forms of human communication in a digital format where the rules and constraints of the analog world no longer apply”.

By following Pavlik (2001) and analysing the notion of 'convergence' deeper, it can be seen that it is not only about a technological transformation. In Robinson's (2011: 149) words, "[i]n digital news spaces, the product itself is supposedly 'converged'". The notion of 'converged' was firstly understood as a "cross-media content dissemination" which refers to employing a newspaper story for a TV news broadcast. Recently, 'converged' has become a popular term to define the content distribution over different media. While the content is distributed visual materials are converged with audio and also text.

According to Jenkins, in line with the discussion above, convergence is not only a technical transformation but it penetrates people's lives as a paradigm. In this approach, convergence refers to the end of distinctions between newsrooms, individual journalists, and audiences (Jenkins, 2006 cited in Robinson, 2011: 149). In order to bring the discussion to what this paper deals with, it would be useful to focus on how 'media convergence' influences journalism.

### ***2.1. Convergence in Journalism***

According to Kolodzy (2006: 3), the notion of convergence in journalism has problems in its definition and it is usually misunderstood and misrepresented. To make the definition of convergence within the field of journalism clearer, Kolodzy's explanation about what convergence in journalism involves can be useful:

"Convergence in journalism means the coming together of journalists and certain types of journalism that have been operating in separate spheres – newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and online – to provide quality news in all those different formats. That coming together can involve shared resources and information. It can involve joint reporting and production on projects. It can involve "one-man bands" or "backpack" journalists – one person doing the reporting and producing of news for all the different formats. It can involve multimedia storytelling online or what could be called "converged presentation." It can involve some or all of these variations" (Kolodzy, 2006: 10).

According to this view, media convergence brings new responsibilities to journalists and their news organisations. The new

order in media cannot be understood without taking into account the expectations of audiences and finding the 'best way' to inform them. Kolodzy argues:

“Convergence refocuses journalism to its core mission – to inform the public about its world in the best way possible. But nowadays, the best way is not just one way: newspaper or television or the Internet. The best way is a multiple media way, doing journalism for a public that sometimes gets news from newspaper, at other times gets news from television and radio, and at still other times seeks news online. To be successful at convergence, journalists need to understand the strengths of each news medium or outlet and work to develop and provide news stories that dovetail with those strengths. Convergence requires journalists to put the reading, viewing, and browsing public at the center of their work” (Kolodzy, 2006: 4).

Having explained media convergence and its impact on journalism in summary, the following section will be focusing on some information about the research sample of this study. According to recent studies, video viewing on the Internet is increasing. Moreover, online news videos hold an important share in those views. Excluding the youngsters, news videos are the most popular video genre for Internet users (Peer and Ksiazek, 2011: 47). Bearing in mind this and having presented a section about the influence of the Internet and the notion of 'convergence' on news media, the section below will present brief information about *Hürriyet* newspaper and *Hürriyet TV* website.

### **3. HÜRRIYET NEWSPAPER AND HÜRRIYET TV**

#### **3.1. *Hürriyet Newspaper***

Since it was established, *Hürriyet* has always been one of the top three papers in Turkey. Its financial structure is a robust one compared to other Turkish media companies. The brand of *Hürriyet* is one of the 10 most known brands in Turkey and the paper can be seen as the number one newspaper which can get readers from different political and economic groups of society (Kılıç, 2003: 100).

The first issue of *Hürriyet* was published on 1 May 1948. The paper brought something new to the Turkish press and give more importance to visuality by using big pictures related to news stories.

Besides, the general tendency in 1940s in the Turkish press was publishing long political columns. *Hürriyet* chose a more popular language in its content and published shorter articles. This made the paper much closer to the regular people in the society (Inugur, 1988 cited in Yüce, 2007: 117). Even though the paper's ideological view has usually been near the 'centre' (i.e. the Turkish elite), the paper also holds a strong link with the 'periphery' (i.e. mass readership from different backgrounds) (Özkır, 2012: 381).

*Hürriyet* is seen as the flagship newspaper of the Turkish press. It is influential in shaping the agenda and it is described as the biggest and most powerful paper of the Turkish press by its former Editor in Chief Ertuğrul Özkök (Özkır, 2012: 359). To explain its political tendency, the paper can be roughly seen as nationalist, liberal and westernised. A recent PhD thesis about *Hürriyet's* institutional identity claims that *Hürriyet* always aimed to be against both 'communism' and 'sharia' and was published according to this stance (Özkır, 2012: 382) [The writer's comment was probably referring to the newspaper's position in Cold War period].

