

dpp[®]



THE NEWS BUSINESS



Foreword

It was Lord Thomson of Fleet who famously described commercial television in the United Kingdom as “a licence to print money” when it was in its infancy in the mid-1950s. Much has changed since then, of course, not least the media landscape from one of only a couple of channels in a duopoly to a multi-channel environment where competition for eyeballs is not simply with other public and commercial broadcasters, but anyone with a device in their hands who can create content.

But while there is a huge difference between the individual creator and a large media organisation in terms of scale, there is no doubt that the work of the former, available on a myriad of online platforms, can have a major impact on the latter.

That challenge for the attention of viewers has more implications than simply the numbers watching an organisation’s news shows. For commercial broadcasters and online news organisations, fewer viewers potentially mean declining revenues and less investment. For public broadcasters, any reduction in reach has serious implications in the ongoing debate to justify their funding formula. And when it comes to news, well, whoever thought that news was supposed to make a profit anyway? But news has to be paid for. Somehow. By someone.

That is why the business of news – separate from the other challenges around trust and relevancy which newsmakers face – is important. Furthermore, as vendors, we are constantly striving to enable our customers to work in the most efficient way possible while delivering to any platform.

Breaking down the silos between traditionally different parts of the organisation – on-air and online for example – enabling new workflows for remote and distributed teams, and making it easier to share content between teams regardless of their physical location, are ways that Avid’s news solutions have developed in recent years. And then there is still the potential of the cloud, which is yet to be fully harnessed.

Avid has been delighted to be part of this discussion with the DPP, major news organisations and other vendors in our sector. Trusted by many of the world’s biggest news organisations, reliably delivering news to millions of viewers across the globe, we welcome this report and the findings, which we are sure will help to drive the future direction of the news business that is so critical to our industry.

The News Business

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Introduction

This is a report about what it takes to both make news and make money.

The DPP explored the editorial and consumer context of topical content consumption in the opening report in our Tomorrow's News series: [What's the news?](#)

Editorial leaders from the BBC, The News Movement, PA Media and Vice News described a power shift from traditional news organisations towards platforms and consumers. This is primarily being driven by trends in mobile technology and social media.

The competition is now anybody with a smartphone

And the competition is now anybody with a smartphone and access to the internet. This means how news is made, and *what* news is delivered has to be different. Kamal Ahmed, the former BBC News Editorial Director and now co-founder and Editor-in-Chief at news startup, The News Movement, describes the challenge.



People aren't coming to destinations for the news, they're seeing the news in their feed. So we're no longer competing with each other; we're competing with anything you can do on your mobile phone, or any other type of screen. And that means that our content approach is going to have to change.

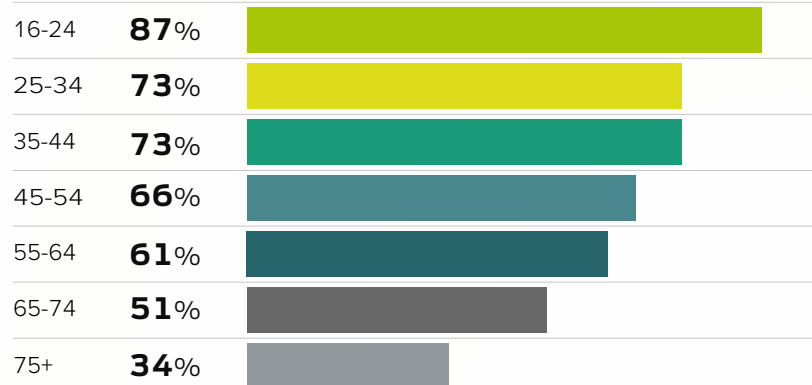
In July 2022, the UK communications regulator Ofcom released its [News Consumption in the UK 2022 report](#). It revealed an increasing relevance of social media as news sources. While its report related only to the UK, there is every reason to believe a similar trend would be found around the world.

For the youngest audiences, social media has become the main source of news.

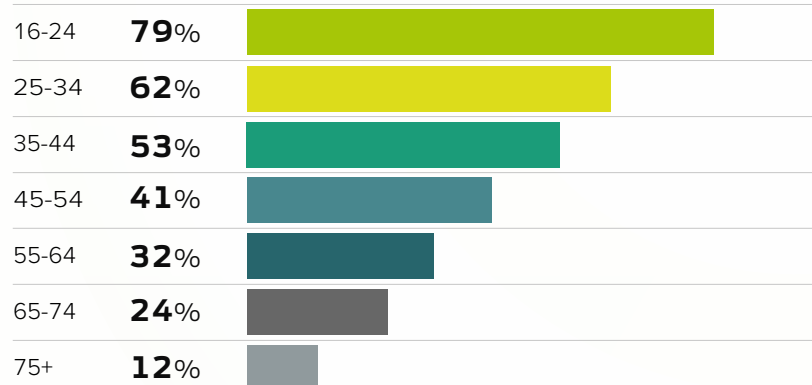
Younger demographics get their news online and from social media

[Which of the following platforms do you use for news nowadays?]

Any internet



Social media



Television



But while the biggest growth is in social media, television still remains overall the number one source for news consumption. Especially so when including those responding that they 'watch TV news online'.

