

Interactive news services – competitors to the printed newspaper

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Introduction

The December 2005 issue of *Newspaper Techniques* - the international magazine of newspaper strategy, business and technology addresses the issue of a second generation of new media, denoted as "new new media". Northrup (2005) states "Now publishers have a new set of new media to master, such as video, podcasting, mobile and epaper"(p.1). In a now out-of-date reference book on New Media (Pettersson, 1986), one of the suggested "new new media" technologies, "video" was included in the long list of new media. Thus video was considered as new both in 1986 and in 2005, however in different contexts. New media or contemporary new media are seldom completely "new" but rather combining characteristics of old media (van Dijk, 2004). This is also discussed by Bolter and Grusin (2001), suggesting the concept of re-mediation to be "the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms".

New media is thus obviously a continuously evolving time-dependent concept. Rogers (2003) suggests that an innovation is an idea, habit or an object that is perceived as new by an individual. However, the actual newness of the idea, measured objectively in time, is of minor importance for the individuals' reactions to the idea. Hence, according to Rogers, for the publishers, traditionally having worked with printed media, video can be regarded as new media.

Researchers as well as industry representatives have ever since on-line newspaper editions were introduced on the market discussed them in terms of potential threats or as complements to the printed editions of the newspapers. As new digital editions of the newspapers continuously have been launched on the market, the threat to the printed edition may have increased further.

In this paper, four digital news media services have been analyzed; the on-line news paper edition, web TV news services, news podcasting services and news blogs. The four services all contain elements of interactivity.

Objectives

One of the objectives of this paper is to investigate whether the interactive aspects of new digital news media services are the core of the potential threat to the printed edition. Furthermore, the paper will discuss the newness of new media forms such as interactive news services. When do such services stop being new and how important is it for their success to be perceived as such?

Method

The discussion in this paper is mainly based on literature on new media, interactivity and personalization, a survey performed during the spring of 2006 and interviews with experts at newspaper companies. The results, which are to be considered as a contribution to discussion rather than solid conclusions, have been obtained using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Literature and available statistics of the four new media news services have been analyzed. The survey was carried out with early users of the selected new media news services, with the purpose to discuss the usage of the interactive aspects of the services.

The sample used in the survey was a convenience sample. All students at the department of Media Technology and Graphic Arts at the Royal Institute of Technology received invitation e-mails to participate in the survey. The total number of e-mails sent out was 273. Of those, 86 students participated in the survey, thus a response rate of 31 % was obtained. The survey was set in the end of the spring term, which might have had a negative impact on the response rate. Many of the students claimed after the online survey was closed that they had not checked their university e-mail accounts during the time of the survey.

According to Cook et al. (2000) on line survey response rates tend to be lower than traditional paper and pencil response rates. Cook et al. analyzed response rates for 68 online surveys reported in 49 studies and found a mean of 39.6 %. Kaplowitz et al (2004) suggest that the difference in response rates can depend on that fewer efforts have been made to develop motivating tools to increase Web Survey response compared to mail surveys.

The survey questions were of an exploratory nature and the area is of interdisciplinary nature in lack of methods for studying and comparing the phenomenon (Cooke, 2005), the results have to be regarded as preliminary and serve more as contribution to discussion and inspiration for further research.

Outline of the paper

The paper consists of an introduction to the area of digital news media services, background of the selected four communication channels, results from the survey, discussion of the results with emphasis on the newness of new media and interactivity in relation to being potential threats to the traditional media, conclusions of the paper and suggestions for future research.

The newness of new media

Frequently cited in new media studies, Manovich (2002) sees variability as a basic condition of all new media. He states that elements in new media are “wired” together into more than one object, always retaining their individual identity, whereas in old media the elements are “hardwired” into a unique structure and no longer maintain their separate identity.

Siapera (2004, p.157) describes a somewhat similar development where the media industry envision a convergence, in which all current media will join together in a singular mode of encoding and delivery. Deuze (2006) states that as everyone now can make, copy, modify and send any kind of media, the consequences of this interactivity in new media are that media companies share control over the contemporary mediated experience with everyone else.

