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Enseignement supérieur de type long de niveau universitaire

## ***Impact of social media on journalism:***

*Has traditional media managed to increase its audience by reaching 18- to 25-year-olds in Belgium through social networking websites?*



Thesis presented

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## Summary

The world is changing: with the emergence of Web 2.0 and the development of new technologies, we are seeing a transformation of many economic sectors. I've always been interested in innovations and in the impact they could have.

Through this work, I try to understand the relationship between social media (social networks) and journalism. As web users notice, there are more and more pages devoted to information: there is a real digital revolution that will forever change the concept of journalism. This thesis is divided into four main chapters that form the basis of my work.

The first chapter is devoted entirely to social networks. It is important to understand their history and evolution before analyzing their impact on journalism. This part also makes it possible to determine who are the leaders in terms of social network (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). This chapter also deals with the number of users around the world and in Belgium in particular, since the practical part of my work does not go beyond the Belgian framework.

The second chapter is the most developed and represents the most theoretical part of the work. It is used to understand the journalistic application of social media. First of all, I define and analyze the concepts of Web 2.0 and journalism 2.0 which have appeared because of the digitization of our world. Then I focus on media consumption: where do people search for information? Studies have shown that smartphones have revolutionized the way users look for information: a large proportion of citizens use their mobile when it comes to learning about news.

This "mobile" aspect is then analyzed in order to know what it has brought to the professionals of the journalism: this changed the conception of the profession and allowed the development of citizen journalism. I concentrate mainly on the advantages and disadvantages that this entails.

Then, a part will be devoted to new competitors who have emerged following this digital revolution: the news aggregation websites (Google, Yahoo, etc.). Afterwards, I will highlight the reasons why social media have become essential to the practice of journalism. It is

important to analyze the benefits, to understand what are the good practices to respect and to know the different challenges that can be met. Finally, this chapter ends with an analysis of the business model of digital journalism. It is important to understand the costs, the potential revenues, the return on investment and the different analytical tools.

The third chapter is a more practical chapter. I conducted two interviews with two major Belgian media groups (RTL & RTBF) in order to compare my theoretical part with a field analysis. I wanted to know if this digital revolution is really taken into account by these companies. For this, I got in touch with people confronted with this reality in both media groups: I try to compare their approaches and strategies regarding social media in order to have a critical look at the usefulness of social media for professional journalists.

The fourth chapter is the last of the thesis. In order to answer my research question, I've realized a survey among young Belgians to learn about their habits regarding social networks and the media. They were asked about their presence on social media, the types of media they were following, and so on. This survey, although limited in number of participants, complements the details given by the two interviews.

In my conclusion, I compare the theoretical and practical parts in order to formulate a concrete answer to my original question. After analyzing the interviews and the survey, I think I can claim that social media is the best way for journalists to reach young citizens; I'm also convinced that journalism will never be the same again and that we will still face many changes in this sector in the years to come.

## *Subject of the thesis*

*Impact of social media on journalism:*

*Has traditional media managed to increase its audience by reaching 18- to 25-year-olds in Belgium through social networking websites?*

## ***Acknowledgment***

First of all, after having accomplished this work, I would like to thank my advisor, Mohamed Selmouni, for guiding and supporting me over the months. You have set an example of excellence as a researcher, mentor, instructor, and role model. Your lessons prepared me well for the pursuit of my studies and your opinion was a real added value for this work. Your help and availability enabled the smooth progress of this thesis. Your remarks helped me refine my survey and focus on the relevant issues.

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Besides, I would like to thank and acknowledge the many current and former ICHEC colleagues and friends that I have had the incredible joy and pleasure of working with over the course of my education. This dissertation and project would also not have been possible without the support of all the teachers that developed my desire to make my thesis in this field and that gave me, during the years, the intellectual background necessary for the realization of this ultimate project at ICHEC. It has been an honor to share your seminars and lessons, my time at the school allowed me to deepen my knowledge and to develop a new vision of the world.

Last but not least, I thank my parents for their constant support and for their presence during this incredible journey; they have never stopped believing in me and have done everything to make me succeed, thank you for your support and trust. I also thank my friend, Alexandre De Moor, for the proofreading of my thesis and his advice. I hope through this work to show me worthy of ICHEC and finish my training beautifully.

Finally, I also apologize in advance if the text is not perfect, as English is not my native language.

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## Introduction

*“Today, when news breaks, there are two simultaneous events unfolding; those on the ground and those online.”*

Josh Stearns, journalist and community builder

With the development of the internet, the world continues to change. More and more people have access to online information, and can play a role by becoming citizen journalists themselves. This transformation was made possible by the emergence of the social media that surround our lives today. As an example, the social network “Facebook” has recently reached 1.87 billion users and is the most used network in the world. (*Statista, the Statistics Portal, 2017*).

Keith Rupert Murdoch, an Australian-born American media mogul, explains that young people are digital natives, people that will never know a world without ubiquitous broadband internet access. Those people have different expectations about the kind of news they will get. It is all about what they can find, where they can find it and how easy it is to get it. (*Allan, 2006*).

Many economic sectors must adapt to this omnipresent digitization and this is also the case for journalism. The key objective for journalists is to understand and adapt to this technological swift; the potential of new technologies is rarely understood. Of course this revolution breaks some of the cultural barriers that have been established in the past and brings a new twist to this sector of the media. Critics argue that this democratic potential of digital journalism will reduce the reliability of information and increase surface information to the detriment of a deeper analysis (*Salter, 2012*). Do we have to take take this revolution as a threat or as an opportunity?

The aim of this thesis is to explain the impact that social networks have had on traditional journalism and particularly analyze a research question: ***‘Impact of social media on***

***journalism: has traditional media managed to increase its audience by reaching 18- to 25-year-olds in Belgium through social networking websites?'***

For this purpose, four major chapters will be addressed during this work.

In Chapter 1, we establish a theoretical basis for social networks, we analyze how they are defined, we learn about their history and evolution, we look at the influent ones, and so on. Before proceeding further with the investigation, it is essential to understand the technological framework that surrounds us.

In Chapter 2, we will deal with the journalistic application of the social networks. We will see what is the difference between the “Old” and “New” Media, and what are the advantages and drawbacks. Furthermore, we will continue with the analysis of the role of journalists and the emergence of new journalistic forces such as Google and Yahoo. Finally, we will go into details to understand the business model of journalism on the social networks and investments necessary to the proper functioning of it (such as new jobs, things to watch for on the internet, etc.).

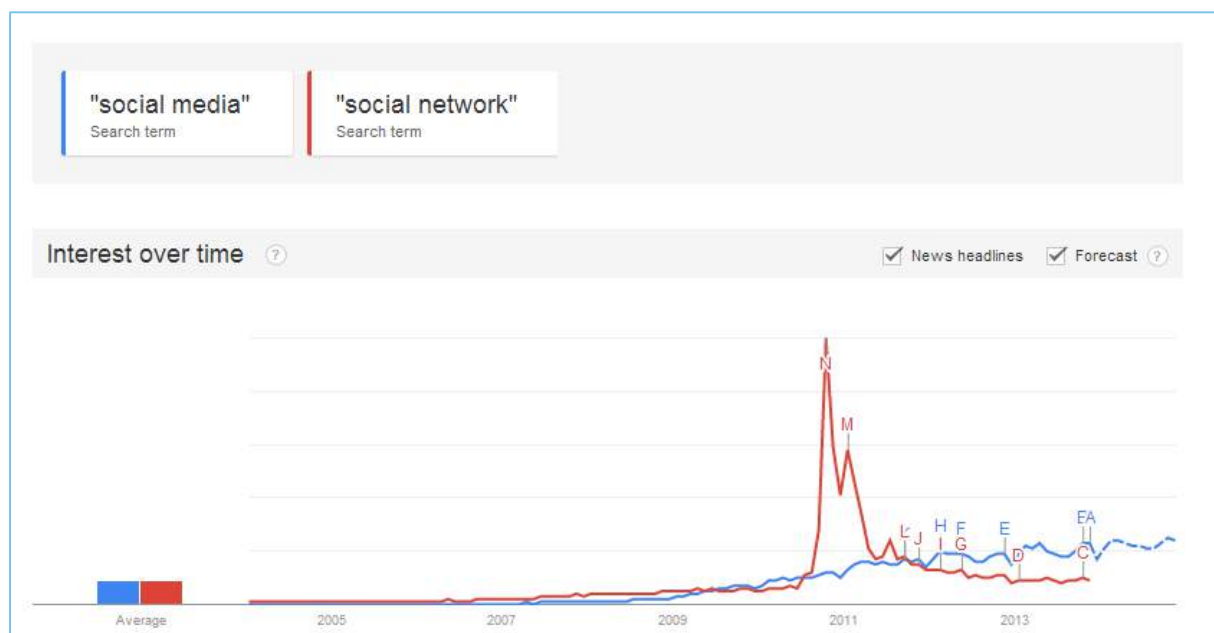
In Chapter 3, interviews will be conducted in two major Belgian media groups: RTL & RTBF. The objective is to gather the opinions of Belgian professionals who are confronted with the realities of the field with regard to this media change. It is a matter of understanding what are the real objectives of these major groups, what they are putting in place to achieve their ends.

In Chapter 4, we carry out a survey of young Belgians between the ages of 18 and 25 about their habits regarding the media. Are they interested in it? How much time do they spend looking for information? What do they think about digital journalism? The goal is to understand if this new journalism has succeeded in reaching and convincing the generation Y (Millennials).

As a conclusion, it is important to synthesize the answers to the research question that we asked. We will see whether or not social networks have helped the media to improve their audience among young Belgians.

## Chapter 1: Panorama of Social Media and its users

Now let's get down to business. The first step is to define what is social media. Like any important term in the field of media, the meaning of social media is contested but social media generally refers to “networked database platforms that combine public with personal communication” (Meikle, 2016). They use web-based technologies, desktop computers and mobile technologies; it changes the way people and organizations communicate. It is based on interaction, content-sharing and collaboration (Rouse, WhatIs, 2017). After carrying out several researches, it would appear that two terms are closely linked: Social Media & Social Networks. What is the concrete difference? According to Google Search Engine, prior to 2010, the term “Social Network” was more commonly used than “Social Media”, but the trend has reversed since 2012 (Veerasamy, 2015).



Comparison on the Google Search Engine

It is partially explained by the fact that famous social networks like Facebook and Twitter weren't media at the beginning, it was something they grew into, rather than set out to be (Veerasamy, 2015). In this sector, terminology changes a lot and the term “social media” is both a successor to and a replacement of the term “social network”. It is almost certain that if these technologies continue to evolve, the term "social media" will in turn be replaced (Highfield, 2016).

## 1.1: History and evolution of social media

The first social network was born with a website called “Six Degrees” and it lasted from 1997 to 2001. After 2000, more than 100 million individuals got access to the internet and it allowed the development of social networking platforms; people wanted to get socially engaged online. In 2003, MySpace popularized the use of social networks among the most advanced societies. After noticing the success of social networks, Facebook and Twitter were set up in 2005 and were soon to emerge as leaders. Subsequently, many competitors appeared, with networks such as Tumblr, Instagram, etc. Nowadays, there are hundreds of social platforms in line, each with their own specificities, and their target audiences (*Hale, 2015*).

## 1.2: The different social networks

Social networks can be categorized into several categories, although sometimes the differences may be minimal, or some platforms may be difficult to categorize (*White, 2012*). The following list is not exhaustive but covers a large part of the social networks. There are 7 main categories that can be established:

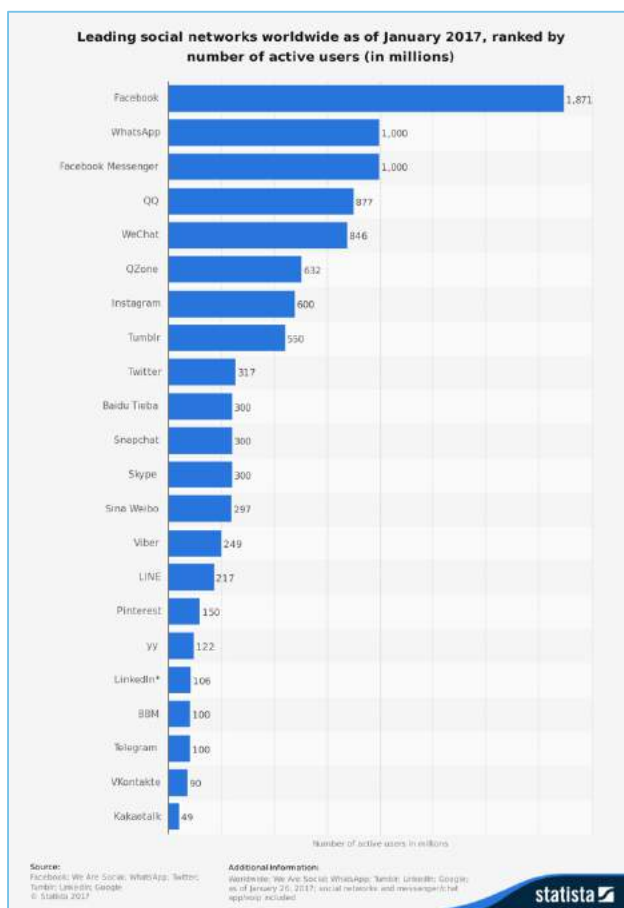
1. **Social Connections:** designed to keep contact with friends or family, it is the most used type worldwide (e.g. Facebook, Twitter).
2. **Multimedia Sharing:** designed to share video or photography online (e.g. YouTube, Flickr)
3. **Professional:** designed to offer opportunities for work or career, it allows individuals to connect when they are business-related (e.g. LinkedIn, Classroom 2.0).
4. **Informational:** designed for personal projects or everyday problems, people looking for the same type of information about gardening, computers, etc. (e.g. Super Green me, Do-It-Yourself Community).
5. **Educational:** it gives student the possibility to collaborate on academic projects, to communicate with teachers, etc. (e.g. The Student Room, The Math Forum).
6. **Hobbies:** It allows people to find a website dedicated to their favorite hobby; they can share their experience and feelings to a precise community that shares the same passion (e.g. Oh My Bloom).

7. **Academic:** designed to give researchers the possibility to share the data and to evaluate the results of other colleagues (e.g. Academia.edu).

In this work, we will focus on the first three cited categories, and particularly on the first one, the others being little used by journalists or media.

### 1.3: Popularity of social media worldwide

Now that we have been able to classify the networks according to their types, we will focus on the popularity of these social networks. The organization Statista has published a social media ranking based on the number of active users in January 2017 (*Statista, the Statistics Portal, 2017*):



*Statista : Leading Social Networks in 2017*

As you can see on the chart, Facebook and Facebook Messenger are the undisputed leaders, although Chinese social media, QQ, and the smartphone app WhatsApp also have halting results. Approximately 2 billion internet users are using social networks and these figures are still expected to grow due to the development of new technologies and the scope of the mobile Internet (*Chaffey, 2017*). Moreover, according to the US consumer panel from comScore, Facebook is the most engaging social network. In fact, 76% of users log in daily on the site of the American giant.

Given the popularity of these social networks, it is unthinkable that the media do not interfere in them. They make it possible to reach an increasingly large audience at lower cost. Indeed, more and more companies seem to invest in social networks, from 10% of marketing budgets today to an estimated 20% by 2020 (*Drake, 2016*). Plus, people tend to think that if it doesn't work on smartphones, it doesn't work at all. One of the great advantages of social networks is that they are available on almost all smartphones and tablets; it is possible to permanently reach a huge audience. This is another reason that explains the fact that the media devote a little more to social networks, becoming social media (*Rouse, WhatIs, 2016*).

### 1.4: Type of users

We have learned more about the popularity of social media worldwide, but what is the age range that makes the most use of these? Seeing that Facebook is the most used platform, it could be interesting to analyze the different categories that use it.

<b>79% of online adults (68% of all Americans) use Facebook</b>	
<i>% of online adults who use Facebook</i>	
All online adults	79%
Men	75
Women	83
18-29	88
30-49	84
50-64	72
65+	62
High school degree or less	77
Some college	82
College+	79
Less than \$30K/year	84
\$30K-\$49,999	80
\$50K-\$74,999	75
\$75,000+	77
Urban	81
Suburban	77
Rural	81
Note: Race/ethnicity breaks not shown due to sample size.	
Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 4, 2016.	
"Social Media Update 2016"	
PEW RESEARCH CENTER	

According to the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan American "fact tank", it seems that young adults (18-29) are the most frequent users of social networks but the number of older adults (30-49) is also increasing (*Greenwood, Perrin, & Duggan, 2016*). It can therefore be said that people who have grown up with the Internet are more inclined to use social media. Besides, it seems that women use Facebook at higher rates than men, interacting more and getting more involved in them (*Vermeren, 2015*). Finally, data suggest that income and housing location also have an impact on social network attendance. People who live in urban areas and that earn less than \$30k/year represent the most important class.

*Pew Research Center: Facebook users - 2016*

### 1.4.1: Social Media in Belgium

According to the Internet World Stats, more than 85% of the Belgian citizens use the Internet (*Internet World Stats, 2016*) and nearly all of them (more than 90%) use social media, with Facebook being the most used due to its penetration rate of 57% (*Passport to Trade 2.0 Project, 2016*). Social networks have made surprising progress in Belgium in recent years thanks to the diffusion of new technologies such as smartphones and netbooks.



*Global Web Index: Digital Media – Belgium 2015*

The two graphs above are taken from the Belgian report in 2015 drawn up by Global Web Index, a market research firm based in London. They show the diffusion of new electronic devices and estimate their impact on the consumption habits of the population. We can analyze that young adults spend considerable amount of time on mobile websites every day (*Global Web Index, 2015*).

Another interesting thing to point out is that over 70% of Belgian businesses have a profile on at least one social media platform. Companies and managers spend more and more time managing their e-commerce, e-reputation and recruitment through social networks (*Ueland, 2016*). As for the rest of the world, social media has succeeded in establishing itself as an essential element in Belgium. Digital disruption continues to change our habits and become anchored in our way of life. The forecasts show that it should continue its spread in the coming years and further accentuate the impact of digital and social media (*Selen, 2016*).

## Chapter 2: Journalistic application of social media

After completing the chapter dedicated to social networks, it is now time to address the second part dedicated to journalism, its evolution, its transformations and its new forms.

Journalism is no longer what our grandparents knew in their days. It largely leaves the sphere of television, radio or newspapers, that are considered as traditional media.

I will begin this chapter with an essential point: how do we define journalism? Does the simple fact of reporting information make us professional journalists?

For this purpose, let's consider the definition given by The American Press Institute, an educational non-advocacy non-profit organization: "Journalism is the activity of gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information. It is also the product of these activities. Journalism can be distinguished from other activities and products by certain identifiable characteristics and practices. These elements not only separate journalism from other forms of communication, they are what make it indispensable to democratic societies. History reveals that the more democratic a society, the more news and information it tends to have." (*American Press Institute, sd*)

Journalism is not fixed, it evolves with its time and journalists must use the new media that are made available to them (*Cullen, 2014*). We are in the era of digital journalism; it's still journalism, but it also develops its own characteristics, as explained by professor Ersoy at the Eastern Mediterranean University (*Ersoy, 2014*):

- **Real Time:** We can cover real time events or breaking news with chatrooms, online streams, etc.
- **Shifted time:** It is possible to publish and archive articles for viewing now or later and it is easier to access.
- **Multimedia:** Text, graphics, sound, videos, etc. are available through multiple platforms.
- **Interactive:** Hyperlinks represent the primary mechanism of the interactivity but moreover, the online journalist lets readers become participants.