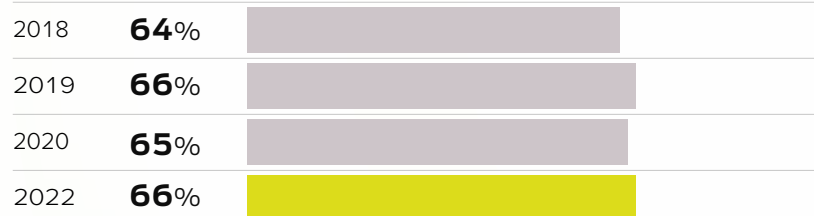
Television is still the main source of news, for now

[Use of main platforms for news nowadays]

Television



Internet



Radio



Newspapers



Television remains the No 1 source of news, at least in the UK

As Nathalie Malinarich, Executive News Editor, Digital, at BBC News put it:



We have to be universal, and that means being everywhere.

This is the challenge at the heart of this report.

The pressure on news operations is to deliver news content across multiple channels, and each time tailored to the vernacular and style of that particular platform.

That is difficult enough in itself, and the DPP is investigating the technical and operational challenges in our *Making the News* report. But it is only half of the problem.

How are news organisations expected to make money from this model? Which also raises the question of whether a reputable news service *should* be profitable?

To find out what approaches media companies are taking to generating revenue from news, the DPP spoke to contributors from Europe, the US and Australasia to share their insight and expertise.

The News Business is part of the DPP's Tomorrow's News project. We are grateful to Lead Sponsor Qvest, Expert Sponsors Avid, Dalet and Wolftech, and Contributing Sponsors 7Mountains and AP for helping enable this DPP work.

Executive summary

1

It's all about diversification

It's always been adverts that drive news revenue - and it still is. But commercial news providers have to find new sources of income if they are to survive.

2

Metadata really matters

Metadata powers the discoverability of news content; good capture, tagging and cataloguing helps news journalism live longer, travel further, and make some money along the way.

3

Longform and long tail

Longer form features news is a greater revenue opportunity, and has a longer tail of profitability, than the shortform video popular on TikTok and Instagram.

4

An integration of church and state

News companies are organising to enable editorial staff to engage in the money-making side of the business. And this often helps fund the editorial purity of news operations.

5

When does it make sense to own the delivery channel?

Consumer trends mean media companies no longer own news distribution channels. But news providers can pivot towards their own app in order to own the customer relationship and generate revenue.

6

There is a massive technology efficiency opportunity

There are still enormous cost savings and efficiencies to be made from retiring legacy tech estates, improving workflows, introducing automation and breaking down silos.

Contributors

The content for *The News Business* has been gathered through research, workshops and interviews with subject matter experts working across the news industry. Valuable input has also been provided by our Lead Sponsor Qvest, Expert Sponsors Avid, Dalet and Wolftech, and Contributing Sponsors 7Mountains and AP.

Although the content of this report has been informed by these discussions, it should not be assumed that every contributor shares all the views presented here. We are grateful to each individual for sharing their time and expertise with the DPP and their peers.

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1. Diversification: The only game in town

KEY INSIGHTS

With traditional media and news business models disrupted, diversification of revenue streams is required

News organisations must accept a level of experimentation while developing new ways of making money

Diversification of revenue streams is the most cited strategy when it comes to running a successful modern news operation.

News providers need to know which revenue models work on which channels, in the same way that editorial leaders are learning how content types need to change across platforms.

Maral Usefi, VP Editorial Operations & Executive Producer, News at VICE Media says that this is “an attempt to find the largest swathe of revenue opportunities”.

“We’ve got loads of hooks in the water, and we’re all going fishing”

Sandy MacIntyre was VP News at the Associated Press, and now works as an independent advisor to news organisations.

With a consultant’s view across different news providers - whether commercial, agency or those with a public service remit - he is able to summarise the approach with a bluntness not afforded to others.

“

All of us have got loads of hooks in the water, and we’re all going fishing.

SANDY MACINTYRE

At VICE News, Usefi outlines a series of options, from serving ads to partnering with brands and operating as a news production service provider.

“ We are looking into revenue from Snap, as well as sponsorships and partnerships with Snap, TikTok and Instagram. And then we're looking at revenue based on sales to other companies as a production company model.

MARAL USEFI, VICE NEWS

Sara Trohanis is Vice President, National, Latin America and Tech Partnerships, which has been a trusted news provider since it was founded as a not-for-profit news organisation in 1846. Its strategy now also includes diversification.

“ AP is really rooted in its mission, yet innovation and diversification are at the forefront of what we are focused on as a news agency. Diversification of our revenue is absolutely critical to continuing forward for another century. That is acknowledged across every facet of our organisation, from news to product to technology.

SARA TROHANIS, AP

“ **Innovation and diversification are at the forefront of what we are focused on** ”

At AP, this means exploring models beyond selling its primary news wire service. While PA Media, based in the UK, does not offer products directly to consumers, AP does and is looking at advertising models.

“ In addition to our primary revenue stream of content licensing, we are also now looking at B2C touchpoints, including advertising and ecommerce models - together with a services model. For example, AP Global Media Services and our assignment services, where we work with media organisations and commercial brands for production capabilities.

But at the core of our work is walking the careful line between brand and mission, and revenue need and diversification - and the importance of a well-rounded strategy has never been truer at The Associated Press.

