

TECHNOLOGY AS A DRIVER AND DETERMINANT OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF JOURNALISM IN KOSOVO AND THE BALKANS

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Abstract

The Balkan is a region with specific development, especially in the last thirty years. A region with approximate elements of development, in the totalitarian system of power, found itself unprepared for the normal transition of society, and its all segments, including the influence of technology and the media, as the focus of our interest. Instead of following the path of technological development and media transition, from a media controlled by the government to a free media and determined by the free market of speech and ideas, this media remained in a pre-transition. Wars broke out and, instead of transition, the media remained in chaos. When the wars in the former Yugoslavia ended and the media began to recover in terms of content, it found itself facing the great difficulties of doing a journalism, facing the wave of changes that technology imposed to media. Only after the wars, this mainly traditional journalism became a question of the past. Technology imposed a new form: of research, of writing, of publication, of public relations. A whole new view of the media, was imposed by the dynamic developments of technology.

Keywords: Technology, Kosovo, Balkans, Media, Transformation.

INTRODUCTION

The media in the Balkans have their own peculiarities. In the second half of the last century they operated under a complete state-imposed censorship. This was happening at the time when the world gave the media and free speech the greatest freedom. In the United States of America, the legitimacy of the media has been enshrined since the 18th century, in the First Amendment of the Constitution, where it is emphasized that "Congress shall make no law (...) which shall limit the freedom of expression or of the press (...)" [1] Other democratic states had also regulated this with positive laws.

The former Yugoslavia also had a positive law. The Constitution of the Autonomous Socialist Province of Kosovo (as its constituent unit) of 1974, which was considered the most advanced, talks about freedom of expression. "Article 183: Freedom of thought and self-determination is guaranteed; Article 184: Freedom of the press and other forms of information and public expression is guaranteed..." [2] it was said in. But, in practice, the opposite happened.

Media leaders were appointed by the political leadership. And they were responsible for censorship and information control. In the 90s, when this state was disintegrated, with painful wars (in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo), instead of transition, the media in these countries stagnated and failed to professionalize.

But the birth of the internet and the development of technology enabled the media in the Balkans to leave behind the period of censorship and state control and develop like the other media in the entire advanced world.

We ascertained the role of technology in the transformation of the media in this region by researching the form of collection, preparation and publication of information in traditional media (printed newspapers), in the second half of the last century, the number of information in a publication and the their content, case study Kosovo.

For comparison, we researched major online media outlets in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo to see the changes in content, enabled by technology.

Five interviews, conducted with media leaders during the period of totalitarianism, reveal the nature of the media of this time. Meanwhile, a qualitative survey with 15 editors and journalists of online media , carried out in Kosovo, has also produced the results of general technology changes in the media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When in 1981 the personal computer IBM appeared on the market, few of the owners or editors and journalists, much less the public, thought that one of the professions where it will affect the most will be journalism. Along with the changes in other professions.



Figure 1: Personal computer -IBM-PC

Source: <https://billpetro.medium.com/>

Earlier, the discovery of the telegraph was called "the most beautiful of all modern discoveries", [3] or "the greatest discovery since Christopher Columbus", while the person who laid the first transoceanic cable (although it did not work) was given the greatest honors of the time (he was awarded the rank of knight at the age of 26). [4] But the internet changed everything. The history of the internet begins in the 40s of the XX century.

It was the idea of American researcher Vannevar Bush, who wanted to create a brand new encyclopedia that would work through various applications. "The vision of the Internet and www (World Wide Web) is revealed in an article of Vannevar Bush in the 40s. Bush was an American scientist who worked in submarine detection for the US Navy. He designed and developed the differential analyzer, which was a mechanical computer whose function was to evaluate first-order differential equations." [5]

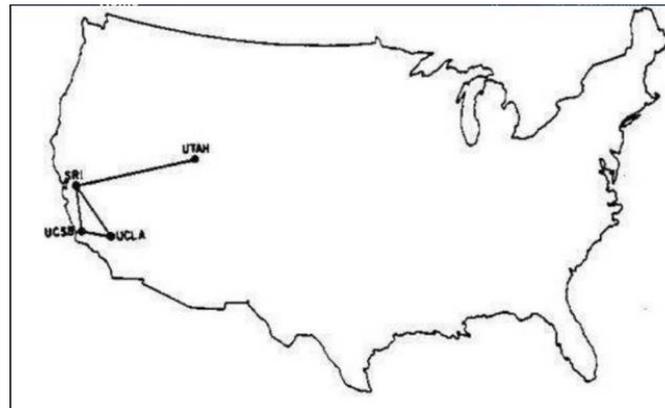


Figure 2: Map of the Internet in 1969

Source: <https://www.reddit.com/>

Researcher Gerard O'Regan says that in the 60s of the last century there were about ten thousand primitive computers around the world. It was the time when the internet was being invented. The first computer-to-computer communication was developed in 1969, through the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), established by the US Department of Defense. "The first host-to-host connection was made between a computer at UCLA (University of California – Los Angeles) and a computer at SRI (Stanford Research Institute) in late 1969".[6]

In 1991 the World Wide Web became accessible. As an information space, in which information is identified by Uniform Resource Locators (URLs). WWW was created by British researcher Tim Berners-Lee in 1989 while working for CERN in Switzerland, it was published outside CERN in early 1991, and in August of the same year it became accessible to the general public on the internet . [7] From here on everything changed. For many areas in the development of human society, and for the media, in particular.

