

## ARTICLE

UDC 070

**MEDIA CONVERGENCE AS A FACTOR  
IN PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY FORMATION****Issina G.I., Abisheva V.T.***Karaganda University named after Ye.A. Buketov, Karaganda,  
e-mail: g.issina@mail.ru, vera.abisheva@mail.ru*

The article reveals the main problems of forming professional identity in the conditions of mass media convergence and improvement of communication practices. It has been determined that with the transition of media to digital technologies, the question of professional identity receives a new sound, while maintaining its reference properties. The features and key directions of the transformation process of the journalists' professional culture in the light of ongoing modifications in the sphere of information and communication technologies have been identified and substantiated. Convergence as a phenomenon of universal journalism within the framework of professional identity determines the direction of further progress of the mass media. The dynamics of the development of media convergence regarding the mutual influence of traditional and new mass media makes it possible to assess the degree of adaptation of regional media to modern conditions in terms of improving their technological and dialogue capabilities in creating and broadcasting content. It has been confirmed that with the expansion of the global network, the importance of mass communication as a form of intellectual activity increases. In the age of active development of media technologies, when there has been a redistribution of labor in the media sphere, which entails an increase in the intensity of work, specialists are needed who have the skills to work efficiently in the media of various formats – print and electronic.

**Keywords:** media convergence, mass media, information environment, professional identity

**Introduction**

In the modern era of information and communication technology, we are witnessing a digital revolution, which has greatly accelerated information exchange throughout the world. In terms of efficiency, visibility and accessibility, the Internet is superior to traditional media. In the history of the media, the speed of reaching a multi-faceted, diverse audience is unparalleled. The generation of consumers of information distributed through the media in the new century had the opportunity to observe the creation of a polyphonic communication product.

Traditionally, indicators of the level of innovations' development in the country, as well as other factors, as a rule, are evidenced by the emergence of modern technologies and the technical equipment of production. Such a noticeable progressive phenomenon for the service of journalism, for example, at one time was the introduction of printing complexes, later the formation of the radio and television broadcasting industry, the construction of television centers and radio stations, the invention of the linotype, phototypesetting, laser, computer, etc. In recent years scientists have repeatedly confirmed the undoubted significance and uniqueness of new forms of communication between content producers.

The task of our research is to investigate the ways of development of convergent journalism as information social phenomenon in

the context of professional identity in various countries, but also to present the evolution of views on the processes of scientific and practical understanding of media resources, to show the attitude of theorists and practitioners to innovations in this sphere.

**The hypothesis of the study** is that the sources of information under the influence of new technologies are subject to modifications, which entail a change in their nature, some functions, and orientation. An important factor in the formation of a personality with a high need for self-determination is the professional identity of a journalist.

In the structure of this work, the concept and issues of identity are used to describe a set of attitudes, motivations that reproduce a kind of collective standard in order to determine one's place in the world, in accordance with traditional social prescriptions and values. Since self-identification is a process of one's own choice and movement of an individual along the intended path, by professional identity we mean the result of self-determination of a person who identifies himself with the profession as a vocation and strives to become a full-fledged representative of the professional community.

Innovations in Internet communication formats, the transformation of mass media contribute to the deepening of the basic characteristics of identity and stimulate the formation of personality. In conditions of media convergence

the idea of introducing universalization is being popularized. New types of skills and abilities, as well as the desire to master them to perfection, are of great importance and necessity for the manufacturer of mass communications.

#### Materials and methods of research

Observations show that in the digital era, the creative activity of a journalist compared to the previous period has changed significantly due to the increasing influence of information on the progress of mankind. Mass media in the information period is one of the main sources of knowledge about the world. Transformations in this area, concerning such areas as new forms and methods of media consumption, experimental formats, are taking place rapidly. These factors certainly have an impact on the future of journalism. Thanks to modern technologies, the properties of interactivity, the media have become more efficient, the addressee has the opportunity to receive the latest news and conduct a dialogue in real time.

In the world communication science in the second half of the twentieth century, information was ascertained about the integration of innovative processes in the field of storage and dissemination of various kinds of information, about the unification of previously disparate media, which among scientists was called convergence.

A.G. Kachkaeva sees in the ongoing processes the result of revolutionary changes in the world of mass media in the 21st century, arguing that changes in traditional media editorial offices are inevitable on a global scale, and we must prepare for them [1, p. 413]. This is also evidenced by modern research by scholars from China [2], Malaysia [3], etc.

