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**How newspapers respond to technological change: a comparison between the UK and China**

**Miao Mi**

Faculty of Media, Arts and Design

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**How Newspapers Respond to  
Technological Change:  
a Comparison between the UK and China**

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**Miao Mi**

*A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of the University of Westminster for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy*

April 2015

# Declaration of Authorship

I, Miao MI, herewith certify that all material in this dissertation is a product of my own work or, if not, it has been appropriately referenced.

Signed:

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Date:

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# *Abstract*

This study investigates whether Internet technology and New Media innovations have been homogenizing British and Chinese press journalism, and, if not, in which ways and why they have responded differently.

The basic assumption of the thesis has been raised from Fidler's mediamorphosis theory and it argues that the transformation of mass media is normally brought about by a complex interplay between many variables (1996). To do this, the study examines the complex processes through which news organizations have been repositioning their brand identity and value, and through which journalistic professionals have been redefining the notion of their craft and their work practices in the UK and China. It first takes a historical perspective identifying the commonalities and differences between press journalism of the two countries as well as social and economic conditions that have influenced the ways in which newspapers have responded to the development of communication technologies. The thesis then selects four well-established newspapers from the UK and China and compares the commonalities and differences between the online content they produced, their editorial organizational patterns, established journalistic culture in the four selected newsrooms. This study in the end discusses the impacts of the complex interplay between historical journalistic traditions, commercial drives and organizational structure as well as journalistic practices upon the ways in which newspaper organizations in the two countries have responded to Internet technology and New Media innovations.

This study finds that although all newspapers claim to be multi-platform content providers, the two British newspapers, the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*, have enhanced their brand value on the Internet by extending their journalistic values and good practice online, while the two Chinese newspapers, the *China Youth Daily* and the *Southern City Daily*, have faced a decline in brand credibility, a decrease in journalistic integrity and an erosion of self-satisfaction among Party journalists. This study identifies the changes in organizational structure, as well as the negotiations between the Internet's social and technical dimensions with newsroom culture; and it goes on to evaluate how newspapers have managed to achieve a good online strategy and excellent online journalistic practice, and have enhanced journalists' self-perception.

However, the findings have also shown that there is a danger of deterioration in the quality of journalism, and the reasons have been identified as: 1. requirements for multimedia skills; 2. increased competition between 24-hour news channels, online news portals and social media platforms; 3. the replacement of traditional editorial judgments and journalistic practice through the availability of various technical supplements.

The study makes two contributions to knowledge. First, the comparison between the UK and China is a starting-point in seeking a new approach to the understanding of media convergence and New Media phenomena, and a new way of reasoning as to how the interplay between technological, cultural, commercial and political pressures might shape journalism in terms of newsroom practice/routines and organizational structure in different countries. Second, it is the first doctoral study in the UK and other English-speaking countries to compare how newspaper organizations practice online journalism in the UK and China as responses to the development of Internet technology and New Media innovations, not only by providing empirical evidence, but also by providing quantitative content analysis of newspapers' online websites and a comparison between each newspaper's online and offline versions. It will bring the understanding of Chinese journalism up-to-date.

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Since the distribution of news in electronic form first appeared in the early 1980s on text-based interface, pessimists have started to anticipate the dying days of print newspapers. Although it is premature to argue that the print newspaper is dying, since similar arguments have always been repeated with the availability of new communication technology, yet it is hard to deny that newspaper organizations have been challenged worldwide by the development of communication technologies for credibility, authority, speed and cost ([Allan, 2010](#); [Barnett, 2009](#); [Boczkowski, 2002](#); [Chyi & Sylvie, 2001](#)). Professional journalists are therefore expected to reconfirm the credibility and integrity of journalists as public informers, and newspaper organizations are under pressure to enhance and extend their authority as trusted and honest news brands. In response to that, news-gathering and production by traditional newspaper organizations have changed in at least three areas: ([Deuze, 2003](#); [Garrison, 2009](#); [Gunter, 2003](#)):

1. the content that a newspaper organization produces;
2. the ways in which journalists do their work;
3. the structure of news organizations.

However, does this mean that technologies have been homogenizing the methods of newsgathering and production in different social contexts, and that the trend towards media convergence brought about by Internet technology and New Media innovations over the past twenty years has made journalists globally similar in the approach to their work? Has the complex interplay of technologies, culture, and commercial and political pressures impacted differently upon the transformation of journalistic practices and newsroom routines in different countries?

With the development of communication technologies, indeed, what has been witnessed all around the world is a diversity of strategies and outcomes in the way that newspaper organizations have responded to that. The variety of responses calls for a theoretical analysis and an academic explanation to assess the complexity of interplay between technology, organizational structure and newsroom culture, together with the journalistic practice and values within different social contexts that may have distinctive journalistic traditions. However, it is not new for scholars to ask why the press is as it is. It was in the 1960s that Siebert, Peterson and Schramm asked in their book, *Four Theories of the Press*:

Why is the press as it is? Why does it apparently serve different purposes and appear in widely different forms in different countries? (Siebert et al., 1956, p.1)

Yet, although academics have long been attempting to address this question in different social contexts, their understanding of the media and journalism is still dominated by theories generated from a few Western countries (Chan et al., 2006; Pan, 2000a,b; Xin, 2006). Meanwhile, there is a lack of context-oriented approach to answer how media organizations in different social contexts have responded to the development of communication technologies. As Vobic argues:

Because of the heterogeneity of multimedia news and diverse newsroom traditions, distinct approaches to online multimedia news production have emerged and different formats have been adopted. This calls for a context-oriented approach, especially considering the fact that distinct journalistic traditions and prevailing contemporary newsroom organization models have mostly been neglected in investigation into online multimedia news (Vobic, 2011, p.947).

This thesis therefore endeavours to undertake a comprehensive in-depth comparison in the ways in which newspaper organizations in the UK and China have responded to the development of communication technologies, by carrying out content analysis and interviews in their newsrooms to collect up-to-date quantitative data and empirical evidence. Despite their distinctive journalistic traditions, the modern newspaper industries of the UK and China are similar in terms of the format of newspapers, the structural model of newsrooms, the drive towards the adoption of new technology, and in the ethnographic characteristics of the journalistic profession (de Burgh, 2003a, 2008; Lee, 2000; Weaver & Willnat, 2012; Zhao, 1998; Zhou, 2000).

From 1994, when the *Daily Telegraph* launched the UK's first newspaper website until MailOnline became the world's most visited newspaper website, reaching 105.72 million unique web browsers in August 2012 (Marshall, 2012), the understanding of journalistic professionalism, the process of newsgathering and production, and the structure of newsrooms in the UK have experienced an evolution, or even revolution. Britain's newspaper industry, which has a deeply rooted tradition of pluralism, and which has legitimized itself as the "Fourth Estate" (Conboy, 2004; Curran & Seaton, 2010; McNair, 1998), provides an ideal sample pool to examine the transformation of traditional newspapers.

The past thirty years are also the time during which China has experienced the most significant economic growth in the world. Although newspaper conglomeration in China appeared just ten years ago, while press barons have existed in the UK for more than 100 years, and although the press in China has not yet earned absolute financial independence, while British newspapers have enjoyed financial independence for over 100 years, Internet technology and New Media innovations have influenced traditional newspapers in the two countries at the same time.

The comparison between the UK and China should therefore be seen as a starting-point in seeking a new approach to understanding media convergence and New Media phenomena, and as a new way of understanding whether the interplay between technology, media, communication and culture, as well as commercial and political pressures in different social and cultural contexts, have been homogenizing journalism globally.



To achieve this purpose, this thesis first reviews debates on online journalism and employs Fidler's *mediamorphosis* theory as the theoretical framework for this study. By learning from the previous comparative media studies under the light of content-oriented comparison, comparison between journalistic practices as well as newsroom routines and comparison between organizational structures, this thesis in further maps out its methodological solution. By taking a comparative perspective and applying a combination of content analysis and semi-structured interviews, the thesis then investigates the commonalities and differences in the ways in which traditional newspapers in the UK and China have responded to Internet technology and New Media innovation in terms of four aspects: content, journalistic practice, newsroom culture and organization structures. Meanwhile, it argues the complex interplay between traditional journalistic understanding, social, economic and political contexts that may cause the commonalities and differences in the two countries.

## 1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study is to map the commonalities and differences between the ways in which journalistic practices, newsroom routines and organizational structures in well established newspapers in the UK and China have been changed in response to Internet technology and New Media innovations, and then to investigate whether Internet technology and New Media innovations have been homogenizing press journalism in the two countries and made the Chinese journalists and the British journalists similar in the ways that they do their job.

To be more specific, the aim of this study is threefold. First, taking a comparative approach, it aims to map out the commonalities and differences between British and Chinese newspapers by taking a historical point of view with regard to the traditions of journalistic practices and professional values. Second, this study questions whether Internet technology and New Media innovations have been homogenizing press journalism in the UK and China, resulting in greater similarities between Chinese journalists and British journalists in the ways how they practice journalism and how they set up newsroom routines as well as how they design organizational structure. In order to do so, this study compares the

texts of four newspapers in the UK and China to discover whether they have been producing similar online content with similar support from technological innovations and then it explores how the commonalities and differences at text level reflect the ways in which the practices of journalism, newsroom routines, and organizational structures in the four selected newspapers have been changed and what are the commonalities and differences between their changes with the availability of Internet technologies and New Media innovations. The third aim is to investigate the complex interplay between journalistic practices, newsroom routine, organizational structure as well as existing understandings of journalistic professionalism in the four newspapers in the UK and China and to examine how this complex interplay has influence the transformation of newspapers in the two countries when they have to produce and deliver content for multimedia platforms without geographic boundaries.

### 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to execute this study, the following core research questions and sub-research questions have been designed.

#### **Core research question:**

Have Internet technology and New Media innovations been homogenizing British and Chinese press journalism, and if not, how have they responded differently and why?

#### **Sub-research questions:**

##### Questions that outline research background

How has the landscape of the traditional newspaper in the UK and China been changed through take-up of Internet and New Media innovations?

##### Content Level:

- What are the commonalities and differences between the well-established newspapers' online websites in the UK and China?

- What are the commonalities and differences between the offline and online presence of the well-established newspapers in the UK and China?

Newsroom Practices/Routines Level:

- How has making news for two platforms changed the work of journalists in the UK and China?
- What are the commonalities and differences in the understanding of journalism of the two countries?
- How does newsroom culture reflect the different ways in which newspapers in the two countries respond to Internet technology and New Media innovations?

Organizational Level:

- How have Internet technology and New Media innovations changed newsroom structure in the UK and China?
- What are the commonalities and differences in the ways in which newsrooms in China and the UK are structured, and how do these influence content for both online and offline platforms?
- How are the commonalities and differences in newsroom structure between the UK and China reflected in the newspapers' online content?

The following chart shows how the fundamental logic of the thesis:

TABLE 1.1: **Research Design and Thesis Structure**

**Core Research Question**

1. Have Internet technology and New Media innovations been homogenizing press journalism in the UK and China, making British and Chinese journalists similar in approach to their work?
2. What makes press journalism in the UK and China respond to the development of Internet technologies and New Media innovations, using similar or different approaches?

**Literature Review**

1. Reasons for the commonalities and differences between Chinese and British press journalism.
2. How can a comparative study contribute to the understanding of online newspapers?
3. How have Internet technologies and New Media innovations impacted on journalistic practices, newsroom routines and organizational structures globally?

**Two Exercises of Content Analysis**

1. What are the commonalities and differences between the online websites of well-established newspapers in the UK and China?
2. What are the commonalities and differences between the offline and online presences of well-established newspapers in the UK and China?

**Fieldwork: Interviews with the British and Chinese Newspaper Journalists, Editor and Managers**

1. How have well-established newspapers adjusted their organizational structure in order to provide content for two platforms?
2. How far the organizational structure of the “new” newsrooms reflects their newsroom culture, editorial values and brand identity?
3. How has making news for two platforms changed journalistic practices and newsroom routines of press journalism in the two countries?
4. How have journalistic practice and values interacted with the social and technical dimensions of the Internet?
5. What kind of cultural negotiation has been made in the newsrooms as responses to the change of organizational structure and journalistic practice?

**Discussion and Conclusion**

## 1.4 RESEARCH METHODS

The methods employed in this research are a combination of content analysis and semi-structured interview. Content analysis is employed to compare the format of online content distribution of the British and Chinese newspapers, as well as to compare the format of content distribution on the physical newspapers with their websites. Therefore, two exercises of content analysis were designed as a heuristic device to understand, first what are the commonalities and differences between the online presence of the four well established newspapers in the UK and China in terms of (1) the number of articles on Homepages, (2) content diversity, (3) the use of multimedia content, (4) source and originality (5) the use of interactive elements, (6) update speed; second, to what extent, the online content distribution of the four newspapers are different from their print versions. Based on the two exercises of content analysis, further research questions are asked as to why the online presences of Chinese and British newspapers are in different or similar format and how making news for two platforms has changed traditional newsroom routines, journalistic professionalism and newsroom culture in two different social and political contexts.

Although newsroom observation is often applied in journalism research, due to the limited access to the newsrooms of the selected newspapers, this study applied semi-structured interviews to investigate how newsroom structure and newsroom culture have changed in the selected newspapers in responding to the technological changes brought about by Internet technology and New Media innovations. For example, journalists and editors are asked about newsroom workflow, newsroom structures and their routine jobs during interviews. The design of the semi-structured interviews thus overcomes the lack of observation in the newsroom.

By interviewing journalists, editors and managers from the two countries, the study then examines how the commonalities and differences revealed at content level reflect on newsroom routines, journalistic professionalism, newsroom culture and organizational structure. The thesis also incorporates an analysis of second hand quantitative data (e.g. CNNIC report, newspaper organization's income and expenditure, and the number of subscribers).

## 1.5 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis consists of nine chapters. The first five chapters map the background, theoretical and contextual context of this research and the following four chapters concentrate on different aspects of the initial findings, i.e.:

1. identifying the commonalities and differences between the British and Chinese newspapers in terms of their online and offline content;
2. finding out how organizational structures are related to the commonalities and differences at content level;
3. exploring how newsroom culture is related to the commonalities and differences at content level.

The introductory chapter lists the aims and research questions of the thesis. The literature review, contained within Chapter 2, reviews the major debates on online journalism and introduces Fidler's *mediamorphosis* theory as the theoretical framework for this comparative journalism study. In addition, Chapter 2 also reviews previous comparative journalism studies for methodological solutions yet Chapter 3 illustrates in more detail of the choice made for selecting research methods as well as the logic and research design of this study. Chapter 4 provides a historical account of press journalism in China and the UK, aiming at providing historical contexts as well as social, political and economic reasons within the framework of *mediamorphosis* theory to understand individual cases discussed in the following chapters. Chapter 5, in addition, provides a contextual background for this study by mapping out Internet take-up, news consumption and responses of other forms of communication towards the developments of communication technologies. It also echoes the principles proposed in *mediamorphosis* theory as a unified way of thinking traditional newspapers' responses to the development of communication technologies.

Chapter 6, 7, 8 present the major findings of the research. Chapter 6 consists of two exercises of content analysis that respectively compare the four selected newspaper websites' homepages and compare their online versions with respective print newspapers. The content analysis is designed in this thesis as a heuristic

method to propose research questions for the following primary research. With the evidence collected at the content level that suggests the commonalities and differences of how newspapers have responded to Internet technology and New Media innovations in the UK and China, it then examines in Chapter 7 and 8 how the commonalities and differences at content level are related to journalistic practices, newsroom culture and organizational structures in the two countries. Furthermore in chapter 8, the author also discusses to what extent, in the increasingly integrated and multimedia environment, the adoption of Internet technologies and New Media innovations have brought about evolution in traditional journalism skills, standards and newsroom culture in the two countries. Chapter 9 is the conclusion of the thesis in which the author summaries the main arguments, contribution of this study to knowledge as well as possible future research perspective.

## Chapter 2

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

— — WHAT CAUSES THE COMMONALITIES AND  
DIFFERENCES IN THE WAYS IN WHICH INTERNET  
TECHNOLOGY HAVE INFLUENCED JOURNALISM?

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to map the commonalities and differences in the ways in which newspapers in the UK and China have responded to Internet technology and New Media innovations, and then to investigate whether Internet technology and New Media innovations have been homogenizing press journalism in the two countries, making Chinese and British journalists similar in the way that they do their job, or, how the complex interplay between cultural, commercial and political pressures, as well as technological innovations, has been shaping newspaper transformation.

However, no existing English and Chinese literature provides adequate reviews of the variables that cause the commonalities and differences in the ways in which British and Chinese press journalism has responded to Internet technology and New Media innovations, let alone comprehensive knowledge of the commonalities and differences that underpin modern press journalism in the UK and China.



This thesis therefore, first provides a critical review of the literature on the impacts of Internet technology and New Media innovation upon press journalism, then turns to comparative media studies for a methodological solution and finally examines the literature on British and Chinese journalism with the aim of identifying the fundamental differences and commonalities between press journalism in the UK and China. The following two chapters therefore build up the theoretical framework by answering the following two questions:

- **Q1:** What have scholars said about what causes the commonalities and differences in the ways in which British and Chinese press journalism have responded to Internet technology and New Media innovations? (see in Chapter 2)
- **Q2:** What have scholars said about what causes the commonalities and differences of modern press journalism between the UK and China? (see in Chapter 4)

## 2.2 ONLINE JOURNALISM DEBATE

This thesis pays special attention on examining the potential influence of Internet technology and New Media innovations on traditional newspapers. Therefore, it is first critical to define what are “Internet technology and New Media innovations” discussed in this thesis.

After decades of discussion, “New Media” is still a term that is difficult to define. Apart from being new as “New Media” are enabled by digitalization and the networking technologies, they are very diverse in terms of the types of devices and applications. The “Internet technology and New Media innovations” discussed in this thesis are in fact a set of communication technologies that are built upon digitalization and the Internet. Digitalization refers to “the process by which all texts (symbolic meaning in all encoded and recorded forms) can be reduced to a binary code and can share the same process of production, distribution and storage” (McQuail, 2010, p.136), while the Internet refers to a set of networking technologies and infrastructures that build upon digitalization to connect digital devices globally. In other word, in the context of this thesis, they refers to the

set up communication technologies and innovations of media devices that have changed in ways in which mainstream media's content to be gathered, produced, presented and disseminated in a different way compared to how they have been done traditionally. In addition, this thesis aims to closely look at the direct consequences of Internet technology and New Media innovation for traditional mainstream newspapers rather than personal life. Therefore, it emphasized on their mass communicative features as hypertextuality <sup>1</sup>, interactivity <sup>2</sup>, immediacy <sup>3</sup> and multimediality <sup>4</sup>.

In general, the adoption of digitalization by media organizations in most of the developed countries started in 1970s and accelerated by the introducing of Internet technology in 1990. The process of adoption in the past forty years have experienced a timeline illustrated as Table 2.1:

TABLE 2.1: **A Timeline of the Adoption of Computer and Internet Technology by Newspapers in Developed Countries**

Timeline	Development of Digitalized Newspapers.
1970s	The introduction of computers to news desks and the beginning of the digital production process.
1990s	The introduction of the Internet, World Wide Web and computer-mediated communications (for example, instant messaging, email, chat-room, bulletin board service, etc)
2000s	The emergence of Web 2.0 (the emergence of web-based software, such as blog and social media)
2000s	The popularity of New Media devices, such as smartphones and tablets.

It was not until the mid-1990s that newspapers generally started to publish news online. In 1992, the *Chicago Tribune* launched its first online edition "The Tribune" marked as the start of newspaper's online publishing. It provided same-day editorial content to America Online (AOL), but it was only accessible through AOL. In 1993, an American Bay area newspaper, the *San Jose Mercury News*, published its entire content on AOL. *The Palo Alto Weekly*, a twice-weekly Bay area newspaper, is widely recognized as the first paper in the US to publish its

<sup>1</sup> Note: hypertextuality refers to the Internet 's feature to link text internally and externally through hyperlinks

<sup>2</sup> Note: interactivity refers to the Internet's ability to realize two-way communication between the editors/reporter and the readers

<sup>3</sup>Note: immediacy refers to the capability of lead and follow information flow online

<sup>4</sup>Note: multimediality refers to capability to use multimedia elements

editorial content on the World Wide Web on its own website, in January 1994. It was soon followed by newspapers elsewhere in the world, mainly due to a simple “point-and-click” interface for the World Wide Web that brought a breakthrough for public Internet usage. In the UK, the *Daily Telegraph* launched Britain’s first newspaper website, [Telegraph.co.uk](http://Telegraph.co.uk), in 1994. The *Guardian* first launched its Go2 as the website for the *Guardian*’s computer, science and technology supplement online in 1995. The *Times* had an online presence by 1999. In the US, The *New York Times* went online in 1996.

According to the *Editor & Publisher* magazine, there were only about 100 commercial newspaper online services operating worldwide at the beginning of 1995 ([Outing, 1996](#)), but after just one year, in 1996, the figure rose to 1,115 ([Chyi & Sylvie, 2000](#); [Outing, 1996](#)). By the end of 2011, more than 4,400 newspapers provided online services, but nearly three-quarters of them were still based in North America ([Chyi & Sylvie, 2000](#)).

Like the dramatic growth in the number of online newspapers, the audience for online news has also increased significantly worldwide. Newspapers around the world are competing to win the attention of the large and still growing online audience. In 2009, only 17% of Americans said they obtained most of their news about national and international issues online, yet by the end of 2010, the figure had doubled to 41% ([Pew Research Centre, 2011](#)). By the end of 2010, 45.35 million people in China acquired news online ([China Internet Network Information Center, 2011](#)). According to comScore, 644 million people worldwide visited online newspaper websites in October 2012, making up 42.6% of the world’s total Internet users ([Radwanick, 2012](#)).

Not only have thousands of mainstream media upgraded to electronic online publishing and distribution, but also a growing number of scholarly publications have been written about mass media’s adoption of new technologies. The academic researches on the adoption of new media technologies by traditional mainstream media have experienced three steps ([Pryor, 2002](#)). Domingo and Paterson summarized the three steps as illustrated in [Table 2.2 \(2008, p.17\)](#).

Within these researches, media and communication studies tend to look at the adoption of Internet technology and New Media innovations by traditional mainstream media as well as their influence under the light of three perspectives as

TABLE 2.2: **The Development of Online Journalism Studies from 1981 to present**

First Wave (1982-1992)	Normative and prospective studies.	Researchers focused on building up ideal models for the development of online news, based on the technical and communicative features of the Internet, such as hypertext, multimedia, interactivity, immediacy).
Second Wave (1992-2002)	Empirical research based on the theoretical assumptions of the first wave.	Testing the ideal models and examining whether news organizations as well as journalistic professionals have used Internet features in their work.
Third Wave (2002-present)	Empirical research, based on a constructivist approach to technological change.	Understanding newsroom convergence as an open process and admitting that the ideal models are not a necessary goal for online journalism helps to explain the complex process through which professionals are defining a new news medium.

discussed in the following section.

### 2.2.1 Debate on the Practice of Journalism

Once the Internet and personal computers had enabled news content to be published online and received by the readers in electronic form, the news routines of professional journalism had to change in order to meet the demands of online electronic news consumption. Scholarly discussions on the impact of Internet technology have also expanded to cover how journalistic practice has been change to fulfil the key characteristics of the Internet as hypertextuality, interactivity, immediacy and multimediality.