The spread of the Internet in the world is mainly related to the changes in journalism. The latest data shows that, as of January 6, 2023, there were 5,569,200,301 (5.6+ billion) internet users. The average global internet user spends seven hours online each day. As of November 2022, there were over 1.14 billion websites. [8] As for the Balkan region, Serbia has the highest fixed internet quality (53.7 mbps), followed by Kosovo (45.8 mbps). Meanwhile, in the mobile Internet, North Macedonia leads (62.5 mbps), followed by Serbia (44.1 mbps). Kosovo is last with 15.4 mbps). [9]



Figure 3: Internet in the Balkans

Source: Berin Terovic (RFE/RL Graphics)

Media has its own history of development, followed by technological developments. According to scholar Mice Temple, the first published daily newspaper is the "Daily Coruant", "which appeared on March 11, 1702, as a single sheet with two columns, which sold for a penny".[10] The spread of the press was determined by the opening of printing presses. Johannes Gutenberg is considered the first discoverer of the printing press. In 1455, he published the Bible, printed with a new technique. [11]

The Germans established printing presses all over Europe. "By the year 1500, printing presses were opened in more than 250 countries in Europe - 80 in Italy, 52 in Germany and 43 in France", [12] while "over 27 thousand publications came out of these printing presses, until the year 1500". [12] A book was printed in about 500 copies, so "by the year 1500 in Europe (there were about 100 million people) there were about 13 million books in circulation". [12]

The beginning of the 20th century marked the beginning of radio broadcasting. Electromagnetic waves were discovered in 1887 by Heinrich Hertz. [13] In 1901, a message was sent across the Atlantic for the first time (from Cornwall, England to Newfoundland, Canada), while the first television broadcast was made in 1906 in Massachusetts, USA. The oldest television house in the world is believed to be WRGB, founded as an experimental station on January 13, 1928, broadcasting from the General Electric plant in Schenectady, New York, known as "WGY Television" after its radio station. [14]

After more than a year of using the www on the Internet, the first online newspaper, "Chicago Online", appeared. [15] The appearance of Google (1998), [16] Facebook (2004), [17] Twitter (2008) [18] and other social networks fundamentally changed the way news is collected, produced and distributed. The news of the assassination of the President of the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln in 1865 took 12 days to cross the Atlantic,[19] during the reign of Queen Catherine the Great in Russia (1762-1796), to convey a government decision from Saint Petersburg to Kamchatka in Siberia took 18 months.[12] "Letters from Spain to Mexico traveled only four months, but to Lima (Peru) usually six to nine months, and to the Philippines up to two years." [12] Communication between London and the British colonies was faster, but it often happened that letters were lost or did not arrive at the right destination. Thus, "the announcement of the assassination of King Charles I, written in March 1649, reached New England only in June". [12] Today, a press conference of the President of the USA or the Prime Minister of New Zealand can be attended in real time, with a delay of seconds, not only in Europe, but also in the farthest corner of the world.

The technology-media relationship has not always gone smoothly. Videotext released in 1985 by the group "Time Mirror" offered many possibilities at that time. "But within a year, only 2,000 Americans subscribed to this new service. Consequently, it was closed. Such initiatives, within a decade, cost the American newspaper industry less than \$100 million. Things were changing.

In 1992, of the 1,570 daily newspapers in the US, only 13 offered some form of online edition. [12] Just this year, about 20 percent of Americans had computers, and most of them had modems installed. [20]

But whose where profits ? The supplier of the technical infrastructure received up to 80 percent of the subscriptions. Browsing online content was initially very expensive. In 1985, the Internet had a \$9.95 package for current affairs, economics, sports, shows. But overtime was \$3.50 per hour, and archival research was \$48 per hour. Ads

had not yet entered online publications. They will come later. In 1995, "Hot Wired" introduced the designated space for publicity. "The first quadrilateral rectangle, in the dimensions that later became classic (468x60 pixels). [20] But profits slowly increased. "About 12 percent of American dailies had an electronic presence in February 1997 (almost double the previous year), but only about twenty of them were earning something ." [20] It was the important events that highlighted the advantages of technology in helping the media. A Prodigy program user, that used his modem without wire, distributed news of the 1994 Los Angeles earthquake long before CNN and the Associated Press did so in their news bulletins. Critic Jon Kartz said that after this "a new journalistic medium was born".[20]



Figure 4: HotWired website in 1997

Source: <http://www.hotwired.com>

If the assassination of President Kennedy made television favorite media and the Gulf War enabled CNN to penetrate the collective imagination, the landing on the planet Mars is considered to mark the beginning of an entire era of interaction in the consumption of news. [21] In this case, about 45 million people were connected to the web address of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of the US Space Agency. Another media revolution enabled by technology.

