Newsroom dissonance: how new digital technologies are changing professional roles in contemporary newsrooms

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Part II

Digital technologies and their impact on newsmaking

II. Chapter 2: Media convergence and new forms of journalism

In Chapter 1, I reviewed the history of the modern press in Chile and outlined the characteristics and the sociohistorical context of the field in which this ethnographic work occurred. Although Chile's political background is full of grisly memories, as many local media researchers argue, journalists have been able to resist, endure, and sometimes even thrive. This chapter begins with another story of resistance, focussing on how the unwillingness to accept an undemocratic court ruling launched new forms of journalism in Chile and opened the doors for the first multiplatform newsrooms in the country. In this chapter, I examine how digital platforms' demands for content production are producing a clash between digital journalists and television or newspaper reporters within the same newsrooms. I further argue that value-related hierarchies can be observed in multiplatform newsrooms because of the content, boundaries, and business model that each platform supports. Moreover, the platformisation of news has not only created new hierarchies inside Chilean newsrooms but has produced a revalorisation of paper, television, and digital reporters, with different degrees of value associated with each.

2.1. Of God's blessings, drug cartels, and loopholes

As the summer heat was overtaking Denton County in 1977, tempers were also beginning to flare among Dentonites. A liquor sales ban had been recently introduced, and a debate had arisen between the so-called wets and drys. Because this was Texas in the 1970s, or maybe just because it was Texas, even God's name was involved in the discussion. In a letter to the editor of *The Denton Record-Chronicle*, a man argued that although he was a well-respected, religious neighbour of Denton, 'unlike many of the *drys*, however, I see alcohol not as a creation of the devil (whose existence I literally believe in), but as just another of God's many blessings'.[19] Yet, the drys won that fight, and some of God's blessings were indeed temporarily banned.

The lesson of this particular story is not that of not losing faith but that every law has its loophole. Only 22 miles from Denton city limits, just inside the border of the next county, six or seven new liquor stores appeared almost overnight. The wets had found a hole in the law. Although purchasing beer and wine was forbidden in Denton, driving 35 kilometres to the next city and buying case after case of alcohol was completely fine. 'My God will supply all your needs', says the verse.

[19] The Denton Record-Chronicle. July 24th, 1977. Retrieved from: https://newspaperarchive.com/denton-record-chronicle-jul-24-1977-p-37/

Fernando Paulsen found himself in this context when he landed in Texas in 1977. Paulsen, an undergraduate journalism student from Chile, which at the time was under Pinochet's dictatorship, was transferring to the University of North Texas (UNT). Paulsen eventually graduated from UNT, earned a master's degree from Harvard, and returned to Chile to become the director of *La Tercera*. However, not until June 1997 – 20 years later – did the memory of the crafty Dentonites and their ability to sidestep the law reappear in his head as a way to fight for freedom of speech. Before I tell that story, however, first we must jump through time again and revisit one of the most memorable drug cases in Chilean history.

This story began in 1992 when a businessman named Manuel Losada Martínez attempted to ship five tonnes of Colombian cocaine – worth US$75 million – into the United States. To this day, this drug story is one of the most fascinating in Chile; it involves international espionage, the Cali Cartel, and the Italian mafia. Losada was arrested in 1998 and sentenced in 2009 in what was famously called 'Operación Océano' (Operation Ocean).

Losada was a friend and business partner of Jorge de la Barra, husband of María Teresa Cañas, who was Pinochet's favourite niece. In a controversial move in June 1997, Judge Beatriz Pedrals ruled in Viña del Mar for a complete media blackout on the case. None of the national press were allowed to print or broadcast any developments in the investigation or even the names of those involved in Operation Ocean. Pedrals' decision was, not unexpectedly, unwelcome in journalists' organisations, and even then-President Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle 'sharply opposed' the initiative (Brett, 1998, p. 67).

In the newsroom of *La Tercera*, Paulsen received Judge Pedrals' decision with the same aversion as his colleagues. Something needed to change if journalists wanted to share the information.

Then, like an echo resonating deep in his head, Paulsen remembered that small town in Texas hiding between the two forks of the Trinity River and the guileful Dentonites who drove 22 miles to purchase beer and wine inches across the county border. After all, the lesson that day had been that every law has its loopholes. *La Tercera*'s editorial team, with the endorsement of the owners of its parent company, Copesa, moved quickly to circumvent the law. First, the newspaper started printing a 'judicial novel'. Ensuring that the names were securely changed, every chapter of the novel featured a new development in the actual case against Losada. Although that worked in the interim, another possibility existed to which no objection or prohibition applied. The judge's ban was against printing and broadcasting *in* Chile, but what if *La Tercera* published news from a server in New York on an extra-territorial website in which Pedrals' ban had no jurisdiction?

Sebastián Rivas, the Internet editor at *La Tercera* during my fieldwork, chronicled this story and remembered that this decision occurred when there were only five computers in the entire newsroom.[20] As stated in Chapter 1, Chile in the 1990s was already experiencing an exponential increase in its Internet penetration, although the Internet was not yet truly popular in the nation. Nonetheless, the country was already leading the region in computers per capita. The website, www.latercera.cl, had been launched only weeks before, and it only carried news that had already been published in the paper. Now, however, the website had the opportunity to publish stories that the paper legally could not. The editorial team eventually abandoned the www.latercera.cl domain and instead promoted www.infochile.com/tercera, which later became www.latercera.com. Consequently, *La Tercera* is one of the few dot-com, rather than dot-cl, news websites in Chile.

Figure 4. La Tercera *advertising their international website in the paper, c. 1997. Photo: www.latercera.com.*

'New service, directly from the USA. All the news from Chile that currently you find somewhat difficult to get. *La Tercera*, Special International Edition, with daily updates, available to personal computers around the world via Internet'. This was the loophole. Three days after publishing their first stories, the website was receiving almost 10,000 visits per day, a record-breaking number in those days. However, *La Tercera*'s digital platform would prove its usefulness again before the end of the decade.

On 14 April 1999, journalist Alejandra Matus boarded a plane to Argentina and, once in Buenos Aires, connected to another flight to the United States, where she would finally receive political asylum. Nine years after the return of democracy in her country, she was escaping and would

[20] Sebastián Rivas' chronicle can be read online here: https://especiales.latercera.com/mas-que-un-diario/la-prohibicion-de-informar-que-dio-origen-a-latercera-com/

not return to Chile for two years. That Wednesday morning, as the leaves of deciduous trees were still falling, Matus' six years of research had culminated in the publication of her book *The Black Book of Chilean Justice*, a historical exposé about the lack of political independence in the judiciary system. However, it disappeared from bookshelves less than 48 hours after its launch, not because of overwhelming reader demand but because the police confiscated its entire first edition by order of Supreme Court Justice Servando Jordán, who was 'very offended' by the content of the book.[21] Once again, the editorial team of *La Tercera*, who were now growing exponentially every day and had their own history with Jordán, found another loophole. Confronted with a ruling that covered the ignominy of the republic, *La Tercera* published the book in its entirety online. This new way of journalism did not abide bans or proscriptions, and it could only grow from there.

The introduction of new digital technologies, an important process in the convergence of journalistic platforms, has impacted not only the news forms themselves but also the culture and social relations around them, from how journalists negotiate with political and judicial authorities to how they pursue their audiences. However, are new digital platforms in dialogue with more traditional platforms? How do they impact each other and journalistic practice? To answer these questions, the primary aim of this chapter is to explore how journalists are negotiating, adapting, and responding to the introduction of new forms that enable new ways to report the news.

2.2. Multiplatform news and new devices

The 28 April 2019 issue of *La Tercera* was atypical. It had been almost a year since I finished my fieldwork there when I discovered that, unlike any other morning, their front page did not display the most relevant news of the day. No quotes or pictures adorned the headlines on their cover. Instead, 29 black letters were printed on a bright white background, simply stating in Spanish that 'journalism no longer fits on the paper'. On the following page, Copesa's President, Jorge Andrés Saieh, Álvaro Saieh's son, addressed curious readers, proclaiming, 'We believe that journalism does not end on paper. We believe that journalism no longer fits on a cover. We believe that journalism is more than a headline. It does not end in a printed

[21] A news clipping can be found here: "Requisan libro por recurso de Ministro Servando Jordán" *El Mercurio*, April 15th, 1999. http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-87350.html

photograph. Our role goes far beyond paper'. Then he added, 'We understand quality journalism as something that cannot be restricted to a single format. The one that works 24 hours and on different platforms. That is the world we want to invite you to. One where *La Tercera* is much more than a newspaper'.