The examination of the impact of the development of communication technologies started from investigations of the use of Computer Assisted Reporting (CAR) and Compute-Medicated Communication (CMC) in daily journalistic practice and journalistic professionals' attitude towards them. By CAR, scholars refers to the use of computer and the internet to access, analyse information and data while they use CMC to describe the use of computer-mediate formats, such as instant messaging, email or chat room for access to source, information and data. Many scholar attempt to figure out how far journalistic professionals have conducted

these practice in different countries, for example, under this light studies have been done in the context of Australia (Quinn, 1998); Germany (Quandt et al., 2003); and the Netherlands (Deuze, 2002). They found that although CAR and CMC practices were still in its infancy in many countries, the adoption of digital newsgathering and production occurred much earlier in the US and the UK than in any other countries. According to Ross & Middleberg's national survey, by 1996, 87% of journalists in the US had Internet access, and 44% of the survey respondents wrote copy that ended up online (1997) .

These studies of CAR and CMC in different social contexts have generated knowledge with implications for the development of online newspapers. Boczkowski argues that such studies have generated knowledge for online newspapers in at least four dimensions (1999). He argues that first the increased anonymity on the Internet has influenced the dynamic of reporters' information-gathering practices. Second, the breaking of the traditional territorial location of the newspapers' readership has affected newspapers from the choice of news content to the business model. Readers of newspapers are less delimited by geography and more by topic, language and editorial values. In addition, online publishing has made it possible for readers to participate in online discussion on remote issues and even in remote political debate. Third, the two-way communication between journalists, editors and their readers reduced bureaucratic intervention and the personal preferences of the editor, but it also reduced the professional gatekeeping process. Fourth, the involvement of outsourcing software and in-house programming, as well as new investments in various new media ventures by traditional media organizations have made them not only affected by new media technologies but also has been shaping new media technologies (*ibid*).

Although, three decades ago scholars had not regarded online news production and distribution as a separate type of news making, there are now sufficient indications of their differences in the increasingly integrated, multimedia news environment (Stein, 1999), Many scholars argue that Internet had profoundly changed the ways that other media operate, and, at the same time, had changed the profession of journalism (Allan, 2010; Boczkowski, 2004; Vobic, 2011). Some scholar points out that the adoption of Internet technology and New Media innovations have brought an evolution of traditional journalism skills and standards (Deuze, 2004) creates a fourth kind of journalism (after print, radio and television) and

a corresponding fourth type of New Media professional . . . Online journalism in the Netherlands is increasingly professionalized and structured from its parent medium” (Deuze & Paulussen, 2002, p.96).

However, many scholars have sensed the gap between ideal online journalistic practice and the reality. Under the light of these four key characteristics, the ideal changes of journalistic practices should take place from the following three perspectives. First, online news stories with only text are regarded as boring. News presentation requires a convergence of text, image, video, audio and user-generated content, with hyperlinks providing background information. Therefore, new skills and practices are required. Second, news stories are no longer produced as a regular daily routine or weekly routine. Instead, online content could and should be updated at any moment with contributions from staff journalists, editors, freelancers and even readers. Thus, the traditional gatekeeping routine does not fit the reality any more, and staff journalists are required to master multimedia reporting skills and take greater editorial responsibility. Third, collaboration is extended to a wider range. Not only are the newsgathering and production teams involved in online news making, but the technology staff, the digital graphics department and the external production team also have a part to play.

Besides these changes of journalistic practices, Deuze figures out five new journalism skills (1999):

1. thinking ahead about all possible formats to be used in a story, to allow for the medium’s key characteristic;
2. unlike the narrative flow of newswriting for print, online news writing should be brief, concise and entice the reader to follow the storyline;
3. considering journalistic taboos, such as writing questions, quoting dialect and so on;
4. using interactive tools to expand content, such as discussion groups, wechat and so on;
5. cutting the story into separate sections to help users scan through any story or topic more easily.

He also proposed three new journalism standards (*ibid*):

1. an online story should contain hyperlinks to sources, background materials, related content and archives;
2. it should allow readers to trace back the reporting and newsgathering process;
3. an online news website should serve as a community when operating at a local level.

In addition he argues that the websites of traditional news organizations should always have an “about us” section, covering editorial, advertorial and advertisement policies, organizational aims and directive, and feedback opportunities (*ibid*).

Ideally, in order to make news for both online and offline platforms, journalists have to think about text and sound, as well as using any visual means to tell the story. Editors who were once only concerned about news values now have to think about technology. However, scholarly observations of the reality provide a comparatively disappointing result (Loke, 2012; Matheson, 2004). However when looked into the influence of using CAR and CMC on a daily basis for journalists and some scholars found the adoption of these practices does not guarantee an online success. A study carried out in 1999 looked at the BBC and revealed that although the BBC claimed to be making a “radical change” and embracing digital technologies, the reality was that it did not fulfil its radical promise of multimedia news production (Cottle & Ashton, 1999). Cottle and Ashton wrote that although “digital technologies have undoubtedly facilitated changed working practices as the means to achieve cost saving and efficiency gains, increased pressures of work relating to multi-skilled practices and multimedia news production are unlikely to encourage radical new directions in programme making” (1999, p.38). Other studies also found that many journalists and editors felt nervous and resistant to the increased technical elements in newsrooms (Deuze, 2003; Singer, 1997). The other example is when Matheson examined the weblog journalism provided by the *Guardian*, he found that

“it is not in any way revolutionary and does not provide a new personalized democratic space in which the mainstream media are held to account . . . it still preserves the journalistic role of gatekeepers and constructs a journalistic claim to authority and does not let the user talk” (2004, p.460).

Scholar also finds that although journalists are well aware of the significant changes in their industry caused by digitalization and technological development, their perspectives towards the adoption of new communication technology are influenced by their personal experiences, traditions and their organizations’ practice (Anderson, 2009).

In addition, it is difficult for scholars to reach an agreement on whether the adoption of Internet technology and New Media innovations have made “good” or “bad” consequences to journalism. Internet technology and the burgeoning New Media have allowed the audience to take some control over the dissemination of information. Some scholars (Cook, 2006; Robinson, 2007) have therefore raised questions, asking, if the press as an institution plays the functions of shaping people’s understanding of reality and sets agendas for politicians, then whether Internet is taking over some of its functions which were formerly unique to the traditional media, and does it mean that the Internet and technological developments undermine the press as an authority? Therefore, some scholar argues that the collapse of boundaries between journalism and other forms of public communication have gradually eroded the distinct professional identity of newsrooms and their publications (Deuze, 2008) and undermined the basic skills and standards of journalism (Bromley, 1997).

Besides, another concern is whether the ready availability of detailed information about website users’ reading preferences could interfere with what journalists see as the professional task of deciding what belongs on the news agenda. Based on a survey of local British newspaper editors, Singer’s research finds that there was a gap between editors and audience on the understanding of what was newsworthy, but there is little evidence that editors responded to it in making their own news judgements (Singer, 2011).

Furthermore, scholar also points out the danger of an increased reliance on global news agencies, such as Reuters and the Associated Press (Deuze, 2008). Deuze



argues that technology further amplifies this danger, as it is introduced into news organizations to standardize the existing ways of newsgathering and production, and to act as a cost-cutting tool by enabling journalists to do more general work and provide less raw material with less specialized staff and resources (*ibid*).

Yet, in some social contexts, citizen journalism is believed playing as a balancing power to complement mainstream media. For example, Xin provided empirical evidence of the interaction between the mainstream media and citizen journalism in China (Xin, 2010). She examined the co-operation between citizen journalism and traditional journalism in China in four cases: the “Nail House”, the “Loufan Landslide”, the “Milk Scandal” and the “Angry Youth”. She then argued that citizen journalism in China can work effectively with the Chinese mainstream media and that “there is evidence that Citizen Journalism is used by mainstream media as a news source, as well as an alternative channel for distributing politically sensitive information” (Xin, 2010, p.333). Neuberger and Nuernbergk (2010) also argue among the three relationships between professional and participatory media as competition, complementarity and integration, it seems more likely that they complement one another.

### **2.2.2 Debate on the Change of Newsroom Culture**

Since the journalistic work in traditional media is based on a uniform mission, standardized routines and established societal relationships, they are characterised by having authoritative influence and operating as a source of collective guidance for people’s thoughts, principles and actions (Cook, 1998; Robinson, 2007). Traditionally, journalists from Anglo-American countries have built up a common understanding of their aims, which are to monitor government and those in power, to inform people, to lead public discussions, and to provide accurate, balanced, truthful, relevant and interesting news reflecting reality.

Many scholars attempt to figure out whether journalistic professionals have extended their old values to the new media and whether the adoption of the Internet technology and New Media innovation has made impacts upon newsroom culture. Some argues that the blurred line between audience and journalists have taken over some of the functions that used to be unique to the traditional media and

therefore changed journalistic professionals' self-perception as well as journalism ethics (Joseph, 2011; Lewis et al., 2010; Neuberger & Nuernbergk, 2010; Robinson, 2007; Strömbäck & Karlsson, 2011). They focus on examining whether journalists have seen their missions differently due to the shift of power. They argues that the development of communication technologies allows the audience to take over some control in the dissemination of information and therefore journalists have to make extra efforts on transparency, accuracy and integrity in order to keep the authority of their brands (Loke, 2012; O'Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008). For example, Deuze argues that the profession of journalism has been changed in at least three ways:

1. Internet technology has reduced the authority of journalists as the essential intermediary force in democracy;
2. it offers journalists a vast array of resources and technological possibilities;
3. it has created its own type of journalism – online journalism (Deuze, 1999).

By definition, Deuze wrote that:

“Online journalism is functionally differentiated from other kinds of journalism by using its technological component as a determining factor in terms of an (operational) definition. The online journalist has to make decisions as to which media format or formats best conveys a certain story, consider options for the public to respond, interact or even customize certain stories, and think about ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources and so forth through hyperlinks” (2003, p.206)

However, some scholar argues that “journalists are happy to place themselves among Net-progressives” (O'Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008) and in some social context, they have extended their traditional missions as well as journalistic values to their newspapers' websites. For example, in an American context, Robinson sensed that, many print journalists see newspaper websites as an opportunity for community building, broadcast thinking, brand and identity reconstruction, immediate reporting, limitless content producing, customizing, personalizing, dialoguing, experiencing, and transparent information sharing. She found that most

of the journalists she interviewed reaffirmed that the primary mission of their newspapers' websites was to deliver information and to perpetuate their publication's brand and their authority as their community's new purveyors (Robinson, 2007). In addition, from Robinson's study, it is not hard to notice that American reporters, editors, online news producers and photographers are well aware of the expansion of the traditional journalistic mission to enrich the audience's experience of news consumption, and to grow "flat news" into something more three-dimensional by adding audio, video and graphics into their news reporting.

### 2.2.3 Debate on Media Convergence

Unlike other forms of media technologies, digital devices and the Internet make convergence possible. There is a vast array of literature on the topic of media convergence. Jenkins defines "convergence" as "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the co-operation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want" (Jenkins, 2006, p.2). In Jenkins' book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, he argues against the idea that "convergence should be understood primarily as a technological process bringing together multiple media functions within the same devices" (Jenkins, 2006, p.3). He emphasized the cultural shift when audiences are enabled and are encouraged to participate in media content production and dissemination. Using the term "participatory culture", Jenkins points that as new technologies became available, the interactions between professional content makers and amateurs have formed a new set of rules and have stimulated the convergence that occurs within the brains of individuals and their social interactions with others (Jenkins, 2006). In this thesis, however, the word "convergence" is used to describe the changes in newspapers' newsrooms structure rather than culture.

Convergence on the World Wide Web has had a lasting impact on how news stories are told, newsroom routine as well as organizational structures (Allan, 2006; McChesney, 1999). According to previous research on newsroom structure (Deuze, 2004; Esser, 1998; Pavlik, 2000; Vobic, 2011), the traditional newspapers' newsrooms can be divided into the decentralised model and the centralized model.

The newsrooms of newspapers in many central European countries represent the decentralized model. For the decentralized model, a newspaper only has one central newsroom, which is supported by many branch offices with the ability to produce complete sections for the newspaper, or even to compile a whole supplement or maintain the newspaper's website. This model has the disadvantage of lacking the ability to respond to breaking news, and being under great pressure for time, as the division of labour is very low and journalists communicate and work with each other, strictly following the hierarchical structure (Vobic, 2011).

However Vobic found that the traditional decentralized newsroom structure specific to print media in Central Europe was disappearing. In Slovenia, *Delo* and *Žurnal Media* have been selected by scholars to discover how they have responded to Internet technology. Vobic found that *Delo* had organized a separate multimedia news production department, resembling a television news crew, while *Žurnal Media* had integrated its online and offline newsdesks into a common news production engine, and had been trying to develop collaboration between the journalists of both platforms (*ibid*).

By contrast, the centralized newspaper with a clear labour division and a high level of editorial control is widely accepted by the press media; the newsrooms in both China and the UK are highly centralized, for example. In the centralized newsroom, news production follows a strict workflow, with journalists working for different news desks and sections, while there are editors in charge of agenda setting and news selection. The traditional news-making process in a centralized newsroom is that in the morning, reporters gather possible ideas, news events and sources and decide which one or ones to work on, and then report the topic to the day-time duty editors. For a daily newspaper published in the morning, it is normally in the afternoon that the journalists finish a story and send it to the section editor, who may rewrite it or revise it or ask for more information. After the story has been reviewed by the section editor, it will be sent to the sub-editors who have a palate sensitive enough to differentiate instantly between the fresh and stale, and assess the news value of every story, from staff journalists, freelancers and news agencies. The selected stories will be edited again by the sub-editors and passed to the chief-sub-editor, chief designer or layout person, who will design the page layouts to express the priorities. The story will then be placed on printout or document files in newspaper format and sent back to the

section editors again for a final review. The combination of all the pages of the newspaper will finally be sent to the chief editor to sign.

Newspapers have now become more reliant on an interdisciplinary team to innovate new products. When the *Guardian's* leading interactive technologist, Alastair Dant, was asked what smaller media companies can learn from the *Guardian's* model of convergence, he pointed out that it is the interdisciplinary team which combines staff from the journalism and technology departments that enables the *Guardian* to produce sophisticated content on a news deadline. He argues that "collaboration is beyond anything else. We have an interdisciplinary team which I built in the last couple of years. And that team blurs journalism, software development, data analysis and also some design skills. I think having everybody working in that kind of unit is the only way you can produce sophisticated content on a news deadline" (Dant, 2012).

Almost the entire world's leading newspapers follow the centralized newsroom model. However, when these newsrooms leapt towards integrated newsrooms, they took two different approaches. The first approach is to have a fully integrated newsroom, where offline and online staff sit together, such as the *Guardian's* fully integrated newsroom, set up in 2008 in its new building near King's Cross. The other approach is to have separate online and offline sections, like most of the newspapers in China and by the newsroom of the *Daily Mail*. However, Garcia-Aviles, Kaltenbrunner & Meier, et al. examined newsroom convergence in Austria, Spain and Germany and found that no media company was absolutely dedicated to full integration, cross-media collaboration or isolated newsrooms (2009, p.301).

Indeed, newsroom convergence and journalists' adoption of new technologies should not be seen as a technology-driven process, but rather a process that employs technological innovation to achieve specific goals. Thus, there are always economic and cultural pressures that influence the transformation of a newsroom. As Garrison pointed out, there are two reasons for newspapers groups not to separate online from offline staff (Garrison, 2009). First, although major newspaper groups will compete with television and radio in publishing breaking news, most newspapers still hesitate to publish exclusive online stories since they always try to avoid competition between their print and online versions. For that reason, editors and managers may hold back stories that they fear may cause readers to skip

reading their print versions, and would be reluctant to pour staff and resources into their online sites. Second, most news organizations find little practical economic value in dividing online and print staff and putting them in competition with each other.

### **2.3 *MEDIAMORPHOSIS***

Although, as reviewed in previous section, many scholars have examined the adoption of Internet technology and New Media innovations by traditional mainstream media and also looked at its impact upon journalistic practices, newsroom culture and newspapers' organizational structure, they have mainly conducted their studies based on an individual social context or an individual case. There is still missing a theoretical framework to illustrate why different media organizations in different social contexts have responded to Internet technology and new media innovations differently and why there is a gap between ideal online journalistic practice and the reality.

This thesis compares the ways in which traditional newspapers in the UK and China have responded to Internet technology and New Media innovation and whether they have been homogenizing press journalism in the two countries. In addition, it tries to reveal to what extent, during the process of adopting new communication technologies by traditional newspapers in the two countries, technologies have interplayed with social, economic and political factors. Therefore, the basic assumption of the thesis is that the take-up of communication technology by mass media is not on the merit of the technology alone, there must be an interplay between technology with social, economic and political factors.

This assumption echoes many scholars' arguments. McQuail points out that "a medium is not just an applied technology for transmitting certain symbolic content or linking participants in some exchange. It also embodies a set of social relations that interacts with features of the new technology" (2010, p.136). Heinonen also suggests that "journalism is a social phenomenon: it emerged as a consequence of certain social (including technological and economic) developments and it is attached to certain cultural (including political) formations" (1999, p.11).

Among these scholarly arguments, Fidler's *mediamorphosis* theory provides a structure for understanding the potential influences of Internet technology and New Media innovations on different newspaper organizations in different social contexts. As his *mediamorphosis* theory does not only provide a unified way of thinking about the technological evolution of newspapers in different social contexts, but also illustrates six fundamental principles of *mediamorphosis* which could help contextualize the process by which the transformation of newspapers in the UK and China are compared.

By coining the word "*mediamorphosis*" in 1990, Fidler refers to his main argument that the transformation of the communication media is usually brought about by the complex interplay of perceived needs and commercial and political pressures, as well as of social and technological innovations (Fidler, 1997, p.xv). He proposes six unified perspectives to examine the process of the adoption of technology by mass media and therefore, provides an ideal way of thinking for comparative media studies that require a unified measurement approach.

He summarizes six fundamental principles of *mediamorphosis* flow: (1) Coevolution and Coexistence; (2) Metamorphosis; (3) Propagation; (4) Survival; (5) Opportunity and Need; and (6) Delayed Adoption (*ibid*, p.29). By "coevolution and coexistence", he means that "all forms of communication media coexist and co-evolve within an expanding, complex adaptive system. As each new form emerges and develops, it influences, over time and to varying degrees, the development of every other existing form" (*ibid*). By "metamorphosis" he means that "new media do not arise spontaneously and independently. They emerge gradually from the metamorphosis of older media. When newer forms emerge, the older forms then adapt and continue to evolve rather than die" (*ibid*). By "propagation" he means that "emerging forms of communication media propagate dominant traits from earlier forms. These traits are passed on and spread through communicatory codes called languages" (*ibid*). By "survival" he means that "all forms of communication media, as well as media enterprise, are compelled to adapt and evolve for survival in a changing environment. Their only other option is to die" (*ibid*). With regard to "opportunity and need", he argues that "New Media are not widely adopted on the merits of technology alone. There must always be an opportunity, as well as a motivating social, political, and/or economic reason for a New Media technology to be developed" (*ibid*). By using

the term “delayed adoption”, he argues that “New Media technologies always take longer than expected to become a commercial success. They tend to require at least one human generation (20-30 years) to progress from proof of concept to widespread adoption” (*ibid*).

Although Fidler’s *mediamorphosis* theory is mainly inspired by and drawn from his experience working for Knight-Ridder’s Information Design Laboratory to innovate the first generation of tablet publishing system, yet, he takes an approach to look back into history for rules that apply for all kinds of adoption of technology by mass media. Nevertheless that the *mediamorphosis* has not been proved to be universal, it did provide a theoretical approach for a comparative media study that examines traditional newspapers’ responses to Internet technology and New Media innovations.

According to the principles of “coevolution and coexistence” and “delayed adoption”, newspapers did not disappear because of the Internet but were rather influenced by the development of other forms of communication over time. That is to say, in this thesis, it is essential to examine the influence of BBC and its news media initiatives on traditional newspapers’ responses to Internet technology and New Media innovations in the UK. While when we examine the cases from China, it is also expected that we look at the influence of the development of other forms of communication, such as the popularity of citizen journalism online playing as a balancing power that challenges the authority of traditional newspapers. Also the availability of Internet technology and the popularity of online news consumption are also considered as critical variables when we examine newspapers’ complex adaptive process in the two countries. Therefore, chapter 5 is designed for this purpose.

Based on the metamorphosis principle, the emergence of new forms of media often emerge gradually from the metamorphosis of older media (Fidler, 1997) and also according to propagation principle that “emerging forms of communication media propagate dominant traits from earlier forms” (Fidler, 1997, p.29), this thesis finds an another unified way of thinking to contextualize comparison between the two countries which is to look at how historical journalistic tradition(in chapter 4), existing journalistic practices and skillsets as well as newsroom culture and newsroom structure (in chapter 7 & 8) have been adapted. For example, since the production teams of mainstream newspapers’ websites often consist of journalistic



professionals who have print experiences and skillset, how they transform their skillset and journalistic culture is critical for the understanding of how traditional newspapers have responded to Internet technology and New Media innovations in the two countries. That is why in Chapter 6, this thesis compares the online and offline outlets of the selected newspapers in the two countries to argue whether there are possible evidence that indicate whether journalists have been still using the same skillset or mastered new skills and standards to produce content for online platforms.

Based on the principle of “opportunity and need”, the adoption of Internet technology and New Media innovations by traditional newspaper are not on the merit of technology alone and “there must always be an opportunity, as well as motivating social, political, and/or economic reason”, therefore, Chapter 5 examines the historical, social, political and economic perspectives of the four selected newspapers’ responses to Internet technology and New Media Innovations.

## 2.4 COMPARATIVE JOURNALISM STUDIES

Having reviewed the literature on the impact of Internet technology and New Media innovations upon journalism (in section 2.1), and discussed the adoption of Fidler’s *mediamorphosis* theory as the fundamental theoretical framework for understanding the potential influence of emerging media technologies on journalism in the UK and China (in section 2.2), this thesis then tries to find a methodological solution to compare the adoption of Internet technology and New Media innovations by traditional newspapers in the UK and China and therefore to understand how the adoption of technological changes has interplayed with social, political and economic factors.

This section therefore serves two purposes. It first provides a critical review of the literatures on comparative media studies aiming to identify the different layers of comparative media studies and find possible perspectives for comparing the impact of Internet technology and New Media innovation upon newspapers in China and the UK. Second, it closely examines comparative media studies which are conducted under the light of online journalism on what analysis units have

been applied on comparative studies at the levels of content, newsroom culture, journalistic practice and newsroom structure.

Although comparative studies remain essentially in their infancy (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), they have been widely adopted in journalism studies in order to understand why the news media are as they are. The development of comparative journalism studies started with curiosity about the nature of news. Generally speaking, comparative journalism studies can be divided into three categories:

1. a content-oriented comparison, based mainly on content analysis, which examines how different news organizations cover a story or event in the same or different way;
2. comparing journalism culture in different organizations or social contexts;
3. employing political economy theories and examining how variables, such as media policy, politics and economic models, influence journalism and communication.

TABLE 2.3: **Synopsis of Three Types of Comparative Journalism Studies**

<b>Content oriented comparison</b>	Comparison of content between different news organizations (e.g. comparison of BBC's news coverage with CNN's news coverage)
	Comparison of content between different news platforms (e.g. online and offline news comparison)
<b>Journalism Culture</b>	Journalistic value
	Role perception
	Daily Routine
	Newsroom culture
<b>Media System</b>	"The development of the media market" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p.21)
	"Political parallelism" ( <i>ibid</i> )
	"The development of journalistic professionalism" ( <i>ibid</i> )
	"The degree and nature of state intervention" ( <i>ibid</i> )

This section begins with a review of content-oriented comparative journalism studies, and concludes by considering how variables, such as cultural, organizational, social, economic and political elements, are involved in the comparison of news production.