The new century was marked by active convergent transformation processes in the information sphere, which, in turn, is of undoubted research interest. Foreign print publications were the first to use multimedia technologies and new formats of text and graphic materials, as well as adding video and audio publications to the content. Moreover, they were the first to create mobile versions of sites and explore new platforms and ways to improve and expand the capabilities of their materials. By the mid-nineties of the last century, video materials began to appear in online versions of American publications.

The analysis showed that the pioneers in the post-Soviet space were the Russian sites of publications: 'Nezavisimaya Gazeta', 'Izvestia', 'Kommersant', 'Komsomolskaya Prav-

da', 'Moskovsky Komsomolets'. Since 1994, the addressee gradually began to get acquainted with the Internet analogues of these popular newspapers. If at first they were an absolute copy of the printed edition, then after a short period of time they already represented completely independent multimedia resources. An example of purposeful work to prepare for the transition to a new format, associated with certain risks, can be 'Rossiyskaya Gazeta'. The publication appeared more than twenty years ago and today is a multi-structured media enterprise. Since its emergence, journalists have constantly faced certain difficulties in adapting to new conditions.

The use of sociological methods made it possible to form a unique method for obtaining data on the psychological situation in the editorial team. According to Kalliomä L.A. [4], the possibility of independent acquisition of new knowledge, skills and competencies by individuals with the help of textbooks and the open market of educational services was identified. The problem of adapting the editorial staff to production on a convergent basis was successfully solved. In the conditions of mass media transition to digital technologies, the professional identity of a journalist retains its reference properties, which undoubtedly contributes to the implementation of the socially significant functions of journalism.

Similar creative innovations can be observed on the Internet sites of radio stations, where journalists and radio hosts have also achieved the possibility of direct communication with the audience in real time. As is known, the emergence of new technologies is changing the methods of broadcasting and commercial distribution of products, which affects the creative process of radio workers.

New media make their own adjustments to the life of Kazakhstani society [5]. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, where the percentage of the population with access to the Internet and mobile communications is quite high, modern technologies are actively used as an effective and profitable tool for marketing and media communications. In Kazakhstan, the process of convergence is also successfully mastered by regional media. Acquaintance with the practical experience of domestic editorial offices is of considerable interest not only for novice journalists.

Kazakhstan's 24-hour entertainment TV channel "New Television" can be considered unique in its kind, where we observe the fusion of radio and television live. Related to the TV Company 'ART', it is a member of the Nation-

al Association of Broadcasters, is a member of the media group together with TECS-Radio. Based in the city of Karaganda, it presents high-quality content for various categories of TV and radio listeners: interesting and exciting projects, reality shows and good films and series of Russian and Western production, talk shows, humorous programs, sports broadcasts and music videos. Also, the viewer is offered information and analytical programs covering the latest events in the region, country and the world and a number of shows of their own production. The potential audience of the channel is about three million people. With the volume of daily broadcasting – 24 hours, the basis of broadcasting is its own production. Broadcasting is effective in the fact that it provides people with unlimited access to the transmitted message.

### Results of the research and discussions

The convergent media format contributed to the formation of conditions for the development of the photo reportage genre. It can be stated that a number of traditional genres of journalism have undergone changes, turning into multimedia ones. From the practice of Western publications, domestic editorial offices perceived the orientation of the content mainly to the news nature of the materials. Attention is drawn to the departure of convergent editions from analytics. Of course it's not easy to single out the typology of online publications, since "pure" genres began to give way to new, "hybrid" ones. We can observe in the publications of new media that, for example, the authors easily supplement a note with elements of a report; sometimes they replace a classic report with a survey or interview. As a result, the audience is given a "multi-genre" work. The results of the analysis indicate that "pure" genre forms are preserved only in clone publications that completely copy their traditional versions. It is important to note that the convergence of the media becomes a kind of impetus for the emergence of new unified genres. For example, the terms 'infotainment', 'edutainment', etc., were extremely rare in domestic publications.