Figure 5. La Tercera*'s front page, 28 April 2019. Photo:* La Tercera*'s Twitter page.*

What does it mean to be 'much more than a newspaper'? On page 2 of the same edition, José Luis Santa María, director of *La Tercera*, offered a more nuanced explanation: 'We must be able to inform, interpret and contextualize the 24 hours [each] day through the different platforms and formats – videos, podcasts, newsletters – and, in that sense, we have to be more than a newspaper'. In less than 20 years, *La Tercera* had progressed from utilising the Internet as a loophole against what they saw as undemocratic rulings to fully recognising that the newspaper was only one of many platforms available to journalism.

According to Kheeshadeh (2012), since the end of the 2000s, mass media platforms have been classified in seven categories: print (from the late 15th century), recordings (from the late 19th century), cinema (from approximately the 1900s), radio (from approximately the 1910s), television (from approximately the 1950s), Internet (from approximately the 1990s), and mobile phones (from approximately the 2000s). Kheeshadeh argues that the sixth and seventh categories, that is, Internet and mobile phones, can be collectively referred to as *digital media*. The fourth and fifth categories, radio and television, are traditionally called *broadcast media*. Moreover, 'each mass media has its own content types, its own creative artists and technicians, and its own business models' (2012, p. 1745). Therefore, readers could correctly assume that by announcing that *La Tercera* now wanted to inform people 24 hours per day through different platforms, they were saying that they were professionally diversifying their newsroom and

hiring new creative artists and technicians to maintain the new platforms and forms of journalism.

Furthermore, aside from the possibilities inherent in each platform, other authors argue that every type of platform also has limitations, which define the 'outer borders of a format within which the content is moulded' (Westin, 2013, p. 131); every platform allows a degree of specificity in its contents and concurrently restricts what can be done, presented, and said within its frame.

Traditionally, these seven media categories have been considered a starting point to understand media platforms for the majority of the 19th and 20th centuries; these seven categories each have their own possibilities and limitations. This chapter, however, discusses how the different platforms overlap during the news-making process. I illuminate how digital technologies have started to combine different forms of presenting journalism beyond the limitations of the traditional platforms that journalists utilise to produce the news: If I watch a YouTube video on the evening news, if I read the newspaper on my phone, if I listen to a radio show as a podcast in Spotify, then which platform dominates my consumption? Is this determined by the way the story was originally produced or by the way I consume it? How does the team who produced the piece coordinate with the team who formatted and sent it to the platform I am utilising to consume it? Furthermore, if each platform has limitations, then how does a multiplatform context erase, if possible, such boundaries?

If *media platforms* refers to the materialities of the support or channel in which news is placed, then *media forms* emphasise the 'languages' that the journalistic product may take to 'tell a good journalistic story' (Moloney, 2012). Based on its characteristics, each media form is in itself a 'mode of performance' (Mushengyezi, 2003, p. 109) – a way to present or to act – of staging different journalism genres. Mushengyezi employs the concept of form to describe not only modern mass media but also specific forms of communication, such as dance, music, drums, horns, storytelling, and so on. I draw on Mushengyezi's work to argue that each of the platforms with which journalists work – digital, paper, and television – include forms that can be understood as modes of performances, and as Mushengyezi argues, they have limitations. The limitations of every kind of platform, both technical and social, mark not only the boundaries for the content within but also the action and the character of the medium and the medium worker in which they exist. Consequently, the limitations of that platform condition the production of content from the beginning of the creation process.

This is what Marshall McLuhan meant when he now-famously argued that 'the medium is the message' (1994). His characterisation of channel, medium, and message form a useful

theoretical framework to understand the importance of focussing on the forms of production. For McLuhan, the content of any medium is another medium in itself. The electric light, for example, is a medium within another medium: the incandescent light bulb. But the electric light is a medium without a message and without content; this is provided by the character of the platform in which it resides: the light bulb, and the bulb shapes the way human action utilises electricity to create a message and project information. McLuhan further characterises the message of the medium as follows:

> The 'message' of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs. The railway did not introduce movement or transportation or wheel or road into human society, but it accelerated and enlarged the scale of previous human functions, creating totally new kinds of cities and new kinds of work and leisure. (1994, p. 8)

Similarly, Kheeshadeh's digital media – the Internet and mobile phones – did not invent news making or news consumption, but like the railway, they invented new kinds of 'human functions'. Those new works or functions are embodied by the arrival of new professionals in the newsroom and a new way of performing journalism. Accordingly, technological changes in broadcast media, such as the digital television that fascinated Guillermo in Chapter 1, transformed and shaped the speed, scale, and quality of the message that television carried to the houses of every Chilean in the audience.

Perhaps the dominant, most noticeable change in newsrooms is the creation of a new department, often called 'social networks'. Unlike their colleagues who write for the paper or the web or appear on television, social networks' journalists are multiplatform professionals who work concurrently for different platforms, each of which have their own method of production.

Kheeshadeh simply recognises the Internet as one category; however, in my fieldwork, I observed that within that category, multiple social media platforms demand specific modes of creation; Twitter is, for example, limited by the number of characters in a tweet; Instagram requires visual or audiovisual information; and Facebook, which remains the most influential of all, requires the most strategic planning (Meese & Hurcombe, 2020).

In December 2017, I interviewed the social networks editor at Teletrece. My goal was to understand the story of how digital platforms had been introduced at Canal 13 and what he thought was their main impact on other platforms within the newsroom.

The social networks team in Teletrece was created after a first failed attempt to launch T13.cl in November 2014, the editor explained. Canal 13 had decided, as many television stations in Chile have done since then, to launch their own Internet news media outlet. However, not all television reporters are writers, and these platforms are based on different skills; consequently, Canal 13 hired an entire team of new journalists to write about national, economic, and political news. The main objective of T13 was to create a political and influential website to captivate their television audience when they were not at home watching TV. The idea was unsuccessful. After three months with little web traffic, the directors at Teletrece hired a social networks team to work on advertising and attracting users to the website. 'They forgot that a website needs to be read', said the social networks editor during our interview. 'We needed traffic, we needed visibility, we needed people to read us, and well, *what all journalists look for* – that our work could be shared, read, viralised – and so, the main idea was that through social networks, one would be getting new audiences'. For this editor, if one wanted to start a digital project, then social networks would be the optimal option to succeed. Social networks would be the way to capture new audiences and bring traffic to the site; 'it is how we tell people what is happening on the TV news', especially younger generations who do not necessarily turn on their televisions when they are home.

Each social network utilised by Teletrece now has its own target group. Initially, the editor remembered, Twitter was considered equal to Facebook, and his team published the same type of information on both: politics, business, viral stories, sports, international, and so on. However, they gradually realised that Twitter was not producing significant traffic on the site but was instead generating considerable levels of influence. That is to say, people retweeted and commented on Teletrece's posts more than they clicked on them. The tweet itself rather than the news article was the product with which users interacted more frequently. Therefore, they decided to utilise Twitter to address politics (including politicians' quotes) and breaking news. Facebook, however, would be employed to 'post the most important news of the day, but also to enhance fans' loyalty, to chat with them, to read their opinions, to generate interaction', argued the social networks editor. This decision was not random. According to this editor, if social networks brought approximately 70% of the traffic to T13.cl, then Facebook was responsible for 90% of that. Perhaps, however, what he said immediately after was most revealing: 'Because Facebook is an incredible traffic generator, we look for the best way to make our content go viral, utilising *Facebook's language*'. This meant, he said as an example, that if the news on television told a story with the most important bits of news at the end, then the social network team would rearrange that so the most important information was

at the beginning of the post. Another example was the usage of titles as cliff-hangers, which pushed the audience to click on the title if they wished to know 'what part of your breakfast could be giving you cancer'. 'We need to capture the attention of the guy on his phone who has 8,000 tabs open. […] The first 10 seconds are really important', the editor explained. The report offered by Google Analytics proved his point. At the time that I took this screenshot during my fieldwork, 75% of the total audience (n = 2,454 at that moment) was accessing the website via mobile phones, with the majority of active users coming from Facebook.

