Digital Age Media Transformations in Kazakhstan

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Abstract. The article deals with the changes in Kazakhstan media taking place in the digital age. The media have gained new opportunities and distribution channels for their products, interactive communication with their audience and access to the global information space since the advent of the Internet, cell-phones, smartphones, social networks and other mass media. What transformations have taken place in the media market? How has the coronavirus pandemic affected Kazakhstan media? What is the current situation with print and other mainstream media? We tried to answer these and other questions in our article. The empirical research was based on the results of an employee survey of 10 Kazakhstan organizations specializing in the field of media. In-depth interviews were conducted with the management and journalists of “Forbes Kazakhstan”, which includes two editorial staff (editorial staff of “Forbes” print magazine and online edition of “forbes.kz”), “inBusiness.kz” online publication and other representatives of the media industry that the editorial staff of Kazakhstan media changed its structure in the context of transition to cyberspace; findings also identify new strategies and forms adopted by the media to remain economically viable.

Keywords: Kazakhstan media · Transformation · Digital reality

1 Introduction

Media digitalization process has led to many challenges for Kazakhstan media. Some of the major challenges are changing relevance of editorial staff with rapid technological changes, search for new sources of income, changes in manufacturing and distribution of information and communication products, changes in working activities and conditions, employee retraining, profession convergence and job loss. According to the data from the World Economic Forum, published on the website https://reports.weforum.org, due to the digitization process, global job losses can reach two billion people by 2030 [1]. On the one hand, the sphere of Kazakhstan mass media, which has already significantly changed its structure, methods of generating income and production technology, will be affected as well. On the other hand, in our research, we focus not only on problems but also on the benefits that society can get in the digital age. Above all, it is a simplified production process and cost optimization. Along with
the displacement of obsolete professions and positions, digitalization leads to the emergence of new activities and specializations.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created new challenges for media. Though news media has a very important role to play during this time, a reduction in economic activity may affect the revenues negatively. This study explores how Kazakhstan media is adapting to digital environments and what kind of strategies it is using to address challenges related to COVID-19 pandemic.

2 Literature Review

Since the development of the Internet and social networks, the audience has got the opportunity to express and publish their opinions, various channels for distributing information that became quickly accessible and transparent. However, Internet users have recently lost their confidence in online publications and social networks due to a large number of grammatical and factual mistakes [2], problems related to confidentiality, information security, and violation of ethical standards [1].

The issue of ethics is extremely relevant for Kazakhstan and not only the media. This fact has been proved by the recent meeting of media representatives organized by the “Internews” international organization as part of the online club. Dainius Radzevičius, Chairman of The Lithuanian Union of Journalists; Olga Didenko, “Internews” lawyer in Kazakhstan, as well as administrative and creative leaders of “Almaty TV channel”, “Informburo.kz” and “The Village” recognized the existing Code of Ethics for Kazakhstan Journalists as inactive [3]. The main causes of the problem are identified as follows: inadequacy of the document itself and unauthorized interpretation of ethical standards by the editorial staff, which, according to Mikhail Dorofeev, chief editor of “Informburo.kz” “decides independently what is ethical and what is not”; distribution of fake and unbalanced information in social networks, which is no longer regulated by the editors. The latter issue was described and spoken by Nurzhan Mukhamedzhanova, Director General of Almaty TV Channel. According to her, today in the social network space provides data that “harms society and affects its health” [3].

And finally, economic problems gave rise to another problem - hidden advertising disguised as a journalistic investigation, information or interview, which is very difficult to recognize and prove. On the one hand, according to the discussion participants, in Kazakhstan, there are media supported by state subsidies, whose activities are regulated by the Internal Policy Committee, which, according to Aisana Ashim, Director General of “The Village” website, has the right to remove or recommend certain material at any time. On the other hand, there are media supported by a private capital dictating its conditions. On the third hand, there are self-organized publications. According to Mikhail Dorofeev, the editorial independence of the latter is also open to debate, since they depend on the advertiser. Nowadays, the editorial rules of non-state companies tend to specify the amount of reward and set a limit on it. For example, among the ethical standards of “The Village”, there are restrictions on “gifts” for journalists and the editors - not more than one hundred euros per person and two hundred euros per editorial [3]. Therefore, the position of “Channel 31” looks more balanced, where, according to journalist Serikzhan Nauletbay, there is a clear
distinction between advertising materials and editorial policy. One way or another, but the problem of editorial independence, raised by Mikhail Dorofeev during the online meeting, still needs to be comprehended. The dependence of Kazakhstan media functioning on the advertiser became obvious during the pandemic when the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan introduced a state of emergency in March. Three days later, quarantine was declared in Nur-Sultan (formerly Astana) and Almaty, traffic moving in and out of cities as well as within the indicated megacities were restricted [4]. Under quarantine, some print media temporarily ceased to exist. This is the case, for example, of “Prosport Kazakhstan” magazine, which covers sports life in the country and abroad. According to Olga Rudi, correspondent and editor of “prosport.kz” website, several factors influenced the closure of the print media:

1. The surge in the US dollar - “we’ve lost several contracts with clubs, government orders and the support of our founders and advertisers.”