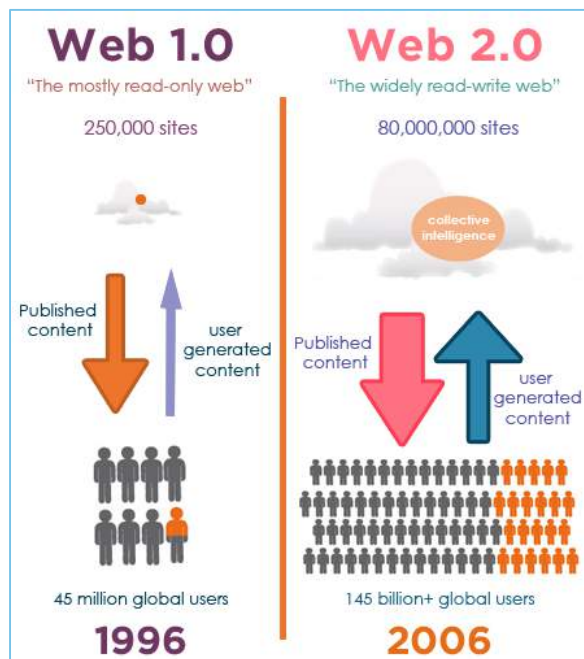


## 2.1: Web 2.0 and Journalism 2.0: A drastic digital change

If you ask any journalist if his job has evolved over the years, there is little chance that he is going to tell you: “No, nothing has changed”. More and more professionals are using a fairly recent term to explain the transition that takes place in their profession: Journalism 2.0. This term is strongly linked to Web 2.0, with the emergence of blogs, podcasts, social networks, etc. For the rest of this chapter, it is important to understand the challenges and impacts of Web 2.0. It therefore seems essential to me to first define this concept before carrying out a deeper analysis of journalism 2.0.

### 2.1.1: The concept of Web 2.0

Vangie Beal, managing editor of Webopedia.com, defines Web 2.0 as the term that designates the second generation of the Internet that focuses on the ability of citizens to share information and collaborate. This has led to the creation of communities on the web and it is from this moment that the marketing took a closer interest in the Internet (Beal, 2016).



ZNet Live-Web 1.0 & Web 2.0

Web 2.0 websites allow users to do more than just gather information. It is based on an "architecture of participation" which creates value as people use it (Rathore, 2016); we try to reduce passive behavior and we encourage users to get involved in the content they consult (Stern, 2015). It was thanks to this new aspect of the web that social media could appear. It is also the embodiment of a much more simplified version of the web that everybody can deal with regardless of the person's knowledge in IT (Techopedia, 2014).

This web 2.0 presents real advantages (*Rathore, 2016*) that simplify our life everyday. The main ones are:

- Easy to use and user friendly
- Real-time discussion
- Available anywhere, at anytime (Flexibility)
- Creation of dynamic web-based communities
- Sharing information faster than ever
- Facilitate business transactions

The following table shows the differences between the basic Web and the Web 2.0 (*Mata & Quesada, 2014*).

Feature	Web 1.0	Web 2.0
Metaphor for the Internet	Information superhighway	Platform for interaction
Metaphor for the WWW	Web of information resources stored on a global network of servers where what matters is retrieval and display	Human web where what matters is human contacts and relations between individuals
Major sites	Information portals	Online social networks
Tools	Oriented to display and retrieve information stored on the Internet	Designed to enable collaboration and content creation on the Internet
Strategy pursued	Efficiency	Effectiveness
Economies sought	Economies of scale	Network effects
Software used	Software as a product	Software as a service
Computing model	Client-server	Cloud computing
Communication range	Wide and local area networks	Mobile communication also considered
Issues	Technological	Social

#### *The characteristics of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0*

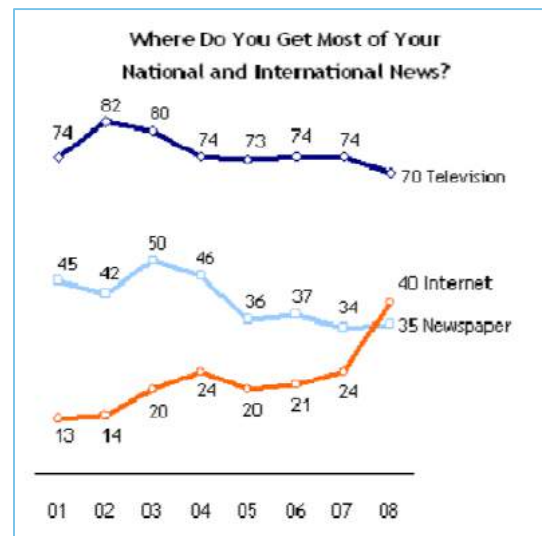
The two Web's are opposed on many points. One was much more technological, the other is oriented in a social context. An entire generation of young people has come of age using the Internet as its dominant medium for socializing (*Pontin, 2008*). The web adapts to its time and to the needs of consumers. It is from this Web 2.0 that was born the journalism 2.0 that we will address in the next point. Nevertheless, to finish this analysis of the web, some experts already point out that Web 3.0 is on the way and will replace the web 2.0 we know. Everything is going so fast in this sector, it is almost impossible to predict future changes.

### 2.1.2: The concept of Journalism 2.0

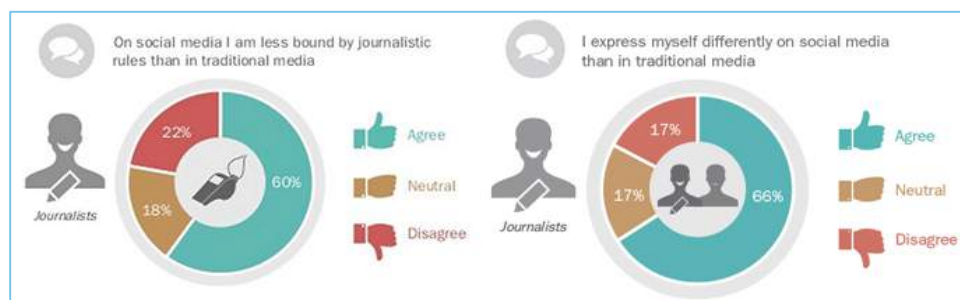
Journalists of past generations would scarcely recognize the profession today (Noyes, 2007). Interviews are regularly conducted by VoIP (e.g. Skype) and much of the information search is carried out on the internet. Virtually all traditional media such as newspapers, magazines or TV, get an online component. Hari Sreenivasan, an American broadcast journalist, has declared: “Traditional journalists need to adapt, to learn new techniques and to understand that the traditional reader is disappearing”. Social networks & media, blogs, newsletters, all of this must be part of the digital journalist skills.

Therefore, it is normal that bookstores and newsagents have a declining attendance and annual decline in business. Denying the Internet in our current world is no longer possible, the one who refuses to work online will never reach the masses (Decker, 2015).

After these traditional media that have transited on the net, we also find all the bloggers, and the amateurs, who have not received journalistic training. These people are called citizen journalists and are increasingly numerous (this concept will be addressed later in the work). ING, a Dutch multinational banking and financial services corporation, conducted a survey among journalists to see if digital journalism has changed professional habits. More than 60% of them admit to adapt and behave differently regarding online journalism and social media. Journalism 2.0 has changed the codes that were embedded in our society (ING, 2015).



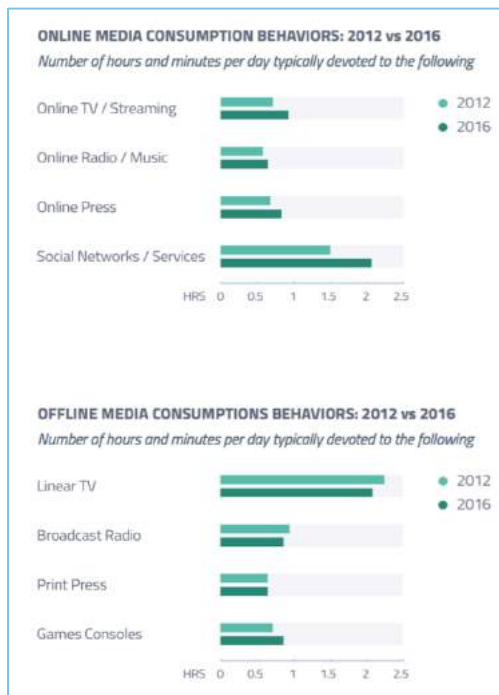
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press:  
Sources of news



The Social Media Impact (#SMING14) survey conducted by ING

## 2.2: Media Consumption: where do people get their news?

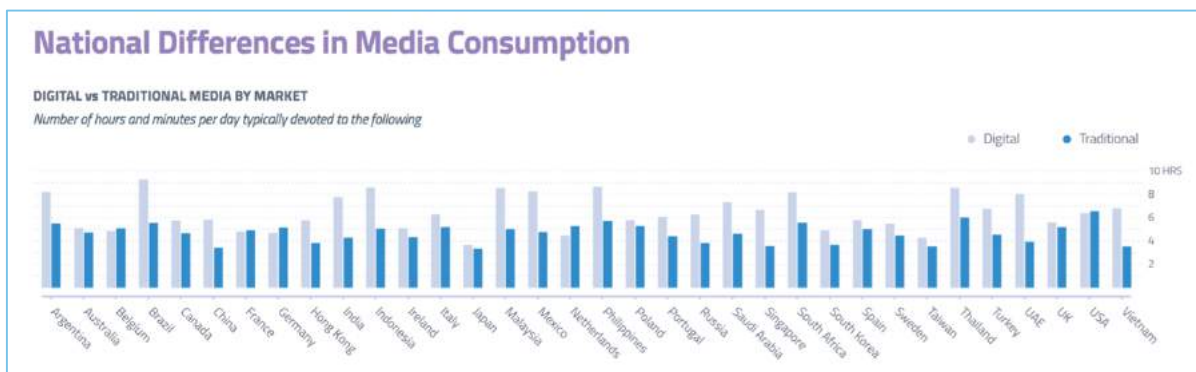
After analyzing Web 2.0 and Journalism 2.0, we must take a closer look at the evolution of media consumption by citizens. Have these new digital media managed to reach consumers? What is the main source of information for people around the world?



*Global Web Index : Insight report summary/ Q1 2017*

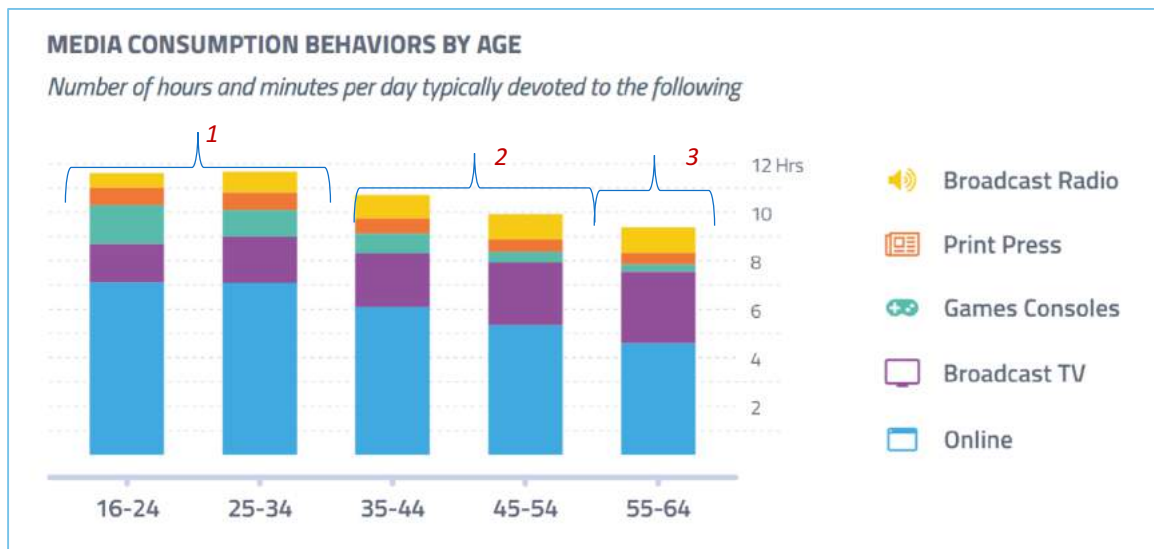
When comparing online media consumption behaviors between 2012 and 2016, we notice that people are spending more and more time on online media, especially social networks, which dominate widely (Mander & Young, 2017). Conversely, it can be noted that the consumption of traditional media collapses although the television still reaches a large number of people and remains a dominant media.

Moreover, what is worth to be noticed is that there are just 5 of the 34 markets tracked by GWI where consumers are spending more time each day on traditional rather than digital forms of media (USA, Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Germany). A study shows that the population of these European countries lacks interest in social networks in comparison with the rest of the world. For the US, it is more related to the very high score of TV consumption (Mander & Young, 2017).



*Global Web Index : Insight report summary/ Q1 2017*

After comparing media consumption across different geographic areas, let's now look at the relationship between the age category and the type of consumption. As it was foreseeable, the age of the consumer greatly influences his search for information (*Blodget, 2014*). This is just the beginning of this transition, and traditional media will face tough years.



*Global Web Index : Insight report summary/ Q1 2017*

Let's concentrate on the information on the graph above. To facilitate interpretation of the survey results, we will group the respondents into 3 distinct categories: those between 16 and 34, those between 35 and 54, and finally those aged over 55.

For the first category, it can be noted that the time spent online represents more than 50% of the number of hours devoted to the media. Traditional means of broadcasting have difficulties imposing themselves, especially radio and newspapers, which are no longer able to reach this audience. This is the category that has grown with Web 2.0. We also note that it is this category that devotes the most time to the media reaching almost 12 hours a day in total.

For the second category, it can be seen that online media remain leaders but concede a bit of land to the conventional media. Television seems to be more anchored in consumer habits.

For the third and last category, which represents the older people, we note that this is the category that listens most to radio. Television represents a portion of time devoted per day almost equal to the one of online media.

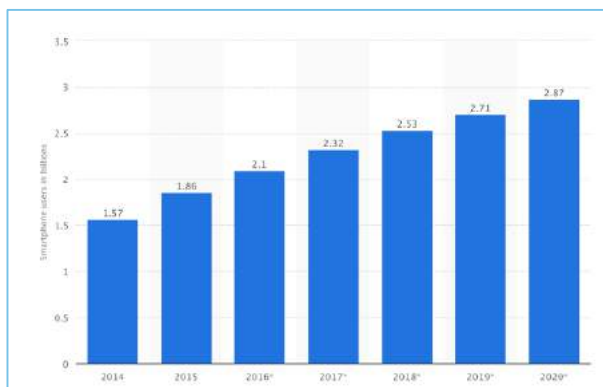
It can therefore be concluded that the trend is more or less the same in all the world with access to the Internet. Online media is becoming increasingly important over the years, and is often favored by young people. Nevertheless, even if the penetration rate is lower among the elderly, online media still represent a sizeable part of media consumption for these people.

### 2.3: Era of “Mediamorphosis”

Now that we've gone through the concepts of Web 2.0, Journalism 2.0, and analyzed the changes in media consumption of citizens, I will try to highlight the major challenges and applications of this digital transformation. In his book published in 1997, Roger Fidler, an internationally recognized new media pioneer and visionary (*Sagan & Nisenholtz, 2013*), had already predicted this revolution. He gave a name to this phenomenon and used this term as the title of his book: “Mediamorphosis”. He had announced this transition and was already ahead of the new concepts of journalism such as citizen journalism and the mobile revolution. He defined it as “the transformation of communication media, usually brought about by the complex interplay of perceived needs, competitive and political pressures, and social and technological innovations” (*Fidler, 1997*). Let us now look at what phenomena this “Mediamorphosis” has engendered.

#### 2.3.1: From classic to pocket

In this sub-point, we highlight the important role that the development of mobile technologies has had on journalism, whether at consumer level or at reporter level.



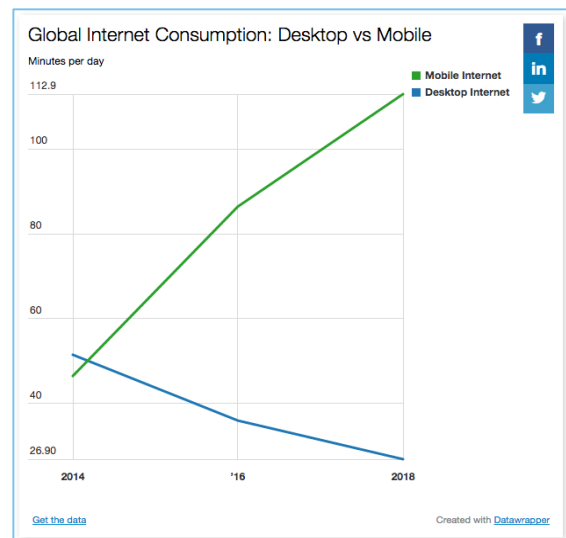
Statista : Number of smartphone users worldwide

The organization Statista estimated that there are about 2.32 billion smartphones users worldwide. This means that more than 30% of the world's population has a smartphone and can access social media on his mobile, or even use it to do journalism (*Statista, 2017*).



In addition to the growing number of smartphones around the world, it is becoming increasingly noticeable that the mobile is replacing the desktop (Brackebush, 2016).

People no longer take the time to sit behind a computer and prefer to spend time on their mobile phones, which they can take anywhere and use in any situation. Mobile has therefore definitely changed our consumption habits.



*Digiday UK: Desktop vs. Mobile Consumption*

But the mobile revolution not only had an impact on consumption, it also changed journalism by updating it. Mobile journalism is a revolutionary way of doing journalism (Maccise & Marai, 2016). Equipped with a simple smartphone, journalists are ready to cover any current event that may happen. It is the best way to report breaking news. There are seven advantages that make mobile journalism interesting for reporters (Maccise & Marai, 2016):

- A. **The cost is lower:** You need fewer people to cover an event and the price of equipment is significantly lower.
- B. **Mobility is higher:** The equipment can be hidden and allows access to areas sometimes prohibited to the press.
- C. **Increased safety:** It's easier to hide in the crowd and pretend to be a lame person.
- D. **4k quality:** The quality of photos or video has increased dramatically and some devices can almost compete with professional equipment.
- E. **Live stream:** The mobile allows you to broadcast live with a very low cost. Real-time audiences can be reached and statistics are easily retrievable from the mobile device. In addition, journalists can directly engage their audience via social networks.
- F. **Makes the job efficient:** Journalists can be their own cameraman and editor. More journalists can transmit info to the operation center.
- G. **Allows creativity and experimentation:** It is possible to try new techniques or different ways of presenting information. Reporters can reinvent the style they want.



*Aljazeera: Mobile Journalism Report - 2016*

To conclude, it can be said that with the right skills, adapted equipment, and a sufficient grasp of technology and new tools, mobile journalism offers a real alternative to the classical journalism we know. Indeed, it offers more mobility, it costs less, it establishes a true connectivity, and the content does not lose in quality. The profession is transformed and democratized. But who are the people who have adopted this new way to broadcast?