The analysis shows that the media landscape has been significantly updated thanks to the formation of convergent editorial offices, when it became possible to produce content for different platforms in the information and communication sphere. In this regard, a transformation took place in a number of areas in the professional community, which affected not only the modification of responsibilities for a certain category of employees in the editorial

offices of mass media, but also the redistribution of labor in journalistic teams, as well as the emergence of new specialties. The practice of foreign and domestic media shows that modification of the production process with competent organization of adaptation activities helps to increase the intensity of information transfer. The transition from a traditional editorial office to a multimedia newsroom can seriously change the usual way of life, new requirements for the organization of the team's activities are expected, as well as the need to equip editorial offices with modern equipment. Examples show that in this situation of reform, as with any innovation, there can be both supporters and doubters.

We analyzed the attitude of employees of different editorial offices to innovative processes in the media sphere. Most journalists and media executives are generally supportive of team innovation, but there were concerns in the oral survey that universalization would complicate the work of preparing a particular media. Opinions were expressed about the need to preserve key specializations with the ability and skills to prepare materials for different media platforms. In addition, among the reasons that raised doubts were, for example, the following: excessive intensification of labor will cause a decrease in the creative process of a journalist's work and eventually turn into an ordinary news broadcast; the use of secondary information will lead to the loss of its exclusivity; classical methods of journalism will be lost; creative employees who are forced to work in different formats risk losing their individuality, since it is quite difficult to simultaneously comment on an event and film yourself against the backdrop of what is happening.

Another important problem is the psychological state of workers who have extensive work experience and are unwilling to adapt to fundamental changes. The transition to a new labor system causes psychological discomfort for older employees, creating a stressful situation for the media as an industry in the context of convergence. The study of the scientific problem and the experience of the successful transition of a number of editorial offices from traditional to convergent, despite different views on convergence in the journalistic community, confirmed the relevance of the organizational structure of the media, a new business model, and modernization of the creation and distribution of information products. Under the influence of convergence – this multifaceted and complex process that cannot occur in the same way in different editions of the mass

media – ideas about channels of communication and information have changed significantly. The revolution in the field of information technology naturally contributed to the gradual transformation of traditional journalism into convergent journalism. Due to changing needs and requirements, the modern consumer wants to receive news not only promptly, but also at a convenient time for him, moreover, through a certain channel of information. These factors, of course, require additional skills from journalists, the ability to revise, rethink, and improve familiar operating principles. A conversation with domestic journalists who have already switched to new forms of work made it possible to determine the main professional competencies of a modern Internet journalist.

First of all, his activity is inconceivable without a broad general competence: high literacy, awareness in many areas of life, quick learning, and critical thinking are important. He must think sharply, be creative, mobile, active. Such a journalist must also learn how to quickly create multimedia content, that is, process information as quickly as possible and be able to write text, take high-quality photos, and shoot videos. It is important to have modern technology. In our opinion, this is why Western experts propose to consider the process of convergence from the standpoint of new professional roles and skills of reporters and editors. In this regard, the work of the Swiss scientist Patrick Ramey is interesting and useful for understanding the key aspects of activity in the new conditions [6, p. 72]. The study deepens popular theories about professional identity and active processes of adaptation of media employees at different levels: social, discursive, blocking the negative and stimulating the positive effects of information technology.

Paul Bradshaw considers it expedient to introduce new positions in each convergent edition or, as he calls it, new roles [7]. According to L.P. Shesterkina, the new roles include: an aggregator editor, a mobile journalist, a multimedia producer, and editor-expert. The duties of the editor include creating a community on the Internet, holding discussions, answering questions, and supporting constructive activity [8]. In accordance with the named specializations in the converged newsroom, employees, using various formats, must complete tasks to create media products. The idea of introducing a “universal journalist” is being actively pursued. The tasks of such an employee include not only the skill of writing a text, he must also independently shoot a video, edit it and voice it, master the skills of working with photo-

graphic equipment and much more. Members of the scientific project “European multimedia news environment” characterize the universal journalist as a specialist who owns more than one journalistic specialization [9, p. 83]. In other words, one person, trained in special courses and mastering modern specializations: newspaper journalism, Internet journalism or radio-TV journalism is now doing work that was previously distributed among several of his colleagues.

It is characteristic that foreign sources often contain the concepts of cross-media trained journalist, multi-skilling journalist, i.e. a journalist with the skills to prepare materials for any media and various media platforms [9, p. 83]. We also meet the concepts «do-it-all journalists» [7], journalists doing different types of work at the same time. Spanish scientific experts consider the term multiskilling [9] as the ability to prepare content for different media, the ability to cover different topics.