SARA TROHANIS, AP

2. An integration of church and state?

KEY INSIGHTS

News providers have created a grey area between journalism and business teams, which maintains editorial purity but enables an organisation to monetise its news

Newsroom talent and storytelling are a big part of any commercial revenue opportunity from news

There is a tension between editorial and commercial teams around distributions channels like TikTok which cannot be monetised

The embedding of some commercial savvy into the editorial side of news operations represents a significant revenue opportunity.

In news journalism, the separation of 'church' and 'state' traditionally referred to the concept that commercial and editorial teams do not interact. In particular, that the business side of a news operation would never impact its journalism and editorial decision-making.

The rigid separation at some organisations is indeed dead. But that does not mean that brand integrity and editorial purity has been sacrificed. At some organisations a grey area has emerged; at others there is a bleeding of editorial into the commercial arm of the organisation - but certainly not the other way round.

An alternative description is that where there was once a metaphorical wall - or more likely a physical floor and ceiling - there is now a one-way mirror.

Richard Dool, Head of Development and Partnerships at CNN, has responsibility for ensuring that when commercial opportunities arise, they align with the brand integrity and feel of the editorially independent news operation.

“

I'm on the editorial side and work very closely with our sales teams. We joke that I am the grey area between church and state; and that joke only works because we take the divide so seriously here.

I work closely with our newsroom when there are outputs that can be sponsored. And due to UK regulations, for example, it's not possible to sponsor news and current affairs on linear TV. We have a whole team of producers working on news features content, from half-hour linear shows all the way through to digital only series and social series.

And it's my job to make sure that everything we're doing in the features space still feels like it makes sense on CNN, and that it works with the CNN brand. That's the piece that can easily go wrong when you veer towards commercialising news channels - and it can confuse the audience.

RICHARD DOOL, CNN

“Quite often there is a tension between brand and revenue”

Tami Hoffman, Head of News & Archive at ITN Productions, acknowledges that there can be a tension between editorial purity and revenue. The approach at ITN, therefore, is to run its production business separately from its Broadcast News operation, which provides live news to UK broadcasters ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5.

“

There are many different issues that traditional public service remit news providers are having to grapple with in terms of commercialising news. That's because there is often a tension between brand and revenue. I think one of the big challenges is staying true to your brand and the integrity of your news creation, while also trying to turn a buck.

To some extent at ITN we've tried to create a division between our newsroom and ITN Productions, with ITN Productions having a clear commercial brief.

TAMI HOFFMAN, ITN PRODUCTIONS

IS THERE A PROFIT, IS THERE A POINT?

One difference between the approaches of the different business units at ITN is the distribution channels they focus on.

Tami Hoffman says the news team is much more focused on audience and reach. It therefore needs to be on newer platforms like TikTok, even if there is no robust way of making revenue from that news content.

“There is no monetisation potential on TikTok at the moment”

Conversely the more commercial news production operation understands the editorial opportunity, but will focus on where ITN Productions can actually make money.

“

When we look at the plethora of digital platforms out there, certainly the ones which we as the commercial side are focusing on are different to what the newsrooms are focusing on.

Something like TikTok has got fantastic reach and gains younger audiences, but there is no monetisation potential there at the moment. On the other hand, something that is a bit more traditional like YouTube or Facebook does have revenue potential.

“ If you’re trying to build out your brand to engage younger viewers, you’d be crazy not to look at TikTok. But we’ve found we are better off putting that shortform video on YouTube Shorts, because we can actually see some revenue from that. And then putting that on TikTok, rather than focusing on TikTok where there is no revenue for us.

TAMI HOFFMAN, ITN PRODUCTIONS

“TikTok is very opaque with the data you get back”

At CNN there is a similar attitude. Indeed, some of its senior news staff, notably London-based anchor Max Foster, have found enormous reach creating serious news on TikTok.

But the network’s Richard Dool reiterates there is no real revenue opportunity on TikTok for news organisations.

“ We would love to be bigger on TikTok, and our future audience is there now. But it is a question of return on investment in the short term. Because it’s difficult to monetise: you can’t click through from TikTok. The platform is also very opaque with the insights and data you get back.

RICHARD DOOL, CNN

A COMMERCIAL LENS

At VICE News, Editor-in-Chief Katie Drummond previously described its editorial planning and commissioning process in *What's the news?* "The expectation is that one journalist and their team in the field will deliver different assets for us for different platforms," Katie says.

“

We really think about one deployment as an opportunity to produce different news coverage for different parts of our broader Vice ecosystem.

KATIE DRUMMOND, VICE NEWS

“We keep a firewall between branded content and news, but we are trying to monetise everything the newsroom makes”

And VICE Media VP Editorial Operations & Executive Producer, News, Maral Usefi, describes how commercial thinking is also woven into this process. The commercial content arm is kept away from news, but news editorial staff are expected to spot the revenue opportunities.

“

We've actually moved away from splitting our newsroom. We keep a firewall between branded content and news, but we are now trying to monetise everything the newsroom makes, and put every idea through a lens of 'what is the best version of this idea?'

We make editorial decisions based on what the viewers need to hear, and what the public needs to see. But then everything else is put through the lens of who we can sell that to, what's the best version of that - is it a docuseries, or a feature documentary? We take every idea that comes out of our newsroom, and figure out the best execution of it - it's a really big revenue driver going forwards.

MARAL USEFI, VICE NEWS

“The talent in our newsrooms can be part of the revenue opportunity”

AP is taking a similar approach, with journalists utilised as storytellers and sources of insight for how news can make money. Sara Trohanis says this is a cultural shift of what is expected of news teams.