Adding new channels as complements to existing media channels have become more common among the media companies. Nysveen et al. (2005) argue that the use of one channel increases as a result of another related channel. Depending on the level of product differentiation, adding publishing channels with so-called “shovel ware”, that is re-purposing print or broadcast content (Boczkowski, Chyi and Sylvie, 1998) might instead result in competition on the expense of the primary product, the printed newspaper. Chyi and Sylvie (1998, p.14) argue that if an online newspaper competes with its print counterpart, “shovel ware” should be avoided. When competing with other on-line news services, they should however according to these researchers provide high-quality news that comes from their print counterparts. Chyi and Sylvie further argue that in the case of on-line newspapers, depending on the somewhat “fuzzy” market structure, the electronic newspaper managers are not sure how their competition measures audiences, and cannot be sure how to market their product, as a substitute or as a complement.

Ihlström (2004, p.1) states that newspaper executives started to assess consequences of the Internet in 1993. Online newspapers have been available for a decade (Hedman, 2004), one example being the largest on-line newspaper in Sweden, Aftonbladet.se that celebrated its 10th year anniversary in august 2004 (Söderhjelm, 2004).

The early attempts at WebTV on newspaper websites have been available for almost as long. WebTV can be defined as televised content distributed over the Web and viewed on a computer (Nysveen et al., 2005). They argue that WebTV and traditional TV are converging as interactive possibilities on the web are combined with the television format. Web TV is used by broadcast networks both as a marketing tool and as an additional channel for the network’s brand extension (Ha, 2002, Siapera, 2004). Ha claims that TV Web sites are trying to transform general viewers into fans, providing extra material in addition to their TV shows. The strategies are to develop brand loyalty of their viewers and to promote their on-air-programs.

What is sometimes labeled as “new” online journalism is the weblog (Deuze, 2003). A weblog is a form of writing that is unique to the web, reliant to its key characteristic: the hyperlink (Matheson, 2005, p.445). News weblogs (Newsblogs) can be blogs event-specific, independent newsblogs, or personal journalistic blogs. Some of them are a collection of links while others are reflective, perhaps containing views or ways to tell the story outside of the traditional storytelling of news. Matheson (2005, p.458) describes how readers of newsblogs are set along paths of exploration rather than given nuggets of information, and that the status of that information therefore changes. However, according to Johnson and Kaye (2004) blogs rely on peer review of other bloggers via the commenting functions, and users may therefore find blogs more credible than sources controlled by for example corporate interests. Another point made by Johnson and Kaye is that as most bloggers are not themselves independent newsgatherers, they must rely heavily on the web, using

content from traditional media sources. Newspapers begun reporting about blogs around 1999, however were slow to adopt the publishing format themselves (Gill, 2005). According to Gill, the first daily newspaper in the world to endorse RSS feeds with news blogs was the New York Times, in 2002 only for UserLand customers however in 2004 to a broader web audience. News blog content can be similar to the more traditional chronicles. Gill claims that there are more newspapers with editorial columns "called" blogs than there are actually published blogs. News podcasts have since 2004 been more and more common, and are currently receiving acceptance of the general public.

Interactivity and personalization

The concept of interactivity has been discussed frequently in scholarly media literature for decades. Several definitions exist, much depending on what discipline the media researcher suggesting the definition belongs to, one example being Rafaeli quoted in Jensen (1998) reserving the concept for communication scholars. As one form of interactivity, the term personalization appears frequently discussed concerning the future of digital news media. Personalized websites are according to Nysveen et al (2005), dynamic Web sites where each consumer can subscribe to services that are in accordance with his/her individual profile. It is outside of the scope of this paper to give a review on the two concepts, origins and definitions. The brief presentation of the concepts of interactivity and personalization made here contains thus only a fragment of the ongoing research discussion of the concepts.

Discussion of interactivity can be described as two-parted, highlighting the positive potential of new communication technology, transforming consumers of news into participants, or emphasising the negative impacts new technology can have concerning fragmentation of the audience (Hujanen and Pietikäinen, 2004, p. 384). The term interactivity has along with many other terms turned into a buzzword. Jensen (1998, p. 186) discusses interactivity alongside with other hyped terms such as media convergence and information super highway, as a concept that has been watered down due to that the worlds of advertising and entertainment have used the term as an value added word in order to sell new products and services. Leaving the hype behind, Jensen (p. 201) defines interactivity as a "measure of a media's potential ability to let the user exert an influence on the content and/or form of the mediated communication".

According to Manovich (2002), the logic of new media values individuality over conformity. Interactivity is not just about exchange of communication but also generation of content (Richards, 2006, p.533). Richards describes how interactivity has a dual nature, activity and property. Activity, meaning perception in use and property meaning available features on a website. In the simplest kind of interactivity the user edits or generates a path through existing content (Richards, 2006, p.543).