2. The cancellation of sports events due to a pandemic - “we’ve lost sources of information, and there is nothing to write about in the newspaper.”

3. “Due to the quarantine introduction, typography is impossible remotely, the printing house is also closed, and it would be difficult to distribute it - everyone is sitting at home, no one would buy a newspaper.”

The print format could not be put into production due to quarantine. Therefore, many media outlets suffered serious financial losses. The level of advertising revenue fell because the restrictions introduced led to a decline in demand for certain goods and services. In particular, from March 26, 2020, in Almaty and Astana, all retail outlets and service facilities were closed, except for grocery stores and pharmacies [5]. Townspeople were not recommended to go outside without special need. As a result, consumers were forced to reduce their claims to goods of priority, detergents and disinfectants, hygiene items and basic food products. Entrepreneurs were also required to comply with quarantine. Many of them, for example, owners of beauty salons, shoe shops, sellers of industrial goods, perfumes, owners of event agencies, public catering, educational centres and kindergartens temporarily stopped their activities or reduced the volume of services rendered. Accordingly, they ceased to place their ads in the media [6].

According to B.Kazybaev, a general director of “Alash Media Group” LLP, which includes tangerines.kz, massage.kz, vesti.kz online resources, “STV” channel, “Tengri FM” radio station, under the current circumstances, the company revenues have fallen by almost 80 percent. As a result, the representatives of 24 major Kazakhstan media holdings, joint-stock companies and the media, including state-owned television channels such as “Qazaqstan”, “Qazsport”, “Balapan”, “Tamasha TV”, “Kazakh” radio, “Astana” and “Classic” radio, “Khabar” agency, “Channel 31” TV and radio company, sent an open letter to the President and Government of Kazakhstan asking to grant them a remission of taxes and other obligations from April 1 to October 1, 2020, due to the fall in income [7]. According to media representatives, a temporary cancellation of the relevant payments would allow them to save jobs. The leaders of media organizations also proposed speeding up the process of consideration and adoption of the bill, which allows them to advertise trademarks and names of domestic low-alcohol products [7]. The state responded to a request from media leaders. According to Mira Khalina, a director of “InBusiness.kz” website, the government will introduce tax
remissions on a selective basis, depending on the size of the losses and income of the company.

Thus, the pandemic situation has shown the vulnerability of the media and their dependence on advertising and external subsidies. The above-mentioned problems open up new opportunities for their research. However, in this article, we have analyzed the issue of adapting the media to the conditions of digital technology. Therefore, the research is aimed to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of Kazakhstan media transformation in the digital age.

The research outcomes, obtained during the interviews with the leaders of media companies, revealed the strengths and weaknesses of online and print media publications, as well as new ways of generating income to ensure sustainable development of media. Summing up, it should be mentioned that if the editors want to get coverage and keep their audience, it would not be enough to have online publications. It is necessary to transform and open new editions for the production of independent online publications and develop SMM management. At the same time, we revealed that the interaction between two editions within the same “Forbes Kazakhstan” company demonstrates that journalists of print and online publications do not mutually exclude, but complement, support each other, performing different functions, taking into account the specific features of the media.

According to the media companies interviewed, digital technologies have accelerated the production process. If earlier all stages of making a media product were carried out separately, in different places and using different tools, including the collection, processing and analysis of information to the publication of material in print or broadcast, today we can carry out all our activities in one place and from one device, such as a computer [8]. In the digital age, almost all media have the opportunity to collect data in a simplified way. This is a great achievement for analytical publications. For example, the editorial board of “Forbes” magazine in Kazakhstan monitors the situation on stock exchanges and joint-stock companies through “kase.kz” website of the Kazakhstan stock exchange. Analysts receive information on taxes paid for the year through the web resource of the State Revenue Committee and “eGOV.kz” Portal of the Electronic Government of Kazakhstan. Having analyzed the data, they try to determine the income of the companies they are interested in. Askar Aukenov, editor-in-chief of “Forbes” magazine, shares his professional secrets:

“If we know who the particular LLP is registered for, we can calculate the approximate income of its owner.”