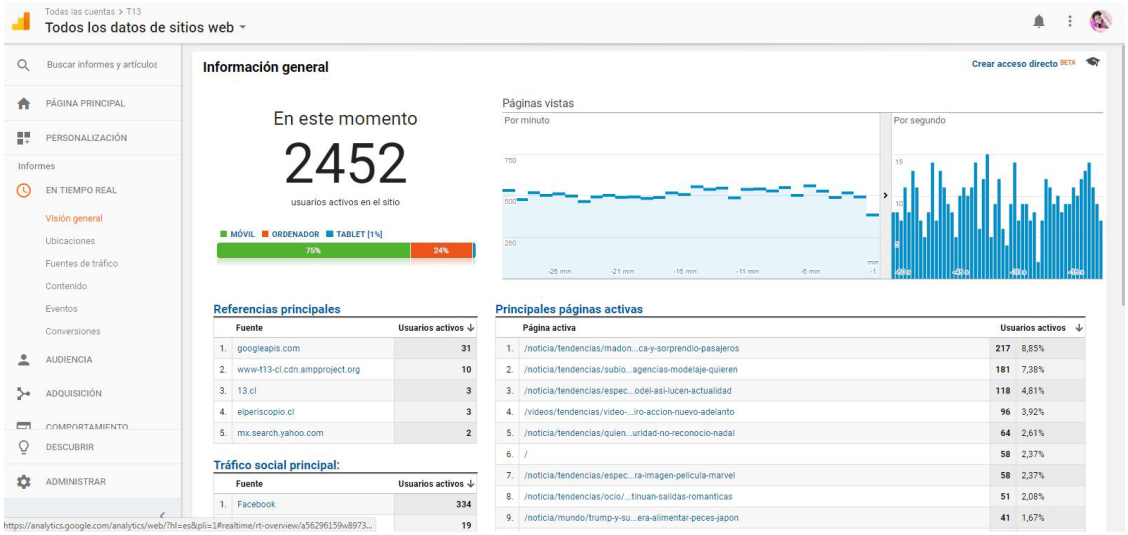

Figure 6. T13's Google Analytics report. Photo: Screenshot by Tomás Dodds during fieldwork.

However, the phrase 'Facebook's language' rattled around in my head for a while. He did not say 'T13's language', or 'journalists' language'; rather, he said 'Facebook's language'. Facebook is not only a social media platform but also a real, material company with office buildings, paid workers, economic interests, and lobby representatives in Chile. Consequently, I explored this issue by asking the social networks editor directly about their relationship with Facebook:

> We have to play along because they are … Imagine this is a big supermarket and they are the shelves. So, if we follow what they tell us to do, they are going to put us on a very visible shelf; otherwise, they are going to put us on the back, where nobody can see us.

Facebook concurrently provided the channel on their site through which news was distributed, and it ruled how messages were to be presented; the content was secondary. Media companies

in Chile have historically owned the prints, the paper, and the ink with which newspapers have been made. They have also owned the delivery trucks to shuttle those newspapers across the country before dawn. Television stations have owned the parabolic antennas on top of the hills, including those on San Cristóbal hill, the wires, the cameras, and the lights, just as radio stations have owned their microphones, transceivers, and amplifiers. They have not owned the radio spectrum in which electromagnetic waves travel to every home with a receptor; all Chileans have owned this portion because the radio spectrum has been a public good in Chile. Now, however, media outlets do not own these platforms or rule how they ought to be utilised. Part of how journalism is being conducted today no longer depends on journalists. As Meese and Hurcombe (2020) argue, this dependency is evidenced by a growing concern in the literature about the increasingly intertwined relationship between Facebook and news organisations. In an article for *The New York Times* published on 26 October 2014, Ravi Somaiya argues that 'if Facebook's algorithm smiles on a publisher, the rewards, in terms of traffic, can be enormous. If Mr. Marra [a 26-year-old Facebook engineer] and his team decide that users do not enjoy certain things, such as teaser headlines that lure readers to click through to get all the information, it can mean ruin' (2014). Journalists' process in writing headlines is not the only change companies such as Facebook are demanding for media companies to remain in 'the good side of the supermarket'. Rather, social networking companies are further privileging the intermingling of formats and modes in a single news piece. This means that journalists are being forced to integrate different platforms into their routines and hire or fire workers who cannot adapt to these new requirements (Meese & Hurcombe, 2020).

2.3. Media convergence

Over the past two decades, we have witnessed a scenario in which journalistic platforms have started to converge, allowing a story to 'unfold across multiple media platforms' (Jenkins, 2006, p. 95). This is visible, although not exclusively, between broadcast and digital media. This process is called *media convergence*, and it mainly suggests that 'all modes of communication and information will converge into a digital nexus' (Mueller, 1999, p. 11). The significance of media convergence for this research is to illustrate that digital technologies have impacted not only the form itself but also the culture and social relations of those who produce new information and those who consume it. As Jenkins posits, media convergence 'is more than a simple technological shift […]. Convergence refers to a process, but not an endpoint' (2004, p. 34). This state of transition has created many fears among media workers. According

to Huang et al., some of the fears media convergence produces in today's newsrooms are 'the need to update news staff, production quality, compensation for multiplatform productions and, last but not least, [to think] who is benefiting from convergence' (2006, p. 84). Some of those fears have been realised. As Madrigal and Meyer reveal, media organisations' quest to increase their audience metrics and advance the convergence of their platforms has caused these organisations to fire hundreds of journalists (2018).

Perhaps one of the drollest, more mundane cases of media convergence that I witnessed during my fieldwork, simply to ground and exemplify the concept, was Carlos Zárate's morning international briefings. Zárate is an international reporter who has worked for decades at Canal 13. Recently, however, he had acquired the habit of reading the international section of the T13 website while he was live on screen during the morning news programme. This had a double functionality: on the one hand, it promoted the website to a television audience. On the other hand, it made his job slightly easier. Nevertheless, Zárate's new tradition involved a combination of platforms: he displayed tweets, played social media videos, read newspaper covers, and scrolled through digital articles on the air. The screenshot in Figure 7 was taken utilising T13 Móvil, a digital television signal that, since 2008, has been available via smartphone, tablet, or desktop computer.

Figure 7. Zárate's morning international briefings. Photo: Screenshot by Tomás Dodds during fieldwork.

The concept of media convergence can be problematised further. According to Jenkins (2001), media convergence is actually an umbrella term that refers to and describes five dimensions: the technological, economic, social or organic, cultural, and global convergence. Zárate's morning ritual illuminates each of these. First, the technological convergence of media refers to the processes in which 'words, images, and sounds are transformed into digital information, [and by doing so] we expand the potential relationships between them and enable them to flow

across platforms' (Jenkins, 2001). Zárate illustrates how, once digitised, information can drift across platforms; in this case, Zárate actively transfers the information across platforms. The economic convergence of media, which refers to the horizontal integration of formats, is also fairly simple to observe. In the screenshot above, we can identify three brands: Canal 13 and its news department, Teletrece (T13), the Internet media outlet T13.cl, and the digital television signal T13 Móvil. On the upper black ribbon of the website, the logo of Tele13 Radio[22] can be seen, through which content can be accessed online and played on different devices. Canal 13 has occupied every possible digital space, and the company can portray it in just one picture.

Social or organic convergence describes the phenomenon that 'occurs when a high schooler is watching baseball on a big-screen television, listening to techno on the stereo, word-processing a paper and writing e-mail to his friends' (2001). In other words, this concept is represented by the new multitasking strategies that the audience needs to employ and deploy to navigate and consume information on contemporary platforms. In this case, by announcing, 'If you want to know more about X news, go to our website', Zárate was actually encouraging the audience to multitask and seek information on other platforms while they continued listening to the television as their primary source of news. We can employ the same example to explain cultural convergence, which 'fosters a new participatory folk culture by giving average people the tools to archive, annotate, appropriate and recirculate content' (2001). Here, the example is the screenshot itself: the T13 Móvil platform allows users to stream the television signal live but also to revisit recent highlights in the transmission as well as rewind at least a month of content and search for a specific date or even hour of the day.

Finally, Jenkins' global convergence is a direct reference to the idea of a 'global village', a term that was first coined by none other than McLuhan. In the early 1960s, McLuhan predicted that we would live in a world interconnected by technology; I can watch T13 Móvil today from my phone in the Netherlands and then send a text message to the journalists in Teletrece's newsroom in Chile to comment on the news.

In the following section, I examine the other side of this issue, in which we find those who argue that convergence may actually not be a suitable, sustainable idea and instead have called for the divergence of media platforms, proposing a collaborative, cross-media environment.

[22] This is their only news radio. However, Canal 13 also owns and operates the stations Oasis FM, Sonar FM, and Play FM.