### 2.4.1 Content-Oriented Comparative Studies

Content-oriented comparative studies are mainly carried out to answer the following questions: how is news covered in similar or different ways by different news organizations; and how does one news platform differ from other platforms (for example, comparison between online and offline, between press and broadcaster)? In order to answer the first question, researchers have traditionally either compared how a particular news event is covered by different news organizations in various social contexts, or have examined how the same issues are covered in different historic contexts. For instance, Traquina (2004) compared the news coverage of the HIV/AIDS issue in four countries to build up an understanding of news from a global perspective. To find out how national political contexts and different media platforms constrain the role of the press, Pfetsch et al. (2008) compared different newspapers in seven Western European countries through their commenting on European integration. Stromback and Sheheta (2007) compared the way in which the leading Swedish news media of television and press covered and described the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the 2001 Afghanistan War and the 2003 Iraq War to examine factors which could influence news decisions and media ability to maintain balance and impartiality. However, in comparative journalism studies, content analysis is very often used as an entry-point to understand the nature of journalism and how it is shaped by its social, economic and cultural backgrounds (Sanders & Canel, 2006; Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006; Strömbäck & Shehata, 2007). Table 2.4 shows the research units that have been developed from the research mentioned above.

The second purpose of content-oriented journalism studies is to reveal the characteristics of a particular news platform; for instance, referring to the promises of a “whole new journalism” on the Internet, Quandt compared the content of ten online news media in five countries (US, France, UK, Germany and Russia). He found out that “most of the websites analysed revealed a lack of multimedia content, missing options of direct interaction with the journalists, a fairly standardized repertoire of article types, missing source/author attribution, and a general focus on domestic political news” (Quandt, 2008, p.717). Dimitrova et al. (2003) focused on how online newspapers use hyperlinks as a gatekeeping device by examining the top 15 print newspapers’ website coverage of an American terrorist; Karlsson and Stromback (2010) emphasized the liquidity of online news,

TABLE 2.4: **Research Directions and Analysed Units of Content-Oriented Comparative Journalism Studies (1)**

<b>Reserch Direction</b>	<b>Analysed Units</b>
Coverage on HIV in four countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authorship of the item</li> <li>• Journalistic genre (brief, news, feature, editorial, etc.)</li> <li>• Prominence of news item (front page, other)</li> <li>• Focus of the item (national or international)</li> <li>• Geographic location as to continent (North America, Europe, etc.)</li> <li>• Precise geographic location in terms of country (USA, France, etc.)</li> <li>• Event orientation (reference to a specific event or not)</li> </ul>
How different newspapers in seven Western European countries comment on European integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The commentator</li> <li>• The addressees, who are held responsible or are the target of criticism or support</li> <li>• The affected actors, whose interests are or would be positively (beneficially) or negatively affected by the claim</li> <li>• The topics</li> <li>• The frames and conflict lines the claim refers to</li> </ul>
Coverage in Sweden of 9/11 attacks, 2011 Afghanistan War and 2003 Iraq War:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers of articles</li> <li>• Types of source</li> <li>• Frequency of quotation and mentioned source</li> <li>• Frame</li> </ul>

and developed a methodological approach for studying interactivity and immediacy on the news story level of online news. Table 2.5 shows the units which have been developed to answer the research questions listed below in research by Quandt (2008), Karlsson & Stromback (2010), and Dimitrova (2003).

The third approach of comparative journalism is to find out how the news product provided for one platform differs from that made for other platforms (Armstrong & Gao, 2011; Boczkowski & De Santos, 2007; Goss, 2003). For example, Goss (Goss, 2003) developed a comparison between the venerable *Washington Post* and a daily updated internet newspaper *salon.com* to reveal the differences between “old” and “new” media; Armstrong and Gao (2011) focused on how “traditional” media employ men and women in Twitter feeds, and how that connects to portrayals in news stories. Boczkowski and de Santos(2007) identified three main patterns of content homogeneity between Argentina’s leading print and online newspapers (2007, p.4):

1. an increase in the level of homogeneity in print newspapers, tied to their online counterparts’ practice of publishing breaking and developing news stories during the day;
2. an increase in the level of homogeneity in online newspapers as the day unfolded;
3. an increase in the level of homogeneity with the Web across print and online newspapers.

Table 2.6 the units designed in the research mentioned above.

It is fairly obvious that the second and third approach of content-based comparative studies have been developed very recently. It is only during the past twenty years that new technologies have changed the traditional media ecology by enabling computer, laptop, mobile as the platforms for receiving news products. This research focused on the significance of technology: for instance, hyperlink for gatekeeping (Dimitrova et al., 2003); how interaction and immediacy affect online news production (Karlsson, 2010), etc. However, few of these recently developed studies borrowed the results of the traditional content-based research to

TABLE 2.5: **Research Questions and Analysed Units of Content-Oriented Comparative Journalism Studies (2)**

Reserch Questions	Analysed Units
Whether news websites use new forms of multimedia presentation and offer opportunities for interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of news articles per webpage</li> <li>• Length of story</li> <li>• Number of articles per news event</li> <li>• Types of news story</li> <li>• Use of multimedia content (slide show/video &amp; audio stream)</li> <li>• Links</li> </ul>
Whether news websites are depent on content from the same type of news sources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source and Link</li> </ul>
In which direction does the news website lead the user by using links?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number/type of hyperlink</li> <li>• Positions of news story on the webpage</li> </ul>
The geographic extension of online news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News topics/story type</li> <li>• Geographic extension of news topic</li> </ul>
Whether hyperlink is used for gate-keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of hyperlink</li> </ul>
The liquidity of online news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating speed</li> <li>• Number of stories per news event</li> </ul>

TABLE 2.6: **Research Questions and Analysed Units of Content-Oriented Comparative Journalism Studies (3)**

Reserch Questions	Analysed Units
What is the distinction between "old" and "new" media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of story</li> <li>• Frame</li> <li>• Narrative genres, tone, word choice</li> <li>• Selection of source</li> </ul>
The degree to which on-line and offline focus on the same story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content overlap (whether the event on the homepage is the same as the event on the front page of the print newspaper)</li> <li>• Content focus</li> <li>• Content type</li> </ul>

consider the interplay between technology, culture, political and commercial pressures, and how they relate to the commonalities and differences revealed through content analysis. Also, very little research has been undertaken to examine the relationship between a parent newspaper and its online website; and there has been no systematic research to examine how the social, economic and cultural backgrounds affect the production of online news from a cross-national perspective.

### 2.4.2 Comparison of Journalism Culture

In addition to content analysis, journalism culture is another analytical concept often used in comparative studies (Atton, 2002; Hanitzsch et al., 2011; Herscovitz, 2004; Karlsson & Strömbäck, 2010; Patterson & Donsbagh, 1996; Platon & Deuze, 2003; Preston, 2009; Quandt, 2008; Weaver & Wu, 1998). Defined as "a particular set of ideas and practices by which journalists legitimize their role in society and

render their work meaningful” (Hanitzsch, 2007, p.369), the concept of journalism culture helps researchers to examine “a set of culturally negotiated professional values and conventions that operate mostly behind the backs of individual journalists” (Hanitzsch et al., 2010, p.1).

One advantage of approaching journalism culture as an analytical concept is its “ability to provide a more intuitive way of looking at the diversity of journalistic practices and orientations” (Hanitzsch et al., 2010, p.1). Also, the openness and inclusiveness of culture mean that journalism culture studies can examine a wide set of variables, from professionalism to objectivism, from role perceptions to ethnic standards. Furthermore, because the concept of culture is universal or that many of the behavioural components of which culture is comprised are universal, thought found in different measures in different culture, these variables can comfortably sit alongside cross-cultural and cross-nation studies.

During the early stages of culture-oriented journalism studies, researchers were motivated by curiosity to answer why news around the world was defined and produced in the same or different ways, and whether journalists around the world shared some common values, role perceptions and daily routines that shaped the way in which news stories were selected, framed and covered. In the late 1990s, Weaver first compared the commonalities and differences among the daily routines of journalism in 22 countries, based on survey results. However, he also admitted that “comparing journalists across national boundaries and cultures is a game of guesswork at best” (Weaver & Wu, 1998, p.455). Nevertheless, with an increasing trend towards the notion of journalism culture, further empirical evidence has been collected from survey-based studies. This evidence provides a more diverse global picture about who are journalists (gender/education/age), what are their working conditions (salary/training/role in news production), what are their daily routines, and how they perceive the role of journalism.

One of the most recent survey-based studies on journalism culture is the collaborative study conducted by Hanitzsch, et al. From a comparative perspective, the researchers surveyed the role perceptions, epistemological orientations and ethical views held by 1,800 journalists in 18 countries around the world. They found that “detachment, non-involvement, providing political information and monitoring the government” are regarded globally as the essential functions of journalism (Hanitzsch et al., 2010, p.10). At the same time, it was generally accepted in



the 18 countries that impartiality, the reliability and factuality of information, as well as adherence to universal ethical principles, were the core values of journalism (Hanitzsch et al., 2010, p.1). However, Western journalists tended to be less supportive of any terms of propaganda function, such as orientation of particular values, ideas or social change. In other words, they believe their own journalism is impartial but other people's is partial. While non-Western journalists were more flexible in their ethical values and were generally more interventionist in their role perceptions.

The traditional research method has been borrowed to examine online journalism culture. Quandt et al. (2008) examined the differences and commonalities between American and German online journalists. Based on a sub-sample of the survey titled with "*The American Journalist in the Twenty-First Century*" (including 100 respondents) and data from the representative study "*Online Journalism in Germany*" (with 461 respondents), Quandt et al.'s research (2006) looks at who are the American and German online journalists, whether the two groups of journalists have common characteristics (gender, personal/marital status, age, general and journalistic education), what are their work tasks, and finally, whether there are notable differences between the two groups. They found that, first there are some obvious demographic differences between American and German online journalists. As presented in Table 2.7 (2006, p.175) American online journalists, compared with those working in Germany, are more educated, with 83% of the respondents having a university degree, and are more experienced, having built up an average of 16 years' work experience in journalism. Correspondingly, American online journalists enjoy a higher average salary than those who work under the same job title in Germany.

Second, Quandt's research looks at the use of computers at work by online journalists in Germany and the US. As shown in Table 2.8 (Quandt et al., 2006), online journalists in Germany are more likely to use the Internet as a research tool: 63.9% of the respondents admit that they use a computer to gather background information for news coverage every day, while 57.6% of the respondents use a computer to check facts daily. However, in the US, online journalists rely more often on a computer to keep them updated with the latest news by visiting the websites of other organizations; and 58% of the American online journalists

TABLE 2.7: **Basic Characteristics of Online Journalists in the US and Germany**<sup>5</sup>

	Germany (N=461)	United States (N=100)
<b>Female</b>	38.20%	34.00%
<b>Now Married</b>	29.10%	58.00%
<b>University Degree</b>	59.00%	83.00%
<b>Age</b>	35 years	39 years
<b>Working in Journalism</b>	7 years	16 years
<b>Average Income per Year</b>	\$24000(net)	\$64000(gross)

<sup>5</sup>Note: Figure cited from (Quandt et al., 2006), *American and German Online Journalists at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century*, p.175

who responded communicate with their readers, listeners or viewers on a daily basis.

TABLE 2.8: **Use of Computers at Work by Online Journalists in the US and Germany**<sup>6</sup>

	Germany		US	
	No.	Daily	No.	Daily
Find name or address of sources, using the Web	460	35.6	99	30.3
Interview sources via e-mail	–	–	99	5.1
Get background information for stories from the Web or computer databases	461	63.9	99	42.4
Search for story ideas from the Web or from list-serves	460	37.4	99	37.4
Check facts in a story using the Web or computer database	461	57.6	99	33.3
Keep up with the news by reading the websites of other news organizations	461	79.4	100	88.0
Search for or receive press releases via e-mail or the Web	460	67.2	99	54.5
Communicate via e-mail with readers, viewers or listeners	461	37.0	100	58.0
Download raw data from computer databases	460	16.0	99	5.1
Use spreadsheets or statistical programs to analyse data from government agencies or other sources	–	–	98	4.1

<sup>6</sup>Note: Figure cited from (Quandt et al., 2006), *American and German Online Journalists at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century*, p.178

Although the sub-sample of the survey of journalists in the US did not ask questions about specific tasks and how they spend their working hours, Quandt et al. (2006, p.177) did add these questions to the survey in Germany. They found that German online journalists actually spent most of their time on news production, including writing, conducting online and offline research on background information, selecting news to cover, and editing news material from agencies, PR or other colleagues. All of these tasks take them more than eight hours every day, as shown in Table 2.9 .

TABLE 2.9: **Tasks of the German Online Journalists**<sup>7</sup>

Tasks	N=	Performing this task (%)	Average duration per workday (mins)
Online research	451	96.6	73
Writing	454	91.2	107
News Selection	449	84.7	84
Editing news material from agencies and PR	446	81.4	78
Copying/transferring text onto the online Web page	451	77.5	62
Management	451	74.4	55
Offline research	453	76.9	35
Editing material from colleagues	453	80.5	54
User contact	450	60.8	21
Production	451	64.1	32
Programming	446	21.8	15

<sup>7</sup>Note: Figure cited from (Quandt et al., 2006), *American and German Online Journalists at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century*, p.177

Quandt's team found that the online journalists in the two countries generally perceived themselves in the same way. They both regarded gathering information for the public and providing analysis and interpretation of complex issues as their top two priorities. However, online journalists in Germany tend to put greater emphasis on news that is of interest to the widest possible audience, and are more like to please the public by providing entertainment and relaxation. American online journalists perceive their role to be giving ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs. Thus, the researchers concluded that there were fewer commonalities than differences between online journalists in

Germany and the US. Although Quandt's team proved that scholars should not take the characteristics of online journalists in one country for granted, it does not clearly define what they mean by the term, "online journalists". It is not clear which media sectors the online journalists are working for press, radio or TV. It is obvious that press and radio/TV journalists have different daily routines and job requirements, and that press journalists work more on writing. It is also unclear whether or not online content editors are included in the concept of online journalism. Any findings of this survey-based study could have been better interpreted with a sound understanding of the setting. Take Quandt et al.'s study, for example, where he does not explain how the commonalities and differences are reflected in the online media landscape in the two countries, and the relationship between online journalists and traditional journalists, etc.

Nevertheless, While Quandt et al.'s research does establish a set of criteria for examining and comparing online journalism culture, there is no systematic research which has focused on examining whether the implementation of Internet technology can yield the same or different online media products in different journalism cultures, and to what extent, and how, the different journalism cultures reflect online newsgathering and production in well-established newspaper organizations.

### **2.4.3 Comparison between News Organizations and Media Systems**

Many scholars have researched the hypothesis that news is also a product of media organization (Cottle, 2006; Hoch, 1974). There are studies which focus on particular news organizations to discover how news production is influenced by newsroom routines (Bantz et al., 1980; Gans, 2005; Schlesinger, 1987), organizational culture (Küng-Shankleman & Küng, 2000; Zeng, 2009) and ethnic as well as national culture (Thiranagama, 2011). However, very few studies are built upon a comparative perspective.

Rather than limiting their valuable comparative insights to a mere description of commonalities and differences, scholars have also attempted to address how the media reflect politics and the economy in specific countries, and have then

compared this with how the media have become as they are today in a variety of social, historical, cultural and economic contexts.

The earliest stage of comparative studies on media systems can be traced back to the 1960s. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm asked in their book, *Four Theories of the Press* (1956). Beside Siebert and Schramm, McQuail (2010), Hallin & Mancini (2004) also developed their theories on how to define and divide the world's mass media system. As Zeng (2009, p.26) shows below, the theories developed in the past five decades could help us to understand how the media vary within different political and economic systems.

The most recent attempt to answer the question about why the news media are as they are today was made by Hallin and Mancini. They identified the “major variations that have developed in Western democracies in the structure and political role of the news media, and explored some ideas about how to account for these variations and think about their consequences for democratic politics” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p.1). By doing so, Hallin and Mancini identified four major dimensions, according to which media systems in Western Europe and North America can usefully be compared (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p.21):

1. “the development of media markets, with particular emphasis on the strong or weak development of a mass circulation press;
2. political parallelism, or the extent to which the media system reflects the major political divisions in society;
3. the development of journalistic professionalism;
4. the degree and nature of state intervention in the media system.”

It is noteworthy that Hallin and Mancini pointed out that a valuable comparative study does not only show the variation and commonalities, but also explores which model is good for democratic politics, or good for the establishment of professionalism, etc. In addition, Hallin and Mancini proposed more reasons to explain why “comparative analysis is of value in social investigation” (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). First, as Hallin and Mancini suggest, comparative analysis

TABLE 2.10: The “Theories” Development in the Past Five Decades<sup>8</sup>

(Siebert et al., 1956)	<b>Four theories of the press:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Authoritarian</li> <li>2. Libertarian</li> <li>3. Social responsibility</li> <li>4. Soviet-Totalitarian</li> </ol>
(Martin & Chaudhary, 1983)	<b>World Mass Media System:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Western World</li> <li>2. Third World</li> <li>3. Communist World</li> </ol>
(McQuail, 2010)	<b>Six Theories of the Mass Media:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Authoritarian Theory</li> <li>2. Free Press Theory</li> <li>3. Social Responsibility Theory</li> <li>4. Soviet Media Theory</li> <li>5. Development Media Theory</li> <li>6. Democratic Participant Theory</li> </ol>
(McNair, 1998)	<b>Two Models of Mass Media:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competition model</li> <li>2. Dominance model</li> </ol>
(Hallin & Mancini, 2004)	<b>Three models of media and politics:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Polarized Pluralist Model</li> <li>2. Democratic Corporatist Model</li> <li>3. Liberal Model</li> </ol>

<sup>8</sup>Note: Table cited from (Zeng, 2009), *Television News and the Limits of Globalization: BBC World and Phoenix Television Today*, Ph.D Thesis, University of Westminster, London

“sensitizes us to variation and to similarity, and this could contribute powerfully to concept formation and to the refinement of our conceptual apparatus” (*ibid*). That is to say, it could help scholars to notice the things that they did not notice before and therefore had not conceptualized. Second, comparative studies allow us in many cases to test the hypothesis about the interrelationship of social phenomena.

# Chapter 3

## METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters mapped out the major theoretical debates and identified the methodological solution for this study. This chapter explains the selection of qualitative research methods, which consists of a combination of content analysis and semi-structured interviews. It also explains why this study uses a comparative approach and discusses the limitations of the choice of research methods, as well as ethical concerns.

### 3.2 SELECTION OF RESEARCH METHODS

#### 3.2.1 Comparative Journalism Studies

Why is the press as it is? Media scholars have asked this question for many decades. It can be traced back to the 1960s when Siebert, Peterson and Schramm asked in their book, *Four Theories of the Press*:1, “Why is the press as it is? Why does it apparently serve different purposes and appear in widely different forms in different countries? Why, for example, is the press of the USSR so different from our own, and the press of Argentina, so different from that of the Great Britain?” (Siebert et al., 1956, p.1). This section aims to cover three aspects:



1. why there is a need for comparative study to examine the impact of technology on journalism;
2. why the selected countries and samples are comparable;
3. a review of the literature on comparative journalism studies.

### 3.2.1.1 Why Use Comparative Journalism in this Study

More than half a century has already passed since Siebert, Peterson and Schramm raised the question of why the press is as it is. Although scholars are still making attempts to address this question in different social contexts, the understanding of media and communications is still dominated by theories generated from a few Western democracies (Chan & Lee, 2007; Pan, 2000a,b; Xin, 2006). At the same time, not only scholars from non-Western backgrounds, but also those from Anglo-American countries have started to consider whether the assumption that the media model in Anglo-American countries is the norm and can be applied unproblematically anywhere (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). More and more media scholars from non-Anglo-American backgrounds have started to rethink the reasons why they are struggling to apply journalism concepts and theories which are deeply rooted in an Anglo-American context to explain what is happening in their own countries (Pan, 2000a,b; Xin, 2006; Zeng, 2009).

These questions have begun to influence current journalism and communication research. Since the distribution of news in electronic form first appeared in the early 1980s as text-based interface, the media landscape has been greatly changed by Internet technology, as well as through the innovation of New Media platforms and online applications. These developments are crucial to the traditional newspaper industry, which is being challenged for credibility, authority, speed and cost. The adoption of new technologies by newspapers has changed newsgathering and production at least in three dimensions:

1. the content of a newspaper's website;
2. how journalists do their work;

### 3. the structure of news organizations.

It is widely accepted that the Internet and digitalization have changed traditional journalism and are challenging professional journalism (Quandt et al., 2006). In response, professional journalists are expected to reconfirm the authority of traditional news organizations, the credibility of journalists and the brand of their press titles.

However, most online newspaper studies originate from an Anglo-American context and only a few of them take a global view. As a result, a more accurate picture of the complex interplay between technologies, culture, and commercial and political pressures has been ignored. In addition, for countries with a less developed tradition of media studies, such as China, the changes in their journalism practice cannot be usefully addressed using journalism or communication theories and concepts that originate from Anglo-American social and cultural contexts.

This study is therefore proposing a different approach, endeavouring to examine the transformation of the communications media from a comparative perspective. Starting from the question of what is the future of newspapers, the author will consider how the complex interaction of technologies, culture, and commercial and political pressures has transformed traditional newspapers in China and the UK. The methodology of comparative journalism will then be employed to test the “*mediamorphosis*” theory established by New Media pioneer Roger Fidler (Fidler, 1997).

#### 3.2.1.2 Comparability

From 1994, when the *Daily Telegraph* launched the UK’s first newspaper website until the time when the MailOnline website became the world’s most visited newspaper website globally, reaching 105.72 million unique web browsers in August 2012, according to Audit Bureau of Circulation<sup>9</sup> the understanding of journalistic professionalism, the process of newsgathering and production, and the structure of newsrooms in the UK have experienced an evolution – or even revolution.

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<sup>9</sup> Note: Figure cited from articles from journalism.co.uk, available from <http://www.journalism.co.uk/news/daily-mail-online-web-traffic-above-100m-first-time/s2/a550434/>

Britain's newspaper industry, which has a deeply rooted tradition of pluralism and has legitimized itself as the "Fourth Estate", provides an ideal sample pool for examining the transformation of traditional newspapers.

However, the past thirty years were also the time during which China experienced the most significant economic growth ever known. In 1992, China's former leader Deng Xiaoping made his famous South China tour, the *Southern Progress*, and stated that planning and market forces were not the essential differences between Socialism and Capitalism. This was the time when China, a country with more than 1.3 billion people, changed from being a planned economy to a market economy. Without exception, China's media sectors also developed from the party's "mouthpiece" into a more market-driven industry, and from state-owned public institutions (*shi ye dan wei*) to businesses.

The British newspapers started to conglomerate in the early 1900s (Conboy, 2004) while the Chinese press started to conglomerate less than ten years ago; British newspapers have been financially independent for over 100 years, while Chinese newspapers have survived without government subsidies for only 20 years. It is clear that Internet technology and the innovations of New Media devices have provided the press industries in both countries with the same opportunities and challenges at the same time. Although Chinese newspapers lag behind British newspapers in many ways, it is interesting to discover how newspapers in the two countries confront the opportunities and challenges in the Information Revolution, why they have responded to these opportunities and challenges in the same or different ways, and how these commonalities and differences are related to editorial organization patterns, established journalistic professionalism, and journalism culture.

The comparison between the UK and China should therefore be seen as a starting-point to seek a new approach to understanding media convergence and New Media phenomena, and new ways of reasoning why the interaction among technologies, media, communication and culture, as well as commercial and political pressures in different social and cultural contexts have resulted in the different stages of online newspapers.