Interactivity described in a positive manner, entails as suggested by Cover (2006, p.141) a built-in capacity to transform, shape or customize, in the case of Cover: text in accord with the author's wishes. However, the possibilities to alter the content might also result in drawbacks, as it can be possible for the users to alter the content outside of the author's control and original intent. A common problem for the on line newspapers concerning interactive services such as chat rooms is according to Boczkowski (1999) the occurrence of aggressive content published by anonymous participants. Because of limited resources at the on-line newspapers, the monitoring of this content may suffer. Newspapers have tried to solve this problem in many ways. One solution is to make participants register before they can interact and post content on the newspapers website. According to Boskowski, registration can have a tendency towards higher audience self-control as the anonymity thus is reduced.

Hujanen and Pietikäinen (2004) identify three discourses relevant when discussion on new technology, journalism and practises in news consumption:

- 1) pick and choose
- 2) user in transition
- 3) multivoicing journalism.

"Pick and choose" which could also be denoted as personalization and is described as dominant when marketing new forms of journalism where the user is expected to be an eager consumer of news, willing to choose the news of his or her interest. Hujanen and Pietikäinen (2004) fear that this approach mainly is used to increase the market and lower production costs and that instead of increasing dialogue in journalism and facilitating audience participation it might steer towards fragmentation and weaken journalism's role as an arena for public discussion.

The second approach, "user in transition" refers to that news users would not only read, watch or listen to news, but also participate by making contact with newsrooms and journalists.

Multivoicing journalism is described as a forum for the public debate with the aid of new communication technologies and interactivity. However, Hujanen and Pietikäinen warn that people's possibilities and

competence to participate in journalism may be limited and that the level of motivation from the general public to participate is still unknown.

Results from the survey

The newness of new media

The respondents were asked to indicate which of the four media services: on-line newspapers, web TV, podcasting and blogs they consider to be new media. Several or all of the services could be chosen. 73 % indicated that podcasting was a new medium (Table 1), Some of the comments given were that many of the respondents had not heard of podcasting before participating in the survey.

Table 1: Which of the following media services do you consider to be “new media”. (N=83)

Media service	Percentage
On-line newspapers	21 %
Web TV	59 %
Podcasting	73 %
Blogs	50 %
None of the alternatives	10 %

The comments on on-line newspapers were that they were not to be considered as a new medium as they have existed much longer than the other suggested services, having been around widely for over 10 years. Furthermore, the respondents commented on if blogs at all can be seen as a medium, due to that they are perceived by these respondents as less serious than the three other suggested services. Notable is that 10 % did not consider any of the suggested services to be new media. One respondent suggested another example of new media over of the suggested four services, namely broadcasting via services such as www.yousendit.com where large files, too big for e-mail (YouSendIt, 2006) can be transferred.

Interactive aspects of digital news media services

On-line newspapers

Interactivity in on-line newspapers was in the survey defined as interactive services such as comments, chat and reader polls. The respondents were asked about how important they consider these services (Table 2).

Table 2: How important is interactivity in on-line newspapers? (N=80)

Importance of Interactivity in Online Newspapers	Percentage
Very important	1 %
Important	18 %
Neither important or not important	53 %
Not important	27 %
Not at all important	1 %

Furthermore, the respondents were asked about how interesting they find the interactive services such as polls and chats provided in on-line newspapers. The result can be seen in table 3.

Table 3: To what extent do you find interactive services such as polls and chats in on-line newspapers interesting? (N=78)

Degree of interest	Percentage
Great interest	3 %
Some interest	13 %
Less interest	51 %
No interest	33 %

Don't know	0 %
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Interactivity in on-line newspapers gathered a substantial amount of comments, where many of the respondents considered the interactive services to be great fun and sometimes interesting, but not important. Especially reader polls were commented on by several of the respondents as fun to read. If the interactive services were used in a more serious manner however, some of the respondents felt that interactive services had the potential of becoming more important to them. Furthermore, as comments to articles are used at the on-line newspapers today, some of the respondents stated that due to that anyone can comment, sometimes without moderation, the information in such comments often were perceived as stupid and something to laugh at, rather than to take seriously.

Web TV

Interactive services in web TV were in the survey defined as possibilities to click on advertisements shown before or after a web TV clip and in this manner get directly to the website of the advertiser. The importance of such services according to the respondents, are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: How important is interactivity to you when watching web-TV? (N=44)

Importance of Interactivity in Web TV	Percentage
Very important	2 %
Important	12 %
Neither important or not important	35 %
Not important	33 %
Not at all important	19 %

The comments made by the respondents concerned advertisements. The respondents do not like advertisements at all in this type of medium, as they consider web TV to be best suitable for watching what you want, when you want it. Interactivity was pointed out as possibilities to pause in the clip or to play fast forward when necessary.