But, in the distant year 1887, an interesting experiment seemed to have warned that great things would happen to the media, alongside the development of technology. The king of railroads, Leland Stanford had made a bet of 25 thousand dollars that the horse during the run, at a certain moment, would detach all four hooves off the ground. The well-known photographer of the time, Eadweard Muybridge, using 24 cameras with loops of different lengths, discovered that for a moment the horse was completely detached from the ground during the run. The bet was won and Muybridge had invented a system for recording and reproducing the movement. [22]

If it was the printing press that enabled the spread of newspapers and other printed publications, today it is the Internet that has given another light to the media. A daily newspaper had a certain flow of rubrics : Politics, Economy, Society, Black Chronicle, Readers' letters/comments, Municipalities, Region, World, Culture, Feature, Reportage, Travelogue, Sketch, Sports, Entertainment, Advertisements/marketing. ,

Special publications (weekly supplements for sports, culture, etc.). In the Internet media, fundamentally changed by the Internet, only the main rubrics have been preserved. Some of the newspaper columns are part of the history (Feuilleton, Travelogue, reportage...). Technology-influenced rubric names, but are not limited to: Politics, Video, Sports, Culture, Opinion, Social, Law, Daily Blog, Live, Global, Interview, Podcast, Hashtag, Mojo, Op-Ed, Pro-Am , Scoop etc.[23]

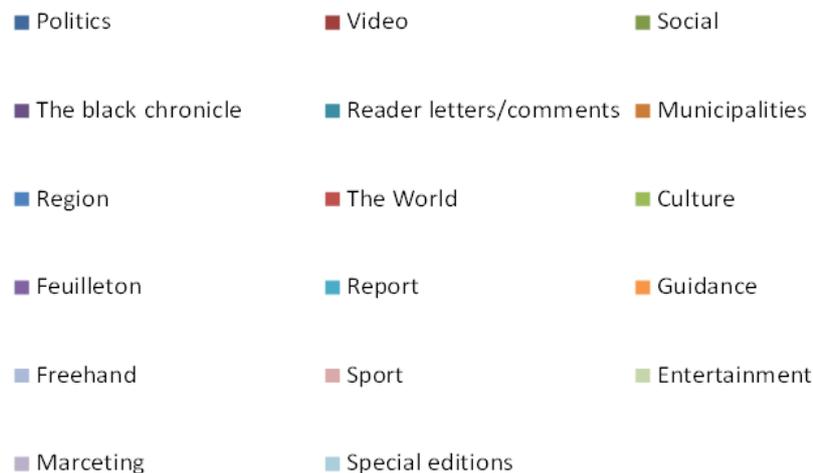


Figure 5: Columns in the printed newspaper



Figure 6: Columns in the Internet media

Technically, media today is based more on video than text. Online media places the main emphasis on footage captured by cameras or other smart devices.[24]

It relies heavily on citizen journalism. Patrice Flichy, specialist in information techniques, notes that “we are seeing a new type of individual: PRO-AM (amateur professional); that develops its own amateur activities according to professional standards”. [25] Even the author Jay Rosen[26] says that citizen journalists are the people once known as the audience, they are simply the public made more real, less imaginary, more capable, less predictable. Abraham Zapruder is considered the forerunner of citizen journalism. On November 22, 1963, he was sitting at the window of his house and filmed the assassination of the president. Egyptian Wael Abbas was awarded several international awards for reporting on his blog "Misr Digital", [27] for a video showing two policemen beating a bus driver. The first images of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center reached the public through photographs and footage of citizens. The Twitter microblog was a vital source of information during

the protests in Iran in 2009, when both journalists and Internet access were blocked. In October 2006, Buffalo, New York was engulfed in a snowstorm.

