News Agencies in the System of Modern Mass Media

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Abstract

The article is devoted to studying the role of news agencies in the modern media, new trends in their development that appear in increasing interactivity, multimedia, news personalization, multi-formatting material, increasing the share of entertainment block.

Keywords: News agencies, news, personalization, multimedia, content, multi-formatting

Modern mass media in comparison with other institutions of communication and culture now occupy a leading position worldwide. However, globalization, the progress of new technologies, the challenges of the modern era put before the mass media more and more complex problems and tasks. The emergence of new media, the restructuring of the functioning of traditional media, the decline in demand for print media – all these trends have not yet received their full comprehension. And the increased internal competition of professional mass media is complicated by the activity of bloggers and regular visitors of Internet portals.

In terms of the global challenges of modern civilization, followed by large-scale changes, mass media are also subjected to a heavy shake-up and awareness of the need to find new ways of organizing its structures, methods and techniques in work. This process in Kazakhstan's mass media is just beginning while in foreign mass media we have long observed a massive process of adaptation to the new challenges of reality.

It turned out that under current conditions we can observe an increase but not a decrease, in contrast to other types of media, in popularity and demand for news agencies, those efficient and structured system is also subject to change today.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, news agencies are actively using the Internet not only to collect and disseminate information, but as basic platform for the activities, as a media environment. There are now Internet-agencies appearing which bypass intermediaries for the dissemination of information and turn themselves into full-fledged mass media with a set of individual typological features.

In the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, on 21-22 November 2011 there took place the sixth Forum of European and Asian Media (FEAM) under the motto “20 years of independence: mass media and society”, organized by the constant media holding RIA Novosti.

The history of the Russian International Information Agency "RIA Novosti" began with the formation in the early days of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Information Bureau (Soviet Information Bureau) with the Council of People's Commissioners of SSSR and Central Committee of all-USSR Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) based on the resolution of the Council of People's Commissioners of SSSR and the Central Committee of all-USSR Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) “On the establishment and objectives of the Soviet information Bureau.” RIA “Novosti” is an actual socio-political, economic, scientific, financial information in Russian, main European and Arabic languages, which is distributed via electronic communication, as well as printed newsletters, bulletins and handbooks. The Forum was attended by over 250 media representatives from the CIS countries, Baltic states, Georgia, as well as media executives and leading media industry executives, bloggers, experts, analysts.

RIA Novosti is a News Agency of a new type, which is actively developing and successfully promoting new technologies and forms of work. The Sixth Forum FEAM remembers not only the use of modern technologies, but also new formats: electronic voting on the subject of the next forum, a discussion format “wall to wall” about the responsibility for the content of their posts of social networks users, tweet-walls, and screens which display messages of Twitter users dedicated to the Forum and its subjects, and they were being discussed immediately.

The basic material of news agencies is the news, main methods and principles of broadcasting – speed, brevity, timeliness, objectivity, all of these like nothing else corresponds to the spirit of the era of speed, when there is no time to
analyze and comment. News has always been unique for its pace of obsolescence. If before the news became obsolete within 24 hours, today in happens in 3-4 hours. News is in a hurry to cancel and oust the prior news. Kaleidoscopic ability and redundancy of informational noise are supplemented today by a clearly marked discourse of simulacrum of forming images of reality.

It is difficult to deny that we are now fully under the influence of the reality, which is made by mass media. The product of news agencies in a more visual form demonstrates the ability of mass media to create our own reality from the fragments and base on the principle of the simulacrum. The war in Iraq or in Afghanistan is presented to us, one would think, in real time and exactly as we have seen it (on TV) or just the way we read about it in the news media outlets. But all that is left over or behind the text, as if it does not exist.

Today, news agencies can successfully complement their text materials with photographs, videos, informational graphics, but still the test number (тестовый ряд) of news agencies dominates in materials, in comparison with TV.

But, unfortunately, news agencies as well as all mass media are now actively constructing a kind of reality which is different and simultaneously seeming more real than reality itself.

In the work of Kevin Robins called “Inside the image” it is said: “all the more we come to the fact that we see the world indirectly, and as this happens, we get a greater and greater opportunity to leave and withdraw from the contact with reality” [1, P. 44].

J. Baudriyard [2] in his article “The Procession of Simulacra” concludes that mass media have neutralized reality. According to J. Baudriyard, at the start mass media reflect reality, then mask and distort it, the next stage – disguising the lack of reality and at the last stage mass media produce a simulacrum of reality. Researchers believe that such simulacrum is the destruction of all values and all relationships with reality, death of discourse.