This thesis has therefore selected a broadsheet newspaper, the *Guardian*, and the *Daily Mail*, which has been one of the most commercially successful mid-market

newspapers for over a century, as the sample of British traditional newspapers. The *China Youth Daily*, a national CCP broadsheet newspaper in tabloid format, and the commercially-driven regional newspaper, the *Southern City Daily*, were chosen as samples of online newspapers in China.

The selection of the sample newspapers is based on the following criteria:

1. The newspapers have online presence and are comparable. The British newspapers are classified as tabloid newspapers, middle-market newspapers and quality newspapers. The Chinese newspapers are classified as state-owned CCP titles, commercially-driven metropolitan and evening titles, and specialist newspapers. All the CCP titles are managed as state-owned public institutions and have the obligation to serve the public interest. They are in broadsheet format and follow serious journalism. Most of the commercial titles in China are owned by large news groups, such as the Southern Media Group, the Yangcheng Evening News Group, and the Wenhui-xinmin United Press Group.
2. The newspapers conduct serious journalism with diversity of content.
3. The newspapers play a leadership role in online newspaper publishing. Site traffic is regarded as the criterion, and so a newspaper with an online audience several times larger than its offline circulation is deemed to be the market leader.

The selected samples from the two countries are also comparable. Although, in Chapter 4, the author gives a more detailed introduction to the four selected newspapers, Table 3.1 is designed to present the comparability of the selected samples.

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<sup>10</sup> Note: Figure is for February 2014 generated by Audit Bureau of Circulations, available from <http://www.theguardian.com/media/table/2014/mar/07/abcs-national-newspapers>

<sup>11</sup> Note: Figure generated from interview with Deputy Online Chief Editor, *China Youth Daily* in 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Note: Figure generated from IFABC (2011), *National Newspaper Total Circulation*.

<sup>13</sup> Note: Figure generated from IFABC (2011), *National Newspaper Total Circulation*.

<sup>14</sup> Note: The official website for the *Southern City Daily* was changed from [nf.nfdaily.com](http://nf.nfdaily.com) to [www.nandu.com](http://www.nandu.com) during the research.

TABLE 3.1: Selected Newspapers from the UK and China

	Britain		China	
Title	<i>the Guardian</i>	<i>Daily Mail</i>	<i>China Youth Daily</i>	<i>Southern City Daily</i>
<b>Circulation</b>	Daily national newspaper  Owned by a charitable foundation  Average daily circulation of 196,425 copies <sup>10</sup>	Daily national newspaper  Commercially driven  Average daily circulation of 2,044,347 copies <sup>12</sup> and is the second biggest selling daily newspaper in the UK  Readers from social grades B, C1 and C2	Daily national newspaper  Owned by the state and managed as a public institution that serves public interest  Average daily circulation of 300,000 copies <sup>11</sup>	Regional daily newspaper; however its website is accessible nationwide  Commercially driven  Average daily circulation of 1.4 million copies <sup>13</sup> and is one of the top three best-selling metropolitan newspapers in China  Readers from social grades B, C1 and C2
<b>Format</b>	Broadsheet	Mid-market tabloid	Broadsheet	Mid-market tabloid
<b>Website</b>	www.theguardian.com/uk  Free access  Publishes entire content of its print version and has exclusive online stories	www.dailymail.co.uk  Free access  Publishes entire content of its print version and has exclusive online stories	www.cyol.net  Free access  Publishes entire content of its print version and has exclusive online stories	nf.nfdaily.cn & www.nandu.com <sup>14</sup>  Free access  Publishes entire content of its print version and has exclusive online stories
<b>Journalistic tradition</b>	Serious news and comment	Human interest stories	Serious news and comment	Human interest stories

### 3.2.2 Content Analysis

In the early 1900s, scholars had already noticed that a content- or text-based coding method could be used to analyse newspapers. Developed over nearly a century, this method has been well tested and corrected and has been named as “content analysis” or “textual coding”. According to Lasswell’s definition (1948), content analysis draws attention to who says what, to whom, why, through which channel and to what effect. The basic elements of analysis are therefore: source, channel, message, recipient and effect. A more comprehensive definition is proposed by Neuendorf, defining content analysis as “a summarising, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method (including attention to objectivity, inter-subjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability, and hypothesis testing) and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented” (Neuendorf, 2002, p.10).

Content analysis has the advantage of validity and replicability (*ibid*) and this research method has therefore been widely used to reveal the characteristics of media products, and has also been applied to explain the consequences of communication. For instance, the Glasgow Media Group (1976, 1978, 1995 and 1998) carried out a series of research studies on press and television output and showed how issues such as industrial relations in Britain, AIDS, and mental health are covered.

Although there is no limitation to the types of variables in content analysis, this method is very rarely used to examine the content output on the New Media platforms. There are several reasons for that. First of all, the massive production of online news content is still very new, even to developed countries. Very little scholarly attention has been given to the antecedents of online news content, the special characteristics of online news production, and audience reaction. Second, the interactivity and immediacy of online news have changed the traditional pattern of communication and flow of information. It is hard to define a finished news piece online, since the editor can always update the content in a digital environment. Third, there is very little critical discussion from the methodology perspective to define how to adapt content analysis to examine online output.

However, there are still some exceptions. Among the limited number of studies, Karlsson and Stromback (2010) made an attempt to explore how to freeze the flow of online news at the story level by offering five methods: using screenshots; using saved PDF files; using manual downloading; using RSS Feeds; and using download programmes. Applying these methods, they compared the versions of the same stories downloaded at different time-slots in a day. At the webpage level, Quandt (2008) examines the format of online news presentation, type of stories, and source originality to find out whether the Internet offers opportunities for interaction and whether it breaks the boundaries of national reporting patterns.

Quandt's research demonstrates that applying content analysis to online output can still be a reasonable approach. However, both Quandt and other researchers ignored the knowledge of database and website architecture. For that reason, they fail in their attempt to reveal the deeper explanation of content format presentation and the use of interactive elements.

This thesis applies content analysis to website content. The concept of "content" refers to headlines, text, multimedia elements (photos, graphics, audio and video content), interactive elements (comment space, links) and format design. All these elements are adopted by websites to communicate with their readers, so that they carry meaning and information. By comparing the content elements contained in the selected Chinese and British newspapers' websites, the thesis aims to discuss what are the commonalities and differences between these websites. In addition, content analysis is used to compare the offline editions of newspapers with their websites. Headlines, text, pictures, graphics, themes and time of publishing are examined to show the commonalities and differences between newspaper websites and their parent newspapers. Content comparison is also carried out across newspapers. For example, the ways in which the *Guardian's* online content differs from its parent newspaper are compared with the case of the *Daily Mail* and of the two Chinese newspapers.

In order to apply content analysis to a website, selected homepages and online news stories have been saved in "Web archive" format. This format does not change the layout of web pages and allows the function of hyperlinks for future access.

As discussed earlier, content analysis has been employed by many scholars from a comparative perspective to collect data for their investigation. It is a useful method for gaining a general picture of news content on online and offline platforms of different news organizations in a certain period. However, it also has its limitations. Employing content analysis from a comparative perspective can only reveal the commonalities and differences between news products on different platforms across different news organizations, yet could not explain the reasons behind that.

### **3.2.3 Semi-Structured Interviews**

Interviewing is often used for generating “empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p.113). In this sense, qualitative interview is often used as a method to interpret reality and produce meaning. Generally speaking, there are three main types of interview: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Arksey & Knight, 1999). A structured interview consists of a formalized, limited set of questions, while a semi-structured interview is generally set up with a theme, is flexible, open and allows new questions to be raised during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. Structured interviews are normally associated with surveys. In a structured interview, interviewees are asked to answer close questions with guidelines set up by the interviewer, and it is important in a structured interview that all interviewees are presented with exactly the same questions in the same order. It is a good means of collecting data for a statistical survey, yet it does not require the interviewers to tailor their questions to the context of the interview. Qualitative research interviews are normally either semi-structured or unstructured interviews. The semi-structured interview normally provides the interviewees with a topic guide but give the respondent and interviewer the flexibility to talk around the topic. Therefore, it is a method that often provides deeper insights. Unstructured interview limit the respondent with a topic guide but use questions as stimulation to encourages interviewee to give spontaneous narrative of events.

This research employs the semi-structured interview that gives the interviewers the freedom to adjust the questions for different interview situations. A set of



guideline questions is thought through and prepared before each interview to ensure that the interviewers can raise these themes and topics in different ways for different participants. Meanwhile, the interview guidelines can also “increase the comparability of data” (Flick, 2011, p.95).

In this research, editors, journalists and managers from traditional mainstream newspapers in China and the UK, in particular from the four selected newspapers, including the *Daily Mail*, the *Guardian*, the *Southern City Daily* and the *China Youth Daily* are interviewed to examine how organizational structure, established journalistic professionalism and newsroom culture are associated with the ways in which the newspapers produce content for online and offline platforms. The interview questions are generated from two units of content analysis and studies of secondary data before and during interviews. The following questions have been designed to collect empirical data.

**Warm-up questions:**

- Please describe your routine jobs.
- Please introduce the structure of your newsroom.
- Please introduce the workflow in your newsroom.

**Core questions: (may vary in each interview)**

- Explain the commonalities and differences between your online and offline platforms.
- Explain how you manage the process of making news for two platforms.
- Explain what technological support you have to ensure convergence.
- Explain how workflow in the newsroom is arranged to ensure making news for two platforms.
- Explain how you balance the circulation of the physical newspaper and traffic of your website. Do you keep exclusive stories for the physical newspaper?

- Explain how you have had to adapt your behaviour to ensure that news is made for two platforms
- Are you aware of what kinds of content attracting the most online traffic?
- Can you explain the international success of your website?
- How do you regard the challenges to traditional newsgathering and production brought about by New Media devices and applications?
- How often do you get training on multimedia reporting?
- Is there any internal guidance on your use of social media as a journalist?

As Byrne noted that “in thinking about interviewing as a tool of social research, we need to be aware of the many different variables which will affect the outcome” (2011, p.208), this thesis has also paid special attention on the significance of these variables, for example, the author’s role to do the interviewing, who is being interviewed, the location in which the interview takes place and the forms of questioning, yet has also to be flexible in reality in order to fits into the interviewee’s busy schedule and create an atmosphere in which they are comfortable and willing talk. The author’s previous study in China at Journalism School in Wuhan University helped her to build up good contacts with alumni who work as journalists and managers in China’s newspaper industry, in particular the two selected titles. But more important, the contacts provided by China Media Centre at the University of Westminster helped the author to gain access to some of the world’s busiest newsrooms for one-to-one interviews with reporters, editors and managers. In addition, training courses provided by the China Media Centre for senior newspapers managers also helped the author on one hand, to extend her contacts in China from junior reporters and editors to senior management teams, on the other hand, to extent the thesis from a close look at four selected cases to a wider scope.

The author has successfully conducted 32 semi-structure interviews (see appendix I) with reporters, editors and managers who have worked for or have still be working for traditional media organizations. The majority of them have been working for traditional press during most of their career years, while media experts who have been closely observing media industries and writing columns on the press

about them have also been included in the list of interviewees. They could provide their long-term observations as well as experiences as column writers to help the author to understand the interplay between the development of technology, cultural, economic and social factors during the process in which traditional newspaper organizations have responded to the Internet technology and New Media innovations. Of all the interviews, 18 were conducted with Chinese journalistic professionals while 14 were with British journalistic professionals. Most of them interviews took place in London, Beijing and Guangdong Province (See Appendix I) during the preliminary fieldwork at their workplace in September 2011, April/August, 2012 and May 2013 or during the interviewees' professional training in London in October 2012. Most of the interviews with British informants were recorded since the author has language barrier to fully understand and analysis them simultaneously while the Chinese interviewee were more reluctant about their interviews to be recorded since in that case they found themselves more relax and comfortable with criticising the practices or policies that their news organizations have taken as responses to the development of communication technology. In total, 18 of the interviews were recorded. Yet, for those interviewed that have not been recorded, the author has taken notes during the interviews and the notes have been transcribed into key points shortly afterwards when the author's memory was still fresh. Meanwhile, for all the 18 interviews that have been recorded, since most of them were in English <sup>15</sup>, I have also transcribed the interviews for further in-depth analysis. Meanwhile, during the process of analysing the interview transcriptions and interview note, the author made marks carefully on the key words, arguments, opinion, fact and stories in the text that are related to the original research questions. In order to fit interviewee's busy schedule set up by newspaper deadlines, most of the interviews were taken place at their work place for durations from 40 minutes to 2 hours. The author therefore, gathered a directly understanding of the responsibilities that the interviewees have been taken in their work place and gets to know the floor plan that represents the organizational structure of the accessed newspaper organization. For example, the interview with MailOnline's Publisher Martin Clarke (No. 32, See Appendix I), was taken place in his office where he oversees the whole online team working outside his office. Although the interview was interrupted by phone calls and meeting calls, the author was provided with the real newsroom

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<sup>15</sup> The author's first language is Chinese and English is her second language.

scenario to understand the newsroom routines and practices. Meanwhile, most of the interviews were conducted in a one-to-one conversation, yet in order to fit into their busy schedule, interviews in the *Daily Mail*/ MailOnline's newsroom, and interviews in the *Southern City Daily*'s newsroom were conducted with more than one journalist and editor facing the author at the same time, as group interviews. However, rules have been announced before the group interview that each time only one person can talk while the author played the role of mediator.

The selection of interviewees took account of the following criteria: first, they must have direct or indirect connection with traditional mainstream newspapers in China and the UK; second, they must fall into one of the categories in terms of their profession: editorial or business managers, or editorial staff, including editors, journalists or freelancer. In the case of the *Daily Mail* and MailOnline, the former Managing Director of Mail Newspapers, Guy Zitter (No. 31, See Appendix I) and the Publisher of MailOnline Martin Clarke were interviewed, besides 4 other journalists and editors who have been working for both the newspaper and MailOnline. In the case of the *Guardian*, a Managing Director (No. 22, See Appendix I) was interviewed as well as one-to-one interviews with 3 online news editors from the *Guardian*. In the case of the *China Youth Daily*, the Deputy Online Chief Editor was interviewed as well as other 2 editors and journalists from the newspaper. In the case of the *Southern City Daily*, 4 editors and journalists were interviewed, including a deputy head of news division and senior journalists who worked in particular for breaking news and investigative reporting.

### **3.3 ETHICAL CONCERNS AND LIMITATIONS**

Similar to other academic researches that have been taken place with Chinese journalistic professionals as the informants, that the interviewees' directly relationship with the new organizations and their ideological background make them less willing to fully open their mind; sometimes they tend to self-regulate critical comments. Meanwhile, other big ethical concerns include the protection of privacy and informing interviewee properly with the aims and objective of the thesis.

The researcher informed all the interviewees, with a summary of the aim and objectives of this study and the author's role as an academic researcher. They have also been provided the right to decide whether they were willing to be recorded or not. During the interview, the author tended not to ask questions that are personal and irrelevant to the purpose of this study. Meanwhile, the author was very carefully about not commenting or judging what the interviewee said or have done.

There are four limitations to the choice of content analysis and semi-structured interview as the research method of this study. First, there is a limitation of relying on semi-structure interview to build up understanding of newsroom routines and journalistic practices. The author has attempted hardly to conduct observations in the newsrooms of the four selected newspapers, yet it turned out to be impossible for the cases in both China and the UK. The two Chinese newspapers both refused the author's application for observation due to concerns of the author's uncertain political background as a student studying in overseas university. Although the author has personal connection with managers from some of the Chinese newspapers, since she has never worked for them before, they could not be sure that she would not bring any political threat to their professional careers and the personal connection was not strong enough to gain access for observation. In the case of the two British newspapers, the newsrooms of the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* are both very busy and were not able to support observations. Within limited time the PhD study has given, the author can only rely on semi-structured interview to draw picture of newsroom routines and journalistic practice taking place in real scenario.

The second limitation is the number of informants. This study has already successfully conducted 32 interviews and the author believed that the interviews have already provided enough empirical data to test the hypothesis and answer the research questions for the thesis. However, the research questions proposed in this study are expected to be answered in both past tense and present tense. The development of communication technologies and the adoptions of technologies by news organizations have been happening too fast. Therefore, the interviewees may have not been provided with enough time to gather strong understanding and experience of a newly introduced content management system or a newly re-organized newsroom structure, on the other hand. Alternatively, what has been

said by the interviewee in present tense may be very easily became the past. For example, when the interviewees with the *Daily Mail*/ MailOnline's editorial team took place in April 2012, the editorial teams of the MailOnline and the print newspapers were separated from each other and regarded by the interviewee as unique in their approach and response to making content for multi platforms. However, when the author visited the MailOnline again in December 2013, the Mail Newspaper Group has introduced a "Leader Sheep" <sup>16</sup> project have the sport sections for the MailOnline and the *Daily Mail* converged into one team producing content for multi platforms, including the newspapers, the website as well as tablet and smartphone editions. It is very likely that what has been recorded by this study in present tense is now past. However, the collection of this empirical evidence is crucial for researchers and newspaper organizations to understand mass media's adoption to technology in a more comprehensive way.

The third limitation is the lack of tailored software for downloading, managing and analysis online content. In this study, the author manually downloaded the homepages of the selected four newspapers in the format called "web archive" for further comparison and analysis. It ensured that the author can preserve information contains on the webpage, including multimedia elements, hyperlinks, for later analysis. Although by saving the webpage in the format of "web achieve" can make the process of analysing its content repeatable and therefore more reliable, however, it is very time consuming. Since the website architecture is normally fixed for the newspaper's online presence, there is normally no change in a long period of time in terms of how many stories and what are the sections listed on the homepage and the allowed word length for article headlines. That means in this thesis, the content analysis does not necessarily need to be repeated to ensure that the results are reliable and representative. However, for some of the research questions that required to be answer by content analysis, for example, the difference between editorial value and agenda setting, if the sample pool could be larger with the help of content analysis software designed for online content and digital data, the finding would be more reliable.

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<sup>16</sup> Note: The phrase "Leader Sheep" is from the interview with the head of sports, MailOnline/the *Daily Mail*. He used this phrase to describe the new initiative of integrating the online and offline production team for sports section as an experiment for further integration between MailOnline and the *Daily Mail*.

The last limitation is related to language and culture barriers. As the author was born, grown up and educated in China, before she started her study for master degree in the UK in 2008, although the academic training conducted during her Master and PhD studies in the UK have helped her to decrease the possible bias or misunderstanding of the Western media, it is inevitable that the author's background and limited work experiences could create barrier to her to understand this topic deeper within limited time.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter discusses the major methodological concerns regarding to the research design and collection of empirical data for this thesis. It explains the choices of comparative studies and comparability between selected samples and adoption of a combination of qualitative research methods including content analysis, semi-structured interviews and review of secondary data. It then gives details of how two units of content analysis are designed and how questions for semi-structured interviews are structured. Details have also been given regarding to how empirical data has been collected during preliminary fieldworks and have discussed possible ethical concerns and limitations around the choice of research method.

## Chapter 4

# HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF PRESS JOURNALISM IN THE UK AND CHINA

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter first examined the major debates on online journalism under the light of comparative media studies, then reviewed Fidler's *mediamorphosis* theory, in particular the five principles he proposed that mass media's adoption to communication technologies follow, and adopted it as the unified perspective to compare the ways in which established newspapers in China and the UK have responded to the development of communication technologies and to understand why.

This chapter follows the review of the theoretical framework and aims to provide a historical account of press journalism of the two countries for explanation on how the complex interplay between technologies, culture, social and economic reasons has made newspapers in the two countries respond to the development of communication technologies in similar or different ways. It identifies

1. the development of the format of newspapers;



2. journalistic practice and newsroom culture as well as understanding of journalistic professionalism;
3. the ways in which journalistic practices have been organized and financed;
4. the historical interplay between newspapers and the change of technological, social, economic and political conditions, in the two countries.

In the end, it points out the most significant differences between press journalism of the two countries and discusses their causes.

## **4.2 PRESS AND PRINT JOURNALISM IN THE UK AND CHINA**

### **4.2.1 British Press and Print Journalism**

This section begins with a brief review of the history of British newspapers, from the production of crude pamphlets to the emergence of the popular press. It focuses on the following perspectives: the format of newspapers, the understanding of journalism, and the function of newspapers in social and political life in Britain. Here, the aim is first to build up a more comprehensive understanding of the genesis of modern British journalism and the British press, and then to provide an historical examination of the relationship between journalists, publishers, readers and advertisers; and, finally, to examine how the British press has managed to legitimize itself as the “Fourth Estate”, has built up its respectability, and has become a “free press”, compared with the press model in many countries, and particularly that of most authoritarian countries.

#### **4.2.1.1 Twists and Turns in the Seventeenth Century**

The history of British newspapers can be traced back 400 years to 1621, when the first dated and sequential “newsbooks” appeared in England (Temple, 2008). Even if printing was not journalism, it constituted part of the social and economic changes which created the conditions under which printed news and versions of

journalism could appear (Conboy, 2004). Although movable type was invented by the Chinese long before it benefited the development of print in Europe, it is widely recognized that Johannes Gutenberg's innovation of the first printing press during the 1450s symbolized the beginning of the printing revolution. However, arriving alongside Gutenberg's printing press came the tight control over the licensing of the press by the Church and State in Continental Europe and Britain. By the end of 1523, there were only 35 printers in London (*ibid*). The limited number of printers and the establishment of the Stationers' Company in 1557 postponed the emergence of regularly printed "newsbooks".

It has to be emphasized here that towards the end of the sixteenth century, England was becoming a prominent player on the world stage, due to its increased maritime power and the acquisition of colonies worldwide. With concerns about the integrity and stability of the realm, monarchies and authorities were all worried about the control of political information and the free exchange of political opinion. However, the restrictions imposed by the Stationers' Company and the Star Chamber could not prevent the emergence of political pamphlets and a clandestine press. The rise of a commercial class and better standards of living created the conditions for recognising news as a commodity in assisting other commodities. The social and economic conditions promoted the demands of the newly risen merchant class for reliable and regular news. Although the first "newsbook" did not appear in England until 1621, the public's eagerness to keep up with the news was satisfied in other forms. Writers were sent to London by a group of prosperous provincials to cover what was happening there, and pedlars travelled to rural areas with messages from the publications available in London. Information was disseminated through a variety of media: newsletters, pamphlets, oral communication, stage plays and official proclamations.

Besides the rise of a commercial class, it is undeniable that the increased literacy rate in the early seventeenth century also hastened the growth of the audience for publications in Britain, and the audience for regular and relatively reliable news began to form. It is believed that in the early seventeenth century, 30% of the male population in the countryside could read, while in London, male literacy rates were upwards of 80%. The emergence of the first regular "newsbooks in Britain in the 1620s indicated that printers and reporters had started to appreciate the potential commercial benefits of "periodicity". In addition, the hunger for news

and information are always most noticeable at times of war or national crisis. In the late sixteenth century, England was involved in wars with Spain and France. During times of war, the news-printing technology enabled news and information to flow more quickly, more widely and more regularly. Not surprisingly, printed newsletters consisted of translations of foreign news arriving at English ports.

As Conboy (2004) noted, the impact of print on Western Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a growing influence on the changes in the structures of political and social authority. Throughout the seventeenth century, the British newspapers played an important role in the lead-up to the English Civil War and the subsequent Restoration of the Monarchy. However, as Herd pointed out, “There has never been a period in our history when authority has genuinely liked the idea of full publicity for all its activities and unchecked criticism of its conduct” (1952, quoted by McNair (2009, p.11)). Thus, the British printers and reporters risked censure, imprisonment and even torture or death to participate in the social changes in the seventeenth century, since the control over publications by the monarchy and the ruling class had never ended. The Star Chamber was misused by King Charles I, who succeeded to the throne in 1625, to prosecute dissenters and enforce unpopular royal policies. On 17 October 1632, the Star Chamber banned all “newsbooks” (McNair, 2009). As a result, “newsbooks” were often printed in Amsterdam and then smuggled into England. However, with the abolition of the Star Chamber in 1641, printing in Britain could finally enjoy a short period of relative freedom from the authority of the press.