“

There is immense talent in our newsrooms that can become part of a revenue or partnership opportunity. It's really thinking differently about the skills and talent we all have in our newsrooms, and looking at them in a new, expanded way.

Our journalists are often the best storytellers and have the best ideas, so why not foster that and create a culture of innovation and creativity within our newsroom, that is an off-shoot of what these folks are already doing day-in, day-out.

SARA TROHANIS, AP

3. FAST-stream to success

KEY INSIGHTS

Connected TVs and FAST channels mean media companies can serve billions of ads to massive audiences

Ad spending on CTVs and video streams is set to grow massively over the next decade

FAST channels have prompted a rebirth of the linear format; of TV channels that are crafted to be immediately engaging

FAST channels (free ad-supported streaming TV) were discussed by VICE SVP Media Operations, Tim Bertoli, at the [DPP Leaders' Briefing 2021](#) as one of the organisation's top priorities for the coming year.

The company's VP Editorial Operations & Executive Producer, News, Maral Usefi, explains how rolling out a FAST news service is an experiment in topical content types as much as it is an exploration of how to make money from news.



We already have a FAST channel for a lot of our library content, and we are launching another FAST channel for news.

The FAST channel is really early on in the game, and it's not immediately going to make us a lot of money on the front end. But we are hoping that it's a place where we can debut new content, and even put premium content there in the next 4-5 years. We see that as an opportunity, and we want to get into that space early on.

Part of figuring out FAST is figuring out what works on FAST. There is not a lot of data to work out whether, for example, typically 'linear' content works on FAST? Or is it more the 'digital' content drawing viewers to FAST? We're throwing a lot of things at the wall with FAST, including upscaling some of our digital content into half-hour series, along with everything in our library.

MARAL USEFI, VICE NEWS

“Part of figuring out FAST is figuring out what works on FAST; we’re throwing a lot at the wall”

I WANT MY CTV

Brian Ring, Senior Director of News & Sports Solutions at Amagi, adds that the real innovation is taking place in the Connected TV (CTV) market.

It's the combination of CTVs, FAST business models and a level of maturity in the technology advertising stack which is enabling a new way of doing what news broadcasters have done for years: serving ads to viewers.

“

There is an explosion of innovation. In the last few years we’ve seen the maturity of live linear streaming - and at a much lower cost; and we’ve seen the rise of CTV.

At Amagi, we are seeing well over a billion ad impressions a month and we’re barely out of the gate.

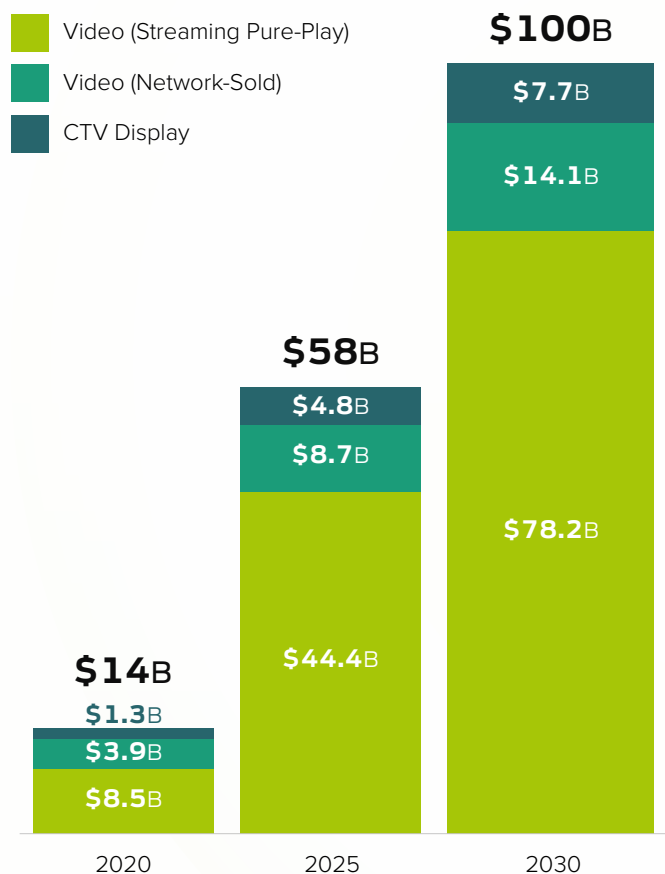
BRIAN RING, AMAGI

“We are seeing billions of ad impressions”

The forecast in the US is for significant growth in video streaming and CTV ad spend for the rest of the decade, reaching \$100 billion by 2030.

US CTV ad spending will grow to \$100bn by 2030

[US CTV ad spending forecast]



Source: Company releases, Kagan, BMO Capital Markets

Ring adds that US corporations are going deeper into this market. With a lower barrier to entry and an established local news provision, the big networks can build weather and regional news into their FAST strategy.

FOX TV's LiveNOW, for example, is a free live streaming service broadcasting 24 hours a day, seven days a week, featuring nearly 120 hours each week of live news. Unlike other FOX programming, it has no opinion segments and limited commentary.

Cox Media Group, a US media conglomerate, is also investing significantly in this space. In 10 markets where it has a streaming channel, 10 weather channels have been added - and a further 10 for breaking news.