2.4. Media divergence and cross-media

Media convergence was widely welcomed by futuristic optimists as a possibility to transform older analogue technologies and 're-create [them] in the image of digital technologies' (Holmes, 2005, p. 64). Thus, according to Van Dijk (1999), we had entered a 'second communication revolution' in which older analogue media are rethought, redetermined, and re-presented, as they now acquire digital and interactive characteristics. This digitalisation of traditional media is based on the cybernetic dream in which the medium, or the channel of communication, and the content it carries can eventually be separated (Flew, 2002). In other words, the idea is to make the content inter-operable or able to be organically placed in different platforms concurrently. During my fieldwork, however, I learned that this is not how journalism works and that every time one of these newsrooms had attempted to implement this cybernetic utopia, it had failed disastrously. As Singer succinctly states, 'What appears online and what appears in print will continue to diverge in line with the respective strengths of the different media forms' (2009, p. 376). Different platforms produce different temporalities and rhythms of consumption and production. It is difficult to imagine that the cybernetic dream to produce platform-less data is the result of a natural technological development. Rather, it seems to be the consequence of the economic integration of mass communication industries and their infrastructure.

Journalists writing for newspapers and, to some extent, television reporters have the *luxury*, as Pepe referred to time in Chapter 1, to prepare a single newsworthy piece during the working day; they search for the ideal angle to tell the story, determine the most effective argument, and curate optimal sources because they have only one deadline, which, for the majority of my interviewees, was in the late afternoon. Digital journalists, conversely, write for an Internet-based media outlet and are constantly competing to publish online before other media outlets do so. In part, this is because they have to feed the social networks department – 'that hungry, hungry hippo', as a television reporter called it during my fieldwork – who concurrently need to sort and publish that information quickly into their different platforms.

As I argued in Chapter 1, companies see technological and media convergence as an opportunity to lower the cost of production (Killebrew, 2005). The establishment of market logic inside editorial decision-making values is one of the most significant transformations in modern journalism and also the answer to the question of who is benefiting from media convergence. However, as Singer (2009) claims, print and online journalism diverge not only because of the type of content that their platforms support but also because of the professionals who produce the content for them. By rejecting the idea of platform-less news content, I am

not denying the importance of the dialogue between different platforms or the benefit to both the journalistic work and the audience who consumes it. The concept of media convergence purports the erasure of the physical and technological boundaries of media platforms, whereas the concept of cross-media aims precisely at the divergence of media, where the strength of each platform is utilised adequately to inform journalists' work.

According to Erdal, the cross-media concept is one 'whereby more than one media platform is engaged at the same time in communicating related content' (2007, p. 52). That is, journalists produce news for two or more media platforms – but not the *same news* – rather, the news is appropriate for each platform. Erdal posits that modern news is not only diverse in content and target audience but also comprises a variety of forms, is delivered in multiple ways, and is consumed via different platforms. As different as there are platforms. This is also important because platforms tend to influence each other. Indeed, some studies have noted the effect that new forms of media may have over others. Ku, Kaid, and Pfau (2003) investigated the impact of digital media over the content of more traditional media outlets. Utilising the 2000 presidential election in the United States as a case study, they conclude that website campaigning had a direct effect on the agenda-setting of traditional media. Other studies on inter-platform impact have offered similar results (Boyle, 2001; Lim, 2006; Schiffer, 2006). These studies indicate that different platforms modify and adjust content from outside sources to suit their own modes of performance.

Some journalists, even those within the newsroom of Teletrece, argue that Zárate should not read electronic news articles on screen. Written journalistic text is meant to be read, not narrated on TV, they would say. Therefore, a cross-media approach rather than a convergent approach stipulates that Zárate should utilise the audiovisual potential of television while the other platforms carry related information about the same issue.

It is easier to employ different journalists to produce content for different platforms than to require the same journalist to produce for multiple platforms. The idea that a journalist should write for different platforms 'is something that everyone is trying to do and has not worked yet', a Canal 13 digital reporter told me. 'They tried to do that in *La Tercera,* and it was a complete failure', said another.

In the following sections of this chapter, I present how, as a result of the introduction of new technologies inside the newsrooms, journalists are addressing the overlapping integration of the platforms with which they work and how this integration is impacting certain journalistic values among journalists from different platforms.

2.5. The *Grey's Anatomy* principle

One of the phrases that I heard most frequently during my fieldwork at Teletrece was, 'Yes! That would do very well in social networks!' This sentence not only indicated the approval and encouragement of the web editors but also denoted that the journalist who had asked whether to cover a topic had stumbled upon a rather enviable gem. A tingling feeling of excitement wound its way along my spine every time I heard the thrill in the voice of my editor, but I often wondered what topic we were about to cover that would break the social networks.

Over the course of the months that I spent conducting fieldwork at Canal 13, I was assigned to the workstation that was across the alley from the T13.cl content editor. Hence, I often overheard his conversations with other journalists who were pitching a story or merely scrounging around to find something new to write about. Only on rare occasions did I see him immediately reject an idea or lead for a story. Rather, he usually proposed a better angle or a different argument to report the same event.

Nevertheless, one of the things that I found odd was that the sentence 'that would do very well in social networks' appeared to be utilised indistinctively for many subjects that did not seem to be related. In my field notes, I noted that the content editor utilised this phrase when he was referring to news articles about *Grey's Anatomy*, Cirque du Soleil, and Kim Kardashian. I name these topics in particular because not all the medical dramas on television, entertainment or circus events, or even members of the Kardashian family received the same type of reaction and attention from the editor.

My excitement soon faded when I realised that the story that would have an impact on social networks was about a returning character or the latest unexpected pregnancy on *Grey's Anatomy*, a long-running medical drama on ABC (United States). However, as time went by, I began to wonder how my editor had acquired this alarming level of specificity in his knowledge regarding which topic would do well, that is to say, significantly impact social networks.

The first wave of newsroom ethnographies assumed that the relationship between journalists and their audiences was abstracted: media professionals were not concerned in practice with specific preferences of audience members. As Gans writes in *Deciding What's News*:

> [I had] the assumption that journalists, as commercial employees, take the audience directly into account when selecting and producing news … I was surprised to find, however, that they had little knowledge about the actual audience and rejected feedback from it. Although they had a vague image of the audience, they paid little attention to it; instead, they filmed and wrote for their superior and themselves,

> assuming, as I suggested earlier, that what interested them would interest the audience. (1979, p. 229)

However, the development of social media departments within the newsrooms, influenced by the advance and popularisation of quantitative audience measurement techniques (Anderson, 2011; Christin, 2020), has changed the role of the audience in the construction of modern news. The audience is no longer a generalised mass of people; rather, they are a group of atomised individuals who actively seek the information they want to consume and reject those pieces that they do not desire. As Napoli argues, 'within the context of media organizations and media audiences, the notion of the rationalization of audience has involved efforts to bring greater empirical rigor and (primarily) quantitative methods to the process of understanding a range of dimensions of audience behaviour' (2010, p. 73), allowing both journalists and advertising managers to grasp a better knowledge of their audience.

I interviewed that content editor who became excited every time he wrote about *Grey's Anatomy,* and we discussed the relationship between the digital audience and how journalists were setting the agenda for the news on the website.

'Our audience is very, very strange', the web content editor said with a snigger when I asked him about this issue. 'It is not a very well-defined audience. We have like … two types of audiences at the same time'. One of these audiences, he argued, comprised 16-year-old, 'super-young', heavy Facebook users. 'I know that if I write something about Selena Gomez, it would cause such a furore among them […]. I know that any of these 'it girl'-things will always work', he added. An *it girl* is, at least according to *Oxford Dictionary*, 'a young woman who has achieved celebrity because of her socialite lifestyle'.

'So, today, for example, I saw Selena Gomez giving a speech, and she started crying because one of her friends gave her a kidney or something for a transplant, and I knew immediately that this article was going to work', he said, quite unabashedly. Indeed, Gomez's kidney-or-something transplant article had at least 500 concurrent readers on the website that morning, which was a satisfying number for this newsroom's metrics. As Turow argues, 'the way media organizers search for and describe their audiences have important implications for the texts that viewers and readers receive' (2005, p. 106), and therefore, I asked the content editor who he had in mind when he wrote these kinds of stories. 'I just imagine I am telling a story to my little nieces', he answered.