According to him, in many cases, this is how the famous ratings of the richest people in the country are born. This is faster and easier than waiting for answers to written requests that are not always satisfied. Digital technologies allow journalists, without leaving the office, sitting at the computer, to identify companies that are hidden inside other companies and to define the ultimate owner. Therefore, the ability to work with electronic data, search by foreign resources is one of the main skills that are today required from a journalist when applying for a job in the editorial office. Digital tools not only simplify the production process but also open up new opportunities for creativity.

Ruslan Gaziev, director of “Business Creative FMA” LLP, a company engaged in the output of audio-visual products, shares his own experience: “If in the early 2000s,
when television lived out the time of cassette media, the primary process of titration and application of effects significantly restrained the flight of imagination and approach to the implementation of what was conceived, then today due to the digitalization process, these tasks are solved, roughly speaking, by pressing two keys.” These are mainly informational and trendy television programs and commercials, projects commissioned by Kazakhstan television companies and state institutions, commercial organizations. According to the media manager, technical equipment remains an important aspect of meeting market requirements. From his point of view, it is necessary to make its constant updating.

Ruslan Gaziev describes the advantages of the emergence of technology that made it possible to shoot the presenters on a green background and layout graphically created studios – Green Screen: “In 2008, we purchased cameras shooting in SD format on so-called P2 media. If today our company had continued to work using this equipment, it would have faced the problem of the lack of orders, since television channels had long switched to a higher quality format - HD.” According to him, the initial processing of the television presenter images required time and scrupulous processing. However, the result was not always excellent. Today this process is much faster and more spectacular. Moreover, the company doesn’t need to make additional investment in the creation of real scenery.

The third, major advantage and opportunity that the media have gained is the expansion of distribution channels and audience: Internet has been included in traditional types of publications and broadcasting.

3 Method

The work used general scientific methods, theoretical and empirical. The classical way of research is the collection of material, its analysis and selection; Recruitment and Sample. We studied foreign and domestic sources of information to be able to compare the situation happening abroad with the situation in Kazakhstan. This allowed us to draw some analogies. In this sense, we concluded that the processes that take place in Kazakhstan are very similar to those that take place in Russia. While media convention in Western society began and gained momentum a long time ago, in our case it is still in its infancy, at the development stage. Before exploring the changes that are occurring in the system of Kazakhstani media, we needed to monitor the information related to the issues of media digitalization and the reasons why Kazakhstan came to this.

In the empirical part of the study, we used the following tools: surveys, deep interview, interview script, decoding and analysis of records; data compilation.

The main theoretical sources analyzing the process of media transformation were the works of American and European researchers: Christopher Harper [9], Robert Picard [10], Henry Zhenkins [11], Philip Schlesinger [12] and others. From Russian scientists, we relied on the works of Evgeny Prokhorov [13], Elena Vartanova[14], Victoria Tulisova [8] and others. In Kazakhstan, Sharvan Nurgozhina [15], Saule Barlybaeva [16], Karlyga Musaeva [17] and other authors are involved in journalism, convergence and new media.
In addition to the works of scientists, we studied the State program “Information Kazakhstan 2020” and the criteria for the development of the information society outlined in it:

- availability of computers,
- level of computer network development,
- number of people involved in the information sphere and using modern technologies in their activities [18].

Thus, our state set the goal of creating conditions for the transition to the information society. Therefore, the information society will be considered as the “formed” one only when each person anywhere in the world and country can satisfy his or her information request using modern mass media as well as when a person is fully and relevantly informed and ready to find an adequate solution to the problem situation [13].

The program deadlines were divided into two stages: from 2013 to 2017 and from 2017 to 2020. This means that we are now in the second stage. The implementation of the program is nearing completion. According to the document, this year the number of Internet users is meant to reach seventy-five percent, digital broadcasting is intended to cover ninety-five percent of the population in Kazakhstan, the level of computer literacy is aimed to reach eighty percent, and the share of electronic media in the total number of the registered ones in Kazakhstan can grow by one hundred percent [18].

3.1 The Empirical Base of Research

In addition to the theoretical analysis of information and media monitoring, empirical research methods were used in the work. In particular, observation, interviews and comparisons. Observations were carried out through a selective analysis of the activities of the media in Kazakhstan. In-depth interviews were conducted with the management and journalists of Business FM, Retro FM radio stations, Muzzon television channel, Forbes magazine and Forbes.kz, InBissines.kz and other online publications.

The results of the study can be divided into two parts - competition between traditional and online media and new sources of income.

