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The Extension of Public Service Media in the Multiplatform Scenario

▪ Introduction

Digitalization and the subsequent technological innovations have fostered the detachment between content, physical supports, networks and devices. At the same time, the latter become more versatile thanks to convergence and acquire a new leading role in the media and communication ecosystem. As a result, a multiplatform scenario is being configured. This has a major impact on media contents and services, which today experience a strong wave of innovation and hybridization. Being available online is not any more an add-on but a pre-requisite for success. In addition, mobility emerges as the next distribution trend. Consequently, ubiquity, time-shifting, on-demand, personalization and social sharing are becoming current and necessary characteristics of any media content.

In the case of Public Service, technology innovation allows its operators deploying new offers that overcome the borders of broadcasting. In fact, public operators are demonstrating that they are still innovators and pioneers. Across Europe, many of them have developed a wide range of online and mobile services that have become 'flagships' of the market.

This evolution and extension of Public Service has led to a confrontation between players within the media sector. On the one hand, the private agents argue that the new opportunities enabled by technology, and the associated potential revenues, should exclusively belong to the commercial sphere. Otherwise, according to their own calculations and benefit expectations, market viability, development and growth might be jeopardized. From their point of view, most of the innovation activities carried out by Public Service Media exceed their remit and distort free competition. On the other hand, it is evident that the configuration of a digital and multiplatform media scenario generates opportunities for public broadcasters to improve their performance and to offer a better service as well as a higher value-for-money to the citizens.

Finally, a very relevant issue to consider is whether technology can solve existing market failures and whether it creates new ones. This fact is crucial in order to determine the need for Public Service as a tool to ensure universal service and access as well as guarantee the quality, pluralism, diversity or the social representativeness of the media offer.

▪ Objectives

According to this scenario, this special issue of the Central European Journal of Communication wants to explore the current transformations and adaptations experienced by Public Service Media operators with regard to their remit, organization and performance.

In addition, the issue wants to identify the different conflicts arising from that evolution and in which way they are addressed by national authorities by means of policy or regulatory instruments, like the so called ex-ante evaluation procedures.

By means of tackling these facts, this special issue also aims to identify and systematize the current debate regarding the future role of public service in the field of media.

▪ Questions

Submitted articles are expected to provide answers to some of the following questions:

- Which are the main challenges, opportunities and risks that public service faces due to the configuration of a multiplatform scenario?
- How do public service operators adapt themselves to the multiplatform scenario? What does it imply from the point of view of management culture, internal structure, production practices and the configuration of an extended offer?
- What are the main arguments of those economic profit oriented players against the extension of public service activities?
- How do public service operators counteract the increasing hostility of commercial players against them?
- How can public service operators improve the value-for-money proposal that they offer to the citizens?
- What policy and regulatory mechanisms are being implemented to address / determine / influence the evolution of public service?
- Is Public Service still necessary in order to face market failure situations and to ensure that the media system provides social profitability?

▪ Paper submission

We ask scholars and researchers interested in publication to submit manuscripts of max. 45 000 characters by **15 September 2012**. Eight papers for the publication will be selected by **30 September 2012**. Full-length papers shall be submitted to journal@ptks.pl and r.suarez@hans-bredow-institut.de according to the Style and Manuscript Guidelines laid out on the official website of the CEJC: www.cejc.ptks.pl



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