

The defining moment – Collaborate or die!

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Challenges – Why defining moment?

It is a wonderful historical time for **us** in in this room. If you take a moment you can almost feel the energy fields. We have gathered here to **pause, share**, go back home and **do better**. At the same time we are all defining the future of public service media and journalism. If we fail, we'll die.

International research is very clear. There are positive correlations between the existence of independent Public service Media, news consumption and knowledge about politics, society and engagement in democratic process.

Good regional journalism helps create and strengthen communities, local cultures and society as a whole. Every modern democracy needs investigative and questioning journalism to engage the audience in seeking further information, learning, and shaping our future society.

Of course we know this. CIRCUM has a real legacy and started in the early 1980s. Exactly in 1983 with 4 father founders: ARD, RTBF, RAI and France 3.

After 34 years after we are still there: from the northern part to the southern part of Europe. From the Atlantic ocean to the Black sea. All together 33 country members, more than 250 regional stations, a powerful network of more than 10.000 journalists.

If we had not been able to change and redefine several time what we are, we would have disappeared. But CIRCUM is still alive. And needs to redefine itself, one more time.

We need to redefine

The role of PSM in this new information- and networked - society is being redefined. By us or by others. We are witnessing an explosion of content. New facts exist in a continuous flow, more audience feedback is available, more voices are being heard - sometimes the voices stay comfortable in its own filtered bubble. It is hard to tell when a story begins, ends and dies. Long tails and the right to be forgotten by Google are just the beginning.

For CIRCUM this means: Sharing best practices and developing new formats.

In order to be able to navigate we need to share our understandings. This is why we are here at this conference.

There will still be a need for high quality journalism to serve the community with fact-checking, analysis and sense-making. In this overflow of information, we need to continue with delivering the very best regional journalism. That's fundamental for CIRCUM

We also believe that it is important to deliver more.

Data journalism is a way forward. A way to combine our traditional information gathering with the creation of new facts. A way to explain to our viewers how to understand all the figures they receive and compare. Therefore we will have a workshop this autumn in London where BBC and SVT will share their ideas and knowledge on data journalism. We hope this workshop will lead to create a training on data journalism. A lot of regional PSM would appreciate to get this skill among their journalists.

Technology

Let's face it. Journalism and media has historically been defined by technology. We have regional television where we have a signal. Through technology innovation we have been able to colour our picture, produce faster and cheaper with fewer people. But it took 60 years. Now development happens in a year or two.

We, as public broadcaster, used to be influential because journalistic research, production and distribution were so expensive very few could afford to do it. Now these criteria are gone. Today a youtuber' can singlehanded invent, produce and distribute to a 50-million audience.

We cannot rely on our historical advantages and legacy to keep or gain audience.

JM. Facing the new technologies has always been part of CIRCUM's DNA

In the late 90s we created the **VJ trainings**, for Video Journalism. This meant that the journalist crew team was made of only one person. That was a revolution at that time. Now it is often the norm, even for the "big" televisions like BBC. Except France Televisions.

Inventing the revolution that also what we decided when creating the **MOJO trainings**. Mojo for Mobile Journalism. A sort of bad word becoming more and more a trendy word.

12 to 15 journalists working together on mobile during a week. Learning how to use this tool, light, easy to handle. Filming, editing and almost broadcasting.

Mobile journalism was a niche 2 years ago, it is becoming the norm for more and more people. Not everywhere and not for every purpose. But its use is really increasing.

That's normal when you know that there are around 3 billion smartphones in the world, and in 2020 the experts forecast more than 6 billion. This can't be called a niche!

And for regional PSM this fact is changing the way to produce, the formats, and the broadcasting system. **Mobile first** could be the rule for all of us.

Talking about technology, CIRCOM has also been a developer through its members. We created our first workshop with RTE and TG4, in Ireland on the theme "**Broadcasting from the field**". Beyond this there was a very challenging reality: how to broadcast in an easy and safe way, from the field, without being forced to come back to our regional station? A clever technic to save time to produce more and better content. In this workshop were shared the experience on the use of the 3G, 4G, Ka-Sat and Ka-Band.

Quite useful for the hot news!

Audience behaviour

Research also tells us that half of social network users share or repost news stories and nearly as many discuss news issues or events on social networking sites. Social and mobile developments are turning consumers into active participants in the news process. Because of technology, we have seen accelerated change in the way journalism is being produced, distributed, and used.

New tools and practices, as well as a multiplication of forms and content, provide better opportunities than ever to deliver high quality journalism services in the digital environment.

Whereas audiences historically were based on proximity and geography, current research show us that communities tend to be based more and more on interest rather than on location. What does this mean for regional broadcasters?

JM. Social media

That why CIRCOM also created a workshop in Amsterdam with the regional public TV ROOS, on "**working with social media**" to better understand how to use social media in the regional newsrooms. And this is quite important for our journalists who can't limit their action and work to the classical production and platform.

Even in the regions to work with social media has become a challenge!

Money and platforms

In the Internet area, the key to attention and economic **success** is to maintain exclusive control over the surface on which the market exchange takes place.

Almost all broadcasters have a social media strategy. Even CIRCOM has a strategy that includes Facebook. These digital platforms give us leverage, durability, visibility and help us reach our audience and possible new audiences. They are also very fun and efficient to use.

The problem is that the underlying principles and strategies of these platforms leads to monopolism. Information control and monopolism is not good in a democracy.