Citizens posted about 100 videos on YouTube and about 800 photos on Flickr. The development of this kind of journalism forced the media to open the door to citizen journalism. Citizens from around the world posted over 100,000 photos, videos and footage to CNNiReport.com in 2012. Of these, 10,789 were verified for CNN, meaning they have been vetted and approved for broadcast on CNN. TV or published on CNN.com. [28] "In San Francisco, a television station laid off its news staff and now runs entirely on viewer announcements." [29] Or, major news agencies allow readers to become part of the content directly. "The Associated Press has an agreement with a website that allows 'citizen journalists' to contribute content." [29] Even, the well-known magazine "Time", in 2006 announced the Audience as the Man of the year. [30]

Many media outlets allow their readers or listeners to ask questions about a personality and make questions based entirely on questions from the audience rather than the editorial. Technology has made journalism faster, but it has also endangered the relation between media and audience. University professor Milazim Krasniqi says that "high technology, set at the service of the media, has begun to dictate its dynamics even on the content of the media itself". [31] Author Nick Coldury says that the new media has oversaturated the public with information and blames technology for this. He lists the facts, like hundreds of cable or satellite channels; constant access to the Internet; online media websites; the massive growth of online distribution networks; social networks. [32]

Semiologist Umberto Eco also gave a special opinion about this media. "Of the seven billion inhabitants of the planet, there is an inevitable number of idiots, many of them accustomed to communicating their ravings to friends or relatives at the bar, so that their opinions are limited to a certain circle. A significant number of these people can already express their opinions on social networks", [33] says Eco.

The financial element, namely the decline in advertising revenues, was among the most important factors that influenced the transition of media from print to online. In 2008, advertising revenue fell 25 percent compared to three years earlier. [34]

At the same time, "newspapers began to reduce the number of pages and the degree of coverage of a news story". [34] One difference between traditional media and online media is that paper costs (and this is what costs the most), while the new space on the web is not much and does not burden the balance of expenses. [35] "In the first nine months of 2008, the average profit margin of newspapers operating was at 11.5 percent. That compares to a peak of 22.3 percent in 2002." [35] Therefore, rightly, the author Paul Sarr states that "a financially compromised press is more likely to be ethically compromised as well". [35] Another element of the influence of the Internet on the media is the lack of need for correspondents. This is because "the internet offers free and easy access to foreign media, such as BBC and the websites of international organizations. [35] Most of the American media closed offices in Washington. Initially, some newspapers kept an office, only to close them later. [35]

The Internet, in cases of war and isolation, has radically changed the form of communication between opposing parties. Thus, when the Zapatistas in Mexico were forced to take refuge in the jungle to escape military persecution, they used the Internet to communicate with the media and the world.[36]

Whenever there is war, the public's demand for news is much greater than in times of peace. But it is the Kosovo war of 1999 that is called the "first online war". Jim Hall says that "the first international conflict that was covered in journalistic form and, in some way, experienced via the Internet, was the Kosovo war in 1999". [37]

"The day after the NATO bombings, CNN's website dedicated to the event received 31 million hits, a number that by the end of the week had reached 154 million. Web traffic from Yugoslavia increased 963 percent," [37] says Hall.

But, in the case of the Kosovo war, except for the beginning days, even technology didn't make it. The Yugoslav government chased all foreign journalists from Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo. They could only report from near the border, interviewing those deported from Kosovo. Sociologist Laura Tettamanzi went to the border herself to see how the journalists were working.

"From 'war reporter', special envoys (journalists) are in danger of turning into 'bar reporter'. [38] The expenses of the media houses were very large. CNN's reporting cost \$150,000 a day, [38] while since the mob attack in Belgrade, CNN had lost more than \$250,000 worth of technicians, and five cars were stolen. [38] When the equipment destroyed in Belgrade by NATO bombings is added to this, the total cost of the CNN exceeds \$1.5 million in destroyed equipment.[38]

The world will always know most about the war, the horrors, the disasters. And here one must look for the big change that technology has made possible for the media: the speed and accuracy of reporting. William Russell is considered the first true war correspondent. In 1854 he wrote his reports with goose feather and started his messages with post horses. [38] Today, the world sees drone attacks in the Ukraine-Russia war almost in real time.

All this thanks to technology.

An important element, brought to light by the development of technology, is the professional preparation of journalism professionals during the education process, but also during their work. This is because, according to research, "technology, in the 21st century, directly affects teaching-learning.

Technology and its development in the field of education helps students develop their knowledge and skills in professional development." [39] In the time of the development of technology, universities that prepare journalism professionals, but also in other fields, are faced with learning based on technology, but also learning according to traditional forms. This is because virtual learning, supported by technology, "has facilitated access to scientific knowledge of information, expanding the learning process and deepening computer knowledge among students". [40]

The introduction of technology in teaching affects the improvement of student performance. "After adopting the new media data interaction system for teaching aids, the students in the experimental class not only improved their written and oral test scores, but also showed a higher interest in learning English, a more serious learning attitude and stronger communication skills than usual." [41]

This system brings a new direction of development in the teaching of subjects in colleges and universities, as well as offers a new direction for the development of university education.