With the emergence of this new type of journalism, three new categories have emerged (Marrouch, 2014):

- A. **Professional journalists content:** They are professionals who have adapted their journalistic training to new technologies.
- B. **User generated content:** It can be anyone. It is usually a simple report of the facts whether it is in photo or video. There is normally no analysis of the situation. The fact that these people report the information is purely random. It was not their purpose at the beginning; they were in a place at a specific time and something happened. What these people put online on their blogs or social networks is very often re-used by journalists afterwards when they have to cover a situation more in depth (Taylor & Francis, 2016). This content is very useful when it comes to crisis situations or hard to reach areas. This allows information to circulate as quickly as possible, even if no journalist is present on the field.
- C. **Citizen journalists content:** citizen journalism is when private individuals do essentially what professional reporters do. The fact of transmitting the information is something planned in advance. It's not just a coincidence that they're filming something, there's a journalistic purpose. It is a growing phenomenon: it is also the form of digital journalism that is most present at the moment. This is the next point in the work, as it requires a more in-depth analysis.



### 2.3.2: Citizen Journalism

The idea behind the term "citizen journalism" is quite simple. It assumes that information is not restricted to large media groups or professional journalists. Citizen collaboration also makes it possible to cover information. The more citizens who participate, the more viable and worthwhile the journalistic work is (*Glaser, 2016*). New York University journalism professor Jay Rosen gave the term a definition: "When the people formerly known as the audience employ the press tools they have in their possession to inform one another, that's citizen journalism" (*Roos, 2011*).

This can be realized whether it is on a blog, a social network, or something else, as long as there is a community of citizens that has access to it. In the United States, this phenomenon was particularly remarkable after the attacks of September 11 that hit the twin towers and the Pentagon. The aim of citizen journalism is not to replace journalism in the traditional sense of the word; It is meant to complement it (*Teoh, 2012*).



*Berkman Klein Center: Berkman Center Research Publication No. 2015-6*

The rise of this citizen journalism has presented some controversies. Indeed, it is becoming more and more difficult to define what is a "journalist", and some people think that it is necessary to let the professionals work, that it is not a task for amateurs. What is the quality of the standards, what are the sources? Is the information viable? Let's look at the advantages and disadvantages of such a system (*Logue, 2011*).

Let's focus on some of the **advantages of citizen journalism**:

- It contributes to democracy and empowers local communities: the profession is becoming more democratic and offering new opportunities to citizens, much like in the sharing economy. They do not depend any more on external persons that they do not know. They choose their sources of information.
- It exposes corruption and reveals injustice: indeed, it is very difficult to control this mass (*Pedroletti, 2013*). Concealing information in the eyes of all is no longer an easy thing, just like bribes. This is particularly the case in developing countries or countries under dictatorship.
- It is a free and public service: it is a citizen service for citizens. This allows everyone, regardless of their income, to have access to information free of charge. Everything is based on collaboration and not on revenues.
- It is original: this format makes it possible to present the information in a free and unconstrained way. We are acting in a new framework where there are no pre-established rules.

Let's tackle the **drawbacks of this concept**:

- Reliability of information: the freedom provided by this new concept also leads to negative points. Indeed, the control over the reliability of information is increasingly weak and the population is likely to hear false information relayed on the Internet.
- Fear: some hazardous areas or hazardous events may not be covered if no one wants to endanger themselves (*Donovan, 2015*). Independents do not specifically benefit from the protection required by the profession.
- Lack of institutional support and access to official documents: these improvised journalists do not always have the required access when it comes to sensitive documents or when it comes to relationships within institutions.
- Limited budget and time: the means available to citizens are not the same as those of a large company. It is therefore difficult to be able to process information on an event that occurs on the other side of the world. This also applies to means of transport, etc.

- Limited audience: Although the information is available on the internet, it will affect only a few people if the "social" network of the amateur reporter is only composed by a few people. We must rely on the fact that his contacts will relay information.
- Ethics and neutrality: One must be careful that the reporter does not pick a side and does not distort reality, since there is nobody to double-check what he tells.

In conclusion, citizen journalism has many advantages which, in my opinion, surpass its weaknesses. However, it must also be coupled with classical journalism carried out by professionals if we want the most information with as much accuracy as possible. By way of illustration, we will go through two examples of citizen journalism platforms: Wikinews and iReport.

**Wikinews** is a citizen platform that brings together information. It belongs to the same group as Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Articles published on Wikinews are not written by a single author. This always involves collaboration between the different members of the community. The articles can deal with all subjects, whether global or local, the only watchword being that the authors must always adopt a neutral point of view. The whole concept rests on the good faith of the collaborators. However, there is still a way to submit an article to an audit if it appears strange or inappropriate.



**iReport** is a platform created by CNN. Citizens may post information that is not directly controlled by CNN. From time to time, the major media group may order from iReport users when they want more photos or information about an event (*Larsson, 2015*). iReport also had to create



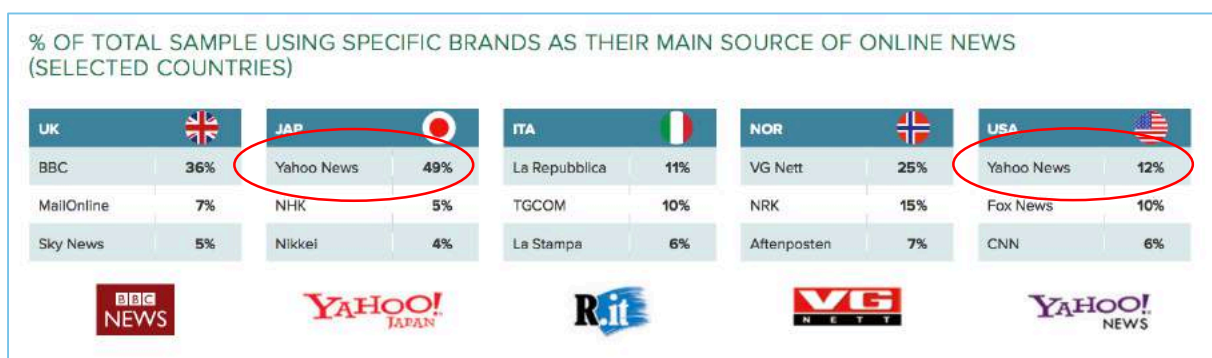
its accounts on social networks because they welcome a much wider audience, and the CNN information site was losing audience. They had to recode a new version of the site that will take stories directly from Instagram, Facebook and Twitter users (*Bilton, 2015*). This transition reflects the importance of social media nowadays, they become essential to journalism.

## 2.4: New journalistic powers: news aggregation websites

In addition to the citizen journalism that we analyzed in the previous point, new powers have also taken advantage of the emergence of Web 2.0 to become essential in the search for information. These new powers are the new aggregators; they are increasingly used by people looking for online information. But what is it exactly?

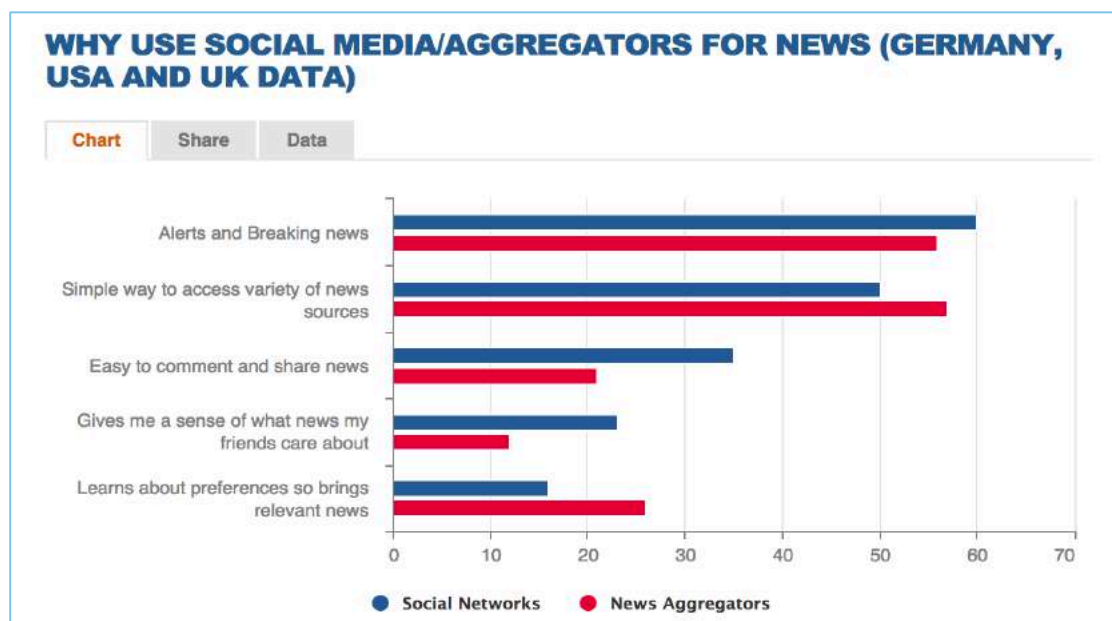
These are platforms or applications that provide users with customized algorithms to help them discover new content on the web in their areas of interest. For example, if the user wants to inquire about a specific topic, they can use the service to receive notification whenever someone writes an article online about the subject (*Skaggs, 2012*). The goal is to simplify and customize the user experience to create a kind of "personalized journal" for everyone. This type of service is often included in web browsers or in web portal sites. This service is also regularly called RSS reader (Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication). There are two types of web aggregators (*Wikipedia, 2017*):

- Those that simply gather information from various sources and put it on their portals, everything is centralized and facilitated. Google News and Yahoo News are the best known examples in this category. For example, 24% of Portuguese use Google News frequently to find out what is happening in the world (*Newman, 2017*). In other countries such as Japan and the USA, Yahoo is the leader in RSS readers. It is in Japan where news aggregators perform best, with 49% of Japanese using Yahoo Japan. This gives an enormous amount of power to such private companies.



- Those that gather and distribute information to suit their customers' needs. They offer a more personalized service. The Awasu reader is one of the best known in this type of RSS reader. In general, these are less used because they require more investments in time and configuration. They are more useful for people looking for information in a particular domain.

The huge advantage of these platforms is that they offer information about many more domains than the one that can be found on social networks. According to a study realized in the U.S., Germany and U.K. by the Reuters Institute (*Reuters Institute, 2016*), it can be noted that the variety of sources and the ability to adapt according to preferences is what drives users to continue using these news aggregators.



*Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2016*

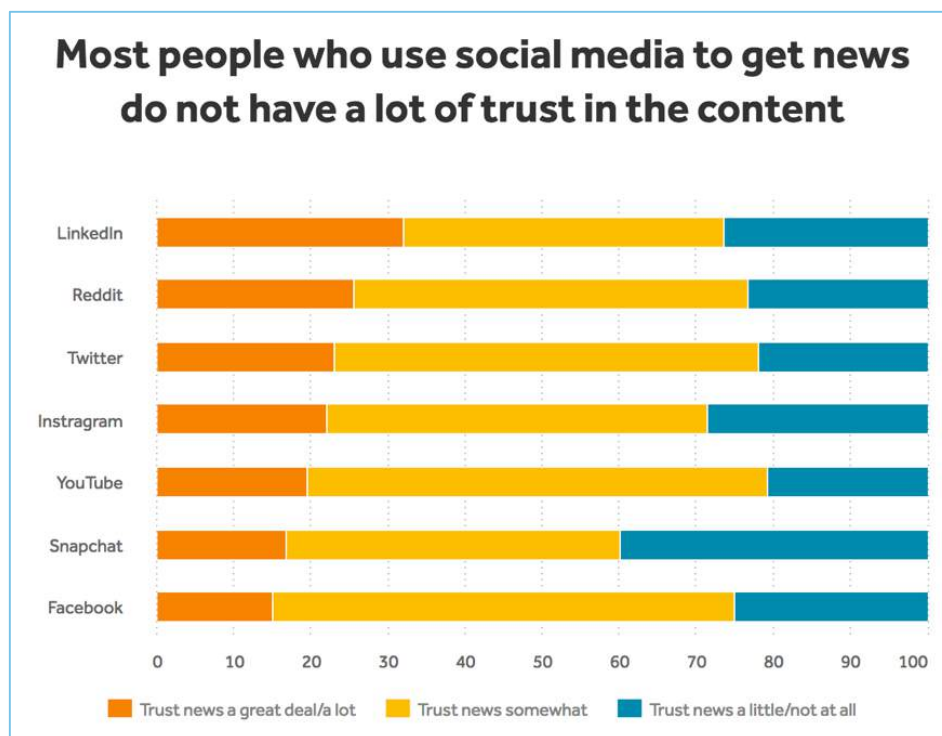
However, some people find that these news aggregators exploit online media and do not follow good ethics. Rupert Murdoch denounces the fact that these sites present information without having to pay for it, and that they ruin the business model of conventional media (*Alejandro, 2010*). Consumers with access to these new platforms spend less money on traditional media; the news aggregators can, on the other hand, benefit from the income generated by advertisements on the internet. Between social media and news aggregators, the times are hard for traditional media, especially the newspapers.

## 2.5: Social networks as new platform:

Now that we have covered the impact of journalism 2.0, that we have analyzed citizen journalism and news aggregators, this part will deal with social networks and how these can be used by journalists. In Chapter 1, we saw the importance of social networks around the world. It is time to know how journalists can benefit from them to the fullest.

### 2.5.1: A hybrid platform

The first thing that must be put forward is that social networks are accessible to everyone. They can be described as hybrid platforms. Indeed, it is possible that these networks are used by professional journalists but also by citizen journalists, even by malicious people who want to spread false information all over the internet. That's why we can describe social networks as hybrid platforms. The information that circulates might come from hoaxes, may not have been verified, and so on. They can combine the worst and the best. But then, are social networks considered reliable by their users? According to a study (*American Press Institute, 2016*), users are sometimes skeptical about the information they find on these networks.



*American Press Institute: How people decide what news to trust on digital platforms and social media*

It is interesting to note that information flowing on LinkedIn is the information that users find most reliable (more than 30%). This could be explained by the fact that it is a professional network which would consequently be given more credit.

Overall, it can be estimated that only 20% of users, all networks combined, firmly believe in the veracity of the information found. Snapchat, the mobile social network created in 2011, is considered as the least reliable: 40% of people using the software do not believe in the information that circulates on it.

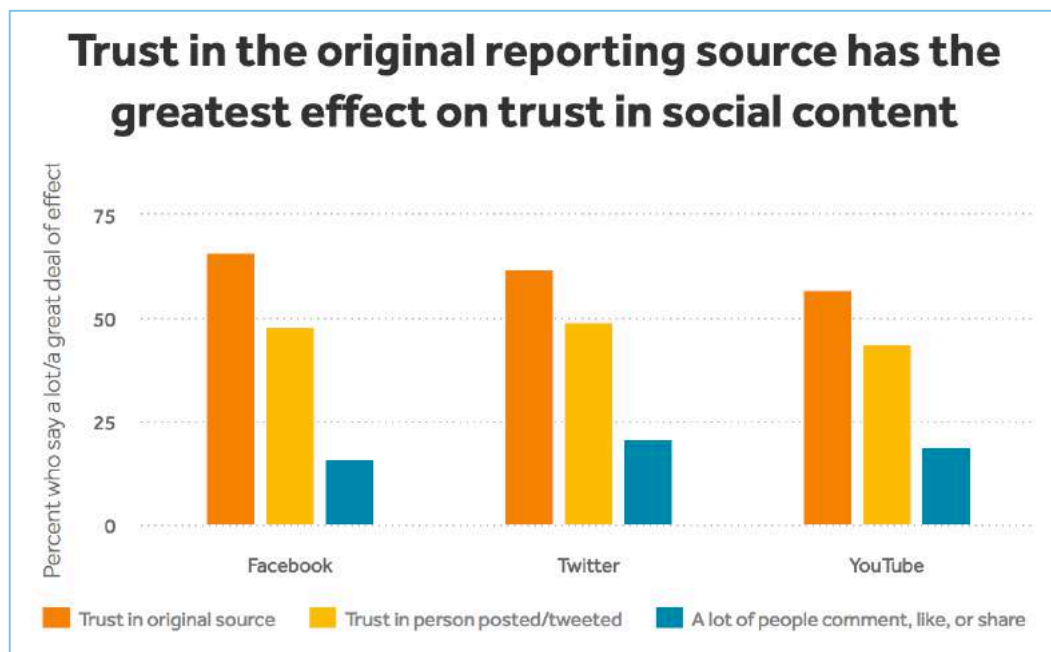
Finally, it is surprising to look at the results of Facebook. A very large proportion of users (60%) give mixed confidence to the information found on the Facebook pages and only 15% of people claim to have a fairly high confidence in this same information. Despite being the most widely used network in the world, Facebook has failed to establish itself as the most trusted social network and has limited confidence in its content.

It would be tempting to say that people do not place any trust in social networks and that these are therefore not useful for journalists, but that is not the case. Even if the high confidence rate is low, this is the case for all media! A survey conducted in the United States by Pew Research showed that only 18% of respondents believe national news organizations “a lot” and just 22 percent trust local news organizations (*Wagner, 2016*). The main problem lies in the fact that people rely very little on the media in general, although this trait is slightly accentuated on social networks.

This is a deeper malaise within society. People have gradually lost confidence in their government or in their news organizations. They are more likely to believe their friends or labor relations. A lot of people now view media as part of the elite ; this is the first time since the 2009 crisis that the confidence rate reached such low levels (*Nicolaou & Giles, 2017*).

As anecdotal fact, according to a study carried out in March 2017, Americans would be more inclined to believe the army than any government organization, while the media come last from the list: seventy-three percent of Americans said they either had quite a lot or a great deal of confidence in the military (*Weast, 2017*). It would therefore be time for the media to find a way to regain some of the lost confidence.

Let us now try to determine the factors that influence trust in information on social networks (American Press Institute, 2016).



*American Press Institute: How people decide what news to trust on digital platforms and social media*

First of all, the most important factor seems to be the trust in the original source, the original news organization that produced the content. Indeed, on the three social networks analyzed, this is the factor that is most often represented. For example, on Facebook, 66% of users say that this factor is central to their trust in information. Then, also for the three networks, it would seem that the person who shared the information is the second factor to have the most weight. Finally, it would seem that the popularity and the number of shares is not an extremely important element in this process. Barely 20% of respondents say that this factor is important to them.






























In conclusion it is important for the media organization to build up a good reputation on the internet. Users should definitely consider this to be a reliable source, at the risk that people will not take information seriously and then are not inclined to share it, which would reduce the visibility of the media. It is therefore a new challenge for journalists, who must be involved in social networks to develop the confidence of their users. Techniques to improve this confidence will be discussed in a forthcoming section.



## 2.5.2: Popular media: those that stand out

Before looking at the tools needed to develop social networks, let's look at what media organizations are doing best today when it comes to using social media. Before going any further, it should be mentioned that it is very difficult to get accurate data on the popularity of pages on social networks, we must choose a criterion among many of them.

To establish a ranking, we will be interested in Facebook and Twitter, because they are among the most used platforms these days. In general, the number of people who like or follow the page is often chosen as an indicator as to the popularity of a page (Lipschultz, 2015). So we will add the number of likes on Facebook and the number of followers on Twitter to have a subjective indicator. After realizing our top 10, we note that CNN World and CNN US are affirming themselves as leaders in terms of popularity.