The concept of universal journalism within the framework of professional identity involves regular training and retraining of employees. With the end of an educational institution, the acquisition and regular updating of knowledge should not stop. In a rapidly changing information environment, people should be able to improve their skills from time to time, receiving a modern education. It is educated people who have become producers of information who receive economic and political power in society. The relationship between theory and practice of teaching students new information technologies and examples of restructuring the traditional editorial board into a convergent one are presented by scientists from the Faculty of Journalism of KazNU [10].

The main value in the modern world, undoubtedly, is information and knowledge. The attention of the mass media is shifting to those areas that are more focused on innovation, cognition, understanding the realities, and self-identification of the individual.

The profession of a journalist requires serious knowledge, skills, universal competencies, talent, intelligence, ethical standards, attention to social problems, etc. from the creators of the media. Journalists today are included in the processes in which communication through the latest technologies has become not only a form of life, but also an opportunity for self-realization in the space of convergent journalism. The professional identity of a journalist can be considered both as an indicator of his professional and personal qualities, and as a factor determining the choice of a specific media

specialization, the desire to improve. On the basis of the study, it was found that the worldview, beliefs, values of journalists, reflecting the process of self-identification, are formed when choosing certain options among a variety of alternatives.

For effective professional work, superficial knowledge and the ability to do a little bit of everything are not enough. In our opinion, in order to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in convergent media, a journalist needs to study well the specifics of activities in traditional media. The undoubted advantage of digital technologies is the distribution of any kind of media content in real time at a reasonable cost. In the age of active development of media technologies, when there has been a redistribution of labor in the media sphere, which entails an increase in the intensity of work, specialists are needed who have the skills to work efficiently in the media of various formats – print and electronic.

Thus, convergence as a phenomenon of journalism universality within the framework of professional identity determines the tendency of further progress of mass media. The development of the Internet and mobile communications can no longer be stopped, and its expanses have no boundaries and provide great opportunities for further improvement of the latest technologies and the professions associated with them. It should be noted that scientific discussions related to the formation of the process of convergence and identification of intentions are actively continuing in different countries of the world. Both foreign and domestic researchers note that during the transition to new forms and methods of work, it is necessary to implement not a forced, but a bal-

anced, purposeful, systemic-activity approach. Mass communications, functioning in time and in the information space, have a significant impact on the formation of new generation, including the generation of journalists on whom the future of the media depends.

### References

1. Multimedia journalism: a textbook for universities / ed. A.G. Kachkayeva, S.A. Shomova; National research University "Higher School of Economics". M.: HSE House, 2017. 413 p.
2. Liu J. Analysis on the Role of Convergent Journalism in Media Community and Press Circles // *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Literature, Art and Human Development. ICLAH. 2020. Vol. 497. P. 31-35. DOI:10.2991/assehr.k.201215.387.*
3. Kobiruzzaman M. Media Convergence Definition, Example Types & Elements // *News-moor-Educational Website for Online Learning. 2021. URL: <https://news-moor.com/media-convergence-example-elements-of-media-convergence> (accessed: 14.03.2024).*
4. Callioma L.A. Adaptation of a journalistic team to work in conditions of convergence. Author's abstract: abstract diss. ... cand. philol. sci. Moscow, 2013. 20 p.
5. Barlybayeva S., Mukanova G. Digital journalism: monograph. Almaty, 2018. 125 p.
6. Raemy P. A Theory of Professional Identity in Journalism: Connecting Discursive Institutionalism, Socialization, and Psychological Resilience Theory // *Communication Theory. Vol. 31 (4). 2021. P. 841–861. DOI: 10.1093/ct/qtaa019.*
7. Bradshaw P. A model for the 21st century newsroom: the news process in action; the news diamond. URL: <http://kernelmediaacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/21stcentury-newsroom.pdf> (accessed: 04.04.2024).
8. Universal journalism: Textbook for universities / Ed. L.P. Shesterkina. M.: Aspect Press, 2016. 480 p.
9. Domingo D. et al. Four Dimensions of Journalistic Convergence: A preliminary approach to current media trends at Spain. 8th International Symposium on Online Journalism. Austin, Texas (EEUU), 2007. URL: <https://dadun.unav.edu/handle/10171/5114> (accessed: 04.04.2024).
10. Barlybaeva S.Kh., Mysaeva K.N., Alzhanova A.B. Convergent journalism. Textbook. Almaty: KazNU named after al-Farabi, 2015. 65 p.