METHODOLOGY

The theoretical basis of this research relies on modern research practices on the issue of media transformation, alongside the development of technology. Before starting the research, professional and sufficiently processed studies were selected, to give the required result and to draw clear conclusions about the impact of technology on media development. The way of doing journalism in the time of traditional media, with undeveloped technology, until today, when the media was dictated by technology, is analyzed. The reviewed literature, concrete examples of media analysis, interviews and surveys allow us to draw a clear conclusion, in response to our interest in documenting the direct impact of technology on media development and its radical transformation. The subject of the research are online media: Delo.si , Slovenia, Jutarnji.hr, Croatia, Avaz.ba, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alo.rs Serbia, Slobodenpecat.mk, North Macedonia, Vijesti.me, Montenegro, Balkanweb.com Albania and Gazetaexpres.com, Kosovo.

For comparison with the work model of the traditional media, the daily newspaper "Rilindja" in Kosovo has been chosen, in the 80s and 90s of the last century, as well as other daily newspapers before and after the war of 1998/1999. The form of gathering, preparing and publishing information, in the period of low technological development and, today, in the time of high technology development, has been analyzed.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Media in Kosovo is later developed compared to other medias in the regions. It begins to develop after the Second World War, in a centralized system with strong control over its content. The work starts with simple tools and is printed in modest printing presses. Along with the development of technology, the media also develops. The newspaper "Rilindja", the only daily newspaper in the Albanian language in Kosovo during the dictatorship period, was dominated by local news. In the specimen taken for analysis, dated March 1, 1985, [42] the newspaper had a total of 107 news, of which 85 were local news and 22 were international news. The paper had 16 pages. The overwhelming majority of news is political news (61). After the banning of "Rilindja", it was replaced by the newspaper "Bujku", which usually has 16 pages. In the issue dated December 1, 1991, [43] the newspaper has a total of 105 news items. 72 of them are news with political content. On March 1, 1994, [43] "Bujku" appeared on only 8 pages. There is a smaller number of news items, 63 in total, 20 local and 42 international. Half of the news (30) are from politics. The newspaper "Bujku" dated January 5, 1998[43] appears on 16 pages and has a total of 81 news items, of which 37 are from politics.

At this time, the other daily, "Kosova sot", is also published. On January 7, 1999, [44] this newspaper appears on 16 pages and has a total of 77 news items. The war chronicle dominates with 29 news and politics with 27 news. Another daily newspaper, "Koha ditore" also has 16 pages. Its issue of January 11, 1999[45] has a total of 64 news items. Politics dominates with 39 news items. After the war, a lot changed. The editorial offices are equipped with computers, while several new printing presses are installed in Kosovo. The number of advertisements is also increased. Thus, the newspaper "Koha ditore" dated March 1, 2001[45] had 24 pages. There are 62 news items in that' day issue.

Politics dominates the content (35), while news from the economy (5) has been added and those from the black chronicle (1) have decreased. "Bota sot" in the issue dated January 8, 2001, [46] has 32 pages and has a total of 76 news, of which two-thirds are local. Content is dominated by politics (39). Newspaper "Kosova sot" also started publishing after the war. In the issue of March 18, 2000, [44] the newspaper appears on 24 pages and has a total of 66 news items, of which 47 news from the country and 19 international news. Thirty-six political news accounts for more than half of the news. The newspaper "Zëri" entered the market of daily newspapers at the beginning of 2000. In the issue dated June 27, 2000[47] it was published on 24 pages, with a total of 70 news in one issue, 47 of them from politics. Even "Epoka e re" is among the newspapers that came out after the war. In the issue dated March 4, 2000, [48] the newspaper has a total of 68 news, of which 42 are local and 26 international. There were 16 pages. Politics dominates the content (34 news), but we have a significant number of news from the black chronicle (17). In 2008, Kosovo declared its independence. To a large extent, the media has passed the "age" in which international aid was necessary. The number of newspapers is also increased. Newspapers improve technically. Add color pages. The circulation also increases.

"Lajm" is a new newspaper, looking more like a tabloid. In the issue of September 8, 2008, [49] the newspaper is printed on 32 pages and has a total of 78 news items. Politics dominates the news content (26). The newspaper "Bota sot" continues its publication in Kosovo, but also in the West (Germany and Switzerland). In the issue dated September 1, 2008, [46] it appears on 32 pages and has a total of 102 news, of which 35 are from politics.

Even other newspapers, such as "Infopress", "Express" and others are dominated by politics. They come out most often with 32 pages, often with 40 and sometimes even with 48 pages.