Linear formats reborn

Ring suggests that rather than business models coming full circle with a rebirth of linear, they are perhaps spiralling higher. Media and analyst discourse about whether SVOD (subscription video on demand) is a better model than AVOD or FAST is just noise against a backdrop of what has actually been happening in the market.

“

There is this kind of rebirth of the linear format on streaming, let's call it new linear. First streaming was SVOD, D2C - then it was all about AVOD. Now it's FAST and CTV. And what's the difference?

Well it's the linear channel format, now virtualised, being reinvented, so you can craft a TV channel for instant gratification.

BRIAN RING, AMAGI

4. Own the ad network; build the distribution platform

KEY INSIGHTS

Media companies can make more money per 'user' in an app experience than from live linear broadcasts and streams

News is a major hook into the app experience, and Global is investing heavily in news talent and news podcasts as part of its strategy

Targeting and personalisation become key when media companies own the engagement relationship directly with their consumers

The ultimate news conundrum was summarised by co-founder of The News Movement, Kamal Ahmed, in *What's the news?*

While TV news bulletins still attract large viewing figures, to stay relevant news organisations need to be where the next generation of consumers are - namely, in their social feeds. But it's hard to make money when you are operating within another organisation's ecosystem.



We no longer own the means of distribution.

KAMAL AHMED, THE NEWS MOVEMENT

The media and entertainment giant Global, Europe's largest radio company based in the UK, is forging its own path.

The company is the owner of some of the biggest radio stations and brands in the UK, and has been on an extended and ongoing business transformation journey. In 2014 it launched DAX - its digital audio exchange. DAX is the audio version of the programmatic ad-buying platforms that online publishers adopted in the early 2010s.

Global productised its DAX platform, which was used across all of its brands and sold as a service to other media companies - including some of its biggest rivals.

Then, at the end of 2018, Global acquired around 30% of the UK's out-of-home (OOH) advertising market when it purchased Primesight and Outdoor Plus. By the start of 2020, Global moved into programmatic OOH advertising, with its digital outdoor portfolio now also available through the DAX platform.

In just a few years, Global automated ad exchanges for radio and out-of-home advertising.

VIDEO GREW THE RADIO STAR

Global's biggest news and opinion brand is LBC, while it also provides national news coverage for its radio stations via Global's Newsroom.

“Visualising radio is central to Global becoming a media and entertainment group”

Steve Wilson-Beales, Head of SEO and Editorial Product, says although video has always been vital for the organisation, there is now a focus on how visual and audio storytelling can drive Global Player app registrations.

“

Our journey has been moving the company from a pure radio group into a media and entertainment group. And video has been central to that ambition - by 'visualising radio' we have not only extended our reach, particularly on social, we have also created many new exclusive live video events that have seen a real boost in registrations.

STEVE WILSON-BEALES, GLOBAL

While building an internal video production group, the company has focused on audience development, expanding its reach and finding ways to monetise video across different social media platforms.

“Our new goal is to supercharge the audience being driven to our app”

“

But the priority now is the investment in our own app - the Global Player - where you can get all those radio streams, video streams, and podcasts as well.

We're doing that because behind it all we have our digital ad exchange, DAX. It started with our radio audio expertise. We can approach media planners with our creative expertise to create audio ads - we've got everything that we need in order to create those ads. And bolted on to that is an ad exchange, which allows us to provide super targeting to the desired audience.

And that has now developed from a pure audio exchange to a video exchange. That's a network we have invested in, which is powering a lot of the investment - including news - in our organisation. And how does that affect editorial? Our new goal is to supercharge the audience being driven to our Global Player app.

STEVE WILSON-BEALES, GLOBAL

“Two years ago the focus was reach, now it's about conversions”

Global spoke to a number of technology partners, many in the broadcast technology space, but decided to keep the development of its content management system in-house.

“

Like any organisation, we will occasionally consider the 'build or buy' approach when it comes to levelling up our technology. Reviewing the market for alternative solutions is always a rewarding experience as it helps teams scrutinise their key objective which can only be - are we delivering something that our audience actually needs?

STEVE WILSON-BEALES, GLOBAL

Global is also focused on having its audience in the Global Player, which is a better business opportunity than listening on linear radio streams.

“

Whereas two years ago the focus was reach, now it's very much about conversions.

And we know that news is a major hook into an app experience. So we have invested heavily in employing more talent to spearhead our radio and podcast shows as well.

STEVE WILSON-BEALES, GLOBAL

“We want to own our content”

At TV2 Nord in Denmark, CTO Peter Zanchetta shares similar sentiments. Working with nxtedition, TV2 Nord has embraced the 'story centric' news model - explained further in *Making the News* - and automated much of the news delivery process.

From one platform, journalists have editorial visibility about news gathering, broadcast rundowns and publishing to different online channels.

But Zanchetta says the next development might be a pivot away from social platforms and towards its own app.

“

I think we're not going to focus so much on social media; we're going to go the other way because we want to own our content, rather than push it out to social media.

5. Longform is where the money is

KEY INSIGHTS

It is much easier to build a business model around longer form news content than ‘snackable’ shortform video

In times of crisis consumers place more value on trust and integrity, and in linear and longer form news - this plays into the expertise of established news brands

Media companies need to make the case that news is ‘brand safe’ as an economic downturn puts the squeeze on advertising spending

The popularity of shortform video has been one of the biggest consumer news trends, driven by social media on mobile platforms.