The visual media often use multiple methods of recognition, the truth of the events, referring to the identity of a situation, event, showing documentary footage. However, it often turns out that this is not a documentary photography, but gaming, imitating reality.

News agencies also tend to emphasize the authenticity, reliability of the reported news, their argument is now factual account, but the truth of the facts in the text material is difficult to be verified. Therefore, more and more often in today’s mass media, the reality is not what has actually happened, but what is presented as happened.

Thus, mass media almost always produce large and small simulacra (hyper-real), pushing the real attractor away and replacing it with a strange media attractor of the narrative recreation of events and facts.

Media-image of the event does not in all correspond to reality, primarily because the events do not coincide in time, the selection of important facts by a journalist, a news angle and degree of verbal narrative and the degree of verbal identity of objective comment.

Of course, text materials of news agencies to some extent are less prone to distortion of reality in comparison to television, where there is more and more use of external devices of pseudo-literary narrative, theatrical play, a visual perception of events, which promote creation of a huge ball of a strange media attractor.

However, textual materials of news agencies are willing to use such principles of postmodern as reflection of reality, as decentration, hybridization. This leads to a considerable diversity of major news, where each piece of news seems to cancel rather than complements the previous one, creating a flickering kaleidoscope of reality, where there is no center, no grounds, but there is a flicker of verbal shots that create excessive noise of information.

If television viewers are unable to actively discuss issues, interactivity has not become effective in the functioning of mass media, and information agencies can provide a platform for discussion of the information provided, but often there are few agencies interested in this, except for the content of those sections, which bring them profits, mainly related to economic and financial news agencies or to foreign news agencies that are actively reshaping the structure of broadcasting, focusing on the performance of those functions that promise financial profit.

Contemporary challenges civilizational changes induce the modern news agencies to focus on the multi-display world (personal computers, laptops, smart-phones, eye-phones, cell phone) so that the consumer had the opportunity to read news every minute from any screen.

Overseas 20 % of viewers read news today from a mobile phone, and earlier this number was only 2 %. This trend will also increase in the post-Soviet media space and over time in Poland and Kazakhstan.

We should point out expansion of possibilities, techniques and ways to enrich the content of news agencies as a varied use informational graphics, videos and photos.

Today, journalists of news agencies are not just providers of information, but very often service providers and advertisers.

There is a transformation of the semantic and style discourse in terms of singling out the two main areas of work of
news agencies: news and consumer media. Today, due to reduced revenues from print advertising, many owners and journalists of news agencies are paying close attention to the interests of online users. What they care about, what they read? Today more and more the worldwide mass media are guided by the interests and needs of readers, researchers call this phenomenon as the personalization of the work of news agencies.

Among the new trends in the work of information agencies we should single out a communicative function interactivity which is becoming more and more popular. Another news feature – website of news agencies are becoming more multi-functional, expanding in terms of multi-media, personalization, there are elements of relationships with social networks, more and more often information is provided in the form of multi-format material, which makes entertainment blocks of information wider and wider. All of this allows us to predict the increasing role of news agencies.

Abolition of censorship, the emergence of electronic publications of different types significantly stir up the content of news provided by news agencies of foreign countries and regions, all of which have special representative offices in our country, they are much more free in their choice of content and aspect of commenting events that take place in our country.

Moreover, it is important to emphasize that the speed, fractionality, sensationalism, and multidirectional feature of information about the same event is typical for news on the Internet. On the national television channels we can observe the wide use of clichés and a regular style in broadcasting news. And we should hardly blame the news agencies, which are the main source of supply of information. What is good enough for the news style of news agencies that limit themselves in news reports, does not justify the newspapers and TV channels that are not in a hurry to deepen the individual news investigation and an author’s commentary.

A serious problem of the media field of mass media is a shallow media coverage of the culture-creating flow of life. For example, journalists are often limited to the news about another film festival, and in Astana there is now an action festival of Timur Bekmambetov and his inner life seething with new everyday discoveries, and it often remains beyond the attention of viewers and readers.

So it turns out, that due to the growth of information flow the socio-political media field is narrowed, there is a basis for a manipulating perception of information, its substitution by rumors, unverified opinions.

Today’s news agencies have significantly more attention to the interests of the resistance of the consumer society, reviving attention to national culture, history and art.

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