Rank	Name	Facebook	Twitter	Total
#1	 CNN Breaking News News - World	 27,263,579 3,799,214 Talking About	 47,519,950 80.4	74,783,529
#2	 National Geographic News - Travel Channel	 43,974,350 1,040,211 Talking About	 16,663,770 95.2	60,638,120
#3	 CNN News - U.S.	 27,263,579 3,799,214 Talking About	 33,338,990 99.0	60,602,569
#4	 BBC World News News - World	 40,630,943 2,912,931 Talking About	 19,010,793 92.1	59,641,736
#5	 New York Times News - U.S.	 13,794,716 1,135,351 Talking About	 35,114,010 99.0	48,908,726
#6	 ESPN News - Sports	 16,498,818 696,842 Talking About	 31,024,106 98.9	47,522,924
#7	 BBC Breaking News News - World	0 Fans	 31,142,808 80.5	31,142,808
#8	 Fox News News - U.S.	 15,369,380 2,996,785 Talking About	 14,046,713 87.0	29,416,093
#9	 The Economist News - World	 7,934,492 343,943 Talking About	 19,876,874 98.2	27,811,366
#10	 TIME News - U.S.	 12,116,689 517,842 Talking About	 13,574,750 99.0	25,691,439

Fan Page List : Social Media directory

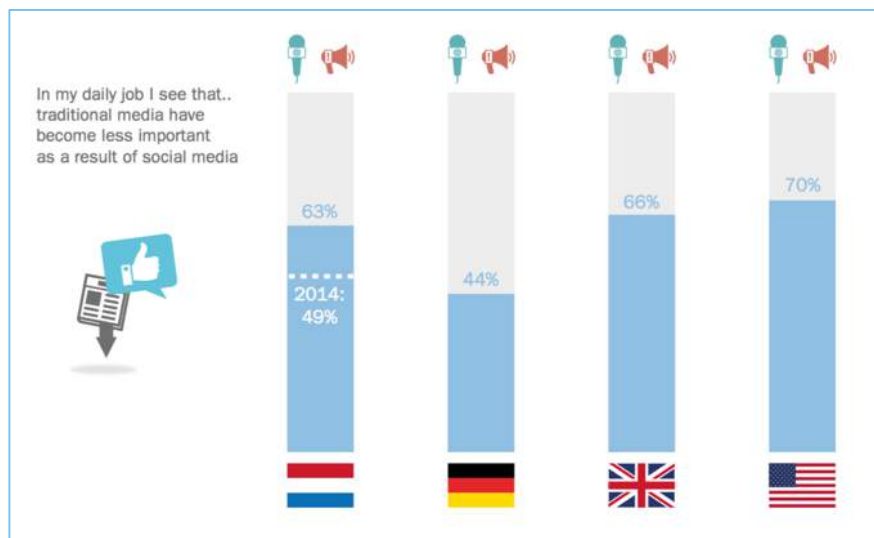
It is important to note that all the media included in this ranking are English-language media. Indeed, English is logically imposed as a universal language on the internet. It should also be emphasized that all media in this ranking also have their equivalents in traditional media. This is mainly explained by the fact that they already enjoy a certain authority and are regarded as reliable sources outside the internet sphere.

CNN, for example, has succeeded in integrating social networks into its media strategy and the different types of media can interact with each other and create connectivity (Corcoran, 2017). CNN often paves the way for the adoption of new formats such as live video, messaging applications and more: they master journalism 2.0.

## 2.6: Why should journalists use social media?

In this section, we will analyze why journalists should use the majority of social networks. What are the main benefits? What are the concrete advantages of these networks for a journalist?

The very first thing to take into account is that social media and blogs do not replace journalism, they are only an additional tool that replaces the existing sources we already know (Cormack, 2013). They must be integrated and used by journalists if they want to stay up to date. Yet, according to a report established in 2015 by ING bank, which has been interested in the behavior of European and American journalists, these social media continue to become more and more important (Reusken & Hulsebos, 2015).

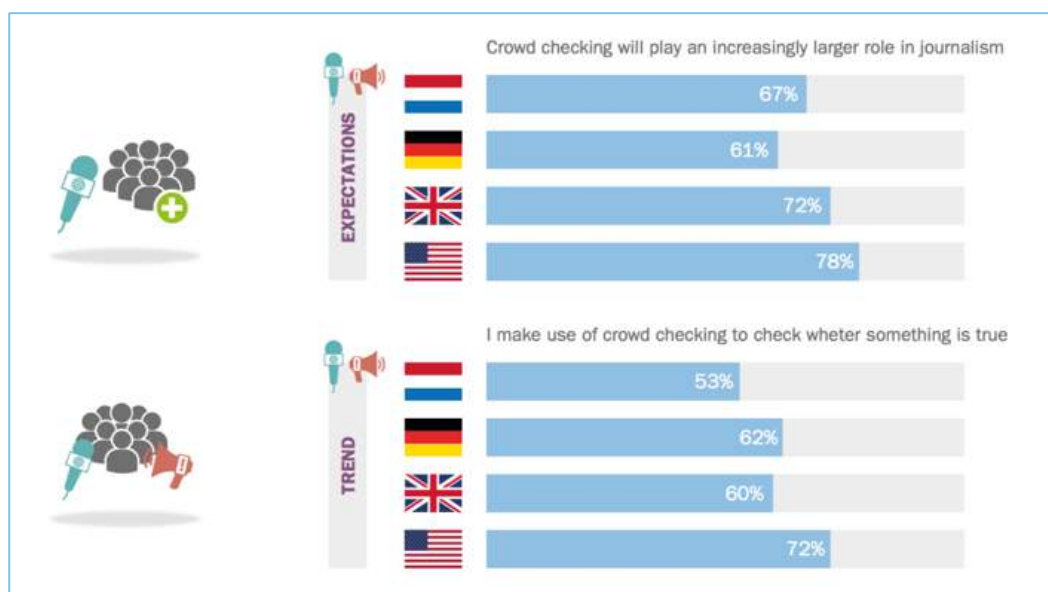


ING Bank: SMING15, Social Media Impact

This trend is more noticeable in the USA while some European countries such as Germany remain in a more conventional approach to journalism. However, if you look at the Netherlands on the graph, you can see that in just one year, there has been a 14% increase in journalists thinking that traditional media has become less important as a result of the development of social media. This shows that change is taking place and conquering European countries, it is normal for the profession to adapt to the current tools in order to extract the maximum benefit from it. Indeed, social networks help journalists on many points. Some benefits are shared with citizen journalism that we have analyzed earlier.

- First, it facilitates access to information. Journalists can rely on crowdsourcing to gather the information they seek. It is very easy to get photos, testimonials from people directly involved in an event, etc. Social media is similar to a huge open sea of information that needs to be absorbed. But the role of the professional journalist is not limited to relaying information as citizen journalists do.





He must gather several sources and analyze the data that emerge from it: we can find a lot of information when you linger on Twitter or Facebook, but many of them are often false, or incomplete. According to the same ING report, the following results emerge from the survey:



*ING Bank: SMING15, Social Media Impact*

The graph tells us that about 60% of journalists surveyed make use of crowd checking to check whether something is true. Moreover, these same journalists believe that the trend will become clearer over time and that crowd checking will become even more important.

- Secondly, social networks are the best way to deliver information to younger generations. We live in an era where speed and immediacy are key elements of journalism (*Mershon, 2012*). We must be able to cover crisis, attacks, unforeseen events in record time. To relay this information, social networks offer the best solution: users will be directly notified by notifications, sound alerts, etc.

Impact of social media				
...traditional PR tools, such as press releases have become less important as a result of social media	62%	38%	71%	62%
...my impact has increased strongly through social media	63%	59%	77%	76%
...social media give the news a stronger impact than traditional media	69%	55%	72%	70%
...social media have a more rapid impact in time than traditional media	77%	78%	90%	83%

*ING Bank: SMING15, Social Media Impact*

According to the interviewed journalists, it seems that it is in the UK and US that social networks have improved the impact of the work of these journalists. European countries are lagging behind in the sector. (e.g. Germany does not fully embrace the benefits of social media and prefers to move more towards the mainstream media. Only 55% of respondents think that social networks can have a greater impact compared to conventional media, which is a relatively low rate compared to other countries analyzed.)

- Third, social media offers journalists an incredible opportunity to create a "personal brand". In general, these professionals stay only a short time in the same work: the social aspect of these media makes it possible to create a community, a reputation or even a relationship of trust with regard to its audience (*Cormack, 2013*). Journalists themselves become "mini brands" and this presence on social networks allows them to stand out and rebound when needed. It is possible to create a two-way commitment with the audience, which will retain users.

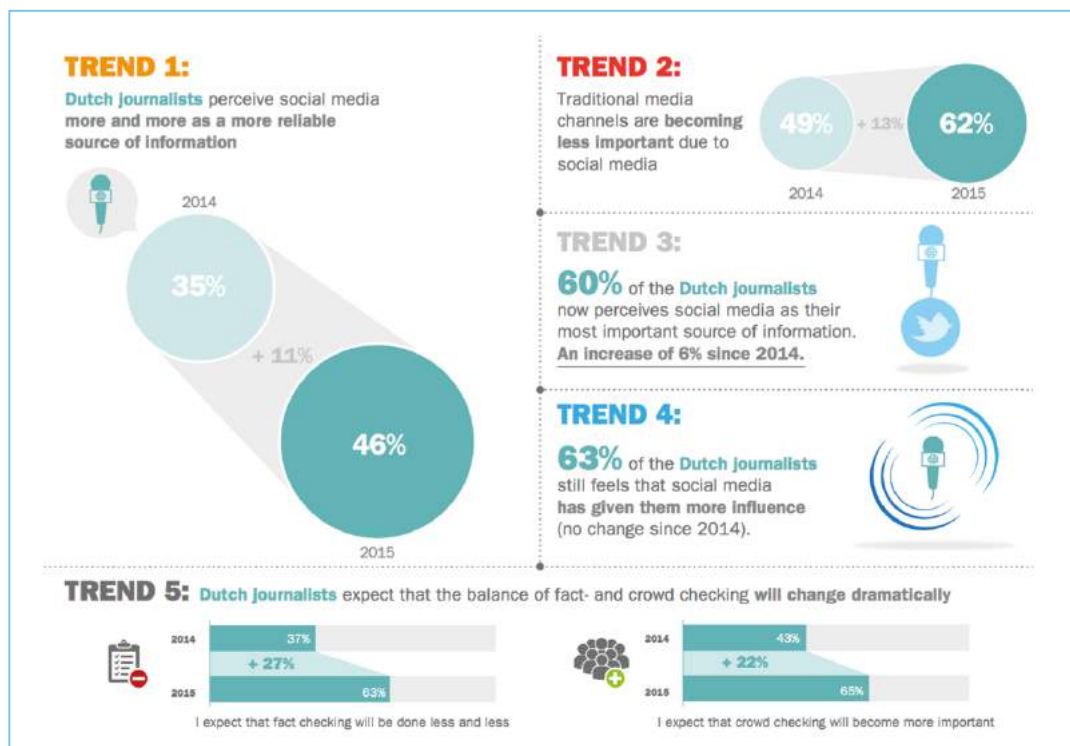
Trends: in my daily job I see that...

Role of social media				
...social media have become the most important source of information	59%	52%	61%	64%
...I can no longer do my daily work properly without social media	58%	62%	74%	66%
...social media put me in a position to have more contact with my audience	78%	73%	87%	82%

*ING Bank: SMING15, Social Media Impact*

The data presented in the table above highlight the fact that communication with the public is greatly facilitated! Moreover, 60% of professionals surveyed believe that they can no longer work properly without the support of social networks.

Finally, regardless of the geographical area, more than half of journalists confirm that social media has become their main source of information.



*ING Bank: SMING15, Social Media Impact, Summary*

To sum up, even if social networks still have difficulties establishing themselves as essential platforms in the field of journalism, trends indicate a more than positive future. The reputation and reliability of social networks continue to improve, whether for journalists or for users. The figures indicate that they are becoming more and more important in our everyday lives: they become a main source of information for many young people and a good number of journalists. The influence given by these networks drastically changes the perception of the profession that some professionals may have. However, care must be taken not to succumb to the dangers of these networks. Indeed, trends show that crowd checking will increasingly replace fact-checking, which can be very harmful.

At this stage of my thesis, I think that social networks are an essential element that will profoundly modify the profession. But as everyone can use these networks, it is necessary to find a way to exploit these networks to the maximum. How to do better than the competition?

The following points will discuss good practices on social media and e-reputation management.

## 2.7: How to effectively use social networks: good practices

After having explored the advantages of social networks, it is necessary to understand how to use them adequately. It is important that they do not turn against you: there are pitfalls to avoid and situations to manage. We will see what important elements to consider: e-reputation, strategic foresight, community management, etc. All these elements must coexist if the company really wants to take advantage of social networks. During my research, six elements returned repeatedly. These are the **6 pillars** that allow a good development of social networks.

### 1. Build a good online reputation (e-reputation):

A new discipline has emerged with the advent of the internet: Reputation Management. It can be defined as “the practice of attempting to shape public perception of a person or organization by influencing information about that entity, primarily online” (*Wikipedia, 2017*).

Reputation has become a strategic asset: social networks are one of the best ways to promote its brand outside its website. Social media promote the interaction and sharing of all types of content such as videos, photos, etc. Through the use of these, a company or person can improve its SEO (Search Engine Optimization). This will help to get higher rankings in the search engines (*Google, 2014*), and to allow its contents to be put forward, in order to get an advantage over competitors.

To do this, it is imperative that users relay your content and that these indicate that they "like" what your product page (*Cordina, 2012*). We must try to exist among the millions of pages existing on these networks in order to stand out. The more the speech held on your page seems to be in your favour, the more you will be put forward. A good command of e-reputation will allow the company to convey a credible and trendy image (*Chombeau, 2014*).



Indeed, this makes it possible to prove the professionalism of the company and to show that it knows how to use the tools of Web 2.0. Finally, the higher your online reputation, the more likely users will be to believe what is said on your page.

Conversely, if your reputation suffers or your company initiates bad buzz, the opposite effect will occur and the users will give no value to the published information. On social media, the snowball effect is omnipresent: the slightest misstep can become a "virus" spreading at full speed that will largely damage your image (*Balagué & Fayon, 2011*).

## **2. Control discourse held on your social**

As the American marketer Seth Godin said, digital word of mouth leaves an inescapable written record. The comments posted online are permanent and will always be retrievable, whatever you do. This problem of the indelibility of the information ensures the necessity of the control of contents.

It is necessary to find techniques to control and to promote its image, it is essential to manage its digital identity (*Auger, 2012*). It is impossible to totally manage users and predict what they will post. On the other hand, it is absolutely necessary to moderate and manage the complaints deposited on the social networks. If these are not managed or are simply ignored, this will cause a snowball effect and it will be a disaster for the company. At the time of the Web 2.0, the users know how to be heard, and any controversy can have great repercussions. Let's illustrate this with a concrete example that has occurred recently.





### ➤ **PewDiePie vs Wall Street Journal:**

The events took place during the month of February. PewDiePie, a 27-year-old YouTuber from Sweden whose real name is Felix Kjellberg, is undoubtedly number one on YouTube, with a total of 53 million subscribers. He has a very active and committed community, ready to defend its internet star (*McAlone, 2017*). He was recently opposed to the Wall Street Journal, an American business-focused newspaper. The young Swede, who had partnerships with Disney and the parent company YouTube, lost support from its partners after the Wall Street Journal accused the YouTuber of anti-Semitic jokes. He has been accused of putting several videos online since February that include "anti-Semitic jokes or Nazi imagery" (*Winkler, Nicas, & Fritz, 2017*).

PewDiePie, in his next video, responded publicly to the Wall Street Journal via a video on YouTube. He declared that it was an attack organized by the media to try to discredit him, to decrease his influence and his economic worth. He insisted that he did not support any extreme right organization and did not encourage Nazi behaviour. Indeed, he does not hesitate to make daring jokes in his videos, but he insists on the fact that it remains humour.

The community of PewDiePie, shocked by these attacks from the Wall Street Journal, invaded the social networks of the newspaper for days and manifested its displeasure. They wrote everywhere that the Wall Street Journal articles were unreliable and were just meant to create buzz, no matter what the consequences. To this day, the newspaper still receives every day comments discrediting him, on several of these posts. This incident had a tremendous impact on the company's reputation, and they failed to respond in a timely manner to the problems caused by the controversy.



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.  
**WSJ**

*Felix Kjellberg a.k.a. PewDiePie against the Wall Street Journal*

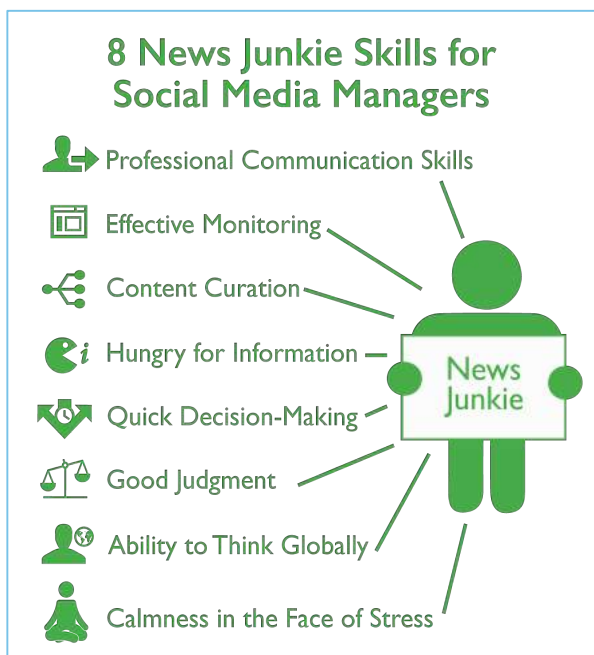


### **3. Hire a social media manager:**

While it may seem easy at first, it is not that simple to manage social media. Indeed, new professions are emerging to bring their expertise in the field and allow a serene use of social media. Someone will have to answer the questions of the users and to keep them informed of the evolution of the situation: this person is responsible for representing your group and defending you as best as possible on these social media (Kolowich, 2015).

It must be in a full-time job, since this requires a permanent investment: community development, online performance analysis and e-problem management are at the centre of this profession. If no one manages the networks or if their impact is taken lightly, social networks will not bring much positive to your company. More and more establishments offer training in order to specialize in this field. It is often perceived as a profession that will be developed in all companies in the future.

Even if journalism is not commercial in its origin, the business model followed by the media group must be in line with the digital strategy of the company. Studies have shown that 73% of users are more likely to buy from a company that responds and creates relationships on social media (Kaleigh, 2016). If we want to apply this to journalism, a media group invested in social networks is more likely to create an online status and strengthen its position, as we saw with CNN earlier in the work.



*HubSpot: What Community Managers Actually Do*

### **4. Develop a strategic foresight:**

It is important to anticipate incoming trends by reading specialized blogs in order to perceive the opportunities that are available to you. Social media is constantly evolving, it is essential to analyse who performs best, what audience they gather, and so on (Faivre-Duboz, Fétique,

& Lendrevie, 2013). Keep abreast and try to adopt the new technologies as soon as possible in order to stand out. In addition, the analysis of the online performance of the competitors makes it possible to position appropriately and better adapt its strategy: using a social network also means using the analytical tools it offers.

### **5. Avoid advertising surplus**

The number of ads on social networks is growing more and more because it is a good way to make money "easily". However, the performance of social networks will be discussed in a later chapter. The only thing that interests us here is the impact that this advertising has on the users. Studies in France have shown that 83% of French people want advertising on social networks to be less visible. 68% think that this advertising is unbearable, while 59% believe that the campaigns are badly targeted (*Albarracin, 2014*). If your pages on social networks contain too much publicity, people will not dwell on them. People should not feel social networks as a marketing tool: it must remain social and user-friendly.

### **6. Be active: build and interact with your community**

The mere presence on social media does not help much if it is not properly used. Most of the benefits of social networking will only appear if your community has enough users and they are committed and showing interest in your content. Stimulate the users by making them participate, by asking their opinions, by launching adapted online contest, etc.

