


Chapter 11


The Platformization of Digital Journalism in Slovenia: Navigating Algorithmic Dependencies and Cross- Media Practices

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores how Slovenian journalists navigate the increasing influence of digital platforms in their professional practice. Drawing on a national survey of 228 media professionals, the study investigates which online platforms journalists use, their level of digital proficiency, and the extent of automation tool adoption in newsrooms. The findings show a strong dependence on dominant platforms such as Google, Facebook, and YouTube, across tasks like research, fact-checking, and audience engagement. Journalists working in online and international media report higher digital proficiency, while automation use remains modest, limited primarily to keyword tagging and fact-checking tools. Advanced automation tools like NLG are adopted rarely. These patterns underscore how platform logics shape editorial workflows in smaller media systems. The study highlights the need for increased

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digital training and more awareness of platform dependency, to support journalism in digitally mediated environments.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing integration of online platforms into journalistic practice has reshaped news production, distribution, and consumption significantly. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter/X, Google, and YouTube have evolved from mere intermediaries to powerful infrastructures that influence the visibility and relevance of news content. Once serving simply as gateways to content, these platforms now act as algorithmic gatekeepers—structuring information flows, monetization strategies, and influencing editorial decisions (Gillespie, 2010; Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). This transformation is driven largely by algorithmic governance, where decisions about what content is promoted or suppressed are delegated to opaque algorithmic systems. As a result, journalistic autonomy is increasingly challenged, and news organizations must navigate the complex demands of platform logics, including shareability, trending potential, and user engagement metrics.

The platformization of news has had global consequences, shaping the routines, values, and economic models of journalism across countries. While large digital outlets like BuzzFeed and The Huffington Post have pioneered platform-native approaches, even traditional public broadcasters and legacy newspapers now optimize content for engagement and algorithmic visibility (Nieborg & Poell, 2018). These shifts are accompanied by increasing experimentation with automation and artificial intelligence in journalism, from audience analytics dashboards to natural language generation (NLG) tools (Diakopoulos, 2019).

In Slovenia, a small media market with a digitally active population, the effects of platformization are particularly pronounced. Media organizations face the dual challenge of maintaining journalistic standards while adapting to the demands of algorithmically mediated content distribution. The Slovenian media system is characterized by concentrated ownership, limited resources, and hybrid media structures, which must adapt to global platform dynamics with comparatively fewer technological or financial capacities (Štětka, 2012; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Furthermore, the majority of content on major platforms is in English, meaning the information available might not be tailored to the Slovenian context. This poses linguistic and geographic biases, which can limit the relevance and usefulness of such data for Slovenian journalists, especially when covering local or national topics. At the same time, digital transformation also presents opportunities for innovation, especially through selective adoption of tools and hybrid human-machine workflows. Platforms not only impose constraints, but also offer affordances, such

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