With Parliament broadly divided into opponents and supporters of the king, hundreds of periodicals and pamphlets burst into existence during the 1640s (Temple, 2008). Meanwhile, news started to be reported in a way that can be recognized as “modern”. For example, in the news story about King Charles I’s execution outside the Banqueting House, the reporter wrote:

January 30, 1649 was a bitterly cold day. Charles went to his execution wearing two heavy shirts so that he might not shiver in the cold and appear to be afraid . . . then the king asked the executioner, ‘Is my hair well?’ And taking off his cloak and George [the jewelled pendant of the Order of the Garter, bearing the figure of St George], he delivered his George to the bishop. Then putting off his doublet and being in

his waistcoat, he put on his cloak again, and looking upon the block, said to the executioner, ‘You must set it fast’ ” (in *The Execution of Charles I*, 1649).

During Oliver Cromwell’s rule and after the return of Charles II in 1660, many regressive features had returned, such as the loss of parliamentary reports, the return of direct censorship, and control by an autocratic monarchy. Some historians even describe the period from the Restoration until the Licensing of the Press Act of 1662 expired in 1695 as a “bleak period for English journalism” (Smith 1979 quoted in [Conboy \(2004, p.45\)](#)). Britain even had its first official censor, Roger L’Estrange, who was given the power and a group of spies to monitor and punish unlicensed journalists and dissident publishers. In Britain at that time, only Oxford and Cambridge Universities and 20 London-based printing houses were allowed to print materials; no other printers were licensed ([Temple, 2008](#)). It was not until the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the establishment of freedom of speech for Members of Parliament in accordance to the Bill of Rights, that the official censor Roger L’Estrange was removed and the number of British newspapers began to grow again.

It was during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the early forms of journalism started to emerge in Britain. The writers of merchants’ newsletters were not referred to as “journalists”, but were called “intelligencers”, and they created a professional business of providing a correspondence service for wealthy families. As Sommerville comments:

“News began as a luxury commodity ...helping elites to maintain themselves by monopolizing political and commercial intelligence” ([1996, p.19](#)).

During the wars in the late sixteenth century, many periodical publications carrying news from the battlefields emphasized the words “newes”, “true”, “credible” and “report”. It is believed that this is the earliest practice of “journalistic truth as a commodity to be packaged and sold” (Voss 2001 quoted in [Conboy \(2004, p.16\)](#)).

Notwithstanding the twists and turns during the development of the early British newspapers in the seventeenth century, it is strongly arguable that the British press had permanently established itself as an important social and political element in Britain. The term, “newspaper”, first appeared in 1670.

To sum up, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the genesis of British newspapers and the birth of journalism have the following significance. First, the emergence of regular “newsbooks” in the 1620s indicated that the printers and reporters had begun to appreciate the potential commercial benefits of newspapers, and readers were targeted as consumers who could bring profits. As Conboy commented, the commodification of news in regular, printed form meant that it could be profitable if the dissemination of news were available for the wider public, and the exchange of printed news was based on one’s ability to pay (2004). It is important to point out that commercial gain was always deeply rooted as the driving force behind almost every innovation and change in the British press industry over the following 400 years.

Second, the important role played by printers and reporters during the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution showed that the British press had already become a significant political element, capable of mediating between the opponents and the ruling élites. The function of newsbooks in the formation of a “public sphere” in Britain during the late seventeenth century will be assessed later in this thesis.

Third, as Temple noted (2008), by the end of the seventeenth century, newspapers were not only merely reporting events, but a combination of news, comment, gossip and invective that still exists in today’s newspapers. Meanwhile, news had started to be covered in a way that can be recognized as modern.

#### **4.2.1.2 The Birth of a National Press and the Period of the Radical Press**

For many years, the abolition of the so-called “Tax on Knowledge” in 1853 had been regarded as a symbol of victory in the fight for a free press. However, this conclusion is not convincing, particularly with regard to the rise and fall of the British radical press during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The

following paragraphs assess the main social and economic impetus behind the rise of the radical press. The two periods of its development are described in detail, and the reasons for the sharp fall of the radical press after the end of the Tax on Knowledge are also examined. It is undeniable that on one hand, the end of the Tax on Knowledge stimulated the growth of the British press; yet, on the other hand it precipitated the further commercialization of the British press and established the market element in the development of the popular press.

As Conboy (2004) commented, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, there was no political or commercially driven force to produce journalism for a wider audience than a narrow élite. However, from the late seventeenth century, journalism began to be consolidated “as a negotiation between the demands of three interest groups:

1. readers who increasingly perceived themselves as both private individuals and as part of the wider public;
2. advertisers who were also keen to profit from the wider circulation of newspapers;
3. politicians who had an ambivalent attitude to exposure in the news, fearful of criticism yet craving the popular acclaim and legitimation which only the newspapers could provide” (Conboy, 2004, p.66).

The ruling class has always been aware of the power of the press and in theory could control newspapers. In the eighteenth century, the governing class replaced direct censorship with tax to control the development of the press. With a strong economic motivation, a tax was first imposed on British newspapers through the Stamp Act of 1712 as a means for the government to raise funds through commodity taxation. The imposition of the Stamp Act introduced taxation on the size and advertising content of both newspapers and pamphlets, taxing newspapers at the basic rate of a penny per full sheet and one shilling on every advertisement they carried.

However, with the end of the Licensing of the Press Act in 1695, newspapers in Britain started to flourish again. Although the introduction of the tax on newspapers increased the newspapers’ expenses, the press in Britain continued

to flourish during the following years of the eighteenth century, in particular the illegal, irregular and unstamped pamphlets. As well as London, many provinces established their own local newspapers, while a steady readership and a demand for political information were formed among the working class.

Although there was clearly a demand for political news among the lower classes in the eighteenth century, the mainstream stamped newspapers and their advertisers still did not target the potential readership outside the educated class (*ibid*). Instead, they maintained their style, restricted to political and economic news. The ignorance of the mainstream stamped newspapers of the potential market among the uneducated class allowed a space for the popular unstamped pamphlets which carried songs, poems, witty anecdotes, gossip, crime and humour.

The consolidation of mainstream daily newspapers and the flourishing of unstamped pamphlets not only extended the dissemination of ideas, but also increased the awareness of involvement in political life among both the educated and working classes. The reopening of Parliamentary proceedings to the press further expanded the political debate to a broader public sphere.

Thus, by the end of the eighteenth century, there was a consolidation of the position of the daily newspapers. It is also worth noting that during the eighteenth century, advertisements became a reliable financial support for newspapers. According to the Stamp Act, tax was applied to newspapers and pamphlets; newspapers had to register at the Stamp Office and provide information about the printer's name and address. On one hand, it made the stamped newspapers more reliant on advertisement revenue; on the other hand, it made the publisher ultimately responsible for the content and for the selling of his newspaper. It is believed that the newspapers that survived under the Stamp Act finally earned the financial independence that, together with political independence, determined the independence of the press (*ibid*). It helped the press to earn its respectability.

However, the competition between the mainstream stamped newspapers and the irregular unstamped pamphlets started to change, due to pressure from both home and abroad. As Conboy noted, during the nineteenth century, "In the wake of the pressures of unemployment and urbanization in the early Industrial Revolution, readerships were being increasingly politicalized along class lines. Newspapers began to address their readers in one of two ways: as a market for economic

purposes, or as a social class for political purposes” (*ibid*, p.88-89). The French and American Revolutions also played a role in the renewal of a long-suppressed radical impulse.

#### 4.2.1.3 The Emergence of the Popular Press

In the late nineteenth century, the radical press was either forced out of existence, or moved up market with an established political position, or developed into small specialist publications. It is mainly because

1. newspapers became cheaper;
2. Acts of the 1870s led to a growth in literacy, and therefore the market for newspapers expanded;
3. capital investment was introduced;
4. dependence on advertising revenue and circulation was increased.

It became hard for radical press to keep running; replacing them was the popular press.

After the Acts of the 1870s, *The Star*, published in London as an evening newspaper in 1888, is regarded as the first newspaper to start targeting the newly literate audience ([Central Office of Information, 1974](#)), rather than the traditional consumers of newspapers, the “relatively small élite of educated members of the bourgeoisie and upper class” ([McNair, 2009](#)). With bold headlines and short, human stories, the readership of the newspaper reached 900,000 in just three months. The first daily morning paper that appealed to a mass readership was the *Daily Mail*.

Founded by Lord Northcliffe, , the *Daily Mail* was created as “a Penny Newspaper for One Halfpenny” and “The Busy Man’s Daily Newspaper”. Having previously founded the weekly magazine *Answers* (original title: *Answers to Correspondents on Every Subject Under the Sun*), Lord Northcliffe strongly believed that Britain needed a newspaper which was aimed at the newly literate lower-middle class market, resulting from 1870 Education Act. He then introduced a news business



strategy which “combined a low retail price subsidised by a high volume of advertising revenue with plenty of competitions, prizes and promotional gimmicks” (Manning, 2001, p.83). Lord Northcliffe had an intuitive gift for anticipating what the public wanted, even before they knew it themselves. He noticed that “there were halfpenny papers already, but these were cheap in every sense; there were penny papers, too, but they were wordy and dull. Even the so-called great newspapers of the age lacked initiative and were remote from the people” (Harris, 2013).

The editorial style of the *Daily Mail* was experimented on in Lord Northcliffe’s first magazine, the *Answers*. covered all kinds of human interest topics, from “What does the Queen eat?” or “Can fish talk?” to “What colour are the Prime Minister’s socks?” or “How long can a severed head remain conscious after a decapitation?” All these topics were covered in three or four lines. The magazine also promoted its circulation through competitions. In every issue, readers were invited to answer questions such as “How many people pass London Tower Bridge each day?” and the winner could expect a considerable prize. By promoting circulation through competitions and providing interesting topics which were suitable conversation topics for middle-class family dinners, the *Answers* magazine helped Lord Northcliffe to make his first fortune. In 1894, he brought the closing *Evening News* and two years later, he founded the *Daily Mail*.

As Paul Harris wrote in the *Daily Mail’s* official history, the beginning of the twentieth century has been one “of adventure and disclosure, of courage and crusading” (2013, p.1), and the *Daily Mail* “has probably contributed more to progress than any other newspaper. It has campaigned on issues ranging from bread to barrage balloons, from aviation to unleaded petrol, and has constantly pushed forward the boundaries of communication. It has kept watch over politicians, influenced the minds of leaders and changed the thinking of governments” (*ibid*).

The *Daily Mail* was an immediate success and Lord Northcliffe’s understanding of what people liked to read was proved to be right. His newspapers were less interested in politics and more in increasing circulation (Conboy, 2004). They turned to the lighter side of life and provided a wide variety of coverage presented in a very concise way, which a busy man could read quickly. The *Mail* also expanded its readership to women, accompanied by a trend towards female journalists. By

the end of 1899, circulation of the *Daily Mail* had reached 500,000 a day ([Spartacus Educational, 2003](#)). By the end of the Boer War, the circulation was over a million, making the *Daily Mail* the most popular newspaper in the world (*ibid*).

With the large-scale commercial success of newspapers such as the *Daily Mail*, journalistic professionalism also developed in the UK. The early 1990s were regarded as the beginning of modern journalistic discourse in the UK ([Matheson, 2000](#)). More editorial interventions were involved in the process of newsgathering and production, and newspaper articles were tailored to fit the format, style and space of the newspaper to allow the paper to be read on the move.

The *Daily Mail* not only introduced a new popular journalism, but also marked the beginning of the division of the daily press into “quality” and “popular” titles ([Central Office of Information, 1974](#)). The division is based on newspapers’ judgements on:

1. who are their target readers;
2. whether their target readers want full information on a wide range of topics;
3. how much time they would like to spend on reading the newspaper.

The publishing of another three popular newspapers, the *Daily Express* in 1900, the *Daily Mirror* in 1903 and the *Daily Sketch* in 1909, marked the start of popular press. These newspapers, without exception, were very successful at providing their vast audience with entertaining elements and bright human stories, presented in a concise way. With clear thoughts and the right answers to these questions, these popular titles expanded very quickly and, by 1910, 67% of the national daily circulation in the UK was controlled by three “press barons”, Lord Pearson, Lord Cadbury and Lord Northcliffe, and the trend of newspaper conglomeration has continued ever since ([Curran & Seaton, 2010](#)).

During the First and Second World Wars, newspapers in the UK continued to see a substantial expansion in circulation and played an important role in shaping the British public’s perception of the wars. British newspapers saw another notable development between 1918 and 1948 with the growing popularity of the *Daily Herald*, which reached net sales of 2 million copies, and of the *Daily Express*, whose circulation reached 2.5 million copies in 1939 ([Conboy, 2004](#)), but faced a new

rival — broadcasters. By the 1950s, radio and television had already started to share not only the newspapers' readership, but also their advertisement revenue. By the 1960s, television had become the main news provider in the country.

In the late 1960s, the British press saw more titles being absorbed into larger scale media conglomeration and further commercialization. The commercialization of broadsheet newspapers started in 1962, when the *Sunday Times* published its first colour supplement to attract readers and advertisers. The arrival of Rupert Murdoch and News International marked a new era of press barons. Murdoch's newspaper empire in the UK started with two tabloid titles — the *News of the World* and then *The Sun*, a broadsheet newspaper at that time. Both newspapers were losing money when Murdoch bought them, but by using the same printing press for both papers, thus cutting costs, and by changing *The Sun* to tabloid format, the two newspapers not only survived in the narrow, competitive British press market, but by the 1970s moved into profit.

Many scholars argue that the point at which *The Sun* adopted tabloid format also indicated the start of the trend towards tabloidization (Conboy, 2004; McNair, 2009; Rooney, 2000; Sparks, 1992). According to Conboy, tabloidization refers to “an increase in the news about celebrities, entertainment, lifestyle features, personal issues, an increase in sensationalism, in the use of pictures and sloganized headlines, vulgar language, and a decrease in international news, public affairs news including politics, the reduction in the length of words in a story and the reduction of the complexity of language, and also a convergence with agendas of popular and in particular television culture” (Conboy, 2004, p.181). Conboy argues that tabloidization was a result of the fierce competition between *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* in the 1970s (2004). While Sparks (1992) argues that the trend of popularization was the result of giving priority to the immediate issues of daily life over those concerns that have a long-term effect. For example, the space for more international news and economic life or institution affairs was given over to “human interest” stories, sports and entertainment news. Sparks argues that it is because acquiring immediate pleasure was given priority.

In 1981, Murdoch expanded his media business in the UK by acquiring another Fleet Street title, *The Times* and *the Sunday Times*. *The Times* was closed for nearly a year from 1978 to 1979, because of an industrial dispute and was struggling before Murdoch's acquisition. After taking over the newspaper, Murdoch

not only appointed a new editorial team, but also introduced new technologies, such as the hot-metal Linotype printing process, computer input and photo composition. These new technologies greatly reduced the cost and increased efficiency, but also resulted in many jobs being lost in the printing industry and were strongly opposed by the Fleet Street trade unions, triggering the Wapping dispute in 1984-1985. However, because thousands of workers had gone for a year without jobs or pay, the dispute eventually collapsed and Murdoch had the printing plants moved to Docklands, with the loss only of one day's publication of *The Sun*.

Murdoch, who is seen as a press baron, "ideologically committed and politically interventionist, but also a hard-headed pragmatist" (McNair, 2009, p.87), also built up its printing plant in Glasgow in the 1980s and established an efficient national distribution system with the help of his Australian partner. His actions greatly reduced the cost of his titles and, in the 1980s, forced his rivals to move out of the Fleet Street in order to cope with the fierce competition in the narrow British market.

However, the success of Murdoch's newspapers was also thought to be the result of strong government backing. By 1985, he had acquired four national titles and gained 33% of the total national newspaper circulation (McNair, 2009). His newspapers' loyal support of the government enabled him to bypass the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and the later Competition Commission. His acquisition of *The Times* successfully bypassed the Fair Trading Act of 1973, which required that only businesses that were certified as unprofitable and under threat of closure could be taken over. By combining *The Times* and *the Sunday Times*, the *Times* titles were regarded as losing money and Murdoch's bid was accepted to be in accordance with the rules.

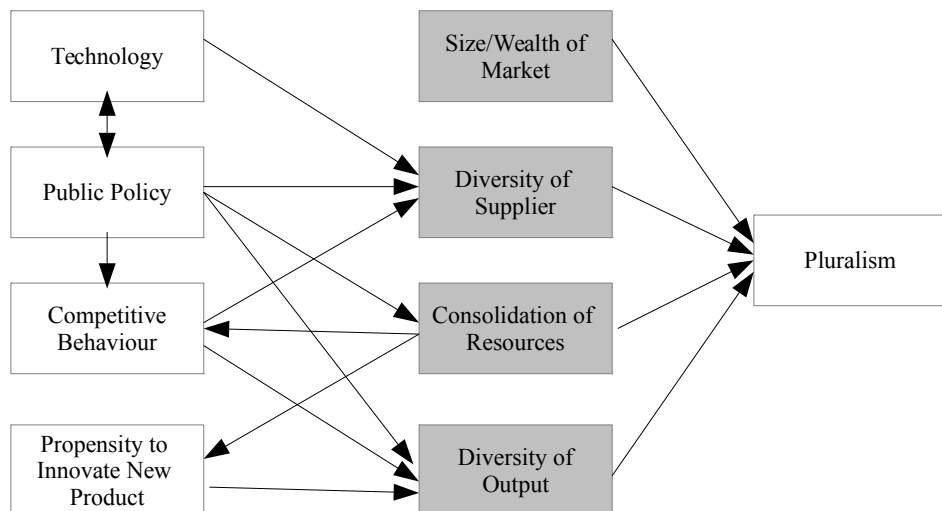
It was not only Murdoch's titles that were taking a political stance, but other British newspapers too, and the 1970s and 1980s saw a significant growth in right-of-centre newspapers. By 1985, there were nine newspapers that fully supported the Conservative Party, leaving only the Mirror Group titles and the *Guardian* standing slightly left-of-centre, while the *Morning Star* fully supported the Labour Party (McNair, 2009, p.88). When John Major led the Conservative Party to its fourth consecutive victory in 1992, Murdoch's title, *The Sun*, even ran a front page story with the headline, "If Kinnock wins today, will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights." Although later research argued there was no

evidence indicating that that the partisan newspapers had a directly influence on the overall result of the 1992 election (Curtice, 1997), it is hard to deny that the British is highly partisan.

Also although *News International's* bid for *BskyB* was abandoned after exposure of the Phone Hacking Scandal in 2011, Murdoch's empire still owned 37% of the British newspaper market before the closure of the *News of the World* and nearly 40% of the largest Pay-TV broadcasting in the UK.

Doyle discussed the nature of the relationship between media ownership and pluralism, and argues that four factors are likely to make impacts upon pluralism: the size or wealth of a market, the diversity of supplier, the consolidation of resources and the diversity of output, as shown in the chart below (Doyle, 2002, p.15).

TABLE 4.1: **The Relationship between Media Ownership and Pluralism**



Although the ownership of newspapers has been conglomerated in the control of a few press barons, the 2011 survey by Freedom House reports that “the law provides for freedom of the press, and the government generally respects this right in practice” (Humphreys, 2009, p.198) and although the conglomeration of

ownership did not provide “pluralism”, yet the British newspapers achieved a degree of political pluralism.

By now, there is currently a variety of newspaper titles in the UK, with 87 paid dailies, 11 paid Sunday newspapers, 12 free dailies, 462 paid weekly newspapers, and 345 free weekly newspapers<sup>17</sup>. Newspaper circulations in the UK have continued to decline with the recent national newspaper data indicating a 4–5% decrease (IFABC, 2010).

## 4.2.2 Chinese Press and Print Journalism in China

This section begins with a brief review of the history of Chinese newspapers, from the production of first modern Chinese newspaper to the marketization or even capitalization of the newspaper sector over the past three decades. Using the same approach as that for the history of British newspapers above, the historical review of Chinese newspapers in this section focuses on the following areas: the form of newspaper, the understanding of journalism, and the newspaper’s role in Chinese society. This section aims, first, to map out the development of newspapers in China and to build up an understanding of the emergence of modern Chinese journalism and modern Chinese newspapers; and then to provide an historical examination of the role of newspapers in Chinese society.

### 4.2.2.1 Before 1949

The Chinese invented printing long before any other nation and regarded it as one of China’s four great inventions, along with papermaking, gunpowder, and the compass. *Di Bao* is widely regarded as the oldest newspaper in China. It was invented two thousand years ago during the early Xi Han period, when news from the Imperial Court was carried on bamboo or silk from the liaison offices in the capital to the regional administrators circulated among the imperial family and members of the social élites.

Modern forms of newspaper were introduced to China by Western missionaries, together with modern science, technology and management concepts. Ever since

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<sup>17</sup>Data updated at 20 August 2014 and retrieved from <http://www.newspapersoc.org.uk/regional-press-structure>

then, newspapers in China have been at the forefront of revolutions, political struggles, social movements and economic reforms in the nation. Like newspapers in other nations, Chinese newspapers have played a variety of roles in social and political life.

The first Chinese language newspaper in the modern sense of the word was the Chinese Monthly Magazine (*Chashisu Meiyue Tongjizhuan*), published by William Milne, a Protestant from Britain, and his Chinese assistant Liang Fa on 5 August 1815 in Malaysia. In the late nineteenth century, with the development of movements for political reform and in opposition to the dynasty, political pamphlets and tabloids dramatically increased. The most widely known is *Wang Guo Gong Bao* (also named as *Zhong Wai Ji Wen*) published by reformers Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei. In the early twentieth century, there were more than 50 newspaper titles in Beijing, and their distribution exceeded 1,000 copies a day (Fang, 1996).

The first attempt at the marketization of the press in China can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. The tabloid title *Shun Pao* first published in 30 April 1872 was widely regarded as the first regular commercial title in China. The revenue of *Shun Pao* did not only come from selling newspapers, but also from a few advertisements. Later, in the early twentieth century, merchants and missionaries from Britain, America and other Western countries started publishing English newspapers in coastal cities, such as Shanghai and Guangzhou, to cover business information and religious stories. At that time, the Americans and British made two innovations to the Chinese press sector: competition and mordent management. It was after the commercial success of two American-founded newspapers, for example *Shang Hai Xin Bao*, that Chinese newspaper publishers started to value readership and advertising.

Seeing the success of the Anglo-American newspapers published in China, Chinese local titles began making attempts to form enterprises. *Shun Pao*, which proclaimed “the Third Way”<sup>18</sup> theory, was a small newspaper selling 7,000 copies a day when it was initially established in 1912 in Shanghai, yet after just ten years, it had become one of the most influential titles in China with a circulation

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<sup>18</sup>Note: “The Third Way”, or “the Middle Way” theory refers to alternative political option rather than accepting a single party leadership under the Communist Party of China or the Nationalist Party of China. It was popular in China during 1920s-1940s.



of more than 50,000 copies a day (Wang, 2013). The success of *Shun Pao* was mainly due to its strategy of valuing advertising and distribution. It set up an advertising department and allowed 60% of its newspaper space for advertisements (Fang, 1996). *Shun Pao* also introduced new printing machines from America, and started using delivery vans for their newspapers. These initiatives speeded up distribution and helped *Shun Pao* to build up the reputation of its brand for offering fresh news.