4 Results

4.1 How Traditional Media Respond to the Challenge of Time

The research results show that “Information Kazakhstan 2020” State Program is still under implementation. In any case, it regards the electronic media. As mentioned above, their share is meant to reach 100 percent of the total number of registered media. Official statistics show that there are 3,669 media registered by the Ministry of Information and Social Development of Kazakhstan on January 10, 2020, where 2,964 are print media, 161 are TV channels, 73 are radio and 471 are news agencies and online media [19].

Thus, the share of electronic media, which include television, radio and the Internet, is no more than 20 percent concerning the total number of the registered media in
Kazakhstan. According to the statistics, Nur-Sultan and Almaty traditionally considered the most advanced cities in this regard, also still lag. In total, according to the MISD, 1,125 mass media have been registered before the pandemic in Almaty. Among them 963 are accounted for print media, 59 are electronic media and 104 are online media. This means that in Almaty the share of electronic media, including the Internet, amounted to 14.3 percent compared to 85.6 percent of print media. In Nur-Sultan indicators are even lower. The total number of mass media is 505, where 382 are print media, 26 are electronic media and 97 are online media. Thus, 75.6% of all registered media in the capital of Kazakhstan are accounted for print media. And only 24.4 percent are electronic media. However, these indicators are expected to undergo some changes before the end of the year, as the pandemic, announced by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020, has affected Kazakhstan media.

Along with the mainstream media that created their electronic versions or independent affiliate online news outlets in Kazakhstan, online media itself has appeared, operating only in digital format. Oleg Khe, co-founder of “and.kz”, “18plusidea.kz”, “MediaLab” media projects, producing information and educational programs, says that his media structures deliver their content through the site, portal, social networks, blog, podcast and mobile applications. There is also “inbusiness.kz” information agency, which exists only in digital format. This is the first multimedia Digital-project, which combines the livestream and the news on “ATAMEKEN BUSINESS” business television channel. It includes exclusive interviews, live broadcasts, a large base of YouTube subscribers. The agency uses mainly online platforms to promote its content. In addition to YouTube, these are social networks and the Telegram channel. The organization also implements image projects for offline recognition. The content is promoted using the RSS system, which collects, processes and provides the user with information in a convenient form using its aggregators. Besides, “InBusiness” uses SEO search engine optimization and promotes its website with link buildup.

The appearance of competitors on the Internet and the creation of New Media [21] prompted the leadership of traditional media to change, which is associated on the one hand with an attempt to maintain the “old audience” and gain a new [14], on the other it can be considered as a way to save or create additional sources of income. If two years ago, the Internet audience of Kazakhstan amounted to 81, 3 percent of the total population of the country [22], then in 2022, according to the state program “Digital Kazakhstan”, this figure is planned to be increased to 82 percent. Publishing experts do not hide the fact that more and more readers of printed matter are leaving for cyberspace. According to Lyudmila Ten, director of “Forbes Kazakhstan”, a few years ago, the company that she heads today decided to create a site, after revealing the current trend of declining audience interest in print media. But access to the Internet is not only an expansion of the audience or an attempt to hold their interest. Online media provide their users with new opportunities, interaction with the audience, voting.

At first, the editors of the print media were limited to their electronic counterparts on the Internet. Over time, many of them came to understand that online media is an independent resource that has a different specificity of work, and it is necessary to create a separate edition. Forbes Kazakhstan, for example, has created a new department - the website, as part of the editorial office of the print magazine. Then the new department budded to a separate editorial office, with its premises, staff, advertising
According to Askar Aukenov, editor-in-chief of Forbes magazine in Kazakhstan, the site is mainly concerned with up-to-date information, news, while print journalists have the opportunity to extract exclusive information. Internet colleagues don’t have time to do research. Therefore, in addition to the fact that Aukenov’s team makes the magazine, they also act as a research centre that produces analytical content, reviews, ratings and shares this information with the online edition. Among the employees of the printing office are observers, editors who monitor the markets and analyze information. Some analysts only collect data. If necessary, they can ask online journalists to prepare any information for them. Employees of the magazine, as a rule, do not attend press conferences. This is the prerogative of online media reporters. Askar Aukenov does not deny that the print edition is gradually being transformed into an analytical department. However, no one refuses to issue the journal as such. Because it is a matter of prestige, people’s priorities, someone likes paper, someone prefers electronic media, and finally, in our life, there are places where it is forbidden to use gadgets and computers. Forbes Magazine, for example, besides subscribing, shopping malls and newsstands, is also distributed on aeroplanes.

But access to the Internet is not only an expansion of the audience or an attempt to hold their interest. Online media provide their users with new opportunities, interaction with the audience, voting.