'And then, some other things are like experiments. You have to test your audience', he continued. 'For example, I loved *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*; it is one of the TV shows I like

the most, but our audience is simply not having it. Articles about that show do not get read at all, unlike, for example, *Grey's Anatomy* or *Friends*. The audience of those shows are very well defined'.

The second type of T13.cl audience was a more politically oriented user, but as the editor argued during our interview, they were still building this group. 'We have grown [the political audience] a lot during the last months. But political articles will never have the same impact on social networks that the articles in the pop culture section have. […] Whatever last semi-nude picture of Kim Kardashian [is on] the cover of a magazine can get you 1,100 or 1,200 concurrent readers all day', he explained, whereas a political piece rarely had a similar readership online.

During my fieldwork at Teletrece, I jestingly referred to this phenomenon as the '*Grey's Anatomy* principle', a system concerning the coverage of specific topics by journalists based solely on the estimated reaction they may have on social networks. Any new piece of information, rumour, tweet, or Instagram post of any of the actors on this medical drama was quickly transformed into an article for the website and then posted on the newsroom's Facebook page. A rapid Google search on Teletrece's website indicated that over 2,000 articles about this programme had already been published.

What the content editor told me during our interview had a direct relationship with what the social networks editor at Teletrece had already told me during our conversation days before: 'We needed traffic, we needed visibility, we needed people to read us, and well, what all journalists look for – that our work could be shared, read, *viralised* – and so, the main idea was that through social networks, one would be getting new audiences'. Articles that fell into the '*Grey's Anatomy* principle' were indeed responding to this goal.

Their idea to save the website from failing again was effectively being realised. Journalists were writing stories under this '*Grey's Anatomy* principle', and in return, social networks were bringing a significant number of visitors to the website.

Utilising tools such as Google Analytics and Chartbeat, the editors were now able to maintain a realistic, in-the-moment, observation of how users were navigating the website and which news articles were being utilised as a door between platforms. For many inside this newsroom, this interaction represented the optimum integration between the social network platforms and the digital journalists. As Outing argues, 'newspaper web sites […] have detailed traffic numbers at their disposal. Today's news editors know for a fact if sports articles are the biggest reader draw, or if articles about local crimes consistently outdraw political news' (2005), and this was certainly the case for the digital journalists at Teletrece. User metrics were sufficiently

detailed so that editors could see which countries users were coming from and set the agenda based on those variables.

As the content editor observed, 'It is weird, and I do not know why, but we have a huge Mexican audience. There are several theories about why this is happening, but the thing is that we have a lot of followers from Mexico. Therefore, I know that if I write about Belinda [a Mexican singer and actress], it is going to work'. A similar pattern occurred with Mexican television programmes that either arrived on Chilean television or were streamed on platforms such as Netflix. 'Mexican people would read articles about their own shows on our website', he finished in a tone of wonder.

Despite the fact that I said the '*Grey's Anatomy* principle' as a joke, this concept is certainly indicative of how, as a consequence of the overlapping integration between platforms, journalistic values, practices, and routines are being forced to change. As Thomsen states, 'the newsroom can be seen as a site in which both professional ideals of journalists and market logics of management and media owners vie for attention' (2018, p. 139). This directly relates to the increase of professional dissonance within newsrooms. As Christin argues, the gap between market logic and professional ideas can make journalists 'experience an acute sense of conflict between editorial and click-based definitions of their work' (2020, p. 6). In this case, if the medium had not decided to utilise social networks as an entry door to generate traffic, then nothing within the journalistic principles of noticeability could have justified covering the topics that appeared under the '*Grey's Anatomy* principle', at least not in that quantity or frequency. Yet, and perhaps more importantly, this phenomenon demonstrated that the process in which two platforms overlap was in no way a mutual concession in which the parties compromised. Rather, it seemed clear to me that instead of an egalitarian exchange of benefits in which the interests of both platforms were considered, one of the platforms was largely obeisant to the other, following editorial decisions that were mainly rooted in economic interests.

As Anderson notes, 'Whereas earlier newsroom sociology emphasized the submersion of audience-centred news judgments in favour of professional codes, […] the process of "deciding what's news" is increasingly influenced by quantitative audience measurement techniques' (2011, p. 563). However, the new relationship that multiplatform newsrooms have established with their audiences is only one part of the recent changes instigated by the introduction of new digital technologies. In the next section, I explain how the relationship between media workers themselves has also been impacted by these technologies.

2.6. Forms, culture, and social relations

'I am a cusser', my interviewee said nervously when I started recording our conversation in January 2018, 'but I will try to hold it back a bit'. We laughed. We sat in an empty conference room on one of the far sides of *La Tercera*'s newsroom. Unlike many of my other interviewees, she was not a journalist, and therefore, she was less familiar with the rituals of the interview: the ethical disclosure at the beginning of the recording, the 'state your name to the microphone' declaration, and the notepad and pen that were visible on the table but were placed at an angle that made it difficult to read the interviewer's notes. The sounds on the background of the recording told me that she clicked fretfully and anxiously on the end of her pen throughout the majority of our conversation. However, I needed to talk to her. She was a digital and multimedia animator who had been working for a little more than year at *La Tercera*. She had not worked in news media before, and she admitted that she had been surprised to find a job at a newspaper. Yet, 'nowadays the Internet is so dizzying that I feel like this graphic reinforcement is indeed necessary', she argued. In her words, her main job was to 'graphically reinforce' the digital section of *La Tercera,*[23] and especially the social networks department. This meant that she created GIFs and flash alerts for Facebook and Twitter and animated infographics to be published on the home page of the website.

She observed that she had barely worked with newspaper reporters or digital journalists since she had arrived. The majority of the time, she collaborated with the social networks team, with whom she shared a desk in the middle of the newsroom, or with the designers in the infographic department on the 14th floor. 'I am not a journalist, so I do have some gaps when I need to write some texts for my pieces, but they [the social networks team] are always happy to help me', she added. She did not have a graphic editor supervising her; rather, she reported to the web editor. That should not be surprising since she was also the *only* digital and multimedia animator at the newspaper. She was responsible for observing what other media outlets were doing with animations and implementing similar ideas at *La Tercera*. Her computer was the only one that had Adobe After Effects, which was the only animation software she remembered how to utilise since it was the only software she had utilised since she started working at *La Tercera*. No one had asked her to utilise another program, probably because they could not list any alternatives. However, this animator was hopeful about the future of animation at *La*

[23] Here is an example where she animated Heglar Fleming's infographic work: https://www.latercera.com/nacional/noticia/perfil-una-megaestacion-asi-universidad-chile-una-las-paradas-mas-importantes-la-linea-3/495751/

Tercera. 'For the first time, this year we worked on animating infographic pieces for web articles',[24] which, she stated, enjoy better reception by the audience.

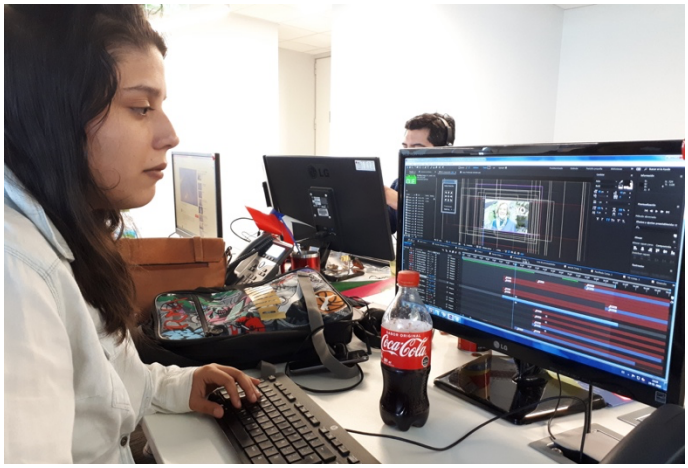

Figure 8. A digital animator inside the newsroom of La Tercera. Photo by Tomás Dodds during fieldwork.

She continued, 'It is a hard job, though, because social networks are constantly looked down upon' by some of her colleagues. 'It is my opinion that everything that is digital is looked down on'. She paused for a second, undecided. 'Why do you think that happens?' I pushed. A grin appeared on her face as she answered, 'We are literally in a floor that cares mainly about the paper. So, the digital is something they use to merely *occupy* the web, but nothing more'. She utilised the word *occupy* with the same connotation as if someone was describing the materials one utilises to fill cracks and potholes in the middle of the road.