In an increasing number of countries, Facebook and Google have come to dominate, it is nowadays practically impossible for new entrants to be able to acquire market share. While the world's leading digital platform businesses have a combined market capitalization of \$4 trillion, only 4 % of this value has been generated by European firms.

JM. Show excellence and belief in European values.

CIRCOM truly believes that regional public service media are shouldering responsibility, and contribute to local and regional democracy and cultural development. But this needs to be shown to a maximum of citizen. Therefore, we work with big and institutions like:

- The European Parliament and Mr Fernando Carbajo.
- The European Commission, DG Connect and DG Regio, and Mr Javier Jimenez-Moratalla.
- The European Committee of the regions and Mr Jiří Buriánek, its General Secretary.
- The Council of Europe and Mr Alun Drake.

We have also collaborations with universities all over Europe. Most recently with Leeds Beckett University, LBU and Ms Tiana Harper, also here today.

Therefore we decided to apply for **the Erasmus+ project** with the academic and professional help of Leeds Beckett University. To create a new standard of trainings for CIRCOM. We are going to propose with LBU real academic trainings for our members and others participants. If we succeed with our application, of course! Answer: end of June

We also nominate the best regional TV-programmes in Europe that contribute to develop important values. The work of the international CIRCOM-jury is unique.

To show our excellence CIRCOM created a long time ago the “**Prix CIRCOM**”. More than 200 regional programmes competing in 10 categories (minorities, documentary, news report, most original programme, ...). The only international competition dedicated to regional TV programmes.

JM. Money and Austerity

Europe is going through a harsh financial situation. The members of CIRCOM are excellent, of course, but all are cutting down and the risk of losing audience and quality is a fact. Therefore CIRCOM members come together and exchange programmes, co-produce programmes. A lot is done voluntarily in the name of solidarity.

It is also done with the help of the European Parliament, in what we call the “**Citizenship project**”. A project with more than 30 million viewers and hundreds of stories on relevant European issues, made in total editorial independence.

10 regional television working together and exchanging their reportages. On several themes like corruption, environment, education, migration, and so on...

It's also a way to bring clear and pertinent knowledge to our viewers. Different point of view from different countries. Already 3 citizenship projects have been produced, and we are going for the 4th. The Citizenship project is really a way to be more efficient and closer to the citizen, with less money. A good way to spend the public money.

Furthermore, American platforms do not pay tax in Europe which **we need to maintain** our democracies and societies. These companies are publishers without ethical standards, transparency, accountability or responsibility towards our citizens or societies.

Public Service Media is in the business to meet the needs of individuals and society. We are not primarily in the business to sell target groups to advertisers. The audience is not what we are selling or providing; the content is. This is our most unique selling point is our reason to be, our reason d'être.

By publishing our content on the American platforms we are making the users, the audience, into products that the platforms sell to advertisers, governments and enterprises. All the data that our audience give away when we lure them to update our news on Facebook,

- At what time, which news and with whom they share - is combined with everything upload and share, they write on Messenger. The amount of data Facebook, google and others are piling up on each individual is far more reaching than any polling institute, research institute or government has

on the citizens of Europe. They also collect your thoughts, pictures, mood and political affiliations. It is simply the best market research ever on an individual level.

So is making our audience in to commodities the only problem.

No. European journalism has for the last 300 years or so to a large extent been financed by advertisement. But compared to the giant digital platforms a newspaper, a TV ad or radio ad is a very stupid and blunt vehicle for advertisement. Now all advertising money flows to the platforms. Hence independent commercially funded journalism and plurality dies.

By publishing our licensed feed payed journalism on the American platforms we are speeding up our own countries death of journalism.

Is this a problem for public service media? Yes, it is. PSM is part of a media eco system. We need each other to make journalism good. We always need private owned journalism if the state suddenly decides to control public service media. The history, very recent, is full of governments who suddenly feel an urge to control media.

JM. Strategic Seminar

This is a major strategic challenge. This is why CIRCOM and its members are facilitating **strategic seminars for regional top managers** which deals with questions like:

How can we organise ourselves?

What is the best strategy towards social media and digital platforms?

Should we develop them together as PSM media rely on American platforms?

We have had one in Dublin, one in Amsterdam last January and will have one in Oslo after the summer at the end of August.

JM. Change training the trainers

But in order to change we also need good staff to share their skills with colleagues. In order to answer to this need for many years CIRCOM has provided the **“training the trainers” course** in Bristol, UK.

This well appreciated training helped a lot of European regional broadcasters to facilitate change, innovation and knowledge sharing. SVT did so, HRT also.

JM. Public Service Media Values

Searching for better quality

Whatever CIRCOM does, we aim to maintain and develop the values of public service and the quality in our productions. That's why we think training is so important.

Trying to keep our independence

Therefore we facilitate discussions and workshops like the one in Slovenia on **PSM independence and internal and external pressures on PSM.**

Internal pressures meaning employees, trade unions, managers. And external pressures meaning: government, institutions, and advertisers.

Maintaining the diversity of our contents, and being voluntarily "risk oriented"

Regional PSM talk to all categories of viewers. For example the minorities.

Regional PSM broadcast difficult contents like investigative journalism, traditional music or culture or regional political debates that don't have a great audience.

We are also the only one to take care of the minorities and the minority languages.

If you consider all CIRCOM's members, we produce programmes in more than 50 European regional or minority languages. Without regional PSM these languages would have no place to be seen!

All these topics are part of our values.

That's what the CIRCOM's members share.

We also would like to develop European vocational training

And please take this with you: A platform is what stays behind when the train is leaving. Should we be on the train or on a platform?