### **3.2. *Hürriyet TV***

*Hürriyet* newspaper's website has been one of the most popular news portals in Turkey since the portal was established.

"According to statistics, the *Hürriyet* website has 3.5 million unique users and 540 million page views as of November 2010, and is in first place within newspapers and eleventh place within a total 100 sites (The 100 most-visited sites: Turkey)" (Parlak, 2011: 66).

The transformation of news realms did not stop by creation of news portals on the Internet. In recent years, a new portal type emerged thanks to the developments in the speed of the Internet, and the expectations of audiences. Thurman and Myllylahti argue that "[o]nline news media have often failed to utilise effectively the multimedia potential the medium offers" (2009: 703). However, the new initiative transforms news portals into Internet TVs where the audience does not only watch news videos like in the previous news portals but also have the opportunity to watch edited news bulletins and other programmes. *Hürriyet TV* is one of the pioneers in this new model in Turkey. *Hürriyet*

newspaper's website already had a video section, nevertheless the newly established platform does not only include unedited news videos but a news bulletin which is presented in a studio, and covers edited and dubbed news videos. The paper's rivals in the market, such as *Zaman*, *Milliyet* and *Sabah* also have a website like a TV channel but not all of them broadcast main news bulletins.

The production quality of the news bulletins on Hürriyet TV can be evaluated as remarkably modest. The studio and the technical equipment look basic and far from the quality of a nationwide professional television channel. The presenters are not famous ones in the Turkish media and each bulletin does not take more than 6 minutes. The bulletins are presented with fast background music which makes the bulletin more vivid and fluid. Hürriyet TV broadcasts its main news bulletins only in weekdays.

#### **4. METHOD and SAMPLING**

The study employs quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods. As the period for the time sample is not the focus of the study, any period could be selected for the material sample. Therefore, the study will be covering the periods between 7 - 11 September 2013 and 11 - 15 November 2013. News items published in these two periods on Hürriyet TV website and in *Hürriyet* newspaper will be included in the research sample. To make the sample researchable, the online news video sample will be narrowed to the main news bulletins broadcasted on Hürriyet TV. The news items found in the bulletins will be compared with its newspaper versions in *Hürriyet* newspaper. As each newspaper issue are published at the night before its delivery, the news bulletin videos will be compared with the following day issue of *Hürriyet* newspaper.

In order to make comparisons between the two different media, some categories will be prepared to perform quantitative and qualitative content analysis. This will help to find systematic answers to research questions.



## **5. FINDINGS**

This section will present what was found in the research sample after applying the research method explained above. Firstly, the section will reveal the findings related to frequency. Then, the second section will present the points that were investigated by a qualitative analysis.

### ***5.1. Quantitative Findings***

After analysing 10 main news bulletins published in two different weeks on Hürriyet TV, it was found that 80 news videos were broadcasted in the bulletins in these periods. The quantitative findings indicate that only 30 same topic items among 80 videos were also published in the newspaper version of *Hürriyet*. Among these 30 items, only 12 reports were included in *Hürriyet's* cover pages. This means that only 15 per cent of reports covered in Hürriyet TV main news bulletins was included in *Hürriyet's* cover pages. According to overall findings in the quantitative results, it can be argued that there is a low correspondence between the paper version and the Internet TV version of the same media company.

### ***5.2. Qualitative Findings***

The main news bulletins, broadcasted between 7 – 11 October 2013 and between 11 – 15 November 2013, from Monday to Friday on Hürriyet TV, were compared with the coverage in *Hürriyet* newspaper. The comparison was conducted by using qualitative content analysis and grounded on the question “What are the main differences between the two news reports which refers to the same issue in two different media?”

In general, the reports published in the newspaper version of *Hürriyet* are more detailed. This character of newspapers always makes them more powerful versus TV news bulletins and it still looks the same when the comparison is made by looking at this study's Internet TV news bulletins sample. This character of TV news especially unveils itself when it comes to detailed, tense and topical issues in TV news bulletins. For instance, it was found in the sample that two important political discussions about the Kurdish issue and Turkish education system for secondary and high school students are covered in a remarkably summarised fashion on Hürriyet TV news bulletin on 15

November 2013. This kind of coverage can be seen as McDonaldization (see Ritzer, 1993) of news where the audience are informed with daily news without any background or detailed analyses.