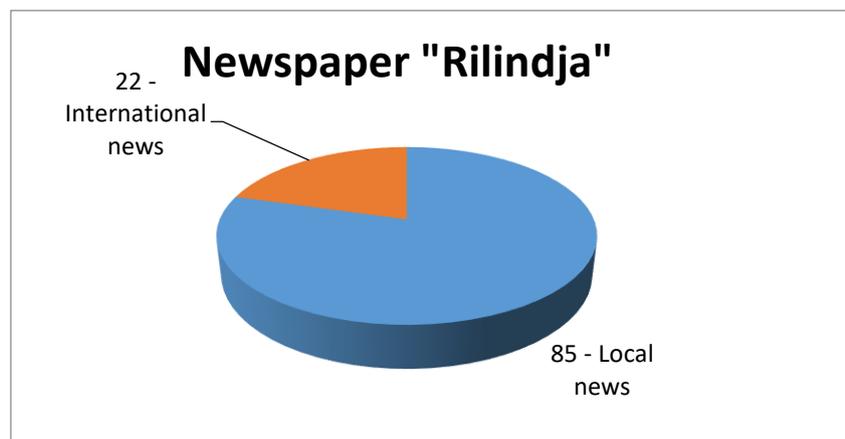


Figure 7: News in an issue of "Rilindja" newspaper during communism, March 1, 1985

Technically, until the 90s of the last century, newspapers were prepared quite differently than today. Texts were typed. The transition from typewriter to computer presented a problem for a significant number of journalists. Even world-renowned writers have admitted that the writing tool greatly influences the shaping of their thoughts. Friedrich Nietzsche's friends noticed a new form of his writing, a new energy in the content of his writings, since he received a new typewriter as a gift. His friend, the writer and composer Heinrich Koselitz wrote: "I believe that with the new typewriter

you will find a new form of expression." For himself, he said that "in his thoughts, as in music, as in writing, the quality of the typewriter, as well as the quality of the paper, affects a lot." "You're right", - replied Niche: "The tool with which we write has an impact on how our thoughts are shaped". [34] Journalists, after the initial writing, had to rewrite the text once it passed the editing process. In the printing press, the text was arranged by hand, in lead letters, and then sent to press. Today, this process is very simple. The newspaper is technically prepared on the computer and from there it is sent directly to the printing press, which is also already automated. The distribution of the newspaper was done by train, and in more distant cities, by buses or cars.

Although later than other countries in the region, all newspapers in Kosovo have switched to their online version. As of 2020, being a rare example, there is no printed newspaper in Kosovo. So technology hit the newspaper industry in Kosovo hard. It forced them to announce the closure of their print version. "In March 2020, the last two newspapers, "Koha ditore" and "Epoka e re", stopped publication, after the measures taken by the government at the time to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and put the country under quarantine, continuing work online." [50] And while in Kosovo no daily newspaper is published anymore, in the other countries taken for analysis for this paper, the daily newspapers continue to be published in the printed version. 3 daily newspapers are published in Slovenia. [51] In Croatia, 6 daily newspapers are published, at the country level and several regional newspapers. [52] In Serbia, in February 2023, 12 daily newspapers are published. [53] In Montenegro 3 daily newspapers. [51] In Bosnia and Herzegovina 3 daily newspapers. [51] 7 daily newspapers are published in Albania. [54] In North Macedonia, 4 newspapers are published in the Macedonian language and 2 in the Albanian language. [55]

The transition to the online format of the media has changed a lot, both the publication format and the content of the texts. Many of the traditional columns are no longer found in the media (reportage, feature, travelogue, commentary, analysis, readers' letters) and have been replaced by comments below the published text, etc.). Meanwhile, new rubrics have been added, according to public interest. One of the leading portals in Slovenia, Delo.si has the following main rubrics: Novice (News), Gospodarstvo (Economy), Mnenja (Opinions), Sport, Culture, Kresnik (Health), Magazin, Sobotna priloga (Saturday supplement). As main subheadings are also: D podcast, Ukraine, Ucitelj sem! (Education) and Kibernetska sverosty (Cyber Security). [56] Jutarnji.hr (Croatia) is one of the most widely read online newspapers. The main rubrics of the newspaper are: Premium (main articles, with additional payment), Vijesti (News), Sport, J2 (with sub-sections for technology, health, knowledge, life stories, entertainment...), Video, Novac (Money), Stage (show-biz). [57] Avaz.ba is the main portal in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its main sections are: Naslovnica (home page), Vijesti (news), Crna Hronika (Black Chronicle), Sport, Showbiz, Lifestyle, Sci-Tech. [58] Alo.rs in Serbia is one of the most widely read portals. There are these main sections: Najnovje (Latest News, Naslovna (Home), Vesti (News), Biz (Business), Hronika (Chronicle), Sport, VIP, Razonoda (Entertainment), Najzena (Women). [59] In North Macedonia, Slobodenpecat.mk is among the most popular online media to the public. Its main sections are: Naslovna (Front page), Vesti (News), Magazin, Kolumni (Opinions), Sport, Zdravje (Health). [60] Vijesti .me is the main portal in Montenegro. Among its main sections are: Vijesti (News), Sport, Svijet (World), Lifestyle), TV Vijesti (TV news), Culture, Zabava (Entertainment) and Columns (Opinions). [61] Balkanweb.com is the main online portal in (Albania). Its main categories are: Albania,