Meanwhile, the importance of journalistic practice and editorial policy was being advocated from the early twentieth century. *Ta Kung Pao*, a title that claimed not to take sides between the Communist Party and the National Party, adopted the motto of “4-No-ism”, meaning “no party affiliation, no political endorsement, no self-promotion, no ignorance” (*Bu Dang, Bu Mai, Bu Si, Bu Mang*). The newspaper’s popularity quickly soared, because of its sharp political commentary and coverage of current Affairs. *Ta Kung Pao* was the only Chinese newspaper to send reporters to cover the Paris Peace Conference after World War I in 1919, and it was the only Chinese newspaper at that time with a correspondent in Europe to cover World War II. *Ta Kung Pao*’s journalists were at the scene of Potsdam Conference in 1945 which discussed the post-war order, and the American battleship, USS Missouri, on which the Japanese signed the documents of surrender. *Ta Kung Pao* was also the first Chinese newspaper to be listed on the stock market.

Notwithstanding the *Ta Kung Pao* and other newspapers striving for independence, from the May 4th Movement of 1919 onwards, there was a growing politicisation of newspapers and political parties began to establish their own. The Communist Party published *Xinhua Newspaper* (*Xin Hua Ri Bao*) and *Literation Daily* (*Jie Fang Ri Bao*) while the National Party had *National Daily* (*Ming Guo Ri Bao*) and the *Central Daily* (*Zhong Yang Ri Bao*). Some influential titles were of neither party. The most famous ones are *Wen Hui Bao* and *Guang Ming Bao*.

#### **4.2.2.2 1949-1978**

On 1st October 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. Chiang Kai-shek and 600,000 Nationalist troops, and about



two million Nationalist-sympathizer refugees, who were mainly from the former government, education, culture, science and business communities of the Mainland, retreated to Taiwan, the island south of Mainland China, and proclaimed the Republic of China.

In general, the development of newspapers during the first three decades after the founding of “New China” can be divided into three stages. The first stage started in 1949 and ended in 1956, when CCP established Socialist public ownership of all social sectors, including the media. The second stage (1956-1966) took place before the Cultural Revolution broke out; and the third stage (1966-1978) ended when Deng Xiaoping launched social as well as economic reforms and the opening up policy.

During the early years of the PRC, China experienced a period of economic recovery and political consolidation. During the first stage of newspaper development after “New China” was founded, newspaper ownership varied from state ownership to private ownership. Some newspapers that were originally founded by foreign businessmen or missionaries continued to be funded by foreign investment. In 1949, the State Press Administration General Office was set up to provide guidance to the press sector. Although the General Office was abolished in 1952 and replaced by the Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee, it drew up some outline regulations on newspapers, including Measures for Newspaper Registration ([The People’s Daily, 1951](#)), with clearly stated guidelines for newspaper registration and management.

Meanwhile, because the nation and government were still recovering from the aftermath of war, newspapers were encouraged to be self-funded and self-managed as enterprises. The result was, first, that advertisements were widely adopted by party titles, as well as by the original commercial titles; and, secondly, a postal delivery network was built up and has been the main method of newspaper delivery ever since.

However, by 1956, however, the Community Party had established Socialist public ownership of all the sectors, including the media. All newspapers became state owned and the model of “public funded and public subscription” was set up. This meant that there were no privately owned newspapers, and no print titles were available for individual subscription. The newspaper, as a commodity, no

longer existed. Meanwhile, although the total number of newspaper titles saw little change, from 382 in 1950 to 396 in 1960, the total newspaper circulation exploded from 651 million copies in 1950 to 4.78 billion in 1960 (Liang, 1996). Through the establishment of the “public funded and public subscription” policy, newspapers in general became more ideologically orientated. Advertisements were regarded as products of capitalism and not in keeping with the spirit of a Socialist country. For that reason, advertisements disappeared from Chinese newspapers for nearly thirty years, until the reforms of 1978 and the opening up.

Meanwhile, Mao Zedong had stated in 1942 in his “Talks at the Yan’an Forum” (*Yan’an wenyi zuotanhui*) that writers should “extol the bright side of life” and “not expose the darkness”. This speech was taken as the guideline for journalism in China in the 1950s. From that time onwards, party newspapers were full of content praising the achievement of constructing a Socialist society. Thus, the central and regional Communist Party Committees had quickly consolidated and expanded their party newspapers to promote and publicize the Communist Party and government achievements.

During the same time, most of the non-Communist titles that existed before 1949 had either moved their publishing houses to Hong Kong or Taiwan or were closed down. Since the People’s Republic of China is formally a multi-party state under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, in practice, only one political party, the CCP, holds effective power to form a government. There are eight other parties which can participate in the political system by joining an advisory body, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). In 1949, most members of the advisory body were the social élites, who preferred to contribute to the social construction of communist China, and thus did not retreat to Taiwan with the Nationalist Party. By the end of 1956, a few of the non-Communist newspapers had become the official titles of such registered social groups, eight non-Communist parties (*Ming Zhu Dang Pai*), the People’s Liberation Army and trade newspapers.

The publishing business was greatly affected by the Great Leap Forward (1956-1961) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). For each movement, the CCP used the press as a tool to mobilize China’s vast population and almost all of the later social movements later; Deng Xiaoping’s 1978 mobilization for reform and opening up was no exception, triggered by political editorials in party newspapers.

During The Chinese Communist Party's launch of the Great Leap Forward in 1958 was an economic and social campaign which aimed to mobilize China's vast population in a rapid transformation of the country from an agrarian economy into a modern Communist society. Mao Zedong's theory was that the best way to finance industrialization was for the government fully to take control of agriculture by promoting agricultural collectives and to establish a monopoly over grain distribution and supply. This would also enable the state to buy agricultural products at a low price and sell much higher, in order to finance the industrialization of the country. In 1958, Mao Zedong employed the slogan "Surpass England and catch up with the United States", which began the Great Leap Forward.

In order to promote and publicize agricultural collectives, the Chinese Communist Party also launched a propaganda campaign in newspapers by publishing articles praising the achievements of joining agricultural collectives and abolishing the private ownership of land. In its New Year editorial for 1958, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, the *People's Daily*, proclaimed that the Great Leap Forward would propel China to surpass Great Britain in industrial output within 15 years and the United States within 20 or 30 years (Li & Yang, 2005, p.841).

News about great achievement in agricultural and industrial production spread widely across China, mainly through newspaper coverage. The phrase, "the more we dare, the more the land will yield", first appeared in the *People's Daily* on 12 June 1958 to advertise the Great Leap Forward, and soon became the slogan of the Great Leap Forward campaign. Journalist Liu Xirui wrote in his article published in the *People's Daily* in 1958 that "ShouXian government (a small town in Shangdong Province) planned to secure 1,000 kilos of grain harvest per acre, tried to achieve 1,500 kilos of grain harvest per acre. However, the peasants are working hard to achieve 25,000 or even 50,000 kilos grain harvest per acre. A poet said 'the more we dare, the more the land will yield'. Indeed, their achievement demonstrates that the speed of writing an article is not as fast as the growth of Shouxian agricultural outputs"<sup>19</sup>. In September 1958, the *People Daily's* published another article praising a successful model of agricultural collectives in Hebei Province. In this article, the journalist promoted fertilizing the land with dog meat soup to improve productivity. He wrote that "by fertilizing the land

<sup>19</sup>Note: Text cited from Xirui Liu published on *People's Daily* on 27th August, 1958

with dog meat soup, in Yushui Town, a Chinese leaf lettuce could be as heavy as 250 kilos”<sup>20</sup>.

During the Great Leap Forward, almost all of the newspapers were filled with overstatements wildly exaggerating agricultural or industrial productivity. Meanwhile, political pamphlets with Mao Zedong’s Thoughts became extremely popular. In the middle of the Great Leap Forward, the Shanghai Publishing Organization managed to print 24 million copies of the *General Line of Socialist Construction* in just two months. This amount was even 7 million more than the *People’s Daily’s* total annual distribution for 1950.

Newspapers’ exaggeration about the agricultural and industrial output during the Great Leap Forward overstated the outcome of central policies and delivered a wrong message to the decision-makers. Meanwhile, peasants across China plunged into the Great Leap Forward movement Campaign and left the land fallow. As a result, between 10 and 40 million people died as a result of famine between the movements (*ibid*).

After the failure of the Great Leap Forward, Mao Zedong lost his power for a time, but soon regained his position by launching the Cultural Revolution, which aimed to enforce Communism and Maoist orthodoxy. Millions of people, mostly the young, responded to Mao’s appeal to remove capitalist, traditional and cultural elements from Chinese society and formed the “Red Guard”<sup>21</sup>. The Cultural Revolution started in 1966 and early in the same year, the Red Guard occupied most newspapers’ newsrooms, including that of the *People’s Daily*, and proclaimed their occupation as the victory of the Cultural Revolution (Fang, 1996). In the 1967 New Year edition of the *People’s Daily*, a political editorial, proved to be by Mao Zedong, entitled “Carry the great proletarian cultural revolution through to the end”, was published. It triggered the outbreak of massive social movements across China which spread to the military, urban workers and even motivated on the Communist Party leadership itself. After that, Chinese newspapers were used as a propaganda machine to promote Maoist orthodoxy and publish political editorials, speeches, slogans and information about the Red Guard’s movements. For instance, in June 1966, the political editorial published

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<sup>20</sup>Note: Text cited from *People’s Daily* published on 18th September 1958

<sup>21</sup>Red Guards refers to young people who joined the mass paramilitary social movement in the P.R.C. mobilized by Mao Zedong during Cultural Revolution.

a slogan “sweeping away all the ox devils and snake demons” to encourage the vast population to join the Cultural Revolution.

During the Cultural Revolution, “the press must necessarily be subject to the control, which is to say the ‘restrictions’ of a particular class. There can be absolutely no press free of all ‘restrictions’. It is subject to the ‘restrictions’ of the bourgeoisie, or else to the ‘restrictions’ of the proletariat . . . as regards all these reactionaries, we must present a unanimity of opinion, we must not allow any expression of ‘different opinions’, not concede them the slightest freedom” (Broyelle et al., 1980, p.81). With the occupation of newsrooms by Red Guard, the regular production and publishing of newspapers was seriously affected. During the nine years of the Cultural Revolution, newspaper titles were sharply reduced. In just two years, newspaper titles decreased from 343 in 1965 to just 43 in 1967, while magazine titles decreased from 790 to 27 (Chen, 2005). By the end of Cultural Revolution, in 1978, there were only 186 newspaper titles in China (Liu, 2010), being just one-third of the total in 1950.

During the Cultural Revolution, pamphlets were widely regarded as a source of information and as a tool for mobilizing the public. The most influential pamphlets were those edited by colleges and universities in Beijing. These pamphlets were not legally registered and had no regular publication or fixed editorial team. The content had a strong ideological orientation, and was mixed with rumours and misleading information. The popularity of pamphlets was mainly due to the absence of authoritative news sources, and indicated the emergence of a belief in the abolition of governments and the professional organization of society on a voluntary basis. Some scholars argue that it was because of the fear of anarchy that pamphlets were ordered to stop publishing, while others believe that it was “down to the Countryside Movement” which brought millions of educated youths to rural China which put an end to the boom in pamphlets.

During the years of the Anti-Rightist Movement, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, thousands of editors and journalists who had dared to challenge authority and had different opinions on the massive social movements were persecuted in violent factional struggles and suffered a wide range of abuse. For example, Deng Tuo who served as the Editor-in-Chief of the *People’s Daily*, committed suicide in 1966 after being accused as a “diving dog” and the leader of an anti-Communist party and anti-Socialist group. Fan Changjiang, who became

a reporter and journalist since 1933 and served as the Chief Editor of the New China News Agency and as President of the *Liberation Daily* and the *People's Daily*, committed suicide in the 1970s, after suffering abuse for about five years during the Cultural Revolution. The other example is the *China Youth Daily's* journalist Liu Binyan who published "On the Bridge Worksite" ("*Zai qiaoliang gongdi shang*") in 1956, which exposed bureaucracy and corruption, and "The Inside Story of Our Newspaper" ("*Benbao neibu xiaoxi*") about strict press control. Liu's article was one of the few pieces to criticize the Communist party itself since 1942. (Barboza, 2005) But he was soon labelled as "Rightist", expelled from the Communist Party and spent 21 years in and out of labour camps.

#### 4.2.2.3 1978-present

In 1976, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai (who had served for a long time as Prime Minister) both died. Their successor, Hua Guofeng, soon issued permission to arrest the "Gang of Four", who were the four leading radicals, as well as their associates and blamed them for all the damage those ten years of chaos had brought to China. However, it was not until 1978, when the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CCP Central Committee was held in Beijing, that order was brought back to the nation which had been in turmoil for a decade. The President of the CCP Central Committee Party School, Hu Yaobang, initiated a national discussion on the topic, "Practice is the sole criterion for judging truth" ("*Shijian shi jianyan zhenli de weiyi biao zhun*"), in order to break the misinterpretation and blind faith of Maoist orthodoxy during the Cultural Revolution. This discussion was again triggered by a newspaper editorial, published in the *Guangming Daily* on 11 May 1978.

The Third Plenary Session of the 11th CCP Central Committee held in 1978 also marked the beginning of the "Reform and Opening Up" policy. For the first time, capitalist market principles were introduced in to China as part of state strategy. Since 1978, accompanied by large-scale industrialization and the largest urbanization in world history, together with a dramatic increase in the literacy rate, the social and economic reforms of the last 35 years have brought changes to almost every aspect of social and political life, including a major transformation

of the Chinese press, from the ownership and management of newspapers to the profession of a journalist and the understanding of news.

However, in order to understand the various changes in the Chinese press, it is essential first to understand the social and economic reforms and the background of the opening up policy. The economic reforms over the last 35 years are now widely regarded as being carried out in two stages. During the first stage, the emphasis of reform was on:

1. decollectivization of agriculture;
2. opening up the country to foreign investment;
3. allowing individuals to set up businesses.

The second stage, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, involved the privatization of state-owned industries and the lifting of price controls, protectionist policies and regulations.

TABLE 4.2: **The Relationship between Economic Policies and Newspaper Development in China**

Period	Economic Reforms and Opening up	Impacts on the Chinese Newspapers
<p><b>First Stage: 1978 to late 1980s</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decollectivization of agriculture</li> <li>• Opening up to foreign investment</li> <li>• Private business was allowed to operate for the first time since the Communist takeover</li> <li>• Dual price system: some of the state owned enterprises were allowed to sell to private sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reintroduction of advertisement to newspaper, the <i>Tianjin Daily</i>, in 1979;</li> <li>• the <i>Luoyang Daily</i> set up its own sales department in 1985, the first newspaper sales department since 1949; the <i>Tianjin Daily</i>, set up its own sales department in 1988, being the first provincial newspaper to have its own sales team</li> <li>• On 4 January, 1979, the <i>Tianjin Daily</i> published the first advertisement since the Cultural Revolution</li> </ul>

*continued on next page*



TABLE 4.2: *continued*

Period	Economic Reforms and Opening up	Impacts on the Chinese Newspapers
<p><b>Second Stage: Late 1980s to 1990s</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Privatization of state-owned industries</li> <li>● Lifting of price controls</li> <li>● Setting up Special Economic Zones</li> <li>● Leaving local provincial leaders to experiment with ways to increase economic growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In 1987, the <i>Harbing Daily</i> was the first newspaper to change from being a public institution into a commercial enterprise</li> <li>● In 1995, the first metropolitan daily the <i>Huaxi City Daily</i> the (<i>Huaxi Dushibao</i>) was founded</li> <li>● In 1996, the first newspaper group, Guangzhou Daily Newspaper Group was founded</li> </ul>

*continued on next page*

TABLE 4.2: *continued*

Period	Economic Reforms and Opening up	Impacts on the Chinese Newspapers
In 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China's GDP grew 11.4% and reached 24.66 trillion RMB (\$3.43 trillion)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 Newspaper Groups registered with the General Administration of Press and Publication Department of the PRC</li> <li>• 32.2 million RMB total advertisement revenue (Cui &amp; Zhang, 2009)</li> <li>• 1,938 newspaper titles (<i>ibid</i>)</li> <li>• Total newspaper circulation 43.8 billion (<i>ibid</i>)</li> <li>• 6 newspaper groups listed on stock market (<i>ibid</i>)</li> </ul>

In the 1970s and early 1980s, televisions and radios were still luxury goods to normal Chinese families. In 1978, on average, only one in a hundred people had a television set <sup>22</sup>. As radios and television were not widely available until the late 1980s, newspapers in China, unlike the UK, were still regarded as elite media with great political influence, and newspapers, magazines and books were the main source of entertaining.

Since 1976, the print industry has expanded in many directions. The number of newspaper titles increased from 103 in 1976 to 186, while in 1998, the figure had reached 2,160 and the total circulation had exceeded 26 billion copies a year. The most remarkable transformation in China's press sector since the 1978 reforms

<sup>22</sup>Note: Figure generated from <http://zh.wikipedia.org/zh/> accessed in 3 March 2012.

and opening up has taken place from the mid-1990s, with tabloidization and marketization.

However, with regard to the function of the press in Chinese society, any suggestions that the media in China are still the Party organ are too facile and have overlooked a great many facts. In order to understand the role of the press in Chinese society and the nature of journalism in China, it is essential to understand how the ownership of newspapers has changed since 1949 when “New China” was founded, although the ownership changes were only slight. The following section first reviews the abolition of advertising and distribution, and then looks at its impact on the recovery of evening titles and the emergence of metropolitan titles. In terms of the changes on journalistic professionalism, the following section reviews the popularity of “citizen news” (“*mingsheng xinwen*”) and investigative journalism during the 1990s.

During the early years of “New China”, newspaper ownership varied from state ownership to private ownership, or even foreign investment. In December 1949, the then General Administration Office of Press and Publication of the PRC held the first newspaper managers’ gathering in Beijing and announced that all newspapers should be managed as enterprises (Cai, 2001). Indeed, newspapers, such as *Tianjin Daily* which is a party newspaper, had managed to profit from circulation and advertising revenue as early as 1949. However, by the end of 1956 when the Communist Party established Socialist public ownership of all social sectors, newspapers all became the property of the state. The distribution of newspapers was restricted to the state-owned post office, which took away the newspapers’ profit margin. In addition, a “state funded and state subscription” business model was applied to all Chinese newspapers and thus eventually abolished the newspaper’s nature as a commodity.

From 1956, for more than twenty years, the nation had experienced a series of social movements. Most of the social movements involved the pursuit of profit, and selling advertising space was regarded as capitalism and against the ideals of a Socialist country. From 1956 to the late 1970s, newspapers in China were state funded and were distributed through the state-owned postal system; they were reluctant to pursue economic profit through the fear of being labelled as Capitalist and Rightist.

This meant that editors, journalists, managers and publishers of Chinese newspapers at that time were neither driven by the circulation nor motivated by appealing to their audience and advertisers. In contrast, they served as government servants and their career paths were closely connected with the favour of their administrative body, the Propaganda Offices. It is therefore not hard to understand why Chinese newspapers appeared to be so accepting of, or even actively promoting, ideologically orientated campaigns before China's reforms and opening up in 1978.

However, in 1978, China's pioneer leader Deng Xiaoping started the "Reform and Opening Up" movement in 1978, proclaiming economic recovery and development as the CCP and Chinese government's priority, and it was then that the nature of the newspaper as a commodity was again generally recognized. Thus, the development of newspapers in China experienced the following stages:

1. the monopoly of newspaper distribution dominated by the state owned postal system was abolished and a modern distribution system established;
2. modern advertising mechanisms were set up;
3. newspapers were changed from public institutions (*shiyew danwei*) to enterprises;
4. press conglomeration began.

This series of changes generally built up the basis for the emergence of commercial newspapers, which by their nature are market oriented and therefore appeal to readers in terms of content and style. The role perception of Chinese journalists was also changing from being the party's organ and closer to being the watchdog of the government, as in the US or like the "Fourth Estate" in the UK. In the following section, these four stages in the development of Chinese newspapers since 1978 are closely reviewed.

#### *Abolishment Abolition of Restrictions on Advertising, and Distribution and its Impact*

Newspapers in China had no any financial independence between 1956 and the late 1980s, because of the restrictions in three areas:

1. within a planned economy, newspaper subscription fees and advertising fees were set by the government; and newspapers were not allowed to sell above the planned quota;
2. advertising was ideologically regarded as anti-Socialist;
3. the monopoly of distribution by the state-owned postal system, as explained in the previous paragraphs.

Many scholars have concluded that the monopoly of distribution by the state-owned postal system restricted newspapers' development as professional media organizations in China (Cai, 2001; Fang, 1996; Wu, 2006). It had four main disadvantages. First, in the mid-1980s, there were over 1,000 newspaper titles publishing across China, while the only distribution channel was the state-owned postal system. The monopoly therefore had almost absolute power to decide how much profit it wanted to make from selling newspapers. At that time, the distribution fee ranged from 25% up to 45% of a newspaper's price, and it was impossible for small newspapers to get a discount (Wu, 2006). Second, bureaucracy in the state-owned postal system made its business co-operation with the Chinese newspapers highly complicated and time-consuming. In addition, the postal system had problems with delays and poor service, which could also damage the brand of these newspapers. Third, any newspaper subscriptions were also made through the post office, thus impeding the cash flow from the post office to the newspapers, which made the business model lack competitiveness.

Therefore, once the restrictions on advertising and distribution were lifted in 1978, advertising soon returned to newspapers. Managers of Chinese newspapers also noticed that circulation and distribution were key to attracting advertisements. In 1985, the *Luoyang Daily* was the first to claim that it had set up its own distribution system by establishing distribution bureau in every town that the newspaper reached, and had introduced modern management to the distribution system. By the late 1980s, the monopoly of distribution dominated by the state-owned postal system was completely broken.

Meanwhile, with permission for individuals to run businesses, private companies also joined the construction of a distribution system. Efficient distribution and retail networks were soon set up across China. Coincidentally, it enabled the later

development of the evening newspapers and the metropolitan dailies that heavily relied on retail and advertising.

In general, the abolishment of the restrictions on advertising and distribution had two major impacts. First, it created the conditions for the recovery of daily evening newspapers. Second, the financial independence and motivation also led to the development of journalistic professionalism.

In November 1979, the *Nanchang Evening News* started publishing after many years of closure during the Cultural Revolution and was the first evening newspaper that recovered from the Cultural Revolution. Very soon, more evening titles started publishing again after many years of closure during the Cultural Revolution. Once the “state subscription” model had been broken, citizens were hungry for news, because of the great changes brought about by social and economic reforms, and so these evening newspapers were targeted at city-dwelling readers who wanted local news and information. The language of these evening newspapers was therefore more colloquial, while the selection of news tended to be more “light”. Educational, economic, cultural and entertainment news made these titles more reader friendly.

In the early 1990s, when the retail system and advertising mechanism had generally settled down, newspapers in China inevitably became more commercially driven and started to enjoy more financial independence from state subsidies.

With the emergence of financial independence, the first modern metropolitan daily, the *Huaxi City Daily*, was founded in 1995 in Chengdu and marked the second wave of newspaper marketization in modern China. It is important here to mention that its parent newspaper is also a party title, the *Sichuan Daily*, and founded the metropolitan newspaper to attract middle-class readers. The metropolitan dailies that appeared later were also founded by the state-owned national or local party newspapers, as an important reflection of the economic reforms on China’s press industry.

As to the *Huaxi City Daily*, it was the first time that a modern Chinese newspaper clearly positioned itself as a middle-class title. As a metropolitan title, the *Huaxi City Daily* was driven by the market and therefore had to make the newspaper appeal to middle-class readers. In a two-pronged approach, the newspaper launched a “doorstep distribution” campaign to increase individual subscriptions; secondly,

the financial independence enabled the editorial team to give more space to local news with entertaining and informing coverage, unlike other newspapers at that time which still mainly focused on party and government officials' activities and political news. In just three years, *Huaxi City Daily* had expanded its daily circulation to 500,000 and its annual advertising revenue to more than 100 million RMB (Meng & Li, 2012).