The respondents were also asked to what extent they find interactive services such as clickable images or games on web TV interesting (Table 4).

Table 4: To what extent do you find interactive services such as clickable images and games on web TV interesting? (N=44)

Degree of interest	Percentage
Great interest	0 %
Some interest	23 %
Less interest	27 %
No interest	48 %
Don't know	2 %

Podcasting

Only nine respondents indicated that they have used podcasting services at all. The respondents who were not using podcasting services (89%) stated the following reasons for not using the service: they found podcasting unnecessary and not interesting yet, they did not own a device to receive the podcasts, or they did not know enough about the service. A substantial amount of the comments concerned that they do not have the energy to find out more about podcasting and that it seemed to be too much work to get information about it. The main incitement to start consuming podcasts for these respondents were if they bought an mp3-player, that the content was interesting enough, that the services provided free music and that they were more talked about in the media.

Blogs

3% of the respondents that read blogs on a regular basis stated that they comment in blogs a few times a week, 5% once a week, 15% a few times a month, 26 % a few times a year and 50 responded that they never comment in blogs even though they read them. Table 5 shows how important the respondents consider interactivity such as commenting, in blogs.

Table 5: How important is interactivity to you in blogs? (N=59)

Importance of Interactivity in Blogs	Percentage
Very important	7 %
Important	39 %
Neither important or not important	25 %
Not important	27 %
Not at all important	2 %

Personalization in digital news media services

Personalization in on-line newspapers was in the survey defined as the possibility for the readers to personalize the layout of the newspaper or to choose what sections of the newspapers that should be highlighted or visible on the main start page of the on-line newspaper. Further it was stated in the survey that several attempts have been made to personalize on-line newspapers throughout the years, however that the most common way of personalization in use nowadays is based on log files of the users' previous reading habits and not on active choices by the readers themselves. The respondents were then asked about how important they consider personalization to be for them when reading on-line newspapers (Table 6).

Table 6: How important is personalization to you in on-line newspapers? (N=80)

Importance of Personalization in Online Newspapers	Percentage
Very important	0 %
Important	22 %
Neither important or not important	41 %
Not important	28 %
Not at all important	9 %

The comments from the respondents on this question were both positive and negative towards personalization in general. Some of the respondents feared they would miss certain news if the newspaper were personalized, and that the newspaper itself already as it is, is a trustable source for what is interesting news. Some respondents thought it would be fun with personalized newspapers, and ease the reading experience. Several comments concerned that the respondents never had come across such a feature and would like to try it first before stating their opinion about it.

Web TV

Personalization in Web TV was in the survey defined as the way the user will be presented to content that may interest her, based on what she has watched before. The importance of personalization was graded by the respondents as can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7: How important is personalization when watching web-TV? (N=43)

Importance of Personalization in web TV services	Percentage
Very important	0 %
Important	14 %
Neither important or not important	58 %
Not important	19 %
Not at all important	9 %

Podcasting

The nine respondents of the survey that consumed podcasting services indicated that personalization, such as being presented to podcasts based on their previous choices of podcasts was not important, nor unimportant. The content of the podcasts was considered highly important for the eight of the respondents. One of the respondents stated that he or she only subscribes to a podcasting service because he or she knows the person that creates this particular podcast.

Blogs

Personalization in blogs was in the survey defined as the possibility to choose layout for the blog or to subscribe to blogs. The importance of personalization was graded by the respondents as can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8: How important is personalization in blogs? (N=59)

Importance of Personalization in Online Newspapers	Percentage
Very important	8 %
Important	24 %
Neither important or not important	29 %
Not important	29 %
Not at all important	10 %

A few of the respondents stated that they visit blogs only because they know the person that keeps the blog. Some read blogs because it is interesting to read other persons thoughts. One respondent stated that he or she by chance sometimes clicks on a link to a blog and therefore gazes through it, but without reading it carefully. Two of the respondents described how they only read blogs about niche content such as sports or philosophy.

Discussion

New new media, positive or negative change?