This interview was recorded almost one year before the cover of *La Tercera* announced that 'journalism no longer fits on the paper', and yet, some of their workers seemed to think, at least at that time, that the paper was all that mattered. I decided to find someone else who may be feeling this way and soon realised that this was not a difficult task.

My next interview was with one of the senior digital journalists at *La Tercera*, and as soon as I asked about the relationship between paper and digital journalists, she answered, 'I believe that paper journalists are not very interested in contributing with the digital reporters. There is a much greater appreciation of the role of paper over the Internet. It is assumed that the best journalists are on paper, and they look down on our job'. For this journalist, one of the best examples of this was that paper reporters, who could walk the streets to report or find additional sources for their articles, were reticent about sharing those sources, scoops, or exclusives with

[24] Before this, she was animating gifs for social media and other interactive visualizations for the website.

their digital colleagues. As I mentioned previously in this chapter, a form's limitations condition the production of content from the beginning of the creation process, and concurrently, these limitations shape the relationships between the workers within the same organisation.

The rapport between the paper and digital journalists at *La Tercera*, as with other newspapers, was marked by the preparation time as well as the transience and fixedness affordances (Tenenboim-Weinblatt & Neiger, 2018) of the platforms journalists utilise to do their jobs. I return to the notion of media affordances in Chapter 4, but here, it is important to explore how preparation time, transience (as in the transitoriness of web articles), and fixation of paper news articles are central to understanding the fallout in newsrooms that taints the relationships between multiplatform professionals.

The concept of preparation time is ideally described in the following quote from a journalist who formerly worked at *La Tercera* but was working at Teletrece by the time of my fieldwork. Although this is a translation, I have attempted to maintain the exasperation in her tone:

> Look, for example, the newspaper journalist criticizes the web journalist, saying that those assholes are sitting all day doing nothing. The newspaper journalists go out to report, and in the meantime, they say, web journalists do not go out to report their articles at all, and they just copy them from other websites. I mean, what the fuck? That is understanding nothing of what the job of the web journalists really is about. And on the other hand, the web journalist criticises the newspaper assholes, because they go out, drink like 10 coffees, have a long lunch, take 20 walks, [and] come back to write 2,000 characters, while the asshole in web writes like 20,000 characters per day. And what for?! The paper journalists write the same article for tomorrow that I already wrote 10 hours ago for the web. And yet, the newspaper asshole earns way more money than you.

Because newspaper journalists had only one deadline in the late afternoon, some digital reporters perceived that they could utilise the entire day to prepare for an article, interview sources, or cultivate contacts. Newspaper reporters argued that this allows them to bring a distinctive note and originality to the news they produce. However, web journalists in the newsrooms where I conducted fieldwork did not have time to prepare because their deadline was marked by their ability to publish before their competition. This often translated into short, sourceless articles that indeed differed little from those of other media sites.

The second affordance is the transience and fixation of the media platforms, which can be encompassed as the versionality of media products. Web articles can be changed repeatedly, not only during the same day but also weeks after they are originally published. During my fieldwork in both newsrooms, I learned that it was common to receive the order to publish at least one paragraph when breaking news occurred, adding a 'news still in process' statement at the end of the text and then including additional information as new data arrived. This practice allowed the social networks department to link the website in their posts and generate traffic to the page. Newspaper journalists, however, and the same can be said for television reporters, were bound for eternity by the fixation of their platforms. Unless a natural disaster destroys the National Library of Santiago, a copy of the articles I wrote for the newspaper will be available in perpetuity exactly as I wrote them in 2017.

The fixation of the platforms also influences different chains of production. Newspaper articles were read and edited at least by two editors every day and a style editor at the end of the day. During my time in the newsroom, I published three articles in the paper, and each of them underwent a meticulous editorial evaluation. However, my digital articles on the *La Tercera* website were published without anybody reading them first. If misspellings or mistakes occurred in the information published, they were not treated as a relevant problem, since they could be changed as soon as someone noticed them. Figure 9 displays the screenshot of a WhatsApp message in the web team's group in which a web journalist (who was not in the newsroom at the moment) alerted the team of a misspelled word in the home page's main article title. The mistake was rapidly corrected, and someone simply answered with a nonchalant 'thanks'. If this had occurred in the paper, however, it could have not been changed.

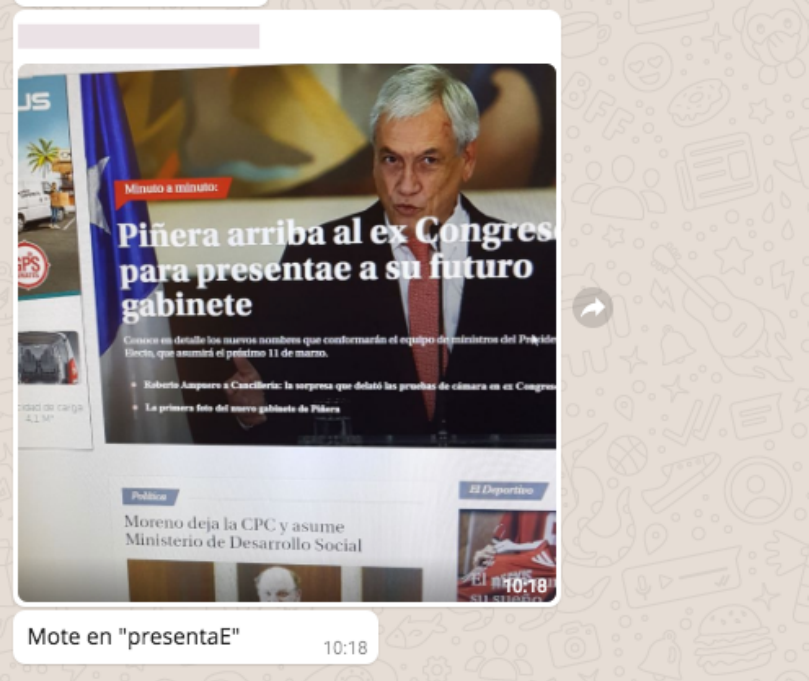

Figure 9. Screenshot of a WhatsApp message alerting the team of a misspelled word on the website. Photo: Tomás Dodds during fieldwork.

My next interview was with a journalist who had worked first for the *La Tercera* website but now was working for the newspaper. Booking an interview with her proved to be more difficult than with the other interviewees, because like many newspaper journalists, she spent the majority of her mornings reporting on the field, conducting interviews, or waiting for press conferences, and later, she returned to the office to write a long piece before the afternoon deadline. However, she invited me to have lunch with her and interview her there. Although the cafeteria of *La Tercera* occupied the entire top floor of the building, the place was already packed when I arrived that Wednesday afternoon. Through the floor-to-ceiling windows that encircled the entire room, I could see the busy streets of the municipality of Las Condes glittering with never-ending traffic below us. I found her already waiting in the queue for food. She welcomed me with a smile and immediately noted which food was of 'doubtful origin' that I should avoid.

She did not think that newspaper reporters disdained their digital colleagues, she said when we finally found a free table. Rather, she believed that the digital team thought poorly of themselves. 'When I got hired to write for the paper, my colleagues in digital told me "now you are *really* going to write"', she remembered. Then she added,

> The web is very useful to us. But I do believe that digital reporters see themselves as inferiors to the paper. Now, it is true that the newspaper is perceived as a more

> serious medium in Chile. At least more than television, more than the web, or radio, or everything. If you say that you write for the paper everyone is like *wow*, unlike if you say you write for a website. But I do not think newspaper journalists look down on digital journalists. I guess we are just used to be[ing] consider[ed] serious reporters.

As the conversation continued, I attempted to determine how correct that journalist at Teletrece was when speaking unkindly about newspaper reporters and their daily routines. However, the more I spoke with this reporter, the more I realised that I was seeing two completely different journalistic experiences happening simultaneously in the same newsroom. While digital journalists, working in two shifts, endlessly wrote small article after small article all day, this reporter's day was entirely different. Although her shift officially started at 10 a.m., 'we always start sending WhatsApp message[s] around 8 a.m. or the night before, checking assignments and the events of that day'. Often, press conferences occurred before 10 a.m., and she would arrive at the newsroom around 11 a.m., when all the journalists in her section would gather and present their topics to their sub-editor. At the time of our interview, she was reporting on education, a category that was under the national section of the newspaper. Once she and her education section colleagues had presented their topics to the education sub-editor, he would join the sub-editors of sports, environment, health, crime, and others in a meeting with the general editor of national news. Around noon, the national news editor would meet with the other general editors, such as those from international and economy, and literally map how they planned to share the limited space available in the paper. The prominence of her work, how far she could advance her career, and how much space she had to write were all dependent on her work before 11 a.m., the sources whom she booked to interview, her determination of the correct angle for the story, the potential to acquire exclusive information, and so on.