You have to create a sense of belonging to a group, people have to feel included and proud to follow you. It is these same users who will recommend you to their friends if you manage to convert them (*Jones & Salter, 2012*).

In conclusion, if all these good practices are respected, social networks should not cause any problems to the media group. It is just a matter of taking precautions so that these new technologies never turn against you, which can be the case if they are exploited badly.

## 2.8: Social media and their challenges

After focusing on the benefits and best practices to apply to social media, let's focus on the challenges and difficulties that these can also bring because any innovation also entails its share of unforeseen consequences.

- **Intellectual property and legal framework:**

Understanding the notion of intellectual property is crucial for journalists who want to approach the digital environment (*Lipschultz, 2015*). The most important legal framework in this area has been set by the World Trade Organization with the establishment of patents, copyrights, etc. Journalists find themselves confronted with a lot of problems, the scope of which can vary.

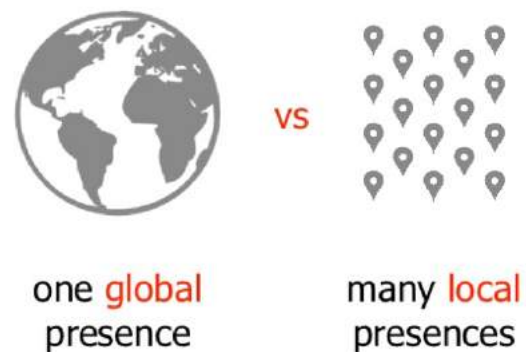
Too many people think that what is on the Internet is not protected, is from public domain. The number of unsigned articles or blogs represents a huge part of what can be found on the internet. Too many people simply gather several different sources, make a synthesis and then publish it on the internet, without citing any source or reference. This practice is normally prohibited and is similar to plagiarism (*Jones & Salter, 2012*). One might think that it only affects "amateurs" who take news everywhere to feed their blogs, but it also concerns large groups or companies. It has happened several times since the emergence of Web 2.0 that news organizations such as the Times, CNN or the Washington Post attacked news aggregators in court for framing their websites (superimposing ads onto embedded websites): this was the case for the company "TotalNews".

Indeed, the media needs traffic to be generated on sites or on social network pages in order to generate advertising revenue. In this case, it was the news aggregators who benefited from it at the expense of the media who saw their information being diverted and this has been declared as undermining the commercial interests of the media (*Isbell, 2010*). Since then, news aggregators must request permission and stop using framing.

- **Choosing between a global & local strategy:**

This problem is normally only addressed when social networks are managed across multiple countries. We need to adapt our strategy and determine whether we want global or local communication. Is it more appropriate to make a single page where everything is centralized, or is it necessary to create different pages depending on the country?

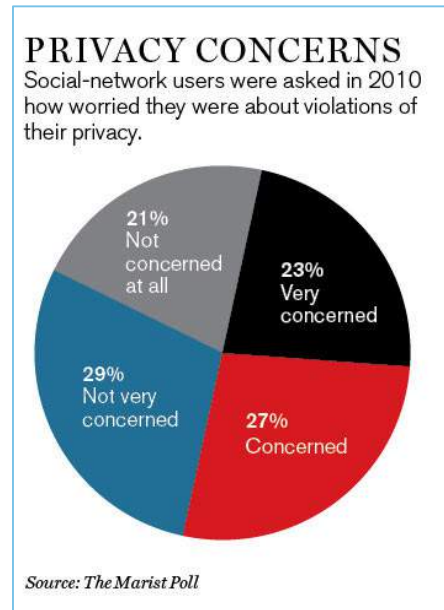
There is no precise answer to this problem, it is to be analyzed on a case by case basis (Gilliland, 2016). Some companies such as Starbucks have managed to develop local pages that perform excellently but it requires a huge investment of time and money, and is not specially adapted to all types of business. On the other hand, working locally makes it possible not to make errors that would be linked to the culture of the country in question. Indeed, a global strategy only allows to disseminate the same info everywhere at the same time, without making any difference: there is always a risk that this will collide with a cultural practice of a certain country.



- **Privacy and the public-private dichotomy:**

Social media and the ability to process and collect behavioral data are at the center of a current debate. Indeed, these social social networks store all the information that circulates and all the information given by the user (Carter, 2017) and this worries a lot of users. As this may discourage users, it is therefore essential to be able to convince resilient citizens to use them by highlighting the benefits of these. For journalists who want to gather as much information as possible, social media is a gold mine. It encourages people to share their stories, to tell what they have seen on social networks. Young users are

particularly affected by this phenomenon because they do not realize the scope of what they publish, they do not protect their accounts like adults, so journalists have access to all the information in some cases (*Garfinkel, 2011*). This content can be analyzed if it has not been made private by the user: it is therefore a good understanding of the regulations around privacy and the general conditions of social platforms. In this area, everything is changing very quickly and it is essential to monitor the potential legislative changes so as not to suffer adverse consequences.



*MIT Technology Review: When Private Information Isn't*

For example, in Northern Ireland in 2016, after a child's suicide, a reporter contacted his friends less than 12 hours after the boy's death (*Gordon, 2016*). It is easy to use networks to find potential witnesses or to contact people closely or indirectly connected to an incident. Nevertheless, this level of intrusion into the privacy of these children just after such a drama triggered the anger of the local population. The journalist has not gone beyond the legal framework, but this has been perceived as an invasion of privacy: the right balance has to be found between intimacy and ethics because everything is not yet regulated in the digital world.

- **Transparency and ethics:**

As Jeremy Harris Lipschultz wrote in his book: “Ethical idealism of truth, independence and minimization of harm has been altered by digital media realities. While truth remains an ideal principle, emerging values include transparency and community engagement” (*Lipschultz, 2015*). Just the fact that the authors are confronted with their audience in real time suggests a drastic change in media communication ethics. The media must adapt to the collaborative practices in which the user communities contribute to the development of storytelling.

Different values, while important ideals, can be a challenge for journalists who try social networks. The search for truth must remain the essential element of journalism, yet social media tends to focus on subjective views and personal opinions. The desire to put oneself forward and to create one's own "personal brand" encourages a desire to differentiate oneself whereas journalistic ethics requires prudence and impartiality.

Can the journalist do his job impeccably if he has at the same time the desire to stand out on social media? Should he be held liable if he shares false information without first checking it? Or can he simply be content to correct his mistake later without worrying about the evil or chaos that the news may have engendered (*Ward, 2016*) ?

The ethical dilemma is how to handle rumors and corrections; each journalist must question himself. Most professionals on social networks believe that transparency is enough to create the confidence of the users. Yet other values remain also essential on social media: clarity, respect, dignity, verification, responsibility and consistency (*Vallor, 2015*). In response to these ethical concerns, most news organizations have sent their journalists specific rules of engagement to follow on social media. The values listed remain of common sense and follow an ideal of good behavior.

Yet all online communities do not share the same values, and some experts question whether social media should adapt its message by understanding the values of its typical audience while keeping the golden rule: "Do not harm!" (*Tchividjian, 2013*). One thing is for sure, discussions about social media ethics are certainly not over and the digital future will have a significant impact on the development of these, communities will have a role to play.



## 2.9: Social Media and the economic impact: business model

The history of journalism is closely linked to the history of capitalism. Indeed, it is a good sold at the price that the citizens are willing to pay. This system worked very well until the digitization of our environment: from then on, the revenue and power of the press began to decline. The big media did not succeed in adapting their strategy to the web sufficiently quickly and found themselves facing a reality that they could not control.

Since this digital revolution, information can be found online and free of charge. Income related to the purchase of media products and advertising revenues, such as those in newspapers for example, only collapsed. One solution seems simple: to put all the media content on the internet and to make pay a subscription to the users to compensate the losses related to the traditional media. Nevertheless, this is impossible : users are accustomed to a free service on the web, and research shows that only 1 to 5% of readers would be willing to pay for online information (*Jones & Salter, 2012*). The media should have jumped at the opportunity when Web 2.0 appeared, now it's very late and we have to find another way to generate profits. Indeed, good journalism costs money and it must be claimed at some point or another.

### 2.9.1: The costs of social media

Using social media, although it seems to be, is not free. You have to invest significant sums in order to be able to use them properly and to embrace their full potential.

First of all, there are the management costs and the training costs. Indeed, if it is to be managed internally, new staff must be hired or existing staff must be trained in new techniques. At another level, strategic research is needed to find out the latest trends in social media, keep abreast of opportunities, and so on. Moreover, all the social networks are different, it would be necessary to assemble enough people in order to have a good expertise on all the platforms. If this does not want to be developed internally, there is always way to outsource the management of these social networks thanks to companies specialized in digital marketing. However, there is a risk that the media loses part of its identity by outsourcing the

management of these new platforms and a journalistic approach always offers additional security; very few media then take the risk of outsourcing (*Dephillips, 2014*). Nevertheless, if the company wishes to delegate its networks to an expert company, the cost can vary between \$ 1,000 and \$ 2,000 per month depending on the services required, the agency, etc.

Secondly, there are also costs associated with developing and promoting your social networks. Indeed, unless you have an enormous amount of luck and your consumers are particularly interested in your media, your social networks will not have a very large community or reputation at your beginning on the net. It is therefore almost obligatory to make its "brand" known by using social media advertising: this allows to put your content forward and make it appear in content suggested to the users. Almost all social networks offer their own advertising services, all different. For this work, we will particularly focus on the social network Facebook, the sector's unrivaled leader.

### **Facebook Ads: a strategic marketing tool**

Facebook therefore has an integrated marketing tool called "Facebook Ads". It is a very versatile tool that allows to adapt its marketing to its public, depending on the budget invested. The greater the investment, the more the public will be affected.

The screenshot displays the Facebook Ads configuration interface, titled "Who do you want your ads to reach?". It includes sections for "Target Ads to People Who Know Your Business", "Audience Definition", "Interests", "Behaviors", "Connections", and "How much do you want to spend?". The "Audience Definition" section shows a gauge indicating "Your audience selection is fairly broad" and a "Potential Reach" of 19,000,000 people. The "How much do you want to spend?" section shows a budget of \$5.00 CAD per day and a schedule of "Run my ad set continuously starting today".

Who do you want your ads to reach? Help: Choose Your Audience

**Target Ads to People Who Know Your Business**  
You can create a Custom Audience to show ads to your contacts, website visitors or app users. Create a Custom Audience.

**Locations** ? Canada  
All Canada  
Add a country, state/province, city, ZIP or address.  
Everyone in this location ▼

**Age** ? 18 - 65+ ▼

**Gender** ? All Men Women

**Languages** ? Enter a language...  
More Demographics ▼

**Interests** ? Search interests | Suggestions | Browse

**Behaviors** ? Search behaviors | Browse

**Connections** ? All  
Advanced connection targeting

**Audience Definition**  
Your audience selection is fairly broad.  
Now you can reach people around custom addresses, within international postal codes or who live or travel in certain areas.  
18 - 65+  
Potential Reach: 19,000,000 people

**How much do you want to spend?** Help: Budgeting & Pricing

**Budget** ? Per day \$5.00 CAD

**Schedule** ? Run my ad set continuously starting today  
Set a start and end date

**Estimated Daily Reach**  
1,100 - 3,000 people

*Facebook Ads Configuration Example*



After determining which type of campaign you want to conduct, you will need to choose your audience according to specific criteria (age, location, interest, etc.) and determine the budget you want to spend on it (*Torr, 2017*). The program will then launch a personalized and targeted advertising campaign, which will allow you to reach the users more efficiently. For example, for an information page devoted to sport, it may be interesting to focus on young people. Facebook already has all the information thanks to the profiles of the users, it is therefore an ideal tool to reach a specific public.

Once you have established your campaign, you can analyze the results of the campaign and understand its impact and reach on users.

Facebook Ads Reporting					
CURRENT REPORT					
General Metrics		Save Report	Schedule	Share	Export
REPORT SETTINGS					
Level: Campaign		Customize Columns	Breakdown: None	Add Filters	
Start Date	End Date	Campaign Name	Reach	Frequency	Impressions
2014-11-05	2014-12-04	--	49,253 People	1.93 Per Person	95,152 Total
2014-11-05	2014-12-04	Website Clicks	1,985	4.49	8,904
2014-11-05	2014-12-04	Website Clicks	24,124	1.57	37,947

#### Facebook Ads Reporting

It is possible to monitor your campaign data throughout the campaign, and thus understand what worked well or not. Facebook isn't just powerful, it's flexible. Marketing campaigns can be modified as needed and adapted at any time. Facebook marketing is still little adopted by major groups in the conventional sectors that prefer the usual advertising (*Bulygo, 2011*).

Yet the results of Facebook campaigns speak for themselves, they are much more profitable because they reach a more appropriate audience. The media must embark on this new type of marketing as quickly as possible in order to stand out and adapt to the new environment: if you want to find and engage with your target market, you will not find a better platform than Facebook. User data is a gold mine, use it as much as you can!

## 2.9.2: Revenues of social media

At the revenue level, you can not bet on a subscription for everything related to information on the web. There will always be a competitor who will offer the same service for free and will get a lot of users. Nevertheless, studies have shown that the subscription model is useful in one case: when users seek a specialized press in a field such as science, economics, etc. Indeed, people are willing to pay to get a high added value, to get expertise (Bradshaw., 2008). Trust and deep analysis are the only elements that make a subscription viable, in other cases it will not work.

Most media have adopted the Freemium model: a combination of “free” and “premium”. Users can get basic features at no cost and can access richer functionality for a subscription fee (Kumar, 2014). Basic information may be free, but any additional information or precision may be subject to a fee (for example: a newspaper could make 30 free articles available monthly on its site, the following articles requiring a subscription to be read. This is the digital business model of the New York Times). We find ourselves in a sort of hybrid model: this still attracts users who browse information superficially and take advantage of those looking for more details. For this, social media fulfill several roles and impact the business model enormously.

New media business models for news		
Paul Bradshaw, <a href="http://onlinejournalismblog.com">onlinejournalismblog.com</a>		
Advertising	Vendor	Services
More readers (hyperlocal, international)	Partnerships	Ad-supported
Other platforms (mobile, DAB, IPTV)	Affiliates	Velvet rope (advanced features)
	Merchandise (in-house, by users)	Partnerships
	Broker	Other platforms (mobile, email, offline)
		Social value (donations, support, spin-off)

First of all, social media serve as a relay to traditional web pages, to media sites, thanks to hyperlinks. The number of users on social networks is growing and we must try to redirect some of the traffic to the company site, to encourage people to make their purchases or simply to benefit from the ads on the web site. Social networks are therefore seen as a marketing tool that significantly increases the number of consumers affected by information.

Simply put a preview of your article on social media, and interested people will have to go through your site if they want to get all the information. Social networks are therefore only an intermediary that will make money indirectly: accumulate the "likes", which increases the impact of publication, and generate high traffic will increase the revenue.

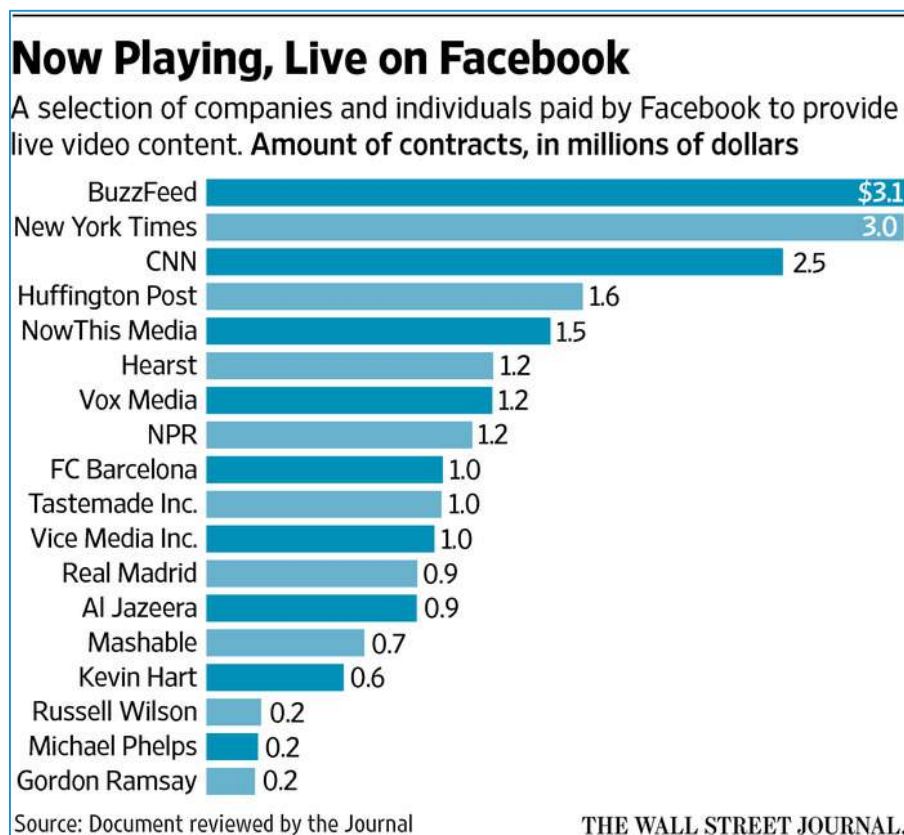
Secondly, there are partnerships with private brands. Partnership is defined as the association of a third party with the broadcasting of an information program or the publication of an article in order to benefit from visibility, without interference on its part in the content. If there is interference, the product is assimilated to advertising (*Conseil de déontologie journalistique, 2010*).

We must pay attention to the code of ethics: it is important to remain impartial, as advertising and journalism can cohabit, but the former must not influence the latter. This is especially the case when online contests are organized by private brands on journalists' social networks. Some less formal media such as radio are more likely to use these contests on social networks: however, it must always be stated that this is advertising. It should not be seen as paid news. It is the role of the journalist to act ethically, even if the legal framework is still vague as far as these contests are concerned (*Farnworth, 2014*).

Thirdly, it is possible to generate income by selling advertising space on social networks, just as it is possible to pay for advertising. If your page has a lot of users, it is possible to hit a commission based on the traffic you generate on the site of the advertiser who paid to put his advertisement on your page: this practice is called affiliate marketing.

This makes it possible to make the social networks profitable but one must be careful not to break the list of terms of service. Large media groups can also contact Facebook to safely plan such practices (*Constine, 2017*). Indeed, Facebook wants to develop partnerships with the

media in order to extend its influence. The US social network even pays famous media to use the platform and generate live video content (New York Times, CNN, etc.).



*Wall Street Journal: Facebook Signs Deals with Media Companies*

This helps to generate advertising and maintain the millions of daily users engaged (*Perlberg & Seetharaman, 2016*). The higher the number of viewers and the greater the number of live video per day, the more Facebook will pay its partners. This is a great opportunity for the media who wish to develop themselves in the digital world. It is therefore possible to make profit through the use of social networks even if these practices are not yet widespread.