With digital news channels such as webTV, blogs and podcasts, the newspaper companies are trying to create new businesses. According to the Economist, newspapers are spending less on journalism to cut costs, furthermore they are trying to attract younger readers by providing more entertainment and lifestyle content (The Economist, 2006, p.9). The Economist further suggests that newspapers will survive in the long term only if they reinvent themselves on the internet and on other media platforms such as mobile phones and portable electronic devices (Economist, 2006, p.50). Such suggestions about the death of old media in the face of new communication technologies are according to Nguyen (2006, para 2.) widespread.

Nevertheless, the Economist's alarming prophesy supports the idea that the change from the newspaper's core business towards a reinvention on the Internet or on other platforms yet to be invented, is indeed a threat to the printed edition.

The focus of the survey in this paper was on young people, studying media technology. The expectation was that these people would be familiar with the latest media channels and perhaps even heavy users of these. As Hujanen and Pietikäinen (2004, p.385) argue, such a target group could indicate possible future developments and changes. Furthermore, Lin (2001, p.34) states that infrequent newspaper readers or nonreaders are typically younger and it seems logical that they are more likely adopters for online services compared to their older counterparts.

Deuze (2003) states that there is a third-person form of interactivity, meaning that the users that do not want to participate or be interactive themselves, however are interested in observing interactive activities taking place. Some of the comments in the survey also point to that it can be interesting to read what others have commented without participating.

Newspaper companies may want to hold on to the idea that people will always want to consume content and news, reading it on paper, but at the same time they provide the audience with alternative publishing channels and new digital services. I would argue this is a message confusing the audience as the newspaper companies claim that they are launching new media channels to meet the needs and wishes of the audience primarily, not revealing that the primary strategy behind such efforts might instead be to keep the audience loyal to their brand to attract advertisers in order to survive as a company.

During interviews with newspaper company representatives, the concern has been raised that new alternative channels might cannibalize the primary product, the printed edition. The interesting thing here is to look at what message the newspaper companies currently are sending the audience, moving from the traditional newspaper product towards something else. As Althaus and Tewksbury (2002) describe how newspaper readers quickly learn to navigate the signals employed by editors such as that long front-page articles in the printed edition are more important than short inside stories, the positive promotion of the newspaper companies digital editions might in the same way send a clear message of that this way of consuming media is the one recommended, the most important. If it is the case that the newspapers want to keep their printed edition, the message they send to the audience is, even if the companies are not as Deuze (2003) describes, making it clear to the audience why they are offering all sorts of advanced multimedia features, not making sense. It sometimes seems as if the newspaper companies hope that the audience, despite of the message being sent to them; that new digital media is the most interesting way to consume media in the future, in the end still will choose to read their news on paper.

Or could it be as stated by Slotterøy Johnsen (2004, p. 252) that quality simply is what the audience wants to watch, even though it might lead to shallow and tabloid news coverage. Has the audience thus already have made their choice, deciding to consume news in a new way than reading it in the traditional printed edition? As diffusion of new technology takes time before it has reached the majority of the individuals in the social system, maybe it is too soon to detect if the newspaper as we so far know it, is already passé? Is thus the change of core products for the newspaper companies the sign of that they do know this and that they already have given up on maintaining the printed edition? Is it a conscious strategy or is it simply a sign of disagreement within the company, going for a little of everything to keep everyone happy?

The message sent from the newspaper companies to the audience is encouraging them to consume news from several channels provided by the company. The audience is encouraged to take part, to be interactive, to personalize their content and not remain passive.

In the context of interactivity and personalization, new media is mentioned. It has also been in the scope of this article to discuss when new media might stop to be new.

The respondents of the survey analysed in this article point out that of the four media services, online newspapers, web TV, podcasts and blogs, podcasts were the medium most respondents found to be a new medium. 89 % of the respondents did not consider online newspaper as a new medium, 41 % did not find web TV to be new, 50% did not consider blogs to be new and furthermore 10 % did not find any of the suggested four services to be new. Literature on new technologies tends to overstate the novelty of new digital media often describing a coming radical break with what has been before (Siapera, 2004). In order to understand what is new, it is however necessary to understand what was before (Slotterøy Johnsen, 2004, p. 240). However, according to Slotterøy Johnsen (p. 255) it seems rather like old practises are being reproduced, and sometimes enhanced through the use of new technology.

Reviewing literature on interactivity raises the question: Where can we draw the line between what is to be interactive and not? Many definitions are complex and in defining the term, the question of why it seems that the media companies choose to put such high importance to the interactive aspects of what they choose to denote as new media, what purpose interactive services serve and why the audience is said to want such services seems to take a subordinate position. The term interactive might not the best way to describe the area of digital feed back channels or the creation of ones own content in relation to established media content.