The overall analysis shows that if a topic is covered by both *Hürriyet* newspaper and *Hürriyet* TV news bulletin, the Internet TV version does not contribute something new to the paper's version. The Internet TV news bulletin version is simply a summarised news text of what a reader can get from the paper version. However, in some occasions, it can be also seen in the sample that some reports which published on *Hürriyet* TV covers more information than the newspaper version of *Hürriyet*. In the analysis of the main news bulletin broadcasted on 7 October 2013, it was found out that the news text on *Hürriyet* TV includes, interestingly, more details than the hardcopy version of the same report. For instance, regarding shortening the length of army service in Turkey, the news video includes even detailed information such as the number of soldiers who are going to benefit from the new legislation. In contrast, the same topic was framed in a more narrowed way in *Hürriyet* newspaper. Nevertheless, this example does not change the overall finding concerning the limited content in *Hürriyet* TV's news bulletin coverage.

During the qualitative analysis, the study was also interested in the lack of some issues in *Hürriyet* newspaper even though they appeared in the main news bulletin as well as the lack of some news items in *Hürriyet* TV which only appeared on the newspaper version. Therefore, the qualitative analysis categories also include the question: "What can be the reasons of not covering the same issues in the other *Hürriyet* media?"

The number of missing news items were much more compared to the number of same news reports published in both media. For instance, the breaking news about traffic jam in Istanbul was the first video of the main news bulletin on Monday, 7 October 2013. However, this topic was not covered at all by the newspaper version of *Hürriyet*. Interestingly, two more news videos about Istanbul also appeared in the bulletin on another day but these were not covered in the newspaper version as well. These show the difference between what an Internet TV and a traditional newspaper are interested in to report their audience and readers. The Internet TV gives more importance to

their audiences living in metropolitans where the Internet connection is much easier and more people follow online media.

Another interesting finding related to what is missing on Hürriyet TV main news bulletin was the lack of sensational, tabloid news reports. For instance, in the first period that was investigated in this study's research sample, the Turkish media witnessed an awkward discussion about 'the cleavage of a woman TV presenter'. This issue did not appear on the main news bulletin of Hürriyet TV while it was included in the cover page as a subhead report for two days. The same issue was investigated in detail by a special interview in *Hürriyet*, and it was discussed by the paper's columnists throughout the week. That does not mean that Hürriyet TV is mostly interested in politics or international news. It was also explored in the sample that technology related reports are remarkably popular for Hürriyet TV while they do not appear on the printed *Hürriyet*. Hürriyet TV tends to broadcast at least one news video about technological developments per day in its main news bulletin. This is understandable as an Internet user's expectations from news coverage would be different than a reader of traditional press.

In some occasions, covering an issue on Hürriyet TV but not on *Hürriyet* is related to the visual power of news videos. For instance, an absurd video about a couple's fight in Hong Kong was included in the main news bulletin on Hürriyet TV. It would not be that much interesting to include the story in a newspaper by publishing a news text and a picture to explain the event.

## 6. CONCLUSION

It cannot be claimed that there is a correspondence between the main news bulletins of Hürriyet TV and the coverage of *Hürriyet* newspaper. The news agenda of two media are remarkably different. For instance, the news stories which appear as the headline of the newspaper cannot be seen in the news bulletins.

Another interesting point is about the selection of news topics for main news bulletins on Hürriyet TV. Firstly, it can be claimed that Hürriyet TV does not give priority to the news videos that are visually important. If a news video's importance does not originate from its

visual contribution to the information we have about the event, why would we need to watch the news video? This evaluation is the most remarkable problematic point concerning the presentation of news on Hürriyet TV main news bulletins. The selection of news in the bulletins is limited with 7 or 8 videos per bulletin. It could be expected that this restriction should increase the quality of the bulletins, however, most news videos of the bulletins are banal or archive material where the audience can understand the event by only listening to the news text read by the presenter.

Another problem found in the news videos is related to its content and depth of information it includes. It is understandable that news videos should be more summarized compared to reports in newspapers. However, in the case of Hürriyet TV main news bulletins, the news videos are mostly a summary of the summarized. This causes the lack of 'Five Ws and one H' in the reports. In addition to the visual weakness in the video reports that was mentioned above, these two problematic points might cause unsatisfactory for the audiences.

All in all, Hürriyet TV presents a type of news narrative without any political stance to its audiences. This does not originate from being institutionally unbiased but from a tendency where the news coverage has become a fast-food style material. The audience consume the news reports with fast background music. The presenter talks hurriedly. This new style of news bulletin on Hürriyet TV is a condensed version of both traditional TV news bulletins and the detailed news reports of traditional and online newspapers. Future research about the audience's expectations from Hürriyet TV can help us to understand the points discussed in the article in a more comprehensive way.

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