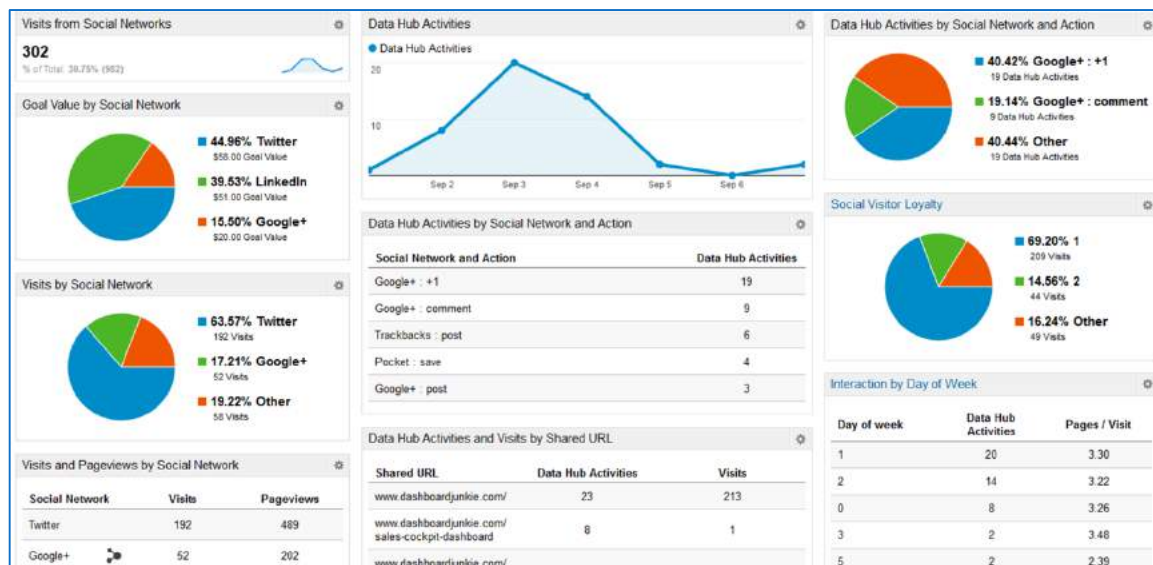
However, some more skeptical fear for the future of journalism and news organizations. Indeed, Facebook controls the terms of this news-publishing deal (*Stelter, 2015*). The publishers will soon realize all the power they are losing and a reversal will surely be impossible. It will be necessary to watch over the next few years how the situation will evolve, but one thing is certain is that this world of journalism will never be the same again.

### 2.9.3: Return on investment and analytics tools for social media

It is hard for a company to calculate a return on investment related to social networks. It is indeed very difficult to estimate the impact of a community presence unless we decorrelate this presence of the rest of the other media used, which is also difficult (Cordina, 2012). Despite these difficulties, let us try to understand how to estimate it. The return on investment can be defined very simply (LePage, 2017):

→  $\text{Money generated via social media} - \text{investment (people hours, ad budget, etc.)} = \text{Social media ROI}$

So it looks simple. The problem is that with social media, the success of a campaign is not always measurable in terms of numbers. Some tools are then available to analyze this profitability like *Google Analytics*, *Lift Metrix*, etc. They gather all the data and present it in a dashboard in order to make the right strategic decisions.



Google Analytics Dashboard Example

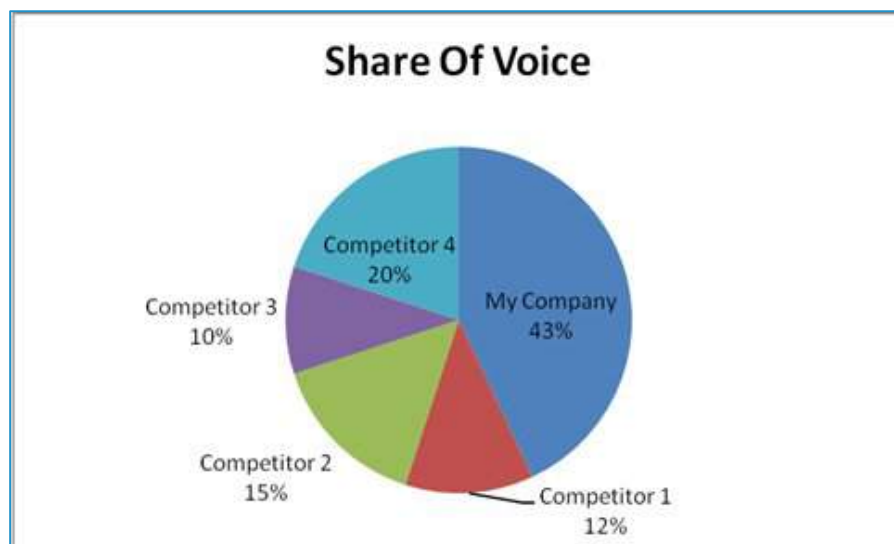
These programs provide the ability to track what's happening on your social media and allow you to build reports from predefined templates. At the moment, there are no more precise tools and these programs also allow the data to be processed in order to highlight key performance indicators.

### **Key Performance Indicators:**

The number of followers is data that has evolved over time and is not very reliable. Nowadays, we can create robots in order to increase the number of followers, or even buy them on various websites. More generally, we try to focus on the interactions and the concrete actions of the users.

To do this, we need to establish a set of key performance indicators that will optimize our actions on social media. Involvement is very important, even essential, and is often at the center of these indicators. Here are several KPIs that are frequently used (Miller, 2012):

- **Share of Voice** = Your Mentions / (Total Mentions for Competitive Companies/Brands)



*Social Media Examiner: Share of voice*

Tracking the evolution of this indicator is very important on time as it helps to know how your group behaves in the digital world against its competitors. Successful marketing campaigns generally increase the share of votes and improves the reputation and the place of the company on the social media

- **Engagement Rate:**

This refers to the activity on the page, the fan interactions depending on the type of posts, etc. It has become an unavoidable element to measure success on social media. The advantage is that this rate can be applied to all networks, just by adapting the formula to the

social network (Rezab, 2013). This is based on comments, sharing: what is important is to see how much users interact and how fast.

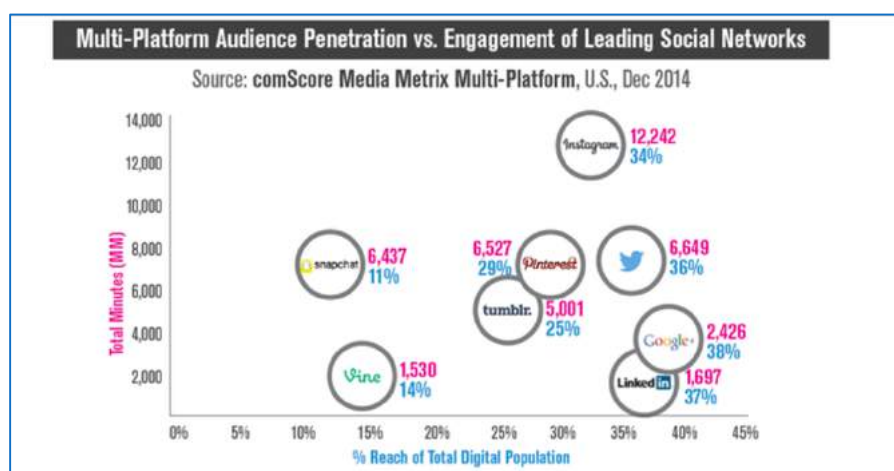
$$\text{Average Post Engagement Rate} = \frac{\text{Likes + Comments + Shares on a given day}}{\frac{\text{\# of wall posts made by page on a given day}}{\text{Total Fans on a given day}}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Daily Page Engagement Rate} = \frac{\text{Likes + Comments + Shares on a given day}}{\text{Total Fans on a given day}} \times 100$$

*Social Bakers: Engagement Rate: A Metric You Can Count On*

#### ▪ Reach:

This is a measure of how your content is spread across various social media platforms (Beese, 2016). It's more or less equal to the number of people who see your content. All users who like your page will not see all the content available, the information may not be seen. It is therefore the measure of your effective audience. It is important to analyze the role your media plays on the digital world, what role it holds. This indicator also makes it possible to know which social network performs best and understand how to adapt its strategy: the social networks where we reach the most people are to be exploited as a priority (Burstein, 2015).



*Marketing Sherpa: Engagement and reach of top eight social networks (2015)*

### ***Chapter 3: Field analysis of Belgian media groups***

After reviewing all the essential concepts and analyzing the theoretical impact of social media on journalism, it is time to consider whether the theory applies to the field and analyze what industry professionals have to say about it. Are we witnessing a digital revolution? What is the role of social media in large Belgian groups? To do this, I conducted two interviews with two Belgian media groups, one in the private sector (RTL) and the other in the public sector (RTBF). The aim is to compare the digital approach of two different companies, to look at what is common and what are the differences, the different approaches: this is why the same questions were asked in both interviews.

My first interview was conducted at RTL (Wednesday 12 April 2017), with the help of Lucile Rochelet and her team. They work in the radio department of RTL, for the channel "Radio Contact" and Lucile is graduated in communication. They are in charge of managing the daily slot between 16 and 20h and ensure the management of their social networks.

My second interview was conducted at RTBF (Thursday 13 April 2017) in collaboration with Julien Brassine, Head of Social Media at RTBF. Mr. Brassine has been managing this department for over a year and a half and takes care of the digital transition within the group. Web and social networks are at the heart of its daily work. He is trained in consultancy and web coordination after studying at Technofutur TIC.

We will therefore deal with the issues discussed one by one and analyze what the two entities' vision is. Do they agree on everything; do they approach social media the same way?

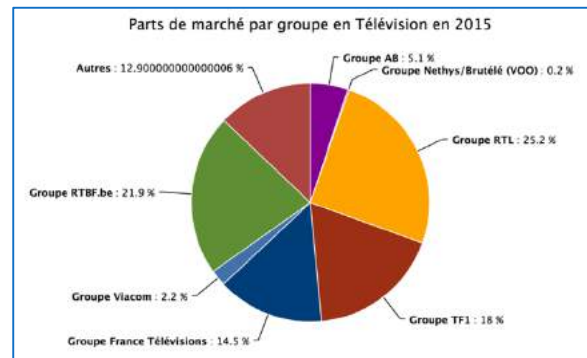
This comparative study in the field will make it possible to give a critical look at the two theoretical chapters of my thesis. Their points of view are a real added value for this work because their backgrounds, experiences and explanations add an additional practical dimension to this work. Moreover, I would like to thank them once again for the time they have devoted to me. Both original interviews can be found in appendices and were realized in French as it is the native language of the speakers.



### 3.1: Contextualization and presentation of the two companies

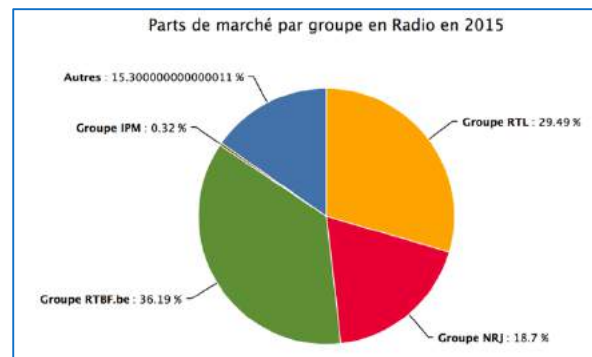
The two media groups play a predominant role in Belgium as shown in the graph below and together account for around 47% of the market share on Belgian television within the Wallonia-Brussels Community (CSA: *Conseil Supérieur de l'Audio Visuel*, 2016).

The market is rather fragmented, but RTL and the RTBF are still leaders in this sector, followed by the French group TF1. Indeed, the newspapers of 19h on RTL and of 19h30 on the RTBF are among the most popular programs in Belgium daily. These two channels offer the most important TV appointments.



CSA : *Audience et parts de marché à la Télévision, 2016*

At the radio level, the two groups also stand out as leaders in the sector, with RTBF largely in a dominant position. The two giants together account for almost 66% of the market share of radio in Belgium. There are hardly any other serious competitors in the sector, except the NRJ group which reaches almost 19% of the shares.



CSA : *Audience et parts de marché à la Radio, 2016*

All the above data highlight the importance of these two media groups in Belgium; That's why I decided to conduct my interviews with employees of these companies. This makes it possible to compare the approaches of two very large structures regarding their digital strategies and management of social media. Before going on to the pure analysis, let us briefly discuss the two groups and their respective structures.

### 3.1.1 : RTL Group (*Radio Télévision Luxembourg*)

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RTL is basically a Luxembourg-based media group. In Belgium, RTL Group owns 3 radio stations (BEL RTL, Radio Contact and Mint) and 6 TV channels (RTL TVI, Club RTL, etc.) via Radio H and RTL Belgium. It is the largest private group operating in Belgium in the media field. It is therefore a company that seeks to make a profit while keeping the population informed through its various channels of diffusion.

The private aspect is important for the rest of this work because it will serve as a basis for comparing with the other media, which is public. According to the annual accounts, the RTL Belgium group achieved a turnover of more than 200 million euros, mainly thanks to advertising revenues generated on television. Indeed, as part of a private media, advertising represents a very large part of the revenue generated by the company; It is compulsory in order to be able to meet the costs of production.

### 3.1.2 : RTBF (*Radio Télévision Belge de la Communauté Française*)

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The RTBF has four television channels and six radios operating on Belgian territory. The company is an autonomous public enterprise of a cultural nature. It can take the initiative and has a certain autonomy, governed by a management contract. This contract is concluded and renewed every 5 years. The media group values communication, diversity and education (*RTBF Entreprise, 2017*). The aim is to bring together the widest possible audiences and to be a factor of social cohesion: for this purpose, the company is financed at 75% by public funds and at 25% by private shareholders.

Revenues from non-commercial advertising, sponsorship, commercial advertising, other advertising and commercial transactions represent less than 25% of total revenues according to the annual accounts of the company. This means that the RTBF enjoys subsidies that make it less dependent on advertising revenues. This will have to be taken into account when comparing the two companies with respect to social media. Indeed, this alters the business model enormously and can change the priorities of the media.

## *3.2: Comparative analysis of responses*

After conducting the interviews, it is interesting to contrast the answers of my two contacts, to synthesize the information and to oppose it to my theory coming from the first two parts of the work. Let's do a point-by-point analysis.

### *3.2.1: Use of social networks and forecasts*

The two speakers think exactly the same thing: it is the media of the future, social networks have become a must-have, both companies are interested in their digital developments. It is essential to develop its presence in order to reach as many citizens as possible. Both believe that more and more citizens will use social media in the future. Moreover, it is an excellent way to communicate additional information or clarifications outside the classical programs, fixed at certain hours. Social networks are essential for the profession because it is changing. In the long run, this can become the most important medium. They also agree that Facebook is timeless and takes on the role of leader in terms of social media. He is so embedded in our consumption habits that he has many years ahead of him. With regard to this point, this perfectly matches what the analyzed theoretical sources put forward. Journalism is changing, and social media is part of the key to this metamorphosis

### *3.2.2: The content highlighted on social networks*

In both cases, the most highlighted content is informative content. This can vary enormously in both companies: information is broad, it can be a “light” or “heavy” subject, it depends. Where you can see a difference, it is at the contests level. RTL frequently uses these to increase its audience, create a link with users and benefit from better visibility on the net. In contrast to the RTBF, the number of contests is very small. Indeed, the people in charge of digital say that this creates artificial communities based solely on the lure of profit. For this reason, the only competitions put online on social media at the RTBF concern only cultural activities or gains without market value such as a pen or a t-shirt in connection with a television program, we look for gifts in the affective aspect.

### 3.2.3: Social media and real-time management

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In both companies, there is always a person in charge of social networks when a broadcast is in progress, live. It seems very important for both companies to provide human support to better manage social media. Community managers (or simply people in charge) react to show that users are listened to and that their participation has an impact. It is also essential to have staff available to moderate the comments made on social media by users if they are offensive or defamatory.

This joins what has been developed in my theoretical part. The role of the community manager becomes more and more essential if one wants to keep control over what is going on online: this control, this human presence, is mandatory in order to take advantage of social networks.

### 3.2.4: Target age range on social media

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For this point, there is a strong difference between the two groups, but it is mainly related to the difference between a public company and a private company. The RTBF has a legal obligation to target all types of public, all people, regardless of their interests or social backgrounds. However, they adapt their management and communication strategy to the target audience of the information or program. For example, they know from experience that sport is a topic that affects young people more. They will therefore adapt the content of their sports pages to these young people, and put the right person in charge. The same applies to cultural programs, etc.

In the private sector, there is another perspective. There is a well-defined target that generally matches the age range of presenters or journalists. The goal is to create complicity and not to create a generation gap. The target audience rarely exceeds those over 50 because it is the group least represented on social networks, the company targets younger categories.

On the other hand, in both cases, we do not really know what the target is, they do not have analytical tools at this level. They define a target, but do not know if they really get in touch with it.

### 3.2.5: Social Media Training

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In both structures, employees have received training related to social media and new technologies. Yet there are differences in the type of training offered.

At the RTBF, employees whose work is directly or indirectly related to social media have received training in digital management, analytical tools, how to moderate, etc. We rely on the expertise and professionalism of the people in charge of digital (they are often full-time jobs). A simple journalist is not able to manage social networks perfectly, he must learn how to do it. Within RTL, employees also received training, but this was often voluntary. The goal was to introduce social networks to those who did not know or use them to understand the basics. It is a completely different approach; it is much less specialized.

The point of view of the RTBF is much closer to the one put forward in my theoretical part. Failure to deepen modern digital skills, as RTL does for the time being, can pose a danger to the management of social media.

### 3.2.6: Integral part of journalism?

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In both interviews, it appears that social media is essential to journalism, or at least greatly facilitates it. On the other hand, there is still a different view in both companies. At the RTBF we can not imagine the future without social media, these are going to be more and more present: it is essential to make the company evolve. While for RTL, the role is different, there is less this notion of professionalism and expertise: social networks remain an aid but not an end. There is no global digital strategy that will be developed in the coming years. This is a rather striking difference in their two approaches.

At the crowdsourcing level, both companies rely on citizen journalism to help them. On the other hand, the RTBF has to check the information every time unlike RTL which is more in the viral. A public service is obliged to verify the sources before sharing any information, where RTL can afford to correct if an error occurs from time to time: The reputation of state services must be irreproachable.

### *3.2.7: Content that makes users react most.*

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This point is very much related to the content highlighted on social networks. The main purpose was to find out whether there are significant differences between the two companies' publics. For this point, the answers are particularly different. The type of information most discussed changes, there is not exactly the same audience of users. In the public sector, daily information is the one that generates the most reactions, for example: sport, taxes, etc. When people understand a subject or feel concerned, they tend to react.

On the other hand, during major unexpected events, these are the most discussed on social networks (terrorism, natural disasters, etc.). For RTL, the contests are the most successful. This is the anchor of online participation for the Radio Contact team. They focus on local news, information that affects the emotional aspect. RTL primarily needs financial support related to advertising and online contests that will increase the audience.

The link with the theory is mostly in the fact that if people feel concerned and listened to, social media is more profitable to the company.

### *3.2.8: Department that manages social media*

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At the level of RTBF there is a whole department that handles digital management with community managers, social editors and social network coordinators, it is really very developed and taken seriously. There is also development for internal tools and partnerships with start-ups that are specialized in this field, we want as many tools as possible to calculate the speed of information sharing. The digital strategy is at the heart of the overall strategy.

On the other hand, RTL employs far fewer people than the public company in this field. There is a person responsible for the digital, but otherwise the different teams are free to manage this as they want as long as they comply with the rules of conduct. We rely much more on the autonomy and the feeling of the employees, all this is less supervised.

### *3.2.9: Guidelines to follow on social media*

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Once again, at the level of the public service, the guidelines are punctilious and given to the journalists, we rely on the understanding of the instructions through the training that is given to those who will have to manage the networks. There is even an examination to see if the person has to assimilate everything. The entire digital frame is written and must be respected. RTL, on the other hand, does not really have any special guidelines for managing social networks: it is based on ethical standards and on the common sense that journalists can have.

