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# PRINT MEDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITALIZATION: MEDIA TRANSFORMATION AND ADAPTATION STRATEGIES OF TRADITIONAL JOURNALISM

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**Abstract:** The media industry is undergoing a period of profound transformation driven by the rapid development of digital technologies and changing audience habits in content consumption. The convergence of traditional print publications with online platforms, resulting in the emergence of hybrid media formats, is one of the key phenomena shaping the trajectory of media industry development in the present century. This issue has been widely addressed in both international and Uzbek scholarship; however, its interpretation in relation to the specific features of the Central Asian media space remains incomplete and requires further study.

**Keywords:** journalism, media industry, remediation, media digitalization, hybrid media formats, information and communication technologies, online platforms.

Throughout their history, mass media have served as a kind of reflection of society, not only demonstrating the achieved level of technological development but also recording enduring social needs and shifts in cultural orientations. At the same time, the development of the media environment should not be described as a rigid displacement of older formats by newer ones; rather, it is more accurate to speak of a complex process of mutual adaptation, cooperation, and a certain symbiosis among different media channels. Print media have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to adapt flexibly to technological innovations and preserve their place within the changing media landscape.

In communication theory, the process of media adaptation and modernization in response to new conditions has been termed remediation [1]. It is commonly interpreted as a natural stage in the continuous evolution of the media sphere. At the same time, any new media format, like its predecessors, inevitably enters into competitive relations with already established channels of communication.

Remediation is understood as a process whereby new media formats borrow, reinterpret, or incorporate certain elements of earlier media while simultaneously transforming them and competing with them [2].

Under conditions of rapid change, traditional media, and print media in particular, are compelled to reconsider their approaches and adapt to new realities. This is connected with the growing influence of digital platforms and communication technologies, which are radically transforming the information space, encompassing virtually all regions of the world and affecting numerous spheres of public life [3].

As early as the 1990s, scholars began discussing the phenomenon of “new media” as technically more advanced forms theoretically capable of completely replacing traditional channels of information. Within this approach, remediation was interpreted not merely as renewal but as the rapid displacement of obsolete media by more flexible, mobile, and audience-attractive new formats.

Remediation is a two-way process: on the one hand, traditional media seek to master and rework digital tools; on the other hand, digital platforms borrow and transform elements of earlier media forms. Many researchers agree that remediation is a defining feature of contemporary digital media. In his work on remediation and the desire for immediacy, Jay Bolter argues that the nature of new media can be understood primarily through an analysis of how they reinterpret earlier media

forms. Hybrid media are not simply an additive combination of "print" and "digital," but a qualitatively new stage of development anticipated by Bolter. Traditional publications do not merely transfer content into the digital environment; they adopt fundamentally different ways of working with audiences. At the same time, newspapers and magazines retain their core strengths - verified factual foundations, in-depth analysis, and authorial perspective - while complementing them with interactive elements, video materials, and convenient online services. As a result, an intriguing hybrid product emerges: the content remains substantial and meaningful, while the form of presentation becomes more contemporary and user-friendly [4].

A particular symbol of digital transformation associated with the name of Warren Buffett has become firmly embedded in public discourse and has spread actively within the media sphere. Over time, numerous assessments by media managers, analysts, researchers, and journalists have shaped a mass perception of the inevitable decline of traditional media, especially print publications. Part of the expert community has spoken directly of their "fading away," while specialized online resources have emerged to document cases of traditional newsroom closures and analyze the causes and consequences of this process [5].

In recent years, public discourse has become increasingly marked by techno-optimistic views, at times assuming an almost apocalyptic tone [6]. Their proponents regard the internet as the sole viable media platform of the future, capable of fully replacing all currently existing formats. The most radical advocates of digitalization go even further, claiming that any turn toward the past effectively deprives society of the future. Such a simplified and, in many respects, naive position essentially imposes a rigid choice with no intermediate options: either the unconditional rejection of traditional media together with their many years of accumulated experience, or, according to these authors, the inevitable loss of prospects for innovative development.

Within this framing, the answer appears almost self-evident: hardly anyone would voluntarily renounce a promising and technologically advanced future. Moreover, in the opinion of digitalization advocates, such a "rejection" of the past demands few sacrifices and appears nearly inevitable: traditional journalism, in their view, has long ceased to be relevant and has become an archaic relic incapable of competing with the dynamic and interactive internet environment.

At the same time, there is another, more balanced position held by supporters of a pluralistic approach. They consider the harmonious coexistence of different media formats possible and recognize the value of both new and traditional communication channels. In their view, the internet should be perceived not as a total revolutionary replacement for everything that came before it, but as another significant stage in the continuous history of media development - much as radio and television were once integrated into the media space despite the initial skepticism directed toward them. As practice has shown, new media platforms did not destroy earlier ones but instead occupied adjacent niches, thereby expanding the possibilities for obtaining and disseminating information. Moreover, according to a number of authoritative scholars, the disappearance of traditional media could entail serious social costs, including the weakening of journalism as a public institution that ensures accountability of power and protects citizens' interests.

