

The end of journalism?—The impact of contemporary changes in storytelling on modern-day journalism

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Abstract: *With the advent of the era of big data, data visualization has become a new change in contemporary journalism storytelling. In the mode of data-driven news reporting, contemporary journalism has also undergone earth-shaking changes. This paper mainly evaluates whether the new mode of contemporary storytelling will lead to the end of journalism by analyzing its impact on journalism. Among them, the influence of data visualization on contemporary journalism will be described in detail.*

Keywords: *storytelling; data visualization; journalism*

1. Introduction

It has to be said that this is an era full of change and creativity. Journalists begin to have many unique opportunities to try new things bravely. They can quickly learn and grow from the always innovative journalism and put in to work in the form of storytelling. When it comes to storytelling, every year, there are enormous new challenges need us to grips : experience new technologies, find new approaches, worthy report news and engage in new debates. Storytelling is such an exciting subject, and there is little sign of things setting down anytime soon. With the development of the big data era, the emergence of data journalism has changed the concept and operation process of traditional journalism. Data drives news reports: however, this does not mean that traditional journalism is no longer committed to the old tradition of storytelling. The characteristics of data and the function of news determine that merely listing data in news reports is not enough. Data journalism itself has no value if it is not interpreted and given meaning. So data is a new way for news media to tell stories better, not replace them.

This article mainly evaluates the influence of contemporary changes in storytelling on modern-day journalism and whether they will lead to journalism. Although the interactivity and data visualization of storytelling may lead to biased public opinions and complexity of journalism work, contemporary changes of storytelling boost modern-day journalism development. By comparing the positive and negative effects of these factors on the end of journalism, it is clear that they will not lead the end of journalism.

2. Contemporary changes in storytelling towards modern-day journalism

The Story is a sequence with a beginning, a middle, and an end, the elements of the event need to be organized in a way that conveys a specific meaning to the audience and gives them some experience and information. However, storytelling in the news requires us to think about effective of the story and how it will be communicated to the audience. Audiences of different backgrounds and cultures have an impact on the expectations and reactions of the story. Nowadays, some changes have taken place in storytelling; digital and multimedia content becomes quite essential for any kinds of journalism in news reports, digital storytelling was born. Digital storytelling still obeys the basic storytelling principles, but it requires digital technology and multimedia content to tell a story. This type of multimedia content can be text, images, audio, video, graphics, data visualization, animation solution, etc. In other words, the main difference between storytelling and digital storytelling is the fact that we will use more effective methods to achieve and convey the news to engage with targeted audiences. So, digital storytelling is a new form of storytelling that combines various media content and technologies to

achieve the goal.

Hyperlinks, interactivity and immersion are the three prominent features of digital storytelling. Interactivity refers to the tools created to allow audiences to interact with the website or the application, and it can also contribute to engaging audiences in the digital environment. It is clear that interactivity does more to improve the news topic and diversity. Interactivity has long been considered an essential element of new media (Boczkowski, 2002; de Sola Pool, 1983; Jenkins, 2006; Liewrouw & Livingstone, 2002). As Pablo (2012, p.38) research evaluates three different types of interaction common on online news sites: clicking on stories, sending an email and commenting. It shows that clicking on stories or selecting to read can constitute a form of media interactivity while emailing and commenting on articles are two methods of expressions on human interactivity. Emails can be shared in a network of friends or family, and comment on articles can be shared in a larger platform built by strangers. A noticeable example is that online news website is becoming more and more interactive: the most obvious is the increasing interaction between human-to-human. Users are allowed to participate in the creation of online news content by uploading photos and videos and commenting on articles. Although in the practice of the online journalism, the traditional norm of gatekeeping is still very much in place (Steensen, p.322). But in other words, the newsroom journalists do not need to collect people's point of view and only need to provide an interactive platform to integrate information and select the user interested in news, enriched the news topics and increase the diversity of the news.

Actually, contemporary storytelling is data-driven storytelling, involving extensive graphics, such as data visualizations and interactive gadgets. These kinds of data-driven storytelling can increase interactivity and provide a detailed temporal or geographic information, which provides the context and enhances the sense of realism. These new features have changed the traditional concepts of 5W and 1H in the news story, that is where, when, what, why, who and how. While in the digital storytelling, 5W and 1H can be developed and broken into different separate stories. For example, what can be linked to official reports and pictures, which can be maps or data on regions, how can be analysis, and animation or even live question and answers to engage with experts.

Ojo states "data-driven storytelling could be described as the act of creating and communicating data stories (2017, p.696)." According to it, data visualization of digital storytelling has driven the growth of journalistic work. It leverages a decisive cognitive advantage: fully half of the human brain is devoted to processing visual information.

A well-designed data visualization storytelling can give readers an immediate and profound impression, and cut through the clutter of a complicated story to get right to the point. Moreover, data visualization storytelling can quickly and effectively respond to breaking news, like the number of casualties and the location of an accident, and provide a new perspective on the news topic to interpret the event.