Anastasia Novikova, editor-in-chief of Forbes.kz, says the following: “We had several advertising projects when readers were offered relevant online profiles, tests, which allowed them to get new information. This is also a big plus for the advertiser.”.

Unlike the print media, “Muzzone TV” later decided to conquer social networks and cyberspace. During this time, its competitor, “Gakku TV”, managed to gain a huge audience by promoting its products on Youtube. Another advantage, taken by “Gakku” in cyberspace, is the use of content produced exclusively in Kazakhstan. The situation showed the popularity of Kazakh-language content in the country. Its production automatically solves the problem with copyright on Youtube. Therefore, the long-term plans for developing “Forbes Kazakhstan”, “Muzzone TV” channel and “Business FM” radio station include the creation of Kazakh-language content.

“Business FM” radio station digitizes its products and places them on its website in the form of podcasts (sound files). Thus, listeners can listen to at least 19 audio programs not only live, on schedule but also anytime on the Internet.

“Business FM,” CEO Rustam Maksutov says the following: “This is a matter of convenience. Since the advent of digital technology, people have got the opportunity to listen to the radio station when it is convenient for them and tune it for themselves”. Many mainstream media in Kazakhstan are now engaged in such post-production. For these purposes, they either have their electronic versions on the Internet or collaborate with affiliated online media. According to Rustam Maksutov, his organization agreed with three companies such as Apple, Google and Yandex to meet the needs of the audience. These companies index podcasts of radio stations and place them on their sites. This allowed “Business FM” to expand its audience and go beyond Kazakhstan, in particular, to capture Russian radio listeners.

The way to save information has been changed. Now we can do this with a smartphone, tablet, digital camera and digital voice recorder. The method of data processing has been changed. For example, the installation of audio and video
programs is carried out in a non-linear way, with a computer. More advanced mobile applications allow us to use a smartphone for these purposes. The method of storing information has been changed. Cloud technology and google drive enable us to archive electronic content. With the help of the Internet, we can pump large amounts of information at a high processing speed [8].

Since the advent of digital technology, the editorial structure has been changed. For example, employees of “Business FM” radio station no longer go to work every day, as it was before. Using digital voice recorders and small lapel microphones, they can produce digital news at home and send them to the editor on the Internet. The sound engineer of the radio station also works from home, connecting to the main computer in the editorial office.

Director general Rustam Maksutov exclaims the following: “We couldn’t even imagine such things before now.” It’s quiet in his office today. In the room next to him there is only a chief editor, who listens to the news and receives them. The CEO finds himself engaged not only in organizational matters, but also produces the content, goes live with his program. Journalists work remotely. The program production process and data collection procedure have been simplified. The company is subscribed to two leading financial information providers - Bloomberg and Forbes.

The creation of digital content has made a significant impact on the HR policy of media companies. There is a demand for graphic specialists. Ruslan Gaziev, Director of “Business Creative FMA” company, which has been discussed above, confirms this fact. To meet the demand in the market, the “hard-liners” of operators, directors, sound and video engineers are required to improve themselves constantly, study new techniques and approaches to the implementation of the tasks. At the slightest opportunity, the staff is sent to undergo various professional courses. At the same time, specialists are improving themselves with the help of video tutorials hosted on the Youtube platform.

Also, the media market has undergone labour optimization and profession convergence. One person today can do the work, which was previously performed by three or four people. Representatives of all the interviewed media companies shared similar experiences during our study. Few of them are interested in domain specialists today. Oleg Abdulkabirov, director of “MUZZONE TV” channel, talks about the new profession called “videographer”. Today it includes five pre-existing professions: camera operator, photographer, video engineer, sound engineer, and computer graphics engineer. Recalling his experience in television news, Oleg said that, not only the journalist and editor but another five people who had the above professions were used to create a news story. The camera operator shot the material. The video engineer mounted. The computer graphics engineer typed and overlaid captions, drew tables. The sound engineer was engaged in making a sound. Today keeping so many people for making one news story is unprofitable. All their functions were combined into one profession - a videographer. It is owned by one person who shoots the video, mounts the news story, overlays captions on it, and is engaged in computer graphics and photographs for the site. He does it all by himself. The salary of such an employee is approximately two and a half times higher than that of each of his predecessors. But generally, this person costs the company much cheaper than the five who used to engage in these types of activities separately. It is beneficial for the employer. According to the rank and file
staff, the employee along with an increase in salary can burn out emotionally because of his versatility. Interestingly, similar studies were conducted several years ago in America. Scientists from America Zh. Wang., M. Irwin., C. Cooper, and J. Srivastava, investigated the negative effects of media multitasking [23]. Considering it, the leaders of the above-mentioned companies are trying to create proper working conditions for their employees. One of the most common ways is to organize corporate parties and teambuilding. Besides, “Business FM” holds a meeting once a week in the mountains, in the fresh air, or, at the request of employees, gathers them in a cafe, accompanying the discussion of current affairs with a delicious meal.