While there is money to be made in ‘snackable’ shortform video, ITN Productions Head of News & Archive, Tami Hoffman, says the revenue opportunities for shortform video are not predictable enough to build a business around.

“Shortform news revenue shares are too dependent on the vagaries of the platform and their algorithms”

So for all the hype around shortform video, it's longer form features where many news companies and DPP members are generating revenue.

“

Longform isn't dead, certainly not for us. What longform tends to do is pay you up front a fixed fee, whereas all the snackable news seems to be far more based on revenue shares, or the vagaries of the platform and their algorithms - and how much money is slushing around their ecosystems.

One of the challenges that we've got is that if you're only relying on shortform, revenue share type models it can be lucrative, but it's variable and it's quite hard to build a business around that.

Whereas the advantage of having the whole pipeline where you're creating footage, and turning that into fast turnaround documentaries, and licensing deals to feed that into other programming, is that tends to be far more visible, solid, revenue once you get it over the line.

TAMI HOFFMAN, ITN PRODUCTIONS

“ In times of war, fake news and coronavirus, people understand the benefits of ‘traditional’ news ”

For Thomas Grandoch, Senior Business Consultant at Qvest, this is the value of being a trusted news provider. Consumer trends will continue to impact news consumption, but the value of trust and integrity of traditional news providers in times of crisis will increase.

“

Snackable news was a result of the rise of social media content being a competitor to traditional journalism. So news brands all tried to play in that field, adapting the language of this kind of media - and this is still relevant and necessary.

But people now understand the benefits of traditional news. They understand why in times of fake news, in times of war, and in times of coronavirus that it makes sense to look at traditional media houses, which have built up their reputations for maybe 100 years for print, and 50 years for TV or radio.

People look to those sources to get trusted news, and get the validation of what is true and what is fake.

THOMAS GRANDOCH, QVEST

“Longform content and the return of linear is playing an important role in news”

As consumers look to established news brands as their main source of information in times of crisis, it plays into the areas where experienced news operations have expertise. Those are areas such as longform content and the integrity associated with linear news bulletins, an area where those companies also know how to make money.

“

In that field, longform content and the return of linear plays an important role, because this is where the core competencies of established brands are played out.

It can then be brought into snackable shortform video on social media.

THOMAS GRANDOCH, QVEST

MAKING NEWS ‘BRAND SAFE’

Richard Dool, Head of Development and Partnerships at CNN, expects a global economic downturn to have a significant impact on business models.

But this challenging market environment will favour trusted news providers which have focused on brand integrity and longform content.

It has never been more important to be aligned with trusted partners

Dool says that news has not traditionally been treated as 'brand safe' by advertisers. But in the world outlined by Thomas Grandoch above, it has never been more important to be aligned with trusted partners.

Rather than not being 'brand safe', there will actually be positive associations from being aligned with trusted news organisations.

“

We all want to diversify our revenue, but we all depend on advertising for a big chunk of that. And what our advertisers want, and what our audiences want, are often not the same thing.

There's been an idea that news isn't 'brand safe', and I think that's going to be incredibly important in the next 12 months as we're heading into a recession, and marketing spend gets that much tighter, and I think we'll see two ends of the spectrum.

There will be bigger projects around brand safe areas, and some targeted ad buys across all platforms.

But news is brand safe, even if some advertisers disagree with that.

RICHARD DOOL, CNN

“News is brand safe - even if advertisers don't think so”

6. Monetising the archive through metadata

KEY INSIGHTS

To maximise the value from news archives, media companies need to make sure their assets are tagged and discoverable

As media and news becomes more 'digital', correct metadata capture and cataloguing only become more important in enabling news companies to re-use and monetise video libraries

News companies need to facilitate a cultural shift around metadata, so editorial and news gathering teams understand why it is important - and why it is valuable

In *Making the News*, the DPP explores some of the innovations and approaches to metadata capture and exchange at news organisations from a technology perspective.

TV2 Nord CTO Peter Zanchetta quipped that metadata had become a distraction that was not adding much editorial or business value to its news operations. Stopping mandating metadata input was actually liberating.

Search and discoverability makes metadata crucial

The general consensus however is that good tagging and architecture is required to enable the movement of data in news workflows. And as news becomes increasingly 'digital', search and discoverability of assets only becomes more critical for the majority of news operations.

From a business perspective, the discoverability of content and archive material represents a major revenue opportunity for news operations. This plays out in how news staff can share material, re-use assets, and how they are able to monetise video they have already produced.

News archives are a major revenue opportunity

METADATA MATTERS

Craig Wilson is Product Evangelist, Media and Cloud at Avid. A former journalist, he understands the pain of metadata entry and the potential editorial and business value a seemingly mundane data entry task can provide hours, weeks, months and years down the road.

“

I've spoken before about metadata being the most important and the most boring word in broadcast.

People don't actually know what they have, and then as a consequence of that there are inherent inefficiencies of people trying to find material, copying files around because they don't know it's there.

We are investing a lot in search. We're trying to introduce easier ways to collaborate, whether you are producing for a digital channel, linear channel, or any of the social platforms. Much of the time the original content is the same, so we're trying to make it easier to find for your journalists.

CRAIG WILSON, AVID

“Metadata is the most important and the most boring word in news”

The bigger prize though for news organisations is the long tail: extracting value from material in a news archive.