Kosovo, Region, Sport, World, Culture, Metropolis, Analysis and Technology. [62] In Kosovo, the Gazetaexpress.com portal is among the most read. There are these main sections: News, Sports, Op/Ed (Opinions), Pink (Entertainment), Arts (Culture), Snow (Health), Other. [63]

In the traditional media we had an order of columns: Politics, Economy, Society, Black Chronicle, Readers' letters/comments, Municipalities, Region, World, Culture, Feuilleton, Reportage, Travelogue, Sketch, Sports, Entertainment, Advertisements / marketing, Special publications special (weekly supplements for sports, culture, etc.).

And the order of the rubrics was according to public interest. With the permanent dominance of politics. In online media, the number of rubrics is much smaller. Politics continues to remain at the top of interest, but other sections have changed. From the examples taken above, after politics, importance is given to the black chronicle, economy, sports, health and technology news items. Measuring public interest is now easy. Media notices which news stories are being read the most, powered by technology. And publishes such news items more.

Technology has enabled the media to increase, as much as necessary, the number of news. A printed newspaper, due to space limitations, rarely publishes more than 100 news stories in an issue. For online portals this figure is small. Most online portals publish about 350-400 news per day. On weekends, less. [64] However, not all meet the criteria of news. By nature, online media react quickly when an event occurs. The first news is usually only with the main data. Further, this news is fulfilled with other data. When all additions are counted, it turns out that there are, for example, 7-8 news items for one event. In traditional media there would be only one news, complete and respecting the rules of professional journalism.

Researchers have found that communication through the Internet has become an everyday thing. Where everyone can freely give their opinion on a problem. [65] Also, the Internet has enabled a massive increase in the average amount of content we process each day, as well as the speed of processing. [66]

Media aided by technology has significantly increased both the presence and the consent of the public.

The Balkan region itself is special. Either because of the geographical position, or because of the political and economic developments, which make it special from the rest of Europe. Its diversity does not allow the definition simply as a suburb, since this region is a suitable laboratory for the research of all aspects of the new medium. [67]

The data shows that the online media is dominant in terms of the address where people get the latest news. In Kosovo, for example, 85 percent of citizens use Internet media more than three times a day, [64] unlike data for the European Union, [68] where 58 percent of respondents declare that they use these media at least once a week. In Kosovo, in March 2023, the act of internet penetration was marked even in the last settlement, that is, the coverage of the entire country with 1.8 million inhabitants with an internet connection. [69]

The other countries analyzed have this level of Internet penetration: In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 59 percent of residents will be connected to the Internet with a fixed connection in 2023, in Serbia 80 percent, in Montenegro 67 percent, in North Macedonia 77 percent, in Albania 55 percent, in Kosovo 95 percent. [70] Data varies for dial-up internet connection. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2023, 2.88 million

people will be connected (in 2016 they were 13.32 million), in Serbia 8.30 million (in 2016 they were 4.85 million), in Montenegro 0.89 million (in 2016 they were 0.37 million), in North Macedonia 2.12 million (in 2016 they were 1.19 million), in Albania 2.94 million (in 206 they were 1.57 million), in Kosovo 1.98 million (in 2016 they were 1.24 million). [70] Let us recall here some global data. In in 2020, the world had over 4.7 billion people connected to the Internet (In Asia 2.55 billion, in Europe, 632.25 million, in North America 480.34 million, in Africa 451.62 million, in South America 313.03, in Oceania, 27.68 million. [71]

The percentage of internet connection in the households is also important. The data are presented in the table below: [39]

Table 1: Percentage of households who have internet acces at home (%)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
EU-28	79	81	83	85	87	89
Montenegro	56	64	68	70	71	72
North Macedonia	65	68	69	75	74	79
Albania	:	24	25	29	30	:
Serbia	56	63	64	65	68	73
Turkey	49	60	70	76	81	84
Bosnia and Herzegovina	:	:	:	62	66	69
Kosovo	:	:	:	:	89	93

Source: Media Literacy and Young People’s Digital Skills, page 53; iJET – Vol. 18, No. 07, 2023

Social networks, since their creation, have seen only increased use. Facebook only, from the zero point when it was founded, in 2018 reached 2.26 billion users. [72] It is important to highlight that the largest percentage of users are young (76 percent age 18-24; 84 percent age 25-29; 79 percent age 30-49 and only 46 percent over the age of 65. [72] The percentage of young people who engage in social networking online varies by country. Sweden is having the highest percentage (96%), followed by Portugal (95.3) and Denmark (94.5). [72]