4.2 Another Example of a Converged Profession is an SMM Manager.

According to Oleg Abulkabirov, director of “Muzzzone” television channel, “as soon as social networks appeared, large companies began to form a fairly decent staff of SMM-specialists controlled by the head. One of these specialists was responsible for the text, another one - for the picture, the third one - for the design and implementation of the idea in a particular application, for example, in Photoshop. The fourth specialist worked with the video. The fifth one, an SMM analyst, studied the effectiveness of a post sent. Besides, there was a traffic manager, being a link between the client and the manufacturing company.”

Over time, all of these functions also underwent convergence. According to Oleg Abulkabirov, now media organizations prefer to have one SMM manager who knows how to work with Photoshop and video applications as well as with media analytics. However, the ability to write a text, which is not given to everyone, remains exclusive, according to the media leader. Also, any presentation of information is based on certain knowledge. Therefore, the main criterion for evaluating the level of journalist’s professionalism is still the material that he or she produces and its content.

Against the background of profession convergence, the staff reduction was inevitable. This is another trend that has emerged in media companies in the digital age. For example, if previously the staff of a popular radio station in Kazakhstan reached forty or more people, today only 25 employees work for the same “Business FM” radio station.

Rustam Maksutov says the following: “Under conditions of digitalization, we started with 15 people, but then our needs increased. We began to produce video content, we needed the appropriate technical specialists. We have created a website that required a separate edition, and it was necessary to increase the staff to 25 people. But still, it’s not 40–50 people, as it was before.”

The production of video content on the radio station websites has already become a tradition in Kazakhstan. Live broadcasts of programs and placement of video files on Kazakhstan radio station websites have already become trendy. This means that radio, television or magazines do not exist on the Internet by themselves. They converge and acquire features of each other in cyberspace [8].

“MUZZONE TV” channel’s staff has also halved. Its management notes that the number of people watching television is falling in Kazakhstan. So, the vast majority of the “advertising cake” is distributed in favor of online media. Therefore, it is unprofitable to engage exclusively in television in Kazakhstan. That’s why the creation
of electronic versions or your online media outlets on the Internet can also be considered as a way to save and increase your income.

4.3 New Ways of Income

Since the audience was attracted to the Internet, Forbes Kazakhstan had not suffered losses, because of the profit, although it was reduced by advertising the magazine, consequently, increased by advertising on the site.

Director of the company Lyudmila Ten says the following: “If we roughly (every year we have different indicators) analyze the entire period of the company’s existence, then the income from advertising the magazine decreased by about 2 percent in tenge and by almost 50 percent in dollars. On the contrary, the website’s annual income growth is approximately 20 percent in dollars and 50 percent in tenge, not counting the last two years, associated with a high exchange rate volatility.”

Thus, the use of the Internet is not only a struggle for the audience and the expansion of broadcasting opportunities and channels but also some way, if not multiply, then save your money. In general, according to Lyudmila Ten, the business model of the print publication has not changed radically. Additional opportunities for promoting the magazine through digital directions were added. The resource promotion strategy through SMM was revised. To this end, management has entered into a series of contracts for the sale of magazines through digital channels. If we talk about ways to earn them, then they are traditional - subscription, retail and advertising. It is impossible to make money on the net sales of a magazine. The print run is small, the audience is limited, and production is costly.

According to Askar Aukenov, with the advent of the Internet archive, some readers stopped buying the print version. Waiting for electronic, free. Since the research is deep, does not become obsolete, like news, consumer analytics is ready to wait.

One of the additional sources of income for traditional media in Kazakhstan is offline projects. Forbes magazine in Kazakhstan is actively trying to develop this area. One of the editorial’s projects is Forbes Entrepreneurs Club. This is a club of entrepreneurs, which can only be reached by invitation. Or for the money. The number of seats in the club is limited. As a rule, a well-known person in business circles who is of interest to the participants and answers their questions is invited there. It is believed that getting into this closed community is prestigious. Therefore, people are willing to pay for it. Publishers are regularly contacted by senior officials asking them to invite them there. Among them are bank leaders, owners of large companies. Among other things, it is also an opportunity to expand the circle of useful contacts, to build new business connections. Such an event, as a rule, has partners, advertisers who want to be noticed. And they are willing to pay for it in exchange for placing their brands and trademarks.