What instead is new, is perhaps not the interactive aspect but the way the media companies position themselves in relation to their audiences. One example of this positioning is given by Siapera (2004) where TV channels take upon themselves to provide a meeting point for fans, coordinating fan activities, placing themselves in the centre of the activities. A similar example from the newspaper industry is hosting blogs for their audience provided via the newspapers website, as in the case of Swedish evening newspaper Expressen.

When the on-line editions of the newspapers were still regarded as new, the Royal Institute of Technology hosted a website with a list of on-line newspapers in the world (Enlund, 2001). Keeping such a list might not be as interesting as it once was, as it does not have a news value anymore. The list is still available on the Internet, however last updated in 2001. When this list originally was created, internet was indeed a new medium, and providing news content on-line was new. In a few years from now, media companies positioning themselves to their audience as an intermediary platform for various community

activities, moving into other areas than simply producing and presenting news to their audience might not be considered as new at all. The Internet and the www, have according to Slotterøy Johnsen (2004) been temporarily "christened" "New Media". New media is obviously a time-dependent context, thus denoting something as new media is dangerous. Whatever is labeled as new media will soon be outdated and old. Inspired by Slotterøy Johnsen describing how the internet was temporarily labeled as new media, perhaps a better way to describe the area would be by a term that in itself tells us that it deals with temporarity and ongoing change, such as "recent media".

Rogers described an innovation, as something perceived as new by an individual, even though the time of existence for this particular product or service might be long. The ideas presented in this paper can to experienced readers be old and presented many times before. However, to the author, this way of thinking was indeed new. The newness of new media undergoes the same phenomenon. What is new is time-dependent and subjective. In an attempt to clarify what is new right now, the conclusion is that changing "new" to "recent" might avoid confusion.

I would argue that on-line editions are not new media anymore. The results from the survey supports this as 89% percent of the respondents indicated that on-line newspapers were not to be regarded as new media. Previously, as on-line editions were regarded as something new and not yet established, they could not constitute a real threat towards the traditional and established media. As on-line newspapers now have turned into an established medium they are competing with other established media. As newspaper companies are constantly experimenting with new media services, labeling them as test projects thus indicating that these services are small-scale, non profit services, they are not to be considered as threatening, at least not yet. However, as soon as the status has changed from "test project", to "new media" to "media", it is the author's opinion that the threat is increasing. Thus, as status of on-line editions according to this study, has moved on from new media, the author suggests that they constitute a real threat towards the printed edition.

Judging from the review of articles for this paper on multiple channel publishing, there are research on both that the printed edition will not be negatively affected by additional publishing channels and there are research stating the opposite. On the positive side for the future of the printed edition, previous research has shown that the newspaper companies need not to worry about additional publishing channels constituting a threat towards the printed edition as the electronic newspaper is not yet satisfactory compared to the printed edition (Chyi and Sylvie, 1998). Furthermore, previous research on the positive side, has shown that the audience still prefers to read news on paper (Hujanen and Pietikäinen, 2004), that online service adoption has not negatively reduced time spent with other media (Lin, 2001) and that internet will not replace traditional sources in the long run (Nguyen, 2006). However, with regards to the theories of diffusion of new technology and services, these might not still be valid conclusions. As Lin (2001, p.36) argues, traditional media are not going to be displaced by the online medium easily, unless the online medium can provide the audience with better content, superior technical benefits, and greater cost efficiency. The question is therefore, for future research, are we there yet? Future research need to once again explore the strategies of the newspaper companies concerning multiple publishing and the future of the printed edition and match these strategies and opinions to the opinions, wishes and news consumption patterns of the audience. However, the most important question might not be about the future of the printed edition, but moving on towards what a newspaper will be, what function, market and audience it will have in the future.

Conclusions

According results from the survey of this article, interactivity is not yet considered as particularly important by the respondents, except in the case of blogs. Interactive features and the content they add to the services such as comments, according the respondents fun, but mostly of low quality. As the population investigated was small and not representative for the entire population of consumers today, the results are only to be regarded as indications. The indications found, points out that the interactive services in the digital services analyzed are not in themselves a threat towards the printed edition. This article also discusses the possibility that the status of on-line editions has moved on from "new" media, to established media and that such services therefore constitute real threats towards the printed edition. Other digital media services such as webTV, podcasting and blogs still not as established, might in the future contribute to this threat of the printed edition due to the same reasons.

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