Take The New York Times as an example: In 2009, in the wake of the global economic crisis, The New York Times published an interactive chart that allowed users to filter the U.S population through various demographics and other filters to see how diverse the unemployment rate was. This is a happier example; National Geographic magazine produced a simple chart showing the connections of three U.S cities about significant wine-producing regions and the way each wine product is transported and its carbon footprint, making it known that wines from New York are greener than those from California. It can be said that data visualization of storytelling expands the spatial and temporal scope of news, not only maximizes not only the profound connotation of news reports but also discovers the logical structure that cannot be reflected in traditional news. After data visualization is completed, data journalism can use social media platforms to allow readers to customize their own personalized applications according to their interests and needs to realize more positive news value. However, interactivity has such evident and intuitive advantages in storytelling; in some cases, it can be detrimental to the marketing and advertising of modern-day journalism. A study from Yuping (2002, p.53) shows that the adverse effect of interactivity on advertising effectiveness and marketing results from the interaction between person and situation. Undoubtedly, data analysis complexity in storytelling presents an undeniable challenge: data visualization techniques and methods need to be improved. Olshannikova (2015) noted that the data visualization technology currently used will face new limitations due to its vast resource, memory requirements and high cost. One of the first comprehensive studies of the field undertaken by Google News Lab and PolicyViz, showed that more than half of respondents want their organizations to be using more data visualization technologies to tell stories. But, some barriers limit that limit the use of data visualization in newsrooms. For example, Many journalists view data visualization as a skill that takes a lot of time to train and is not easy for all journalists to master. Data journalism also takes a lot of time and resources to produce, and the return

on investment is unclear. Despite these challenges, data visualization in storytelling has become more mainstream than at any other time in its history. Newsrooms are trying to do works that help explain the world around us.

3. The end of journalism will not happen

Although everybody talks about "the death of print", It has to be said that almost every story about print has been bad news for more than a decade. "One presentation to the Leveson Inquiry into press regulation shows that between 2005 and 2010 regional newspaper group Newsquest had lost more than half of its revenue", says Bradshaw (2018). Almost all newspapers, such as the Guardian and the Sun, now have more online readers than their print editions. Inevitably, many publications are starting to forgo the expensive cost of printing. Many readers also say they prefer to read online. It is not hard to see that some storytelling changes could indeed lead to the end of print media. But the situation is improving, and some exciting innovations are taking place in the print media. They attract the audience through the color picture layout of satire or humor and constantly give full play to the advantages of printing technology to convey information and attract readers' attention, thus giving space to the role of news and publishing and its unique texture.

On the contrary, these changes towards modern-day journalism play an essential role of journalism in democracy. First, data visualization facilitates public debate. In order to make democracy work properly, governments often use data visualization technology to expose and debate issues related to social life. In this way, data visualization becomes a method of public political debate, through which the public decides the direction of the social problems and how to vote in elections. Secondly, data visualization in storytelling promotes the formation of the ideology of civic democracy. For example, the pay gap between men and women is just a natural state of affairs? Sometimes data visualization can illustrate such issues. How the public perceives such issues of inequality or gender equality is crucial to politics. Only when the public is aware of such issues can the government take action or welfare measures to address them. Finally, data visualization helps people fulfill their roles as citizens. Citizens sometimes do not care about many issues, which prevents democracy from functioning as it does. Data visualization can help people understand complex social problems and connect them to their daily lives. Data visualization has played a massive role in media coverage of the 2020 US presidential election. In this election, mass media enabled audiences to understand the political election process through data visualization, creating an agenda and allowing the people to play a role in that democratic agenda (McCombs, 2005; Nelson, Lecheler, Schuck, & De Vreese, 2012). For example, The New York Times and the Washington Post have both created data visualizations of the candidates' positions and odds of winning, using colors (red and blue, representing Republicans and Democrats) and maps to visualize what is going on in real-time. Many voters have become participants in this data-visualized journalism, analyzing election data from various of scientific backgrounds, including journalism, design, and computers. Candidates and audiences have also formed a good interaction, in which democracy has become more and more important.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, data visualization of digital storytelling is the most significant change in contemporary storytelling. It enriches the diversity of news topics and promotes the development and reform of modern-day journalism. By evaluating the positive and negative effects of these changes toward the end of journalism, it is clear that they will not lead the end of journalism but increase the role of democracy in journalism. Unlimited technology and social media's interactivity will continue to have a huge impact on storytelling and news delivery.

I consider the trends in mobile devices such as immersion, visualization, personalization, and interactivity will have the most significant impact on modern storytelling. Data visualization in storytelling has become one of the most vital tools for the media to cope with the rising flood of information. Some journalism organizations have invented new training programs for their journalists to improve new knowledge of new visualization tools that were continually developing in the era of the Internet and online media.

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