Once again, the RTBF is more in line with a strategy of digital and modern strategy, they seem to have understood more the stakes and put more means available to ensure a digital transition.

### *3.2.10: Social media budget and impact*

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RTL does not invest in social media and earns no income from it. What counts is loyalty through social networks. We want to increase the audience by using digital. We end up with a balance where social media is neither a burden nor an income.

The RTBF is interested in social media marketing and invests in Facebook ADS to put its content forward on the social network. They also charge advertising space on their pages in order to gain some benefit (confidential data), and have developed a special link with Facebook to discuss the terms of the various operations / contracts. They have put much more emphasis on the economic side of social media, and are trying to get some financial benefit.

However, neither company has a tool that measures the impact of social networks on their audience in other media such as radio, TV, etc. On the other hand, within the RTBF, KPIs are developed within the strategic marketing department. There are analysts who follow the evolution of the scores given by the KPIs and analyze the social media performance of the public company (scope, views, progression, etc.).

### 3.3: Critical examination

I am very satisfied to have realized these two interviews because it really allowed me to confront the theory with the reality on the ground. The RTBF and RTL are media that I follow regularly, and I was pleased to be able to discover this sector from the inside.

The contrast on the digital level is blatant between the two groups. The RTBF projects more in the future and adapts a reflective and precise digital strategy. It really gave me an impression of professionalism and good decision making.

On the other hand, RTL does not seem ready to me to approach the future serenely. Even if there is a use of social media within the company, it remains lighter and less framed, less professional. This is already a first step but I am not sure that this is enough to quietly address this media transition that they will need in the future. This reinforced the feeling I had during this work: digital represents the future of the media.

I would have also liked to conduct a third interview as part of my thesis. Indeed, the two companies that I present offer television and radio services, but are not specialized in the written press. It may be interesting to analyze a press group such as "Le Soir" or "La Libre" in order to understand what strategies are put in place at this level. The change is perhaps more important for a newspaper business.

Finally, if I had the time and resources, I would have asked for a meeting with a Flemish media group to compare companies with different languages and cultures. The digital approach may be different in different regions of the country, whether in the north, south or Brussels.

Erik Qualman, an American author, has said during a conference: *"We don't have a choice on whether we do social media, the question is how well we do it?"*. I think he is entirely right, and my interviews have enabled me to verify this hypothesis.



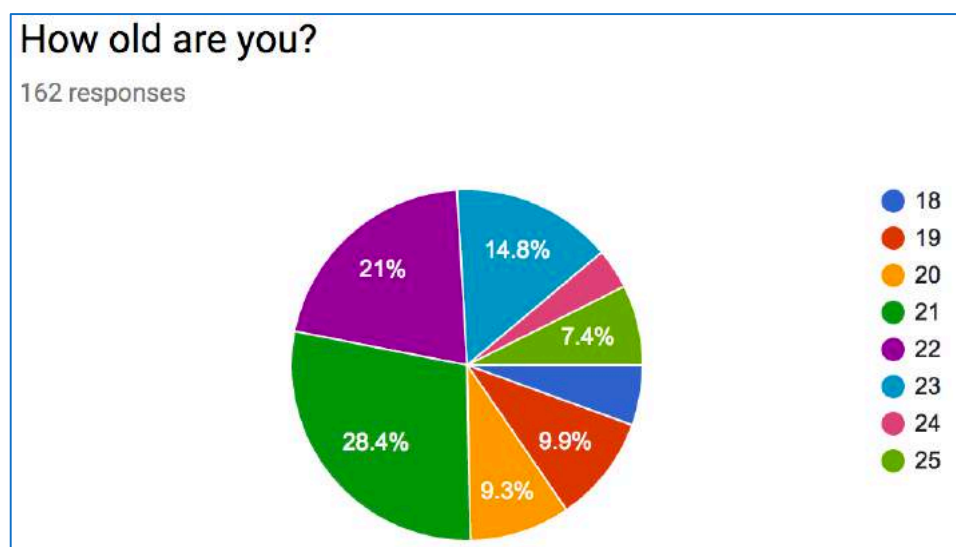
## Chapter 4: Case Study in Belgium

This is the chapter that comes to finalize the development of my research question. We saw the theoretical advantages, the impact of social networks on journalism and we obtained the views of two Belgian media groups. The last step is to interview young Belgians between 18 and 25 years old to understand their consumption habits. Are they really interested in journalism? Are they on social networks, and what do they think? This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of their answers. Indeed, 162 participants responded to the survey created via the platform Google Form that allows to create and analyze surveys for free. The analysis of the survey can be found in annex. I have little information on who are the exact respondents to my survey. Indeed, I sent this one to all my network and it was then propagated whether by email, social networks, mobile applications, etc.

### 4.1: Descriptive statistics

#### 4.1.1: Presentation of respondents

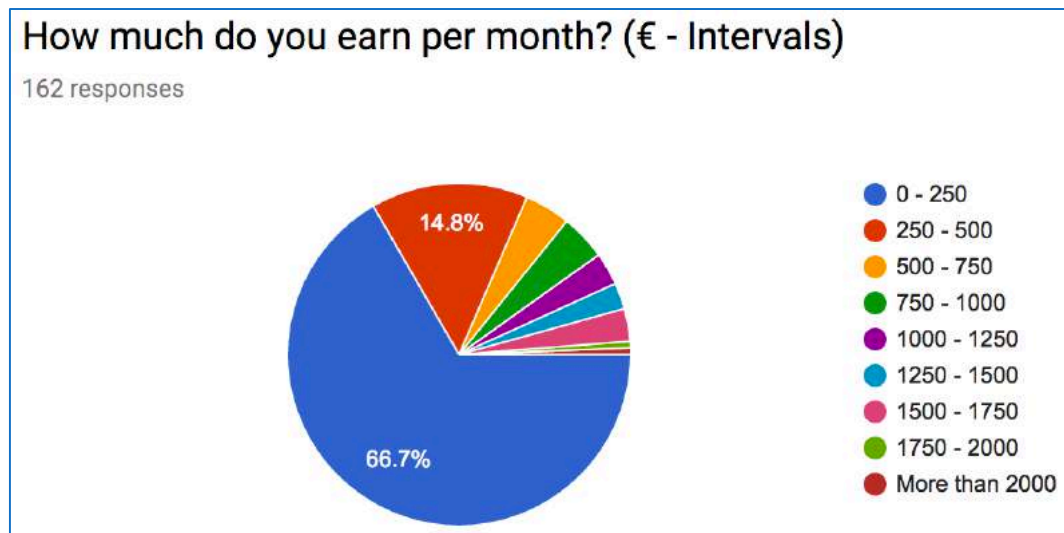
For this survey, 88 women (54.3%) and 74 men (45.7%) responded. In this sample, 112 people live in Brussels (69.1%), 31 in Wallonia (19.1%) and 19 in Flanders (11.7%). However, the ages of the respondents are very variable, as shown in the following graph:



Age of the respondents

Those aged 21 and 22 are the most numerous: it is surely related to the fact that the survey has mainly circulated in the academic community and that this is the average age at university.

I then became interested in the income of these same people. Indeed, it seems important to me to have as much information as possible to analyze the factors that impact the consumption of media. Respondents were asked to indicate a monthly income range among different proposals, here are the results:



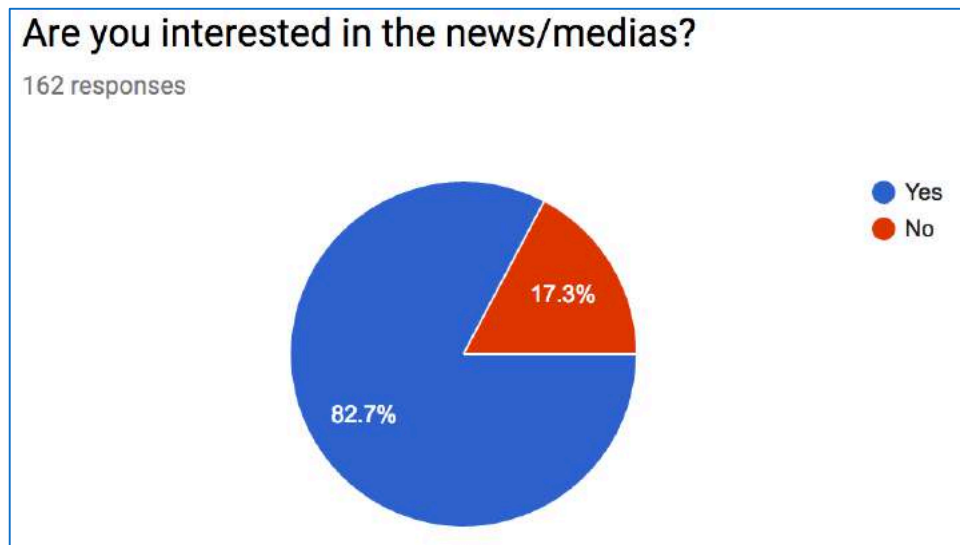
*Respondents' income per month*

The results may seem surprising at first sight given the very high number of low incomes. Indeed, 66.7% of respondents only earn between 0 and 250 euros per month. I think this is closely related to the fact that most respondents are still studying and do not receive any substantial income, other than pocket money or a student job. The other categories include far fewer people as it can be seen on the graph. The results would certainly have been slightly different if the survey had been conveyed in other social categories such as professional circles where young people are more active and quicker to be independent of their parents.

#### **4.1.2: Habits towards the media**

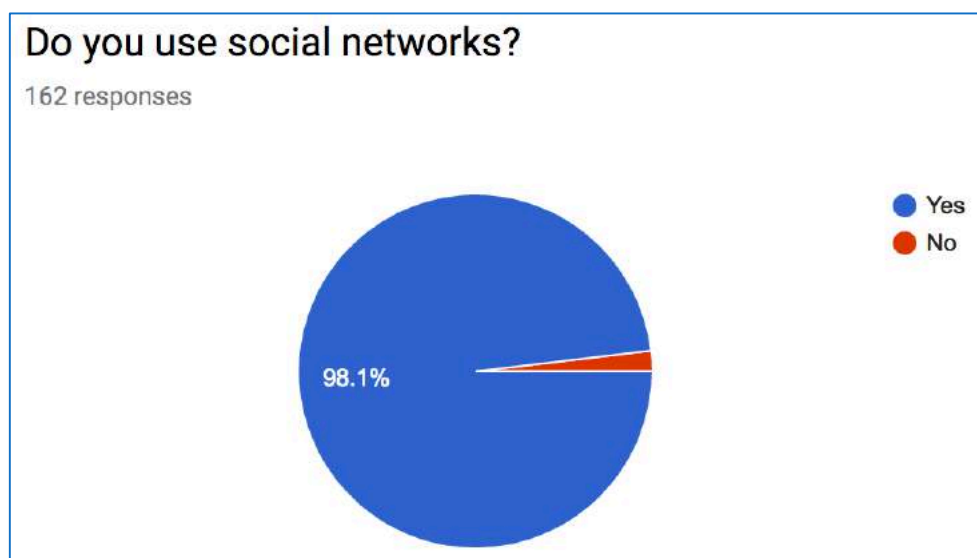
After asking for income, I wondered if these young people were interested in the media and the news. It is important to know whether this younger generation places importance on current events and what is happening in the world. With all the modern tools, it is very easy to find the information but it is necessary to have the desire to look for it. Here are the results

of my inquiry as to their interests or habits. The first step is to know whether or not the media and the news are of interest to young people



*Interest in the news/media*

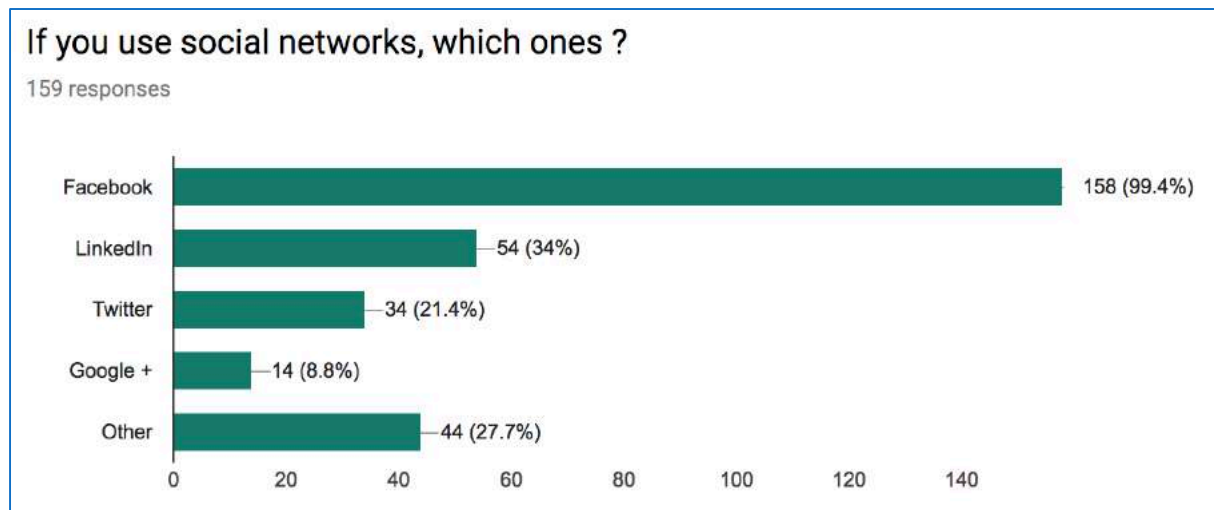
To this question, 134 (82.7%) persons answered that yes, the media and the news are interesting. These figures confirm the fact that there is a real opportunity for media organizations that want to focus on young people. These young citizens are interested in all this media world; we just need to understand how to reach them. Now that we are aware of the interest in the media, we must analyze the presence of respondents on social media to see if they are good platforms for reaching young people. Therefore, the next question is to ask young Belgians about their presence on social networks:



*Use of social networks*

More than 98% of people responded that they use social networks nowadays. These social media are anchored in this generation; it is an indisputable result. Nowadays, it is almost unthinkable for a young person to live without using these new digital platforms accessible from everywhere thanks to smartphones, tablets, etc.

Second, it is necessary to determine which social networks dominate within this generation. All those present on social media have had to answer this question and the results are clear:



*Use of social networks by respondents*

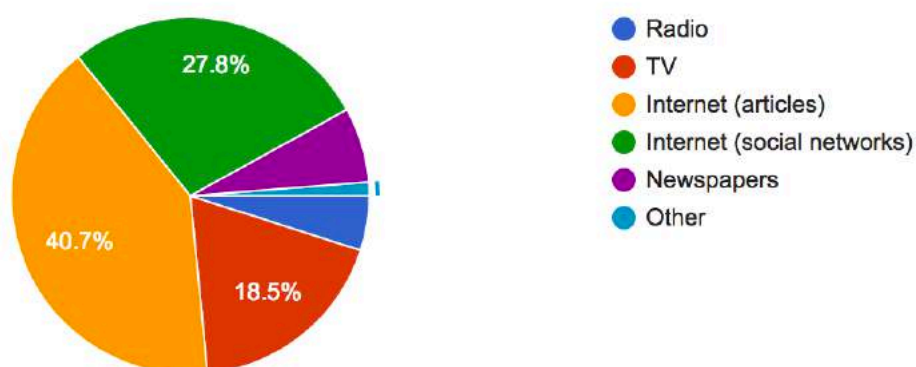
We note that almost all people who use social networks favor Facebook, which imposes itself as a leader with a utilization rate of 99.4% for this survey. This corresponds perfectly with the data presented in my theoretical part. LinkedIn comes second, followed by Twitter which is used by more than 20% of the people surveyed. On the other hand, it seems that Google+ has only a low penetration rate among this young generation. Indeed, it represents only a very small part with a little more than 8%.

The "Other" category includes other social networks that respondents could freely indicate. When we analyze this category more in depth, a social network is often cited even if I did not expect it. Indeed, 34 people indicated using "Instagram", which makes a percentage of 21.38%: this is very close to Twitter usage rate. Instagram is an internet-based photo-sharing application and service that allows users to share pictures and videos either publicly or privately (*Wikipédia, 2017*). Instagram was bought out by Facebook on April 10, 2012 for about \$ 1 billion. This again demonstrates the power of the American giant in this social media sector. Other networks such as Snapchat or Reddit are also sometimes mentioned, but at a

much less frequent pace. Let us now look at the main sources of information for our respondents. Do they prefer television or newspapers or radio, etc.? The main goal is to see if the classical media are still as effective as before with young people.

### What is your main source of information on this list?

162 responses



*Main sources of information for the respondents*

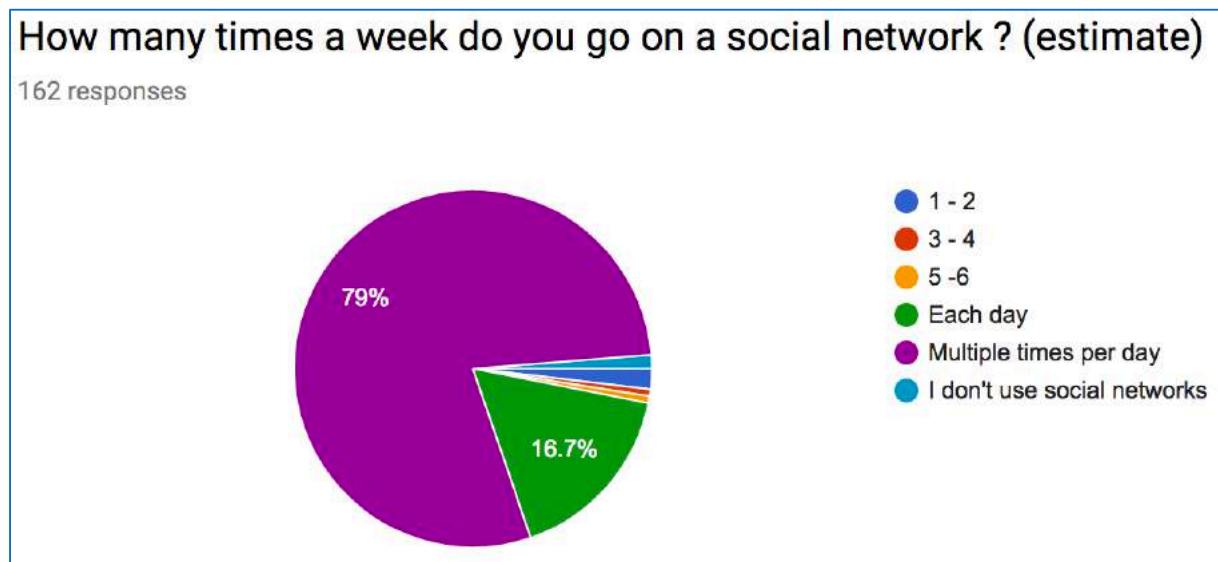
Two sources really stand out among Belgian young people: websites (online articles) and social networks. They together account for about 68.5% of responses with respect to the primary source of information. Although television has an honorable score of 18.5%, the print media (6.8%) and radio (4.9%) can be considered as secondary media for this generation.

This is really a very interesting point: indeed, we can notice that the digital sources of information come to dethrone the classic sources which are no longer able to reach a young audience. Let us now analyze the habits of the respondents towards the classical media. They have expressed this with frequency estimates at which they follow these conventional media: data is summarized in the table below (with 162 people expressing their habits):

<i>How many times a week:</i>					
	1 or 2 times	3 or 4 times	5 or 6 times	Each Day	Never
<b>Do you watch news on TV?</b>	45	32	12	22	51
<b>Do you listen to the radio?</b>	31	33	11	31	56
<b>Do you read a newspaper?</b>	44	17	4	12	85

It can be noted that the number of young people who never consult these media is far greater than the number of young people who consult them every day. Television remains a favorite among traditional media, in front of radio and newspapers, which are only used a little.

