

JOURNALISM ON SOCIAL MEDIA: HOW TO TELL STORIES AND NEWS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

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Abstract: Digitization in media industry and in the other segments has brought many challenges for journalists. First of all, it is lower rate of attention on the side of consumers. Secondly, it is multitasking which goes hand in hand with using of social networks like Facebook or Instagram. These two problems are mostly related with young people, especially children and teenagers who were born as digital natives. This paper will analyze ephemeral images, so called Stories, which media use to tell stories to promote their web content mainly for young people using this kind of platform. We will try to figure out why this is an appropriate way of informing young generation called generation Z.

Keywords: digitization, ephemeral journalism, Instagram, Snapchat, social network, visualization

1 Communication on social networks

Social networks initially served only as a tool for citizen journalism. Nowadays, they are very good helpers for both media and individual journalists. In journalism, they serve several purposes:

- Website content propagation which is related with expansion of readership.
- Getting tips about various topics that can be processed as journalistic content. Social networks are one of the primary sources of information from different areas.
- Feedback from audience not only in the form of comments but also through private messages, sharing, or other interactive elements (likes, Facebook responses, etc.).
- Journalist can communicate with readers by informing about their articles, or work, or colleagues' articles on their private accounts.
- Social networks offer an area for citizen journalism, smaller media and blogging.
- Creating specific content for specific social networks.

This very last point has created a need for the production of original content designed primarily for social media delivery. These contents are especially characteristic by the viral potential, which means content should be shared as much as possible, without much effort, for example without the need for sponsorship it should reach as many people as possible. This means, in particular, that social network content is brief and visually attractive using especially videos or photographic content and images. Above all, this means that social networks are responsible for the trend of content visualization. Social media and the presence of media on this platform have redefined the way the public is informed about up-to-date "hot" information and news, as they often appear first on the social network, later on the media, depending on the type of event. Another feature of journalism on social networks is their connection to mobile phones, which represent the fastest way to process news or feedback. The number of smartphone owners is steadily increasing as well as fast internet coverage and speed. Social networks are therefore the fastest medium.

We can say that social networks together with the Internet are new media. Their main advantage is that users use them continuously, although often only in the background and on the other hand recipients do not open individual posts very often even though special content for social networks is linked to the web site, or refers to the web in the description.

It is not anything new that Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, they work mainly on the visual side. Users primarily share content like photos and videos, and the main device is a mobile phone or tablet. At the beginning, it should be said that the existence of media on these social networks is a necessity, though it is not compulsory to exist at all of them. For example, Snapchat is not open to all media and chooses who can

contribute to Discover. The Instagram and Snapchat are primarily for young generation. Thanks to the regular content on these two visual social networks, the media can engage new potential younger readers and also increase brand awareness.

Audiovisual content, especially on Facebook and Instagram is very important to produce. It has even a greater impact on the audience. Video on the social network (especially Instagram) should be 1:1 and should contain subtitles. Additionally, the visual elements shared on social networks are infographics, journalistic photos. There are also so called semantic graphics. Again, it is a 1: 1 format containing text and picture. The most common are quotes, science and technology facts, showbiz, and so on. It is combination of the media graphic identity and logo. Semantic graphic should be comprehensible without the accompanying text (status) to be easily shared. The last one new type of social media content is so called ephemeral images, known as Stories, which originally come from Snapchat and later this concept was taken by Instagram and Facebook. We will study their functions and influence upon audience in the following chapters.

2 Methodology

Ephemeral images are quite new digital content for newsrooms and media at all. Even though almost all of most popular social networks use "story mode", we can say that Snapchat invented it. For that reason, we decided to analyze mainly Snapchat's Discover with seventeen media involved in this project. For example, there are such brands like Daily Mail, Mashable, People, IGN, MTV, BuzzFeed, National Geographic and many more which represent the biggest progress in digitization and convergence of journalism. On the other hand, named media are leaders in their field of journalism worldwide. We chose content analysis of already mentioned Snapchat channels with consideration of Instagram Stories. The main goal is to find out most frequent ways of communicating news by ephemeral images, known as Stories. We also would like to generalize this specific type of communication to bring new theory on the field of mass media communication and describe new journalistic genre.