Conducting entertainment, sports and business events is also an opportunity to attract partners and advertisers. Forbes Kazakhstan holds tennis tournaments and golf competitions annually. According to Askar Aukenov, one can also earn money on this. Among the events held by the company are SEO summit, investor summit, “New technologies in agribusiness.” Participation in such meetings is paid. An interested party can find a potential investor within its framework. Advertisers post their products.
Below is a table of Forbes Kazakhstan revenue as a percentage of subscription, advertising and offline projects (Table 1):

| Ad placement          | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Advertising in a magazine | 40%        |
| Advertising on a site  | 40%        |
| Advertising at events  | 14%        |
| Implementation         | 6%         |

As you can see, advertising in the magazine gives only 40 percent of the company’s revenue. The same percentage brings online advertising. In general, the bulk of the revenue, 80 percent, comes from advertising in both publications. And only six percent of revenue comes from magazine sales. On offline projects, you can earn more than two times more. Thus, the main source of income for the media is not the sale of their products, but advertising.

Unlike the music broadcasting companies described above, the editorial board of “Forbes” information and the analytical magazine has preserved as many original team members as possible. However, the reduction of product distribution channels on the sales market was another problem that the print media faced and the reason for the reduction in their circulation. “Forbes” management states that their main wholesaler of printed matter was “Kaz Press” company. As a result, it went bankrupt and closed a wide network of stalls around the country. Perhaps it happened because the company had problems with the implementation. It is unclear whether this was due to the high price of printed matter or the outflow of the audience on the Internet. Both factors were most likely to play a role. For example, the prime cost of “Forbes” magazine content is from 16 to 20 million tenges per month (salary fund). One way or another, but the loss of a major distributor has become another reason to promote the magazine through digital directions.

Radio Business FM has a slightly different survival path. It does not sell its product, as print publications do. But also developing digital directions. Radio has its website, which, as mentioned above, hosts podcasts and video recordings of radio programs. Also, the site is another opportunity to advertise. The format of the so-called talk radio, unique for Kazakhstan, plays a large role in generating revenue. It uses native advertising. For this, manufacturers can create a program for their customer. A commercial proposal is compiled according to the individual request of the client, following his interests and capabilities. There are also standard types of interaction with the customer – commercials. The site also hosts PR-articles, the program “Business Morning” is sold as a whole as a sponsorship.

Besides, participation in the program is being sold. Direct advertising, according to the manual, is less effective and annoying the modern radio listener and site user. Therefore, they recommend that the customer use native advertising.
One of Business FM’s partners, Beeline company, indirectly promotes its services and products through podcasts recorded on radio stations on how it can help the be-to-be business. For example, the program may talk about how to improve WiFi in a cafe or about the benefits of 5G technologies. Employees at Home Credit Bank in these podcasts can give tips on how to keep their savings. Among the offline projects of Business FM is a business breakfast at the Media café, where entrepreneurs come for advice. The radio station arranges meetings with specialists on specific requests. Among the speakers may be lawyers, economists and other experts. Entrepreneurs pay for breakfast themselves or the sponsor does it. However, such gatherings usually do not bring income but serve more cooperation. Another thing is the mass events. For example, seasonal events - Summer Fest, Autumn Fest, Spring Fest or Winter Fest. They can take place in different places of Almaty, depending on the purpose of the event.

For example, the Winter Fest winter festival was held at the Medeo high-mountain skating rink, in cooperation with the city authorities, accompanied by sports and musical performances. Revenues came from the sale of tickets and advertising. Before this, in the summer season, entrepreneurs who would like to advertise their goods were involved. Tan Media Group, of which Business FM is a part, organized a special exhibition for them. Also, businessmen had the opportunity to speak from the stage and share their expertise with the audience. The holding of the spring festival was postponed due to quarantine.

Thus, Business FM is one of the first media companies in Kazakhstan that built its business model, not on entertainment content, but relied on an entrepreneurial module, talk radio, and an opportunity for an advertiser to speak out. At the same time, according to Rustam Maksutov, the radio station moves away from traditional commercials with a timing of 30 s, since they work inefficiently. According to the director of the radio station, people need details. And the customer can get a whole hour of airtime, within which one can tell what the organization is doing, which product it produces, what are its advantages, why it costs so much. A potential client, while travelling in a car, receives a full layout of the advertised product and can already decide whether he needs it or not. In any case, this is the opinion of the editorial office of Business FM.