Researchers and media actors in Kosovo point out that the controlled media in Kosovo, at the time when there was no Internet, although there were efforts, did not manage to be professional at the appropriate level. Often, the public had to read between the lines, [73] to understand what the author was trying to say, bypassing the institution of censorship. Often, a journalistic and suggestive writing was cultivated, in cases where it was not possible to tell the truth directly. [74] The situation was clear. There was no internet, no developed technology. Therefore, journalists had to be protected a lot - so that they could continue to work. Because, the red line is the party line that was "always white and without any stain". With this professionalism was "measured" . Whoever violated it, violated himself. [75] Censorship and control also affected the professionalism of the media. In the times of communism, the other side of reporting was missing, independent journalism was impossible, moreover, the broadcasting formats: Radio, TV, press were limited and controlled. [76]

For the purposes of this research, a survey [77] was conducted with 15 online media professionals in Kosovo (3 editors-in-chief, 8 editors and 4 journalists), most of them with over 20 years of experience in journalism and who have also worked in the press media and online media. The participants in the survey were able to give more than one answer to the questions asked. The survey shows that there is a great deal of

agreement that, in a professional sense, traditional media have been more professional (12 responses) and more reliable (13). There is, likewise, a complete agreement (14), which is understandable, that in terms of speed of reporting, traditional media have been slower. Also, only two people declared that traditional media were more attractive. 13 others agree that she was more unattractive. But, while 14 people agree that, in terms of reporting speed, Internet media is faster, they also emphasize that this media is less professional (11) and less reliable (9).

When discussing about professional side, one of the main elements is the verification of facts. The traditional media has done this better (13), while the internet media has done it much less (2). Asked in what sense the Internet has changed the media, the participants say that it has made it faster (13); made it more attractive (10); has made it more vulnerable to the propaganda of politics and interest groups (7); has made it more vulnerable to fake news (14); It has influenced the interaction with the public to make the media better and more acceptable to the public (9). One of the new forms of new journalism is citizen journalism, an action enabled by the Internet and technology. The participants point out that it endangers the media (7), but most agree that it enriches the media (13). From the answers, it can be seen that some think that it both endangers and enriches the media. The Internet has enabled the direct communication of policy makers and interest groups with the public, through social networks. There is almost complete agreement (14) that this endangers the influence of the media on the public, while only one thinks the contrary.

Regarding new media content, each of the participants mentioned the elements that are most liked by the public. The news/text professionally prepared and published after verification of the facts is highlighted by 11 participants; Short news (10); News with a professional title (6); News with an attractive/sensational title (8); Video publication, accompanied by some text (10). The last question was about the "columns" left aside by internet journalism and their presence in the media where the participants work. According to the answers, reportage (10) is still present in online media, Travelogue (2) quite a bit, Analysis (6) and Commentary (6), also more present, while show-biz with dominance (12).

Another element that must be added about the reach and influence of the media concerns the possibilities that the Internet offers for journalistic content to be read anywhere in the world. The Balkan countries have a million emigrants around the world. A newspaper published everywhere in this region needed days and weeks to arrive in the countries of Europe, America and Australia. Today, a resident of Australia, of Croatian descent for example, reads the same news that a resident of Croatia reads, and that in real time.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research, it appears that Kosovo and the Balkans in general are among the regions where the impact of technology on the transition and transformation of the media is more than visible, essential even. In a region dominated by controlled journalism, technology enabled media professionals to practice their profession, following the demands and interest of the public rather than the direction of content by politics. As well as globally, technology has enabled the media to gather journalistic content and deliver it to the public at a speed previously unimagined. If before the time of technological development, news had to be waited for weeks and months, today the

same event that happens in every continent of the world can be conveyed in real time. Technology enabled Gutenberg, the printing press discovered by him to be considered a miracle, to remain almost exclusively in the history books. So technology has made media faster. Technology also influenced media content. Following the interest of the public, the media left some rubrics in oblivion and replaced them with other rubrics, most of them new, influenced by technological development and the opportunities offered by it.

Technology enabled the public to have many more choices, than a single daily newspaper (the case of Kosovo), as well as made the media much richer in number of columns and news. If the print newspaper had space limitation for certain news, the internet media has no limitation - the media can publish news as necessary and of interest to the public. Likewise, technology has directly influenced the preparation of journalism professionals, offering countless opportunities during the study process in universities. Bringing quite different results from the preparation of journalists in traditional schools.

In summary, the element that has the most to do with the impact of technology is observed in the approach of the public to be informed mainly by online media. And, the direct impact – the closure of all newspapers printed in Kosovo and their significant reduction in all other Balkan countries included in the analysis. The interviews conducted with media experts and the survey conducted for the purpose of this paper have highlighted the great change in the media under the influence of technology: from slow media it has become faster; from control and censorship has made it free and professional; from the limitation of space has created unlimited space for the media. Challenges, such as protection against fake news, however, remain to be overcome.

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