3 Spreading news with ephemeral images

The media that managed to publish content on Snapchat or Instagram use the broad functionality of these social networks, especially the visual possibilities offered by them which border on infotainment, tabloidization and citizen journalism.

The way of content creation and publication is dependent on the video / photo length which is 10 / 15 seconds. After 24 hours content disappears. It is also possible to swipe down and read full article on the website of media. The purpose of publishing on Snapchat and Instagram is not just to promote and refer to existing content, such as articles on the web, but Discover and Stories also have a place to strengthen the media brand for the target group of teenagers. In the following lines, we'll give examples of how the media is communicating on Snapchat and Instagram focusing on the target group: Generation Z, people born after 2000 who have not experienced life without cutting-edge technology. Generation Z is not willing to act or make moves, even if it is in its personal interest. For example, meet and talk to friends? Generation Z would rather stay in the comfort of home on the Internet because everything is solved by modern technologies. Their armor is the distance from the outside world which separates them from everything that does not concern them directly.¹

¹ Generácia Z sú maximálne digitálni ľudia. [online]. [2016-11-6]. Available: <<http://strategie.hnonline.sk/spravvy/782335-generacia-z-su-maximalne-digitalni-ludia>>

We have divided Snapchat and also Instagram publishing into five groups based on content and way of telling stories.

Hard news

Even though we have infotainment elements in serious news, content creators have to consider the character of information. Content mostly consists of one bigger photo and the text is also dominant. Regarding the text part, the authors mostly choose a short caption – title and a short introduction containing one maximum of two sentences. Creators do not even avoid tables or charts. It is also important to be able to broadcast events directly in real time, such as elections, protests, and so on. Live events should be main part of publishing on Instagram or Snapchat.



Hard news on Snapchat (Daily Mail, CNN and MTV).

Tabloid content

Authors are more likely to use Snapchat's graphical capabilities, including collage of photos with moving pictures or videos and animations. Similar to the print press, the Snapchat and Instagram content is typical for its colorful content and using of photographs. Typical is irony or humor, especially celebrity themes. Content creators also use moderators to report or offer various polls.



Soft news on Snapchat (Daily Male, Food).

Entertainment

The content prepared to amuse people promoted by Snapchat or Instagram is, in most cases, educational or popular and educational at the same time. Among other things, they are devoted to culinary themes, techniques, sports, or various interests in politics, culture and everyday life. Speaking about visual elements, the processing is similar to both tabloid and hard news. Creators use animations, videos, music, or text, as well as other elements that have hybridized into news. These are various tests, quizzes, recipes or preparation procedures, as well as stories to continue or snippets of interviews or humorously sketched sketches. It is important to note that creators can give a true point of their stories in ten / fifteen seconds or with the help of few Stories or Snaps going in the right order in a row which is similar to listicle articles.



Entertainment information on Snapchat (Food and National Geographic).

Interaction

Although Snapchat has a lower level of interaction, since it is not possible to comment, share or share in the form we are used to, there is some possibility of interacting with the content. Among those that determine the success of the content from a marketing point of view is, in particular, the number of screenings and the number of screen shots. These options have also been used by the media to promote their content. There is also possibility to edit particular post and share it or send it to friends. Instagram also offers live poll feature. Users can choose from two possibilities, yes or no most frequently. They can also know results.



Way of interaction on Snapchat (People, BuzzFeed, Cosmopolitan).

Citizen journalism

Snapchat has changed the nature of citizen journalism. Although he didn't come with the live video first, Snapchat has made the most of its potential. Snapchat has developed a system of geolocation labels that work similarly to hashtags. This means that if a user is in a certain location or on a certain event with its own geolocation label, they can pin it to their shared content. For example, if a geolocation sticker has a hockey match; Snapchat can aggregate all the videos or photos with this sticker and offer a live Snapchat transfer from that location. This makes it more authentic than Facebook, as one event is streamed to an unlimited number of users, making it more attractive. On the other hand, Instagram has similar feature but it collects Stories from similar geographical places.

3.1 Ephemeral images: characteristics

The specific features of Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook (the inventor of which is Snapchat) have suggested formation of other journalistic products on social networks. They are so-called stories, but terminology varies according to the social network. In the next lines, we'll introduce the features and ways of publishing through this platform, which are really creative and offer unlimited publishing capabilities with functionality of promoting content. We are talking about huge multimedia potential as no other social networks' content. So called Stories are not periodic, don't have an archive and content is very primitive and ephemeral exactly as an informal personal communication. Content we're talking about can be very vigorous, interactive and intelligent in few seconds. This chapter

will describe elementary characteristics of new type of communication defined mostly by Snapchat.