“

It's about trying to maximise what you have in your archive, and then getting more value out of it. The value in an archive is only there if you can find it.

CRAIG WILSON, AVID

“The value in an archive is only there if you can find it”

The fundamental metadata challenge was summarised at the DPP's inaugural [European Broadcaster Summit](#) held in Berlin in March 2022. How can a news organisation incentivise a camera operator, for example, to perform a relatively mundane data entry task that might only take a few minutes - but which potentially saves an editor many hours at some point in the future? After all, it may only take a few minutes, but the primary objective of the camera operator at that moment is to gather material for a breaking news story or evening bulletin - most likely in difficult circumstances.

ITN's Tami Hoffman says the better integration of metadata tagging into news workflows will make a big difference. And that it will also make money.

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Probably the easiest way for me to increase my revenues would be for every producer and journalist at ITN to realise that their material has a life beyond the two-minute package that they're doing for that night's News at 10.

I can't speak enough about the fact that there is a huge amount of material coming into an organisation, and being able to keep it and log it and make sure that it can carry on to be used is one of the biggest challenges that we face.

The challenge is partly that, in trying to keep the separation between editorial and commercial, it's not always a natural part of the workflow to bring the rushes back.

TAMI HOFFMAN, ITN PRODUCTIONS

THE LONG TAIL OF NEWS

Tami Hoffman hopes that a cultural shift will take place at news organisations to help monetise the long tail of news.

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Where we see the biggest financial rewards for our investment - and it's so unsexy - is in our cataloguing, our archive sales and in our metadata. That's the long tail of news - that's what helps the journalism live longer, travel further and make some proper money along the way.

We need a long term, cultural shift to make people realise when they are being sent off to Ukraine that they are doing something more than covering that day's news.

TAMI HOFFMAN, ITN PRODUCTIONS

“Metadata helps journalism live longer, travel further and make some proper money along the way”

AP is also investing in how the agency uses its vast archive.

Its vision extends further than traditional news use cases. Sara Trohanis says that AP Productions, for example, which at its heart is “focused on monetising our deep, rich archive”, is working with production houses, studios and creators to explore the vast library of AP’s news content, pulling out unique storylines and deeper context around the issues of our time to reach broader audiences globally.

CAPTURING NEWS FOR RE-USE

In *What’s the News?*, VICE News Editor-in-Chief Katie Drummond outlined the *what* of news gathering. Its journalists are sent out in the field with a brief to collect a menu of assets for use across a variety of news distribution channels.

Journalists need to understand why metadata capture is important as part of a mindset shift

The next phase for many news organisations will require a mindset shift; encompassing the *why* of metadata capture during news gathering.

“

It’s taken a long time to get a journalist used to making broadcast packages to then file a piece for online. The next step is to make them realise that their newsgathering needs to be brought back to base, and handed over to the right people so it can be re-used, and re-used further.

TAMI HOFFMAN, ITN PRODUCTIONS

7. The cost and efficiency opportunity

KEY INSIGHTS

Technology innovation can drive down the cost of production, providing the cost scales which can enable news operations to be profitable

Artificial intelligence and automation can be used to enable editorial teams to produce more news content, faster and across different platforms

Implementing new tech tools in newsrooms can tear down silos, enabling more collaboration and business agility

A popular technology and IT transformation narrative has emerged in recent years as tech teams have been thrust into the spotlight and ceased being treated as a back-office function. This narrative runs that technology investments are an enabler for new revenue opportunities, and that leading CTOs are business visionaries exploring disruptive innovations ahead of less headline-grabbing priorities like saving money.

It's an appealing view. But the fact remains that there is a significant cost and efficiency opportunity which helps make news operations profitable. Put simply, in the world of news, all money saved does add to the bottom line.

All money saved in a news operation adds to the bottom line

This is a common theme from DPP members when asked about how news providers can make money.

Sandy MacIntyre, previously VP of News at AP, notes that while there has been technology innovation in the news space, some of the technology is still in its infancy. But the opportunity to reduce costs should still not be ignored.

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We all need to get the cost of production massively down, because we know there isn't as much money as there was before - or there are more outlets competing for it. And I don't think those scales we've tried to balance thus far are getting anywhere close to where we need to get to to balance the books. There's been a lot of incremental changes, but I don't think there's been a really big change.

Whether it's AI layers, microservices or news production services - there is an awful lot out there, in its infancy, which can give us massively different cost scales which would make the commercial side of our business an awful lot easier, and I'm not sure we've taken advantage of that.

SANDY MACINTYRE

**“Technology innovation can give us
massively different cost scales”**

Qvest's Thomas Grandoch says that as news production and delivery more closely resembles the software-based digital world, then so too will the revenue models for news.

“

It's very obvious that technology can increase efficiency and reduce the cost that comes with the increased demands in terms of speed and the diversification of channels you need to produce for.

Bringing the models of the digital world into the linear world of print, TV and radio, for example, is about data. And therefore it's a very technical challenge.

THOMAS GRANDOCH, QVEST

“People can be afraid of AI, but it’s about empowering your people rather than replacing them”

He adds that the opportunity provided by emerging innovations like artificial intelligence is not to save money by replacing staff, but to empower people to do more.

“ On the efficiency side, in particular, AI will be utilised for automating processes. People can be afraid of their organisations using AI, but from our perspective it’s about freeing resources from doing repetitive tasks, and the machines being better at analysing data.