Nothing is simple when writing for a paper. Therefore, why do digital journalists, who do not have limited space for publication, not undergo this level of preparation to write in-depth articles about their issues of concern? As mentioned previously, the limitations of a form condition the content production from the beginning of the creation process, and some of these limitations may not emerge organically from the platform itself; rather, they are imposed by a cultural context. The question then is this: who decided that web journalists could not write extensive, well-reported journalistic articles, thus aggravating this dichotomy between paper and digital?

2.7. The vagueness and specificities of new journalistic roles

I consider the digital animator's case to be the epitome of a cross-media newsroom in transition, which was characterised by the incorporation of new professionals' profiles without a clear place in the organisation's general design. These improvised roles defined themselves more by the everyday practices with which they were involved, many of which were fortuitous, than by the development of career objectives based on job-related skills and expertise. Her job description – 'graphically reinforce the digital area of *La Tercera'* – which she mentioned many times during our interview, told me little: What was the purpose of such reinforcement? Why were graphic reinforcements necessary? Was it because people may linger a few extra seconds on a website to watch an animation instead of a two-dimensional infographic?

The only person other than this animator who could offer me more answers to these questions was the editor who supervised her. What follows in this section is the interview I conducted with *La Tercera*'s Internet editor, who was a young, smart, talented journalist. He was simultaneously the gatekeeper and the broker with whom I met before starting my fieldwork at the newspaper. After a brief meeting in the Juan Valdez café downstairs, where we discussed what the research would entail, he provided me with full access to the newsroom. He also introduced me to everyone around the newsroom on my first day, invited me to write several newspaper articles with him about the upcoming presidential election, and offered me tips about interesting facts that I may have otherwise missed during my fieldwork. Nevertheless, he had been named multiple times by the reporters I interviewed as the source of the palpable discomfort expressed constantly by digital journalists.

'Talking with [the digital editor] is like talking to a wall. He pretends that he is receptive to the things you say, but in practice he does nothing. I do not doubt that his intentions are the best, but he has not done anything to make the web more competitive with paper', stated a digital reporter who had been working at *La Tercera* for five years.

During my fieldwork, I also noticed that this editor seemed personally keener to write for the paper, a job he had held before his promotion to Internet editor, than to edit the website. Unlike Teletrece, where the website content editor sat at the head of the table and read every piece that was written before publishing, *La Tercera*'s Internet editor sat rather far from his team of web journalists. This translated into maddening situations, such as the dictatorship-in-the-title case I mentioned in Chapter 1, where the debate lingered until he happened to walk by our desks. At least twice during my fieldwork at *La Tercera*, two online journalists published the same story about the same topic because they were unaware that somebody else was working on it. This was in addition to the endless spelling mistakes and typographic errors, which were

consequences of the unsupervised and frantic attempts to write and publish as quickly as possible. Above all, however, his absence in the web journalists' daily work or their editorial meetings seemed to send his subordinates a message about his priorities.

However, he was an important figure for my research, so following the same logic I had applied months before at Teletrece, his was the last interview I conducted before leaving *La Tercera*.

'I have saved the best for last', I joked. 'Never!' he responded, his tone ludicrously inappropriate as he waved his hand in modesty. We sat in the same conference room where I interviewed the digital animator weeks earlier; however, unlike that interview, I was now interviewing an experienced reporter who was aware of the mechanics of the interview process. 'Let's go on the record!' he said animatedly when I started recording. For this conversation, I decided to start from the beginning. Thus, my first question was simply this: 'What is the importance of having a news website for a newspaper?'

Although there was no single response for this, he argued, since it depended on each medium and where they decided to focus, he noted that his response only applied to *La Tercera*: 'It is about not only making your content available to people but also about generating a link between the brand and the audience at a time when it is very difficult to compete against the 24/7 news of radio or television. [This] is the way we have to say that we are working very hard all day and not just [for] a minute', he responded. The editor spoke quickly and eloquently. It seemed clear to me that he had offered a similar answer before. Then, in the same breath, he added that the website was important because if they were not working on it, then they would be missing out on an entire generation who consumes the news online, and that would simply be unacceptable.

'Does that importance translate into the resources that the organisation provides to the digital reporters?' I asked bluntly. He paused. 'No', he said finally, because the core business of *La Tercera* was still the newspaper. He began to elaborate, but then he stopped himself and, as a seasoned journalist who was being interviewed would do, he said, 'I will give you a better response', and started over. Had the importance of the digital area grown over time? Yes. Had the company placed more resources in the digital area over time? Yes, even proportionally more than what the company had invested in the paper. Was the digital area the priority? No, the priority was still the paper. 'The paper remains as the most important product of the company, and that just makes sense […] as well as it makes sense to expect that the gap between digital and paper will shorten with time', he said.

'But then why do we still have this separation between web journalists and paper journalists, where we can also see different cultural appreciations for each one of them?' I questioned next.

‘Because culturally, the setting has been to separate them’, he responded honestly. ‘Culturally in this organisation?’ I asked. ‘Culturally in this country’, he said, and then added, ‘It is the way in which traditional media has understood digital media for the longest time’.

During the first minutes of our interview, I had the impression that his answers about the importance of the website related mainly to brand positioning, competitive distinctiveness, and product placement. Not once had he, at least at this point, mentioned the benefits for journalism, reporters, or the audience. The scornful tone with which the digital animator had said ‘occupy the space’ came to my mind once more.

‘The number of articles produced by a web journalist, as we understand their role today, [is] different from those of the newspaper journalist. What the web journalist is doing is getting the immediate news out, [...] that implies a much faster speed and a level of exclusivity that is infinitely lower than the newspaper journalist has’, he continued. This Internet editor believed that this was the source of the undervaluing of web journalism. That inferior level of exclusivity meant that web journalists were expected to cover different topics, not only with less time for preparation but also with less familiarity with the theme in general.

However, I kept thinking during this interview, *that is merely an organisational decision*. ‘Why try to cover everything, when that has the consequences that we know it has, instead of covering just specific topics?’ I wondered aloud. ‘Because covering everything is what allows us to compete with our immediate rivals, and that “everything” is what allows us to validate ourselves as a news brand at this point’, he responded. For *La Tercera*, this was a strategic decision. They chose to deliver a breaking-news service that had a relatively acceptable quality, but more importantly, that allowed *La Tercera* to be in ‘all the conversations’. However, this decision also concerned the media business in Chile, he added. ‘Do you know how *The New York Times* covers breaking news?’ the editor asked. *The New York Times*, as many other newspapers in the United States, he explained, utilises the services of the Associated Press agency (AP), whose standard for breaking-news articles tends to be high. ‘Chile used to have agencies like that – UPI, ORBE, and others. They generated the content for many of the emerging news websites. Today, however, they are gone. The absence of these agencies generates a need for the everyday news outlets. If someday, news agencies returned, one could think of going back to that system and use web journalists for other things’, but until then, he said, they had to remain where they were. ‘Today, I want to be in everyone’s conversations. In order to do that, I need to be in as many topics as I can and publish as fast as possible’, he continued.

The new journalistic roles that have started to flourish across multiplatform newsrooms, especially in organisations such as *La Tercera*, seem to be marked by the vagueness of the topics and themes around which they work, although concurrently with a higher degree of specificities in the way they are expected to perform these jobs or their modes of production.

The digital animator's work, for example, was surrounded by the indeterminateness of the platforms on which she worked. Her visual animations were unfixed, as they had to occupy different spaces of the websites or follow the ever-changing, dynamic languages of every type of social platform. Sometimes, her GIFs were meant to be portable and seen on screens of different sizes and dimensions. Other times, her animation remained unmovable, as it was supposed to attract viewers to the home page.

Something similar happened with digital journalists. Unlike the reporter who covered education news for the newspaper and had meetings with her education sub-editor, web journalists bounced from one topic to another without delay.

Synchronously to the vagueness, and perhaps because of it, there was a great level of specificity in the work done by these new professionals working in the newsrooms. These particularities were determined not only by the limitations of the platforms on which they worked but also by the rhythms and speed the organisation – as expressed through their editor – expected them to work.