1. Video length: For Instagram it's 15 seconds, Snapchat has 10-second videos or photos that only last for 24 hours. We talk about ephemeral communication that is not periodical; they do not have a public archive.
2. Individual photos or videos can create a longer story.
3. Another feature is filming or shooting with a mobile device in height, which denies all shooting rules.
4. In essence, these contents are primitive and volatile as normal communication.
5. Visualization of data and information. These are shared by either static or dynamic images. This visualization is typical for Z generation but also for all online journalism. The contents are authentic and brief, using humor and often game elements.
6. Users focus on shared content more than on any other platform. It is certainly a positive change for newsrooms. Each type of content lasts only 10-15 seconds and it is followed by another, or it is cyclically repeated, users pay much more attention to watched videos or photos with text. This is a great deal of scarcity nowadays, because we live in a time when young people, surrounded by information overpressure, do not pay full attention to media content. In addition, Snapchat repeat one post cyclically, while Instagram cuts post after 15 seconds.
7. Contribution to citizen journalism. Snapchat has popularized aggregation of user's created content into one channel using geolocation tags. It has created a completely new kind of citizen journalism that can bring interesting, atypical information from various events, protests, sport matches and many others. We are talking about the next level of automation of journalism. The first social network that introduced such a procedure was Periscope.
8. Return to old media. First, there is a comeback of print magazines, because users mostly scroll from left to right or they simply tapping on that part of the screen of the device. In addition, there can also be a return to the traditional 50's when the viewer's only watched programs running behind each other. Similarly, Discover or Stories works on Snapchat, Instagram, where users just follow posts in a row without the ability to manipulate this content. They can just switch channel.
9. The purpose of publishing with this platform is not just to promote and refer to existing content, such as articles on the web, but it also has its place in the context of strengthening the media brand.
10. The target group of young people is undisputed advantage and main reason of using Snapchat Discover or Instagram Stories as a media channel. The young people who have found their place at Snapchat or Instagram have developed a certain language of communication or slang and media producers should understand it and use it in communication of news. Of course, young people will stay on Snapchat because there is a small probability of meeting their parents there who primarily use Facebook, less Instagram. The media have a unique chance to capture a target group of teenagers to create a future audience.
11. The easy form of information spread, which is closely related to the use of infotainment elements, is another advantage of using Snapchat as a communication channel. Young people can receive serious mediated in an inconvenient and fun way.
12. Since Snapchat content remains visible for 24 hours, users are used to share content of very low standards. We find a similar situation in content shared by media channels, although there is rather a larger tendency to tabloidization of information. The problem is also the preparation of Snapchat content itself. Mostly we meet professionally prepared animations or videos that require at least two editors (graphic, journalist). Therefore, there is a need to employ new content-editors for preparing ephemeral content, which also means an intervention in the publisher budget that not every media house can afford.

13. The existence of Snapchat has sparked a number of issues related to privacy and trustworthiness. Is the content of thousands daily users really deleted? In addition, there is also a problem affecting personality rights. If a medium or a private person shares Snap or Story with untrue information about another person, group of people or company and this information will disappear, how could a violation of the law be made when the court does not require screen shot videos or photos to be real evidence?

4 Conclusion

What we should learn from spreading news by Discover or "Stories?" First of all, the most important fragment is the platform. We are talking about mobile devices which are portable and generation Z use them constantly same as social networks (Instagram, Snapchat) which have become a virtual community where they can talk freely and in their own virtual visualized language. It is generally known that nowadays it is very difficult to concentrate for many children and teenagers. Stories offer very useful way of spreading news and telling stories. They are brief and short and users have to remember them because they will disappear forever. The way of telling information is very flexible, funny and comprehensible for generation of digital natives. Media often use gifs, memes and videos. We can say that they visualize communication which is very important for children and teenagers who do not read so much as generation before. We would like to recommend ephemeral images to educational institutions. They could use them as an educational tool which is inconspicuous, interactive and much more effective than traditional way of teaching.

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