There will always be the need for human beings to work on the quality of investigative work and opinion pieces.

THOMAS GRANDOCH, QVEST

Maarten Verwaest, CEO at Limecraft, also believes that automation and AI - built on robust metadata - will drive huge efficiencies at news operations as they are expected to deliver news in different formats across multiple channels.

“ The key is to make more content faster, making it available on more platforms. This often requires remastering of that content. And if you don’t want to go back to the edit suite, that needs automation.

That relies on search and metadata, often produced by AI, and the problem of accuracy and whether we can trust it or not.

MAARTEN VERWAEST, LIMECRAFT

“Artificial intelligence can do a great job of making more content faster”

He too says that the benefit of AI from an editorial and business perspective is to augment the human, rather than replace them.

“All this technology should not be positioned to make people redundant. If we pitch it to improve peoples' jobs - rather than to get rid of them - the chances are it's much more likely to be accepted. If we fit in a proper workflow and interface, the combination of human intelligence and artificial intelligence can do a great job of making more content faster.

MAARTEN VERWAEST, LIMECRAFT

“Vendor business models need to align with what the customers need from a consumption perspective”

CLOUD ECONOMICS

Chief Strategy and Cloud Officer at TagVS, Peter Wharton, also a former journalist, believes the economies of cloud and the pivot to remote working being part of news workflows will drive wide-ranging efficiencies.

“The vendor business models need to align with what the customers need from a consumption perspective. And the real cloud costs underlying this need to make it work.

“

Working from home too has become the norm, and I've seen news organisations embracing being able to work from anywhere. Companies should be building the technologies that enable that in their normal workflow, and not trying to put it back into the control room gallery.

This is about breaking down the silos of technologies, and enabling people to work from anywhere, which I think will also really help diversity. That will be a key shift on how our businesses move going forwards.

PETER WHARTON, TAGVS

COLLABORATION AND BREAKING DOWN SILOS

Tearing down the silos between departments at news organisations is a common theme for DPP members on the technology supplier side.

Robin Kirchhoffer, CMO at Dalet, says bringing broadcast and digital news teams together using the same software is necessary to create the agility media companies need to adapt to changing markets and distribution platforms.

More than anything, media companies need the agility to adapt to a changing market

Norway-based Wolftech, which describes itself as a story centric workflow management system, has been adopted by a number of large news organisations, including VICE Media and the BBC. “We are trying to tear down the walls between different departments and provide visibility,” says its CEO Arne Berven. Fundamentally, Wolftech and other innovators in the space are focused on the needs of the journalists as the mechanism for news organisations to make money.

“We are trying to tear down the walls between different departments”

Conclusion

News providers have been particularly impacted by digital disruption and the rise of social media platforms. In *What's the news?*, editorial leaders discussed both the opportunity and the threat this has created.

To continue to provide news to the biggest possible audience, topical content providers have to be in the feeds of the consumers - an ecosystem that is much harder to monetise than traditional TV broadcasts and news bulletins.

In *The News Business*, we have heard how organisations are ultimately looking to diversify their revenue streams. One common thread that emerges, summarised by Qvest's Thomas Grandoch, is that a focus on quality and trustworthiness is still the most important asset for any news operation.

Indeed, thanks to technology innovations in streaming and the huge audiences accessible on social channels, the barrier to entry to deliver news has never been lower.

“None of us are in the business of just wanting talking heads on live TV”

But VICE Media's Mara Usefi says peers in news are investing more in the quality of their journalism.

“

I don't think any of us are in the business of just wanting talking heads on live TV, which is the cheapest way to make news.

MARAL USEFI, VICE NEWS

And while exploring new revenue streams, some of the most traditional and established ways to make money from news are still relevant - or have boomeranged back thanks to FAST channels and Connected TVs.

Avid's Craig Wilson reminds us too that it's important to focus on the present as well as emerging models and innovations.

“

**In a lot of markets, linear television still makes people a lot of money.
And we can't forget that while we're trying to enable these other innovations.**

CRAIG WILSON, AVID

The dilemma of 2022 is that journalists are following consumer trends, creating and publishing their news where the biggest audience growth is - and understandably so. But this is operating in an environment where their employers can't generate revenue. The journalists are following the eyeballs but not the money.

We all need trusted news providers to succeed

Revenue is not and should not be a dirty word for journalists and news organisations. And older structures are being reimagined, helping make the money that is enabling editorial purity to continue. In Tomorrow's News we have seen how media companies are trying to rebuild news programming for the modern age, while staying faithful to proven business and journalism strategies. High quality, and widely consumed news has never been more important; and we all need trusted news providers to succeed.

About Avid

Avid Powers Greater Creators

People who create media for a living become greater creators with Avid's award-winning technology solutions to make, manage and monetize today's most celebrated video and audio content—from iconic movies and binge-worthy TV series, to network news and sports, to recorded music and the live stage. What began more than 30 years ago with our invention of nonlinear digital video editing has led to individual artists, creative teams and organizations everywhere subscribing to our powerful tools and collaborating securely in the cloud. We continue to re-imagine the many ways editors, musicians, producers, journalists and other content creators will bring their stories to life. Discover the possibilities at avid.com and join the conversation on social media with the multitude of brilliant creative people who choose Avid for a lifetime of success.

The News Business was written by **Edward Qualtrough**, edited by **Mark Harrison**, and designed by **Steph McGonigle**.

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