I needed to ask the Internet editor one last question before finishing our interview, and I left it for the end because I was concerned that he could interpret it as an attack or a rude comment: 'What could be the motivations for a journalist to be a breaking-news reporter here? At the end of the day, we are in a market that privileges the prestige that journalists have associated with their names, and therefore, how much prestige does being a breaking-news journalist in *La Tercera* actually give you?' As I feared, this question was followed by the longest pause yet in our meeting. He stuttered a little before replying, 'The scheme we have is designed … so that the breaking-news journalist is just an "ephemeral journalist"'. If the quality of web journalists was sufficient, the editor continued, they would have many possibilities to acquire other jobs because of the volume of articles they could produce per day. 'Professionally, web journalism cannot be your endpoint', the Internet editor finished. In 2019, Vázquez-Herrero et al. published an article describing what they called ephemeral journalism: 'Journalism which creates ephemeral contents to distribute them through ephemeral platforms [such as Instagram Stories] and tools with the aim of satisfying the consumption habits of ephemeral users is what we called "ephemeral journalism"' (2019, p. 3). However, I argue that the proliferation of these new journalistic microformats (Silva-Rodríguez et al., 2017) is not alone in its limited lifespan.

The work of *La Tercera'*s digital journalists themselves was ephemeral, at least until the company changed their position regarding digital journalism and the new role of those digital platforms in attracting new audiences.

In the next section, I discuss the implication of this particular answer. However, for now, my primary concern with the editors' response is that I am unsure whether *La Tercera*'s digital journalists were made aware that they were expected to pass through – that they were considered temporary workers under the organisational culture in which they worked every day. Conversely, I am convinced that one-half of the professional journalists working in that newsroom, that is, digital journalists, were incognisant that comparing themselves with their newspaper colleagues was a futile exercise. Certain professional values may have been shared between platforms, but those values that were well expressed by newspaper journalists could not match the tasks assigned to digital journalists because in this organisational culture, that was the role they were assigned and nothing more.

2.8. A clash between journalists

Franklin (2012) considers that the proliferation of neologisms, many of which I have already mentioned in this chapter, such as cross-media, convergence, divergence, and so on, are but a mark of the speed with which the changes in journalism are unfolding.

Therefore, my priority has been to start this chapter by tracing the beginnings of the new platforms that have joined the now-traditional media forms. By the end of the 20th century, Chilean newsrooms were already experimenting with the benefits and gratification of a new, borderless platform that could function outside the law, the 'networks of networks' – the Internet. However, changes in the state of the art in technology also produced transformations in roles that these platforms were fulfilling. The Internet was no longer uncharted territory; now it was occupied by an active audience who demanded atomised, à la carte content. According to Carlson, 'the shift from news scarcity to news abundance began with the digitization of legacy news on the production side and the limitless access to news sites on the audience side' (2016, p. 230). The predominant revolution for news consumption, therefore, occurred when the audience started carrying with them the platforms they utilise to consume the news: their mobile phones. Media organisations started competing with each other to feed the 'hungry, hungry hippo' that is the demand to constantly refresh their social media feed. To satisfy these demands, digital journalists have been forced to abandon certain journalistic

values, which further evidences how different they are from reporters working on television or newspapers. This necessarily has produced a culture in which not only journalists but also the entire newsroom holds the 'old forms' as better than the newer, faster, and perhaps more superfluous platforms. Some of the journalists I interviewed indeed thought of their work as improper, unbefitting, and incompatible with the role they believed a quality journalist should fulfil in these modern times.

The key argument of this chapter is that the demands and modes of performance inherent to digital platforms – the web and social networks – are producing a clash between digital journalists and other media workers within the same newsrooms. Each platform supports its own content, technologies, boundaries, limitations, and business models, and yet, one would have thought, despite all these differences, what would have remained the same were some core journalistic values regarding their roles in a democratic society. However, journalists in the newsrooms of *La Tercera* and Canal 13 were being pushed to publish news articles online even before they had completely written those articles. By adding a 'news still in process' comment at the end of a one-paragraph news article, these reporters were complying with what Facebook and Twitter told newsrooms was necessary to be competitive and concurrently eroding the basic requirements that separate professional journalism from other forms of civic mass communication.

Certainly previous studies have demonstrated how traditional media, such as television, radio, and newspapers, are utilising the web to reinvent themselves and 'adapt to the new political and economic conditions' (Martin, 2007, p. 27). However, beyond all the voices that have celebrated the arrival of media convergence and the utopian dream of formless information, few in the literature have noted the resentment and frustration that digital journalists feel when they are encouraged to cover topics relating to 'it girls' and melodramatic television programmes. Do the ends justify the means in contemporary newsrooms? Does the need to generate traffic on a website that offers newsworthy, relevant information justify the practice of making news professionals write endlessly about unnewsworthy, not-interesting-enough-to-warrant-reporting topics?

Digital journalists' discomfort is not a whim. Rather, they constantly see how journalists from other platforms advance their careers by authoring quality, well-reported news while the digital journalists face many limitations that accompany the way their organisations have chosen to utilise social networks and the web.

Perhaps one of the most important findings in this chapter is the realisation that the source of professional dissonance among digital journalists is the organisation. This was particularly true

at *La Tercera*, as the company had decided to conceal their real vision and mission from their workers. The revelation that *La Tercera*'s web editor considered his journalists to be professionals in transition also presented ethical dilemmas that I needed to consider during my fieldwork. This interview was conducted toward the end of my stay in the newsroom; however, I started wondering if I should study how digital journalists would react to this information. What would happen, I imagined, if they knew that they should already be seeking another job that was based on a different platform, as nobody was expected to continue writing for the web for an extended period?

Then I realised that this information also indicated a professional dissonance within the editorial management of the organisation itself. Despite a public narrative and façade that highlighted the importance of a multiplatform newsroom for the contemporary production of news, there was a tacit agreement within the organisation to disregard the work of digital journalists as less important and secondary to that of other platforms.

2.9. An uneven relationship

The research question that drove this chapter aims to understand how media platforms are responding to the introduction of new technologies that enable new ways and forms of reporting the news. In this chapter, I have presented some of the data that I collected during my fieldwork, much of which indicates a paradigmatic change in the ways journalists are currently relating to their audiences, to a new group of media workers, and to other journalists within their own newsrooms and organisations. Media platforms, some of which were first introduced in Chile to promote freedom of speech and democratic values, are now being utilised in the service of extraneous actors who have clear, extrinsic market-driven interests.

Some of these actors, particularly corporate social network companies, such as Facebook and Twitter, have introduced a disproportionate relationship between themselves and certain departments within media organisations. These departments, such as newly inaugurated social networks teams or the media companies' advertising management, are unconcerned with latent ideals of journalism's professional culture and thus have translated these external pressures into the creation of new news-making routines and ethical standards (A. O. Larsson, 2018).

As I have previously written in this chapter, the limitations of a form condition the production of content from the beginning of the creation process, and concurrently, these limitations shape the relationships between the workers within the same organisation.

During my fieldwork, I also found that digital journalists were sometimes unaware of the value their organisation attributed to the platforms on which they were working and their own professional profiles. Some journalists believed that the discomfort they felt regarding the shortcomings of their digital journalist roles was mainly due to temporary mismanagement, although my data suggests that their role descriptions would not change any time soon and were as the organisation intended. That is to say, the editorial evaluation of their positions was marked by the ephemerality of both the content they produced and the expectations of their digital careers.

Both Canal 13 and *La Tercera* have provided recent public statements about the importance they wish to assign to their digital workers; however, in-the-field and post-fieldwork conversations with my sources seemed to indicate that these problems have not dissipated. Rather, the demands to comply with these external companies' requests, such as Facebook and Twitter, seem to grow through accession of newer platforms.

Additionally, I observed how the feelings of multiplatform inharmoniousness were starting to express themselves in open animosity and blunt hostility between digital journalists and newspaper reporters. A battle of egos and accusations of incompetency started to flourish between reporters of multiple platforms. Concurrently, other non-journalistic media workers saw their work stalled by the lack of a strong organisational vision and institutional development.

Despite the negative way some reporters have responded to the introduction of new technologies, I also witnessed that, when correctly implemented, beneficial and productive results could be achieved from a cross-media model of production that highlighted the strengths of each platform individually and the workers performing within its boundaries.

In the next chapter, I explain how, beyond these platforms, news makers are adapting the general physical and technological infrastructures of the newsrooms to new digital technologies, the digitalisation of news production, and the transformation of reporting tools as well as other radical transformations experienced by Chilean journalists.