From the 1980s to 2000, the female adult literacy rate in China increased from 80.1% to 91%. Meanwhile, China's urbanization rate grew from 20.6% in 1982 to 50% in 2011 (National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, 1982, 2011). Women readers and city migrants therefore greatly expanded the narrow market for China's press. After the *Huaxi City Daily*, many metropolitan titles started to appear across China, including the *Chengdu Business Daily*, the *Southern City Daily*, the *Huashang Daily* and the *Jinhua Times*. In just five years after the *Huaxi City Daily's* success, more than 100 metropolitan dailies were founded across China.

These new metropolitan titles competed fiercely for a market share (Tong & Sparks, 2009; Zhao, 1998). The financial independence and competition for a market share between the metropolitan dailies also led to the explosion of "citizen news" ("*mingsheng xinwen*") and investigative journalism. The term "citizen news" was officially used in 2002 by the Jiangsu Television group in the slogan of its current affairs programme, "Nang Jing No Distance" ("*Nanjing linjuli*"). However, the idea of providing citizen news and entertainment, rather than reporting party and government activities, was approved by the editorial guidelines of evening newspapers and metropolitan titles even earlier. It is also well known that "investigative journalism has flourished in China" (Tong & Sparks, 2009) by the 1990s.

The change of content and language style also reflected changes in the newsrooms. It was during the late 1990s when metropolitan dailies became more mature that newspapers' newsrooms started to function with various divisions (Fang, 1996). Within the control of the central senior editorial team, journalists were allocated to departments, including the following: politics and current affairs division, breaking news unit, social news division, economic news division, educational and cultural and sports news division, photography division and commentary unit. The size of breaking news unit and the social news division were

comparatively larger than the politics and current affairs division in the evening and metropolitan titles. This newsroom model is now followed by almost every Chinese newspaper.

Having been financially successful for five years, in 2000 the *Huaxi City Daily* announced another target that was to become “mainstream media”. By using the term “mainstream media”, many scholars believe that metropolitan titles were referring to their aim to set the agenda for public discussion and become the watchdog of social scandals, as well as of government wrongdoing.

#### *Ownership Transformation and Press Conglomeration*

Western scholars in particular, have taken a superficial view of the Chinese press by dividing them into party newspapers and commercial newspapers. This approach means that they have overlooked information which could have helped to build up a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the state and the press, as well as the twists and turns in the development of journalistic professionalism in China.

It is widely believed that the ownership of newspapers is crucial to the development of journalism. The following paragraphs provide a detailed review of the transformation of Chinese newspapers from state-owned public institutions into business enterprises since 2002, together with the history of press conglomeration. The impact of this change in newspaper ownership on journalistic professionalism, and the relationship between press and state will be discussed.

The CCP had completed Socialist public ownership of all social sectors, only one kind of ownership remained: state-ownership. China’s press industry was no different; all newspapers at that time were state owned, and journalists were part of the public servant system. In addition, the administrative control over newspapers was held by central and local propaganda departments. The nature of the newspaper as a commodity was abolished before the reform and opening up movement of 1978, as discussed earlier in this study.

Within the framework of the reform and opening up movement, ownership reform was critical. The reform of ownership can be divided into four stages:



1. 1978-1991: ideological restrictions removed; household-responsibility system established in agriculture; restrictions lifted on private ownership; and a dual price system introduced;
2. 1992-1997: state-owned enterprises commercialized and the development of township and village enterprises encouraged;
3. 1998-2001: privatization and shareholding system was introduced on a larger scale;
4. 2002 to date: industrial ownership structure updated.

Coincided with the ownership reforms, the consequences of these general reforms were also seen in the changes in newspaper ownership, which flourished across China's press industry. It was back in 1950 that the CCP first clearly established their regulations on newspaper ownership. In 1950, the Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee published a report about "managing newspapers as enterprises" ("*Guanyu baozhi shixing qiyehua jingying qingkuang tongbao*"). This report clearly stated that "newspapers can be managed as enterprises, and it also works" (*People's Daily*, 27 Sept 1950). Guided by this report, many newspapers in China operated a sideline business in the early years of the 1950s. However, with the start of the anti-Rightist movement and during the years of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, such sideline businesses were usually closed.

In 1990, the State Administration of Press and Publication published another regulation on newspapers, the *Interim provisions on newspaper regulation (Baozhi guanli zanxing guiding)*. It again clearly stated that newspapers were permitted to run a "sideline business" (Ruan, 2004). Therefore, in an economy with a growth in two digits, and with permission to run sideline businesses, newspapers across China entered into many industries along with the press. For example, the *Guangzhou Daily* founded sideline businesses in estate development and the advertising and publishing industries. Take the party newspaper the *Shenzhen Special Economic Zone Daily*, for example: in just three years from 1995 to 1998, this newspaper set up three affiliated publications to increase its revenue from advertising and circulation.

By 1994, more than 2,000 newspaper titles existed in China. In a relatively small market, the competition between these newspapers was fierce. In order to achieve economies of scale, the central government launched a top-down policy to promote press conglomeration. In June 1994, China's State Administration of Press and Publication gathered the chief editors and managers from the top ten party newspapers and discussed the possibilities of setting up newspaper groups. Those attending were from the *Guangming Daily*, the *Economic Daily*, the *Zhejiang Daily*, the *Sichuan Daily*, the *Jiefang Daily*, the *Nanfang Daily*, the *Beijing Daily*, the *Hubei Daily*, the *Liaoning Daily* and the *Xinhua Daily*. Unlike the UK, where newspaper conglomeration was driven by market forces, the emergence of Chinese newspaper groups was stimulated by a top-to-down policy. At this meeting, five criteria for press conglomeration were addressed: brand and reputation; profitability; journalistic professionalism; technical support; and distribution network. In addition, a proposal to set up newspaper groups must be initiated by a party newspaper, and not the affiliated metropolitan titles.

Soon after this meeting, the *Guangzhou Daily*, as a party newspaper that met all the five criteria, was permitted to set up the Guangzhou Daily Newspaper Group. Many scholars have questioned why the first newspaper group to appear in China was the Guangzhou Daily Newspaper Group, rather than any other of the top ten party newspapers that participated in the critical meeting when the policy was agreed (Cui & Zhang, 2009; Fang, 1996; Zhan, 2011). Scholars agree on the following points. First, Guangzhou, as the capital of Guangdong province, was the frontline of China's economic reforms and opening up. During 1984-1993, a notable development was the decentralization of state control, allowing local provincial leaders to experiment with ways of increasing economic growth and privatizing the state sector. Most reforms and initiatives therefore started as experiments by sub-regional government. Guangdong province was therefore believed to enjoy more political freedom, as its propaganda department exercised less control over the local newspapers. Second, being at the frontline of economic growth, the *Guangzhou Daily* was thought to be very profitable, particularly with its sideline businesses. Third, the *Guangzhou Daily* was regarded having less political influence than other top party newspapers, such as the *People's Daily* or the *Guangming Daily*, which meant that if its experiment failed, the local authority, as well the newspapers' managers and editors, took less political risk.

Therefore, although the central government allowed the Guangzhou Daily Newspaper Group to be set up on 15 January 1996, it was not until two years later that any other newspapers followed suit. By setting itself up as a newspaper group, Guangzhou Daily Newspaper Group now has 15 newspaper titles, five magazines, one publishing house and two websites. The circulation of the parent newspaper, the *Guangzhou Daily*, which is also a regional party newspaper, reached 2 million copies a day in 2008.

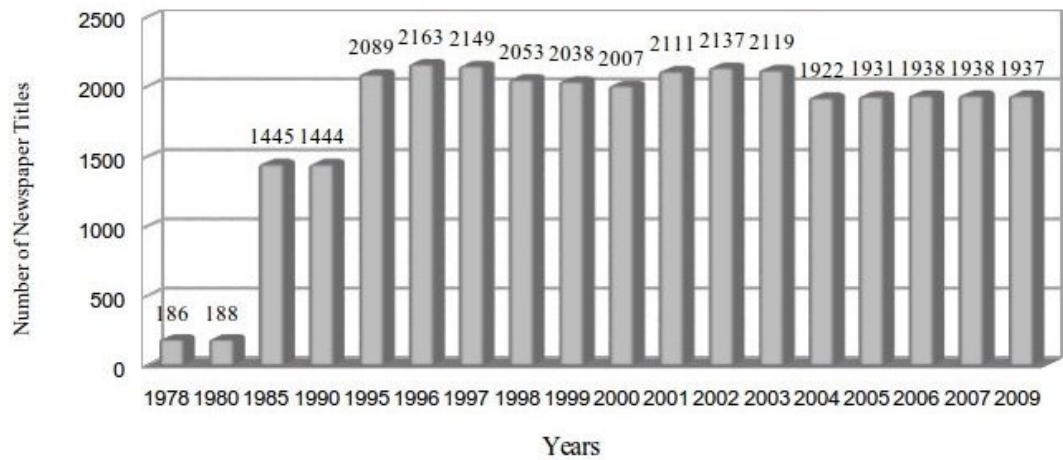


FIGURE 4.1: **Number of Newspaper Titles in China from 1978-2009** <sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Note: Cited from Zhen& Qi (2008), *The Reform and Development of Press Sector in China in the Past 30 Years, Collection of Journalism Essays*, Volume 21.

Now, there are currently 40 newspaper groups in China, two of which are national newspaper groups, 23 are provincial newspaper groups, and 13 are city newspaper groups. The 40 newspaper groups make up 17% of the total newspaper titles and 41% of the total newspaper circulation (Wang, 2005). The combination of newspaper titles reflects its target readership. Without exception, these newspaper groups are supervised by their parent newspapers, which are the CCP titles, while also having commercial titles such as evening newspapers and metropolitan newspapers. The management and financial models of these newspaper groups are generalized as “Party titles (broadsheet) set guidance for public opinion; commercial titles (middle-market tabloid) bring in profit; commercial titles subsidise party titles”. (“*dabao guan daoxiang, xiaobao chuang shichang, xiaobao yang dabao*”).

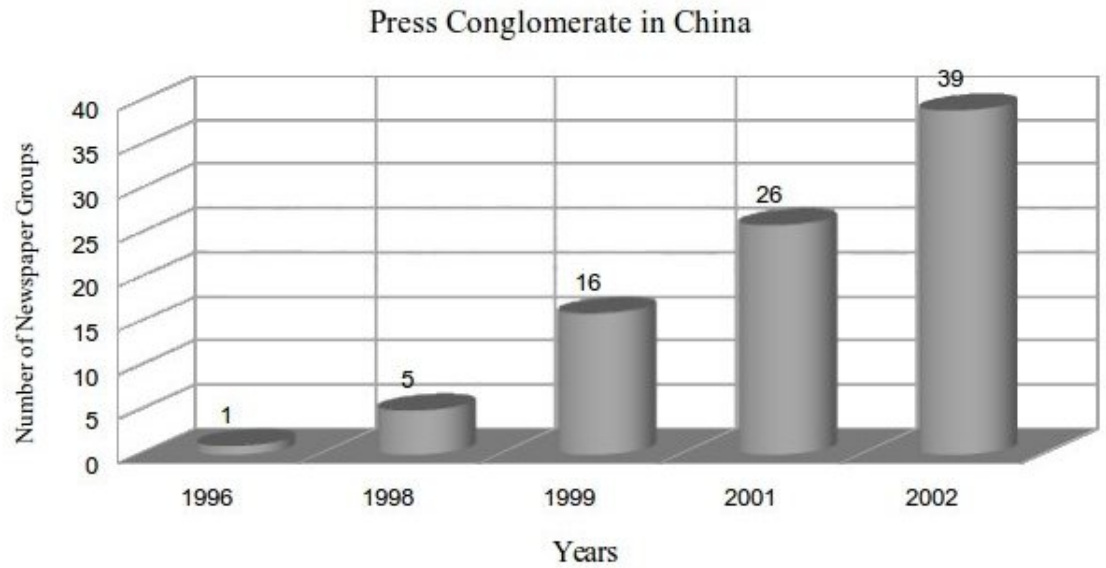


FIGURE 4.2: **Number of Newspaper Groups in China** <sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Note: Figure generated from Zhan (2011), *Historical Review and Analysis of the Development of Newspaper Groups in China*, People's Daily Online, available at <http://media.people.com.cn/GB/22100/213308/213310/13831745.html>, accessed in 2 February, 2013

There is still a certain imbalance in the development of newspaper conglomeration. At the time of writing, there are 40 newspaper groups, mainly located on the east coast and in mega-cities. They are based in 26 capital cities, 10 of which have two newspaper groups; these cities are Wuhan, Shanghai, Nanjing, Jinan, Chengdu, Ha'er bin, Changsha, Hangzhou, Chuangchun and Shenyang. Two of the capital cities, Beijing and Guangzhou, have three newspaper groups. The other 14 capital cities have just one newspaper group each.

By the end of 2007, in terms of newspaper variety, there were 1,938 newspaper titles in China, with 221 national titles, 816 provincial titles, 882 city newspapers and 19 county newspapers. In terms of content specialization, 809 of them were "comprehensive newspapers", making up 42% of the total newspaper titles, 1,129 of them were specialist titles (Cui & Zhang, 2009). In terms of newspaper circulation, unlike the UK, where national newspapers made up more than 80% of the total newspaper circulation, <sup>25</sup> the national titles in China only formed

<sup>25</sup> Note: Data generated from *Daily Newspaper Circulation Trends 2000-2013* published on 28 October 2013 as a discussion paper by The Communication Management Inc., available at <http://media-cmi.com/downloads/CMI-Discussion-Paper-Circulation-Trends-102813.pdf>

11% of the total newspaper circulation in 2007, while 88% of the total newspaper circulation was contributed by regional newspapers as shown in Figure 4.3 & 4.4. As stated earlier, competition in China’s press industry is extremely fierce. For example, for a city with a population of 10 million, such as Wuhan, is covered by more than 43 newspapers titles (Cao, 1999).

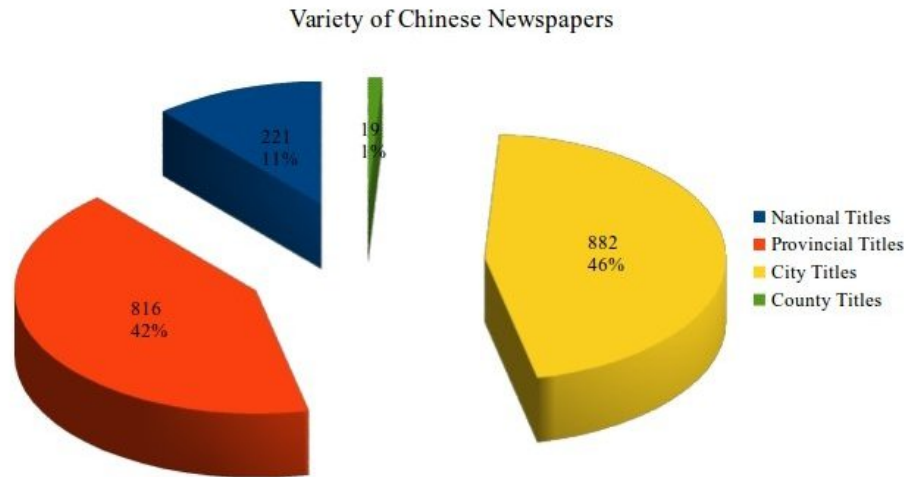


FIGURE 4.3: **Variety of Chinese Newspapers** <sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Note: The diagram in based on figures generated from Cui& Zhang (2009), *The Review Of The Development Of Chinese Press And Discussion Of Its Future*, Zhongguo Baoye Magazine, Issue 3.

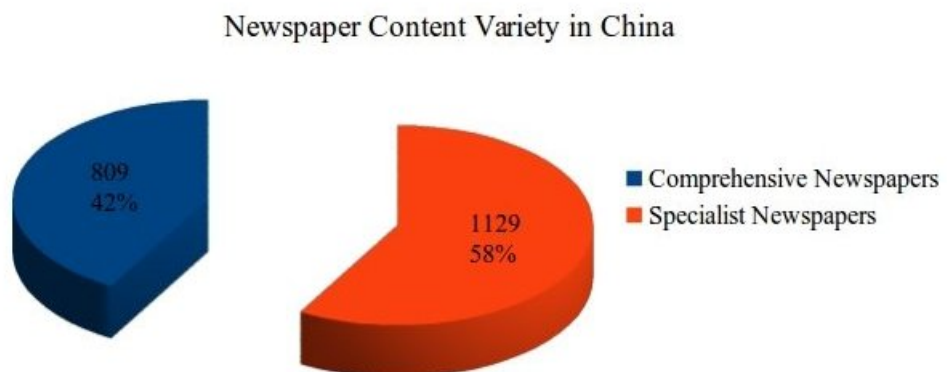


FIGURE 4.4: **Variety of Chinese Newspapers in Terms of Content** <sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Note: The diagram in based on figures generated from Cui& Zhang (2009), *The Review Of The Development Of Chinese*

By 2005 there were more than 1,900 newspaper titles in China, which were all government-run public institutions (*shiye danwei*) receiving subsidies from the government's public spending budget. Like government departments, but completely different from private businesses, government-run public institutions in China are subsidized by the national budget and do not have earnings. They normally exist in social sectors, such as education, science, culture, health and media. For example, most hospitals and universities in China are government-run public institutions, characterized by the following features:

1. state-owned; staffing recruitment and promotion must be done through the government;
2. administered by the government;
3. its staff enjoy almost the same social benefits as a public servant, being much higher than average.

Government-run public institutions resulted from the 1956 Socialist reforms, in which all social sectors were nationalized, including those which provided a public service. However, in the early 2000s, the number of staff in public institutions was far greater than the number of civil servants, and the central and local governments found it difficult to continue financing such a huge burden. By the early 2000s, party newspapers were struggling to maintain their titles on their circulation and advertisement revenue, whereas their affiliated metropolitan titles were profitable and in healthy growth. In 2003, therefore, the central government announced its policy to transform the public institutions in the cultural sector into businesses (*Yuanyu wenhua tizhi gaige shidian gongzuo yijian*) and 21 public institutions, including newspapers and publishing houses, were chosen to test the policy first. In 2008, the National Conference for Reforms in the Cultural Sector (*2008 Quanguo wenhua tizhi gaige huiyi*), the central government set up a three-year schedule to push forward this policy. Although the central government pushed forward the transformation of newspapers from government-run institution to businesses and enterprise, it does. Despite this policy, it did not mean that the government and the CCP would relinquish their control over newspapers. As de Burgh comments, the CCP and China's government built up a "stick and carrot" model. Under this model, newspapers are given the permission to

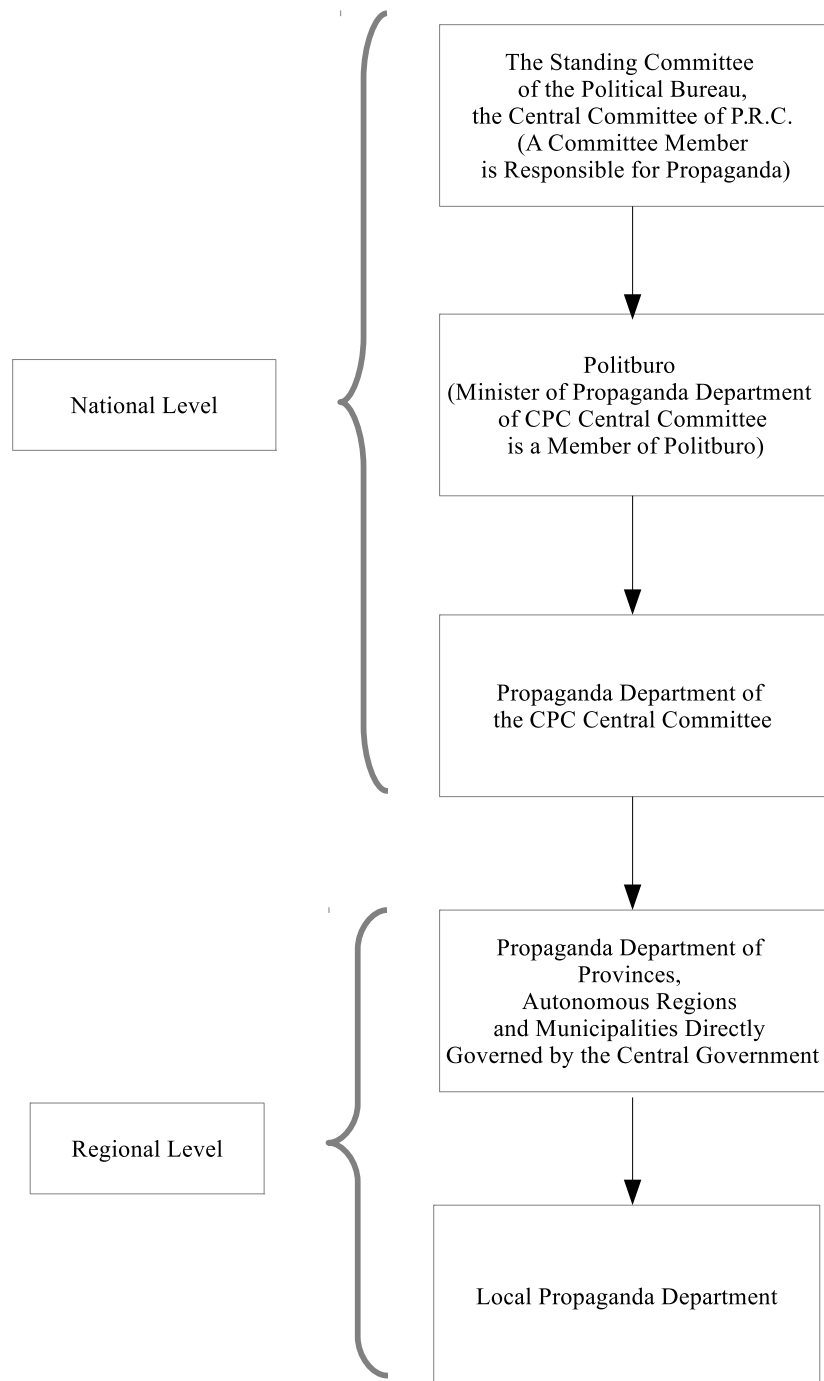
pursue profits, while their editorial policy must follow orders from the central and regional propaganda departments. In order to balance its control over public opinion, the transformation policy divided newspapers into three types:

1. politics and current affairs newspapers, including central and regional CCP newspapers, such as the *People's Daily*, the *China Youth Daily* and the *Guangming Daily* at the national level, and the *Guangzhou Daily*, the *Beijing Daily* and the *Jiefang Daily* at local level;
2. non-profit-making newspapers that provide a public service, mainly referring to academic papers and magazines;
3. non-political newspapers, such as metropolitan titles, evening titles and some specialist newspapers.

According to the transformation policy, for With regard to the first and second categories mentioned above, (i.e., politics and current affairs newspapers and non-profitable newspapers providing public services), the transformation policy means that their editorial parts may be kept as state-owned institutions, while the business operation teams must be turned into businesses. Take the *People's Daily* for example, where the editorial staff were kept within the framework of a public institution, while the advertising and distribution teams were denationalized and run as an enterprise. By doing so, the government and the CCP can retain close control over the content of newspapers, since they have the right to recruit and dismiss the editorial teams. As to the third category, the non-political titles, these all have to be denationalized and transformed from public institutions to businesses.