One significant argument in defense of traditional journalism is the principle that it should not be wholly subordinated to commercial logic. Thus, in his work on the influence of the internet on the future of journalism, A.A. Salakhunov notes that the key problem of the industry has been its outdated business model: contemporary audiences have access to an enormous number of free information sources and are increasingly unwilling to pay for content. This, in turn, reduces demand for print products and television broadcasting, while advertising budgets gradually shift to

the internet, thereby undermining the sustainability of models built on the sale of advertising space in traditional media [7].

As Fink observed, in addition to the obligation to generate profit for shareholders, newspapers have historically fulfilled a number of other functions: informing and educating audiences, sustaining public discussion, and representing the interests of society as a whole. In his view, despite the complexity of this task, no other media channel is capable of performing it as effectively as the printed press.

Thus, the thesis of the inevitable disappearance of print media is not confirmed by objective data. On the contrary, an increasing number of arguments suggest that newspapers and magazines will retain their relevance and will not leave the media market in the foreseeable future. Moreover, provided they adapt competently to the digital environment and build upon their own competitive advantages, print publications are capable of remaining profitable. It is essential for them to continue fulfilling their traditional mission - providing high-quality, verified, and socially significant content - while updating their development strategies in such a way as not merely to preserve their positions but to strengthen them actively within the contemporary information space.

Among the key directions for the effective development of print media are the digital transformation of publishing activities and the introduction of multimedia formats, the preservation of high professional standards of journalism and the quality of published materials, as well as the strengthening of public trust in print media as important social institutions.

Particular importance in this regard belongs to the second strategy, which is connected with maintaining the professional level of journalists and the quality of content. Researchers emphasize that the revival of traditional media should not be accompanied by the loss of their fundamental достоинств: the media continue to perform an important public function by shaping the cultural sphere and supporting education, language, and high forms of creativity. At the same time, journalistic activity should be oriented прежде всего toward the interests of society rather than being subordinated exclusively to commercial gain.

Under the pressure of technological change and market constraints, troubling tendencies are also emerging in the media industry: content is becoming more homogeneous, the analytical depth of materials is declining, and the individual authorial voice is being lost. As the cost of professional content production rises, editorial offices increasingly resort to cheaper external sources - syndicated materials or unverified user-generated content, particularly from blogs and social networks - which ultimately affects the overall quality of editorial work.

At the same time, characteristics of print publications that were once perceived as disadvantages - paid access, limited publication space, and relatively slow news delivery - may, under conditions of information overload and the abundance of unverified material, turn into competitive advantages. The volume of online information available is virtually unlimited, whereas its actual value to the user tends toward a minimum. Against this background, print media stand out because of their ability to offer verified, structured, and carefully edited content. According to experts, demand for professional journalism is likely only to grow in the future.

Among the factors ensuring the resilience of print media, it is important to highlight the comparatively high level of audience trust. This trust has been built over many decades and rests on the perception of a publication’s reliability and the presence of editorial control: the reader understands that a text has undergone review by several specialists - an editor, a proofreader, and others. In addition, material published in print cannot be altered retroactively, unlike online publications, which may be edited or deleted without visible traces, thereby reducing the credibility

of internet sources. For this reason, the level of trust in blogs and informal online platforms remains noticeably lower, especially among audiences oriented toward official sources of information [8].

In recent years, active discussion has continued in both professional and academic circles regarding the future of traditional media, and especially the printed press. Against the backdrop of the expansion of digital platforms and the rapid rise in popularity of bloggers, influencers, and alternative forms of content, the view is increasingly expressed that traditional media have lost their significance and will either disappear entirely in the near future or change so fundamentally that they will effectively dissolve into the new media environment.

Nevertheless, a stable perception has taken root in the public consciousness - a kind of worldview assumption - according to which print media are inherently doomed, and their exit from the media market is perceived as a logical and inevitable outcome. This assumption has become so deeply embedded in media discourse that it is often treated as a self-evident truth. At the same time, its negative impact on the industry may prove no less significant than actual technological or economic difficulties: such sentiments foster apathy toward print formats and thereby undermine any efforts aimed at the strategic support and development of this segment of the media industry.

All of this confirms the need to reconsider the entrenched discourse surrounding the “death” of print media. The future of traditional journalism largely depends on the willingness of the academic and professional community to overcome negative stereotypes, propose alternative models of development, and contribute to the formation of a media system in which print media continue to occupy a significant place.

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