Let's compare these figures with those of social networks: How many times a week do young people go on social networks and how long do they spend on it?



*Frequency of use of social networks*

The trend is clear: 95.7% of young people in this survey use social networks at least once a day and 79% use them several times a day! It is mind-boggling when compared with other types of media. This shows that this digitization of our world has transformed our habits and changed our daily lives. The influence of these networks is enormous, young people spend an enormous amount of time on it, whatever the reasons may be.

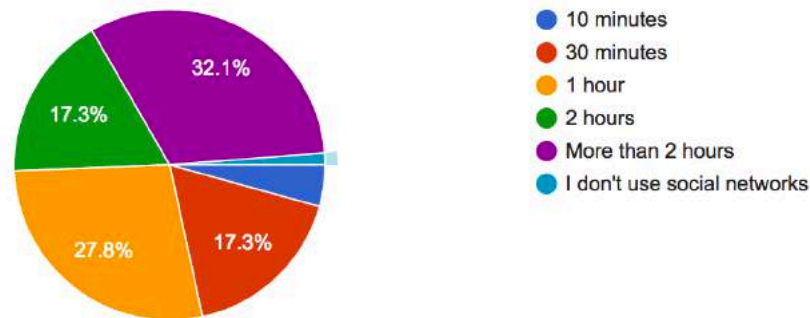
This is in line with what has been advanced in my theoretical part: it is essential to understand all the stake of these social media. I am convinced that this is the current way to reach a younger audience having grown up with the internet.

Traditional media are media that belong to the past, they will not reach future generations who are in constant contact with the web. This is what is at stake, and media groups need to adapt their strategies if they wish to make the most of this opportunity with regard to the younger generation.

However, it is also necessary to understand the connection time on social media. Are users staying on the platforms for a long time or just for a few minutes? This is the next point to be analyzed.

If you had to estimate the time you spend per day on social networks, it would be:

162 responses



*Time spend per day on social media*

The trend is that young people stay an hour or more a day on social networks. Almost a third of these spend even more than two hours a day on these platforms. It has really become a routine for most people of my generation. These social media develop more than ever and allow them to stay in touch with others and the news.

We learned that young people spend a lot of time on social media, but do they have other sources of information? Do they consider it to be a source of information or journalism? That's what we're going to see.

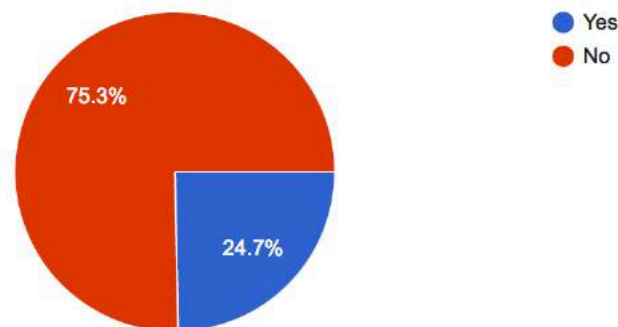
#### **4.1.3: Social Media Journalism & Behaviors**

It must be understood whether these young people are actively seeking information or rather adopt passive behavior without real research. Indeed, a stream of content such as videos, photos, ads, etc. scrolls continuously on social media. Are young people interested in journalism on social networks or do they not use them at all for that purpose? The rest of the survey tries to answer all these different questions and put a trend forward.

Let's start by comparing subscriptions to online newspapers or newsletters and social media information pages.

## Have you subscribed to newsletters or PDF journals ? (internet subscription)

162 responses

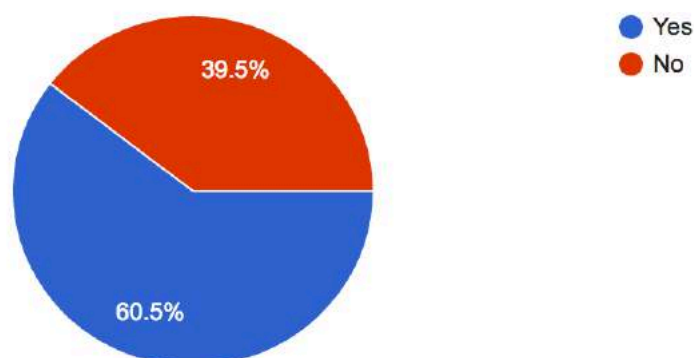


### *Online subscriptions*

We can note that this system is not really popular. Only one-quarter of respondents have such a subscription in order to keep up with current events. It would seem that this is not the solution required to reach the public concerned our survey. The great mass will never be touched, only a small party that agrees to make the registration process. Now look at social media:

## Do you follow information pages or journalists on social networks ?

162 responses



### *Social Media journalism & subscriptions*

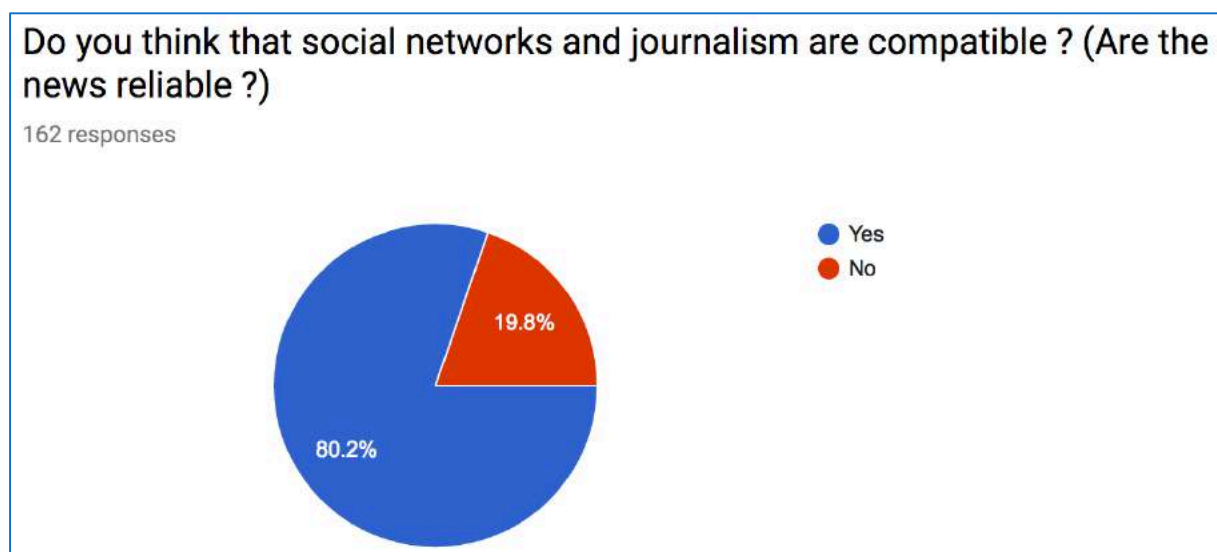
The trend is already different: 60.5% of respondents follow specific information pages or journalists on social media. The formula is already more appealing to media companies or journalists. This can be seen as a real mean of bringing its content to the attention of young people. I also asked in free answer to indicate which pages are being followed by these social network users. Of the 75 responses, the results are very varied. This includes international



media such as the *BBC*, *CNN*, *The Guardian*, etc. and local media such as "*La Meuse*", "*Courrier International*", etc. It is very difficult here to put forward one or more media that stand out. By refining the results, I wondered whether the RTBF and RTL, groups with whom I conducted my interviews, were cited in the free answers: I got 17 times RTBF and 16 times RTL, the media groups playing almost equal.

However, to my surprise, another Belgian media was mentioned more than the others. It was "*Le Soir*", a French language daily Belgian newspaper. Indeed, this one was written 30 times spontaneously, which is huge seeing the total amount of 75 answers to this question. I do not know the reasons for the digital success of this group, but I think it is the fact that it is considered a particularly serious and reliable newspaper by Belgian citizens.

This then leads us to wonder whether the information found on social media is considered reliable by young Belgians, since this was a problematic point in my theoretical part (the mistrust being quite high).

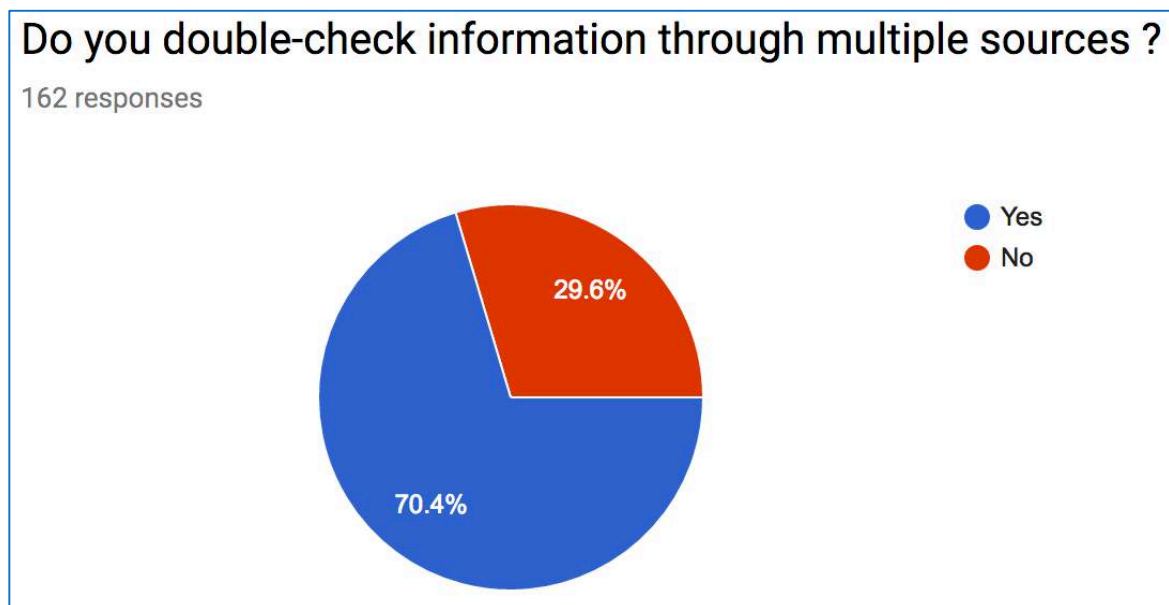


#### *Reliability of social media*

Strangely, more than 80% think that social media contains reliable information and only 20% think it is not compatible with professional journalism. On the sample, it can be said that trust in information on social networks is high enough.

The people who responded not justify this because they find that speed is privileged in relation to quality and that this impairs the quality of the information. There are also many fake news or sensational articles to encourage the reader to click in order to learn more.

Ideally, we need to link this trust in social media with the number of people that double-check information on several sources.



#### *Variety of sources and verification*

It is noteworthy that over 70% of people check their information using multiple sources and do not just read an article on a page of a social media. This percentage is nevertheless lower than the one of people who trust information on social networks (80%).

This is somehow a problem because some people may be led to believe false information or incomplete information, as seen in the theoretical part.

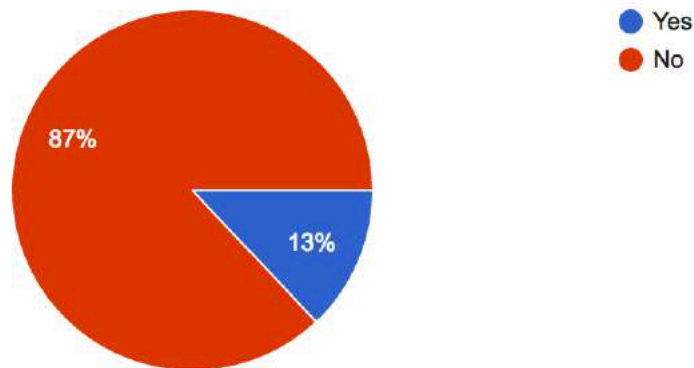
#### **4.1.4: Economic point of view and business model**

That is the last point of my survey. It is necessary to discuss it because it is an essential element for any media group or journalist who wants to use social media to the maximum. We must understand the behavior of this young generation, whether or not they are willing to pay for access to information.

If this is not the case, we must find a way to monetize these social networks and rely on advertising in order to obtain a certain return on investment. Indeed, the management of these social media generates many costs that must be borne. This can be dangerous if you do not get any income from your digital content.

## Are you inclined to pay in order to have access to news ?

162 responses

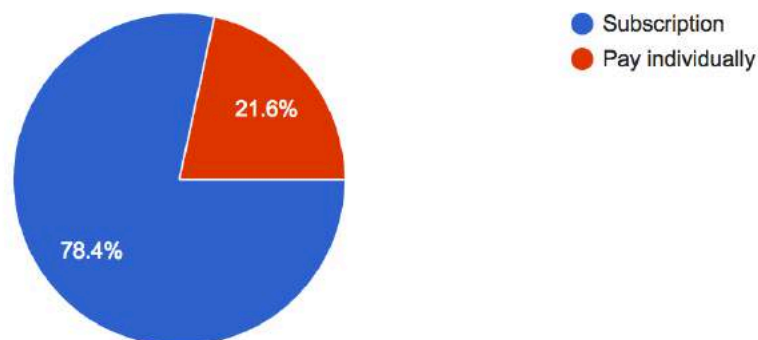


### *Cost of information*

The signal is clear: these young people want information to be free. 87% of them are not willing to pay to keep themselves informed. It will therefore be very difficult to obtain direct revenues from users. It is necessary to think of other revenues, such as those generated by partnerships or advertising. However, the last question of the survey concerns the economic model preferred by the users if information was not free.

## Would you rather pay a monthly subscription with a total access to all the articles or would you rather pay for each article individually?

162 responses



### *Preferred economic model*

The subscription system seems to be the most favorable because it is preferred by 78.4% of the respondents. When I asked what would be a reasonable price for this type of subscription, the answers often varied between 5 and 10 euros per month in the vast majority of cases.

#### 4.1.5: Cross-matching of data

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I also wanted to cross-reference the different data that I've collected. For this, I had thought of 7 possible correlations so I used the SAS software to figure out if there were links between the variables (the tables can be found in appendix). The relationships sought were as follows:

- Relationship between age and interest for the media
- Relationship between age and sources of information
- Relationship between age and time spent on social networks
- Relationship between income and interest for the media
- Relationship between income and paying for access to news
- Relationship between income and the preferred economic model.
- Relationship between double checking information and the compatibility of social media and journalism

However, the data collected did not allow me to demonstrate clear relationships between these different factors. This could have been different with a broader and more representative sample.

#### 4.1.6: Personal recommendations based on survey results

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If I had to give recommendations to media groups on the basis of my survey, I would focus on several points that seem essential to me due to the fact the young citizens are greatly focused on the web and do not have the same media perception as other generations. My recommendations would be as follows:

- Be well informed about the target audience of your media
- Presence on social media almost mandatory to reach young people because other media are losing ground for this generation
- Focus on Facebook as a priority
- Increase financial investment for digital services given the untapped opportunity
- Engage web professionals and develop this digital aspect at all costs
- Rely on advertising revenue as primary economic model for the digital

## *4.2: Critical look at the survey*

Now that I have analyzed all the results of the survey, it is necessary to step back, read all the answers again and draw conclusions.

First, regarding the respondents, I would have liked to have a larger and more diverse sample. However, I was limited in time and resources because of all the workload that this thesis represents. I think that my survey did not have the opportunity to reach all the social classes (for example, we must already speak English to be able to answer it), especially the poorest or disadvantaged. Academics are often inclined to respond to this type of survey, and most of my relationships are in this environment.

Then, several trends emerge. First, we note that for this young generation, it is the social media that takes precedence over the classical media whose golden age is gone. These new technologies dominate everyday life and have become embedded in our way of living. As expected, Facebook is the undisputed leader and brings together a huge part of our generation. Young people do not hesitate to spend many hours on online platforms, whatever the reasons.

Secondly, social media journalism is promised a bright future as young people trust these new tools and are already following the news for most of them. However, these same young people are not willing to pay for information. They grew up with internet and everything was always free for them on the web. We will therefore have to look at new economic models and sources of revenue for all the companies that would like to embrace this digital sector.

This is a great challenge but also a huge opportunity, because social media will not disappear anytime soon and occupy a prominent place in our lives. If I compare my survey with the interviews, some companies already understand these major issues, while others are falling a little bit behind.

## *Conclusion of the thesis*

The objective of this thesis was to know whether the digitization of our world and therefore indirectly social media, had an impact on journalism.

I knew very little about the subject before I started this work. I have always been fascinated by the media, and I even hesitated between studies of journalism or management. This work was therefore an opportunity to take a look at a fascinating topic for which I had very little theoretical knowledge but great interest. I wanted to mix this with my marketing skills learned at ICHEC because I think journalism and marketing are related nowadays. This thesis allowed me to understand the stakes and the impacts of the phenomenon that I have treated. There are a lot of things I would not have thought of at first. I feel that I have expanded my knowledge during this work and come out better trained.

I was wondering whether technological change was an opportunity or a threat to the media we know. Throughout my work, I realized that it was both. Like any change, it will cause its disruptions and change our habits but the digital area brings a revival to journalism. This enhances our freedoms, creates new work opportunities, allows us to access any information quickly. In my opinion, this revolution brings more advantages than disadvantages, although ethics will still take an increasingly important place in the years to come.

My theoretical part taught me a lot of things: I did not measure the impact of this digitization and the importance of the Internet these days. Our world is impregnated by the web and it is almost impossible for our society to backtrack. My research has allowed me to tackle points of view that I could not have developed on my own, and this has been very useful to me. The important number of books on the subject is a major asset because it allowed me to compare the authors' ideas and their views. I think that this is a subject of future which will be still much debated in the years to come and which will accentuate the generational cleavages.

Personally, I find that the most interesting parts of my work are the interviews and the survey I have conducted. Even if the theory gives us a good overview of the stakes, it can remain vague or imprecise at times, there is a lack of concrete examples. I wanted to make these two practical steps in order to have the views of the companies and the consumers.

On the business side, I discovered a new world that I did not know and realized the role social media would play in the future strategy. This is likely to generate a total transformation that needs to be prepared and the economic stakes are enormous, because the one who does not adapt is destined to suffer hard times. But the business approach is not enough, it is a global issue whose citizens are the key.

Through my survey, even though it is not perfect given the number of respondents I would have liked higher, I strengthened my basic feeling: The world has changed in a few decades and mentalities have evolved. Understanding my generation is essential for media organizations if they do not want to drift off and miss out on great opportunities. I knew we were hyper connected but I did not expect such high results. Almost all young Belgians are connected on these social media and they spend a huge amount of time on it. The Internet is their primary source of information and this is where the whole challenge lies, this is the most important point to take into account. It is also essential to understand the viable economic models that will have to be adopted in the future if the media wish to retain sources of income from this generation.

Has the mainstream media increased their audience with social media? It is very difficult to say given the tools at our disposal. On the other hand, it is sure that it is the “number one” media for young people and the right strategic choices will have to be made. Social media could be an opportunity or a threat to the classical media. All depends on the investment in time and money, and the perception they have of this new digital media that should not be taken lightly. It is a fully fledged media, not just a support.

The question now is whether these new media can coexist with the classical media, or are we going to witness the disappearance of the media that we have known for decades (or at least a transformation)? Only time will give us the answer.

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