To summarize the above, we conclude that, as before, the main source of income for non-state media is advertising. In the context of digital technology, it gets additional opportunities - posting content on the Internet or offline, at events. Traditional commercials are considered less effective than native ads. The latter fulfils its role in the form of various programs, quizzes, online surveys, etc. that come with a certain mark, for example, “sponsorship project” or “affiliate program”.

5 Discussion

Summing up the first results of the study we can say that digital technologies brought Kazakhstani media some advantages:

• Simplified accelerated and reduced the cost of the production process, as acknowledged by the employees of media companies interviewed by us;
• Provided the media with the opportunity to collect data in a simplified way;
• Broadened communication channels and audience reach.

Kazakhstan media, despite the prevalence of print media in the country, after all, seek to move to the Internet space for several reasons:
1) to hold their target audience and expand the scope of their influence;
2) to maintain the level of income due to advertising revenues, mainly received in online media;
3) to discover new creative opportunities and creative solutions;
4) to take advantage of the interactive opportunities given on the Internet, maintain feedback with their users and, thanks to this, adjust their strategy.

Technological changes prompted the editions of traditional media to transform their structure and create new departments or additional editions to work on the digitization of their products, electronic counterparts or New (online) media. Digitization of products allows to save and archive information and communication products on the Internet, increase audience reach and enter the global space.

Electronic counterparts do not fully use the power of the Internet. Therefore, gradually, the founders and heads of the media come to understand that to increase competitiveness and profitability, it is necessary to open independent online editorial offices, with their information and marketing strategy and separate staff.

The sources of revenue for modern media are still advertising. Only now it receives an additional and less costly online platform that allows using of interactive methods and native advertising. Along with traditional methods of earning, such as subscribing, selling a product and advertising, offline events and projects are especially popular.

The convergence of professions allows a modern employer to save costs and optimize staffing. But, along with this, new problems appear such as unemployment and job loss. Therefore, the training of future specialists in the field of digital media is becoming a promising area in the field of education.

Radio, television or magazines do not exist on the Internet by themselves. Once mainstream media acquire features of each other in cyberspace. For example, radio and print media are gaining signs of television. Therefore, the requirements for the specialists, hired to work for the radio station, have already been changed. They must have the skills to work in digital media, be able to create a multimedia product, work with video applications, Photoshop, shoot and edit video. Not all journalists have such skills and are ready to do it all by themselves. On the one hand, some of them lose their jobs due to inconsistency with the required parameters, and on the other hand, due to the profession convergence, when one person performs those functions in online media that were used to be performed by several people. In this sense, one of the most effective practices is the creation of a media school for media companies, since universities are unable to keep up with rapidly changing technologies. According to Mikhail Dorofeev, deputy general director of Channel 31 for information broadcasting, higher education institutions should provide fundamental knowledge. As for new specialists training, different employers use different tactics. For example, “Business FM” radio station prefers to hire young journalists who are easily trained or already have acquired digital media skills. Forbes Kazakhstan is training its employees. According to Anastasia Novikova, editor-in-chief of online media, there is not a ready-made specialist. Even if he or she is a very good journalist, he would still need time to
adapt to the new format and speed of work. “Forbes.kz” editorial board doesn’t only writes for its online website, but also works as a site administrator. Journalists post their materials themselves. It will become possible only if there is appropriate training. No one can do this immediately. The site’s management understands it taking a patient approach. “Tan Media Group” media holding, which includes Forbes Kazakhstan, has created a media school. If you want to have an editorial office today that can work effectively in digital media, you need to train and invest in your employees.

This question, as before, remains debatable, who, how and what should teach students. In this sense, we adhere to the position of the Russian microbiologist Tatyana Chernigovskaya [24] and the international journalist Kipras Mazheyka [26], who consider the learning process as an opportunity to improve neural network and consider higher education not as a craft, but as a system of knowledge and activities that allow a person to broaden their horizons and increase their understanding of the world.

6 Conclusion

Concluding the first stage of the research, it should be noted that the era of digital technology has opened up new scientific and educational opportunities for the media. One of these opportunities is to inform the audience about new achievements and discoveries in the field of science, culture and art, about current events and phenomena through new channels of communication, such as network media, social networks and others. The second possibility is the popularization of relevant ideas through visualization and multimedia technologies, which increases the efficiency of the perception of information and makes it more accessible. The third advantage is the ability to disseminate and promote useful information to a wider audience since access to cyberspace allows us to go beyond a location and cover the global world. And, finally, the fourth scientific and cognitive opportunity of the media in the digital age is the ability to correct published information in an interactive environment and to be critical of ourselves.

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