This raises an interesting point of how the government can control the non-political titles after denationalizing them. By referring to the previous paraphrases, it is not difficult to observe that the influential non-political titles are mainly regional metropolitan titles and evening newspapers. Most of them were conglomerated into the big 40 newspaper groups which are all supervised by national or regional party newspapers. Since the party newspapers' management and editorial teams are still within the state framework, all the affiliated newspapers are thus "guided" by the government and CCP administrative bodies. Table 4.3 shows the administrative structure of press control in China.

TABLE 4.3: **The Administrative Structure of Media Control in China**





Therefore, non-profitable newspapers, such as party newspapers and some of the specialist titles, are responsible for providing a public service and are under administrative control. They are supported by mandatory subscription and government subsidies, whereas the non-political newspapers do not receive government subsidies and are not protected by mandatory subscription. They are, however, still expected to make “social benefit” (*she hui xiao yi*) as their priority, rather than “financial benefit” (*jing ji xiao yi*). Both non-profitable newspapers and commercialized newspapers contain advertisements, but the former competes for political influence, while the latter fiercely competes for advertising revenue and circulation.

Meanwhile, the Party newspapers and newspaper groups are still under the administrative control of the CCP Propaganda Department and the senior managers of the Party newspapers and the newspaper groups are the normally the director and the party secretary of the newspaper or newspaper group. By examining the leadership of the top ten newspaper groups in China, as shown on Table 4.4, it is noticeable that almost all the top 10 newspaper groups have the same person taking the position of party secretary and director or chief editor, and almost all the party leaders of the top 10 newspaper groups have worked in the CCP Propaganda Department.

The State Administration of Press and Publication in 2009 first permitted 35 national newspaper publishing houses that did not publish political newspapers to change from being public institutions and become businesses. By January 2013, of the total 3,388 non-political newspapers and magazines, 3,271 of them have transformed from government-run public institutions to businesses, being 96.5% of the total. Some scholars argue that media conglomeration has, to some extent, restricted the development of investigative journalism (He, 2000; Tong & Sparks, 2009). With the emergence of large and often very profitable media organizations that are closely aligned with local business and local government, the well-paid journalists were believed to be willing to participate in “party publicity”, and tended to avoid possible conflict with an advertising partner or local government. These arguments coincided with the reality in 2004 to 2006. For example, the editor-in-chief of the *Beijing News* (*Xin jingbao*) and the deputy editor-in-chief of the *Southern City Daily* (*Nanfang dushi bao*) were dismissed and *Freezing Point* (*bing dian*), which was a magazine supplement of the *China Youth Daily*

TABLE 4.4: **Analysis of Chinese Newspapers' Management** <sup>28</sup>

<b>Titles</b>	<b>Party Secretary/Director</b>	<b>Education Background</b>	<b>Career Background</b>
<b>National Newspaper</b>			
People's Daily	Zhang YN	N/A	Propaganda Department
Guangming Daily Newspaper Group	He DP	Journalism	Journalist and editor
<b>Shanghai</b>			
Jiefang Daily Newspaper Group	Yin MH	Journalism	Journalist and Propaganda Dept.
Shanghai Wenhui Xinting United Newspaper Group	Xu J	Journalism	Journalist and editor
	Chen BP	Journalism	Journalist and editor
<b>Guangdong</b>			
Nanfang Newspaper Group	Yang J	Journalism	Journalist and Propaganda Dept.
	Yang XF	Journalism	Journalist and editor
Guangzhou Daily Newspaper Group	Tang YW	N/A	Propaganda Dept.
Yangcheng Evening Newspaper Group	Huang B	N/A	Propaganda Dept.
<b>Beijing</b>			
Beijing Daily Newspaper Group	Yan LQ	N/A	Propaganda Dept.
	Mei NH	N/A	Propaganda Dept.
Beijing Youth Newspaper Group	Zhang YP	N/A	Journalist and editor
<b>Zhejiang</b>			
Zhejiang Daily Newspaper Group	Gao HH	Journalism	Journalist and Propaganda Dept.
Hangzhou Daily Newspaper Group	Zhao Q	Journalism	Journalist and editor

<sup>28</sup> Note: Data collected from the official announcements published by the newspapers' website or the Organization Department of the CCP at central or local level.

and specialized in investigative reporting, was ordered to be closed down in 2006 (Tong, 2007). Others believe that the slowdown in the popularity of investigative reporting was caused by the central prohibition of extra-territorial reporting, published in 2004, and the prohibition of unauthorized reports of disease and public emergencies published after the SARS crisis of 2005.

### 4.3 COMPARISONS BETWEEN CHINA AND THE UK IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF JOURNALISM

Taking a historical perspective, the previous sections reviewed press journalism in China and the UK. After reviewing of the formats of newspapers, how journalistic practices have been organized, the business models that support the survival and development of print titles in the two countries respectively, this section concentrates on comparing the social, economic and political conditions under which established press journalism has responded to the development of communication technologies. This chapter identifies the following facts that indicate the similarities and differences, as shown in Table 4.5.

TABLE 4.5: **Comparison between the Newspaper Industry in the UK and China and the Social Contexts of the Two Countries**

	UK	China
Urbanization	By the late nineteenth century, over 50% of the population lived in cities. (Conboy, 2004)	By 2011, the urban population reached 50.6% (Pan & Wei, 2012)  China's urbanization took 22 years to grow from 17% to 39.1%. It took Britain 120 years to accomplish this (Ma, 2002)

*continued on next page*

TABLE 4.5: *continued*

	UK	China
Literacy Rate	Significant growth in literacy occurred during the Industrial Revolution and in the early 1900s.	By 2010, the literacy rate had reached 95.1%. <sup>29</sup>  From the 1980s to 2000, the female adult literacy rate in China increased from 80.1% to 91% ( <a href="#">The United Nations Economic &amp; Social Commission for Asia &amp; the Pacific, 2003</a> )  <sup>29</sup> Note: Figure generated from National Bureau of Statistics of China (2011) the <i>Six National Population Census of the P.R.C.</i> .
Newspapers' Financial Independence	Newspapers' dependence on advertisements and circulation started in the 1820s ( <a href="#">Conboy, 2004</a> )	"New China" was founded in 1949, but it was not until 2005 that newspapers changed from government-run public institutions to businesses.
Newspaper Conglomeration	National newspapers make up 70% of newspaper circulation.  Highly concentrated for over a century. By 1910, 67% of national daily circulation was controlled by three press barons ( <a href="#">McNair, 2009</a> ).	Regional newspapers make up 87% of newspaper circulation.  Press conglomeration started in 1995 and now 40 newspaper groups make up 17% of total newspaper titles and 41% of total newspaper circulation ( <a href="#">Wang, 2005</a> ).
Newspaper Titles	1,111 <sup>30</sup>  <sup>30</sup> Data retrieved at 20 August 2014 from <a href="http://www.newspapersoc.org.uk/regional-press-structure">http://www.newspapersoc.org.uk/regional-press-structure</a>	1,928 <sup>31</sup>  <sup>31</sup> Data retrieved at 20 August 2014 from <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-20970543">http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-20970543</a>

*continued on next page*

TABLE 4.5: *continued*

	UK	China
Newspaper Circulation		43.799 billion RMB in 2007 (Cui & Zhang, 2009)
Newspaper Revenue	<p><i>Daily Mail &amp; Trust</i>: £274 million in 2010 <sup>32</sup></p> <p><sup>32</sup> Note: Figure retrieved at 2 April 2014 from <a href="http://www.dmgt.com/news/567/Daily+Mail+and+General+Trust+plc+(%60DMGT')+Interim+Management+Statement">http://www.dmgt.com/news/567/Daily+Mail+and+General+Trust+plc+(%60DMGT')+Interim+Management+Statement</a>.</p>	<p>For the most profitable newspaper group the <i>Guangzhou Daily</i>, its advertisement revenue reached 2.206 million RMB <sup>33</sup> (about £147 million)</p> <p><sup>33</sup> Note: Figure retrieved at 2 April 2014 from <a href="http://gzdaily.dayoo.com/html/2009-01/06/content-431886.htm">http://gzdaily.dayoo.com/html/2009-01/06/content-431886.htm</a>.</p>
Newspaper Regulation Body	PCC/Self-regulation	Central & Local Propaganda Departments and Central and Local Administration on Press and Publications
Investigative Journalism	Under the influence of more intrusive television reporting of politics, the 1960s became the great decade for investigative journalism in the UK.	With the development of metropolitan titles, the 1990s became the “golden age” of investigative journalism in China.

Having set out the commonalities and differences between the social and political contexts of newspapers in the UK and China, together with recent developments, the following paragraphs further discuss the commonalities and differences between press journalism in the two countries and argues how the past would influence the present in terms of how the established newspapers in the two countries have responded to the development of communication technologies.

### 4.3.1 Debate on Free Press and State/Party Control

The concept of “free press” is deeply rooted in British society, with an adversarial culture and system. Scholars argue that the press in Britain has been consistently fighting for a free press (Curran & Seaton, 2010). Until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, newspapers in Britain were either still under state control or politically partisan. Since the nineteenth century, the House of Commons has become increasingly representative, with growing numbers of members selected from the gentry and wealthy merchant classes to represent their interest. Stenographers were hired to record parliamentary proceedings, and were required to take verbatim notes of what was said in the parliamentary debates without making any comment. The role of the reporter allowed a new approach to news, which differed from that of the politically partisan journalism.

As a result of the increasing power of the House of Common, the development of selective democracy and the rise of the mass circulation press in Britain, the role of parliamentary reporters became more influential and impartial in the adversarial system. The term, “Fourth Estate”, first used in Thomas Carlyle’s book *On Heroes and Hero Worship*, was therefore widely used in referring to press journalism. The other three estates are: the Lords Spiritual, the Lords Temporal (Barons and Knights) and the Commons in Parliament. In his book, Carlyle wrote:

Burke said there were Three Estates in Parliament, but, in the Reporters’ Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all, (1841, cited in (Mittler, 2004, p.412)).

It is thus argued that the press in Britain contributed to the maturing of British democracy by making it less partisan and more even-handed (Curran & Seaton, 2010).

As discussed in section 4.2.1, the British press has experienced a long history of struggling fighting for freedom against state repression, and holds a solid ideology of press self-regulation. The “fully freedom” (*ibid*: 3) results from a series of struggles, from the abolition of the Court of Star Chamber in 1641, the ending of press licensing in 1694 and Fox’s Libel Act in 1792 to the repeals of

“taxes on knowledge” in the 1850s and 1860s (Conboy, 2004; McNair, 2009). Because of the consistent fight for freedom, the concept of a free press is rooted in British political philosophy. With the development of democracy in the UK, its political philosophy was reinforced by the concept of viewing press independence as empowering the people, and a free press was regarded as “great organs of the public mind” (Curran & Seaton, 2010, p.3).

The ideology of press self-regulation in the UK have been tested and debated in modern times through the negotiations between the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and state interventions in the press industry. It can be traced back to the 1930s, with press intrusion into private lives and personal affairs. This resulted in the statutory regulation on intrusion and the state registration of journalists. However, the NUJ objected to the proposal for a state register, and instead proposed that the best way of dealing with the criticism of journalistic standards would be to draft and debate a code of conduct, and to establish a self-regulatory body. Following this, The General Council of the Press was established in 1953 with its members drawn from press editors, the NUJ, the Institute of Journalism, the Newspaper Proprietors' Association and other newspaper associations (O'Malley & Soley, 2000). In 1962, the General Council of the Press changed its name to the Press Council and in 1989, under intense criticism on self-regulation, the Press Council agreed to conduct a major internal reform and was replaced by the Press Complaints Commission, formed as a voluntary regulatory body with representatives from the major publishers. With onward and outward movement, self-regulation has been placed in the centre of press journalism culture in the UK. Although the Press Complaints Commission has received extensive criticism for its nonfeasance in the News of the World phone-hacking scandal and was found not sufficient by the Leveson Inquiry, it is still unlikely that the press industry in the UK would come back under the control of the state with a press regulation.

By contrast with British adversarial culture, Confucianism, with its core values of humanism and harmony, has influenced Chinese culture and society for thousands of years. During the long history of Imperial dynasties, China was governed with many provinces following the rule of a central government. Without access to modern communication technologies at that time, the provincial governments set up Capital Liaison Offices known as “Jin Zou Yuan” to report the royal court affairs, these reports being called “Jin Zou Yuan Zhuang (Fang, 1996). During the

Song Dynasty, an official report could not be sent out to the provincial governor until it had passed the censorship conducted by the central military department “Shu Mi Yuan” (*ibid*). During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, with the rise of a merchant class, local newspapers appeared, such as *Jin Bao*, published and circulated in Beijing. It has been argued that since the majority of Chinese were self-sufficient peasant farmers, the need for information was very low (*ibid*). Thus, it was not until the late nineteenth century that mass circulation of newspapers appeared in China.

With the appearance of mass popular newspapers in China during the twentieth century, the role of journalists was closely associated with two themes: “patriotic struggle” and “Communist Party loyalists” (de Burgh, 2003a). In the early twenty centuries, with the European countries’ growing economic and political interest in China, an increasing number of foreign language newspapers were published in the trading ports (*ibid*). For example, *Zi Lin Xi Bao*, which was regarded as a newspaper representing the British Empire, and *Shun Bao*, which was founded by British traders and edited by the Chinese. While the European missionaries, traders and soldiers were training Chinese editors, journalists and managers in the newspapers they had founded, China came to the end of over two thousand years of Imperial Rule; and, after the founding of the Republic of China, the country was dominated by numerous warlords and fragmented by foreign powers. The generation which had been educated abroad and which had access to Western knowledge and civilization formed a number of societies and parties, claiming social reform and democracy. These societies and parties found newspapers and publications to support their political claims and in the early twentieth century partisan newspapers appeared in China. The partisan newspapers, on one hand, had followed the format of newspapers founded by European missionaries and traders, with a diversity of content of — news, comment and features, etc. On the other hand, as organs of political parties or societies and subsidized by them, and therefore, did not earn financial independence.

From 1949 to the late 1970s, continuous political movements dragged the country through years of turmoil. Journalists have changed from being social activists and politicians during the Xinghai Revolution of the early twentieth century (such as Liang Qichao) to party propagandists who were well integrated into the Communist political structure as a means of political control (Liu, 1971; Pan & Chan,



2003) after the founding of the People's Republic of China. Although there were also journalists and editors who struggled to gain more space for free expression, such as Liu Binyan, who used his literary essays to expose the wrongdoings of government officials from the 1950s to the 1970s, journalists in China were for many years given little to no option on the selection of topic and opinion on investigative reporting. Leaders of the Communist Party in China have given different interpretations of the role of the media. Mao Zedong stated in 1942 in his "Talks at the Yan'an Forum" (*Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui*) that writers should "extol the bright side of life" and "not expose the darkness". After that, party newspapers were full of content praising the achievement of constructing a Socialist society in 1940s and 1950s. However, Liu Shaoqi, China's CCP Secretary General in the 1960s, encouraged the media to expose anything going wrong. Zhao Ziyang, China's prime minister in the late 1980s, stated in his address to Congress that the "government, under the supervision of public opinion and media, should exercise oversight over public officials, keep the public informed of what was going on, and reflect debates among the people" (Wu, 2000). However, the Communist Party dismissed both Liu and Zhao due to political disagreements.

In the 1990s, China's then CCP Secretary General, Jiang Zemin, stated that the media's supervision of government should be exercised under the leadership of the Party, and this became the fundamental concept that guided the later rise of metropolitan titles and media conglomeration. Both were led by party newspapers. At the 17th CCP Congress, China's then CCP Secretary General, Hu Jintao, again stated that supervision by public opinion should be part of the official apparatus for monitoring society, not independent (Lee, 2000, p.569).

Therefore, influenced by the Confucianism, Imperial political system and China's communist ideology as a country that had been lagged behind due to wars and social movements, unlike the British culture which favoured conflict and debate, the majority of Chinese favour moderation as their ideological belief. (de Burgh, 2003b)

### **4.3.2 Debate on Free Market and State Ownership**

The rise of mass circulation of the press and the development of a free market, particularly the growth of advertising revenue, enabled the British press to become

completely independent of the state or party, and to be self-funded by selling advertising space and newspapers. The private ownership of newspapers also means they have been more sensitive and responsive to any change in the markets for commercial returns and competitiveness in the market. For example, at strategic level, they have responded earlier than the Chinese press to the change of news consumption behaviour, shift of advertisement spending and alternative ways to improve newsroom efficacy.

Meanwhile, as a result of the concept of the “Fourth Estate” and the promise of self-regulation, professional journalists in the UK have built up a code of conduct and trust with the public. Journalistic professionalism stands for accuracy, objectivity, balance and respect for privacy. Investigative reporters give their targets the opportunities to reply to their criticism; journalists believe that families in grief or shock should not be intruded; children should be protected in stories such as sexual harassment; no paid source should be used in criminal trials, etc.

In China, the rise of mass-circulated print newspapers in the late nineteenth century was combined with the arrival of European missionaries, traders and soldiers. Most of the print newspapers and journals were founded and sponsored by European missionaries, and some of them even regarded European traders as their main target audience. The later press history was interplayed with wars and social movements. The Chinese press had not been given a period of time with economic prosperity to fully develop its business model. Yet due to its function to the Party and the government, it had been relied on Party and government subsidies for a long time. Even during China’s transition to a free market economy, the ideology, rather than the ownership of mass media was changed. Before the reform and opening up of 1978, Chinese journalists were part of the civil service hierarchy and had prestige as spokesmen and advisers to the leaders and they have all been integrated into the Communist political structure as means of political control (Liu, 1971; Pan & Chan, 2003) It was not until the mid-1980s that Chinese journalism “achieved recognition as a profession” and attempted to “slough off the strict controls from the Communist Party” (de Burgh, 2005, p.549). Before the commercialization of some popular mid-market newspapers journalism in the 1990s, there was little to no motivation for newspapers to compete for commercial success yet they compete for political correctness and political influence.

It is argued the 1990 media reform in China has returned the Chinese media to their ideal role, an industry which is “audience-led rather than leadership-led” (Polumbaum, 1990). Because newspapers were no longer subsidised by the Party and government, investigative journalism and metropolitan dailies became commercially successful and influential. For example, the *China Youth Daily* started to publish its weekly special issue *Freezing Point* to cover investigative news reports. Some scholars pointed out that what has taken place in China is “significant enough to offer an increasingly larger space for journalism”, albeit not yet in the political arena (Wu, 2000; Xin, 2008) There are, however, critical voices asserting that China’s media transformation can only be explained in terms of “commercialization without independence” (Chan et al., 2006) or “liberalization without political democratization” (Zhao, 1998)

In short, during the media transformation over the past three decades, Chinese journalists and the press have gained a certain autonomy, yet both Chinese culture and consistent state repression have tended to cause a lack of “justification for the profession of independent journalism” and “a kind of legitimating of its role in polity and society which journalists developed in the Anglophone countries” (de Burgh, 2003a, p.204). Meanwhile, the political context in China has changed dramatically over the past ten decades, from the end of Imperial rule to savage conflict and from Communist ideology to economic reform and opening up. The social and political contexts have not been stable for long enough to establish a lasting justification for journalistic professionalism.

## 4.4 CONCLUSION

As argued in chapter 2, Fidler’s *mediamorphosis* theory provides this thesis a unified way of understanding mass media’s adoption to technologies in a comparative context. He argues in his *mediamorphosis* theory that the traditional media’s responses to the development of communication technology is often an result of an interplay between previous journalistic tradition, existing journalistic culture as well as influence by other forms of communication. In order to conceptualize the changes of newspaper journalism during the adoption of technical innovations, Heinonen also suggests that online journalism research should look back at the

history of journalism to provide constructive perspectives, rather than be led by technological determinism (1999).

Therefore, in order to understand why the press and journalists in the UK and China have responded to the technological changes brought about by the Internet and New Media innovations in the same or different ways, this chapter emphasizes on identifying the fundamental concepts that have historically underpinned press journalism of the two countries. In general, by taking a historical review of newspaper history and previous studies on journalism culture in the two countries, this chapter argues that the authority and legitimacy of the British press are based on the concepts of liberal pluralism, objectivity, free market and free press whereas the authority. Yet unlike the British culture which favoured conflict and debate, the majority of Chinese favour moderation as their ideological belief, and due to the social and economic facts discussed in the chapter, in legitimacy of the modern Chinese press are based on its social function to civilize and mobilize the public with a purpose that favours to the Party and the government.

## Chapter 5

# FROM PRINT TO INTERNET: THE CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

As argued by the mediamorphosis theory (see section 2.3), besides the historic press traditions discussed (in chapter 4), the thesis also considers the other variables that have influenced in ways in which newspapers in the two countries have responded to the Internet technology and New Media innovations. They are the availability of technologies and their influence on media consumption behaviour as well as social and economic conditions at present.

Therefore, this chapter first investigates Internet take-up in the UK and China, discusses its influence on news consumption in the two countries and then provides a contextual background of newspapers' adoption to Internet technologies and New Media innovations and in further evaluates the popularity of their presence and discusses direct and indirect reason that are related to the result. In the end of this chapter, the author closely examines the cases of four selected newspapers (selection of sample see section 3.2.2) in terms of their actions and strategies that have been adopted as responses to the development of communication technologies and in further identifies the commonalities and differences between their organizational structure and newsroom culture for further investigation in chapter 7 and 8 that discusses how organizational structure and newsroom culture could influence online journalistic practices.

## 5.1 INTERNET TAKE-UP IN THE UK AND CHINA AND NEWSPAPERS' RESPONSES

The previous chapter identified the significant differences between press journalism of the UK and China in terms of their journalistic tradition, however, this section argues that they have been influenced very similarly by the development of communication technologies and are under the same threat for immediacy, credibility and authority.

In the UK, 78% of households had Internet take-up by 2013 (Dutton & Blank, 2013). This significant increase in Internet take-up has been very much driven by the rise in PC and laptop ownership, as well as by the popularity of broadband in the UK. By 2011, 96% of Internet users in the UK were connected by broadband (Ofcom, 2011a). Although all socio-economic and income groups have shared in the Internet take-up boom, the UK has seen significant differences in Internet take-up between the younger and older age groups. According to a 2011 Ofcom report (*ibid*), 83% of 16-24 years old said that they regularly used the Internet via a computer or laptop, compared with 13% of those aged 75 and over, as shown on Table 5.1. There is also a gap between male and female in Internet take-up, but the gap is narrowing, as shown on Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.1: Frequency of Internet Usage by UK Internet Users, by Age, 2010 <sup>34</sup>

Age	Every day or almost every day	At least once per week (but not every day)	Once per month or less
16-24	82%	15%	3%
25-44	81%	16%	3%
45-54	80%	15%	5%
54-64	74%	19%	7%
65+	59%	28%	13%
<b>Total</b>	78%	17%	5%

<sup>34</sup> Note: Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding, among those who have accessed the Internet in the past three months. Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) UK, "Internet Access 2010: Households and Individuals", 27 August 2010 (accessed 3 March 2011).

Print news in the UK is in decline and major national titles, as well as many local titles, have experienced a year-on-year fall in readership. The drop in newspaper

TABLE 5.2: **The Last Time that UK Adults used the Internet, by Gender, 2009-2010** <sup>35</sup>

	Within the Past 3 months		More than 3 months ago		Never used it	
	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
<b>Male</b>	80%	79%	3%	5%	17%	16%
<b>Female</b>	72%	75%	4%	4%	24%	21%
<b>Total</b>	76%	77%	4%	4%	21%	18%

<sup>35</sup> Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; \*ages 16+. Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) UK, “*Internet Access 2010: Households and Individuals*”, 27 August 2010 (Accessed 3 March 2011)

circulation is mainly the result of the full development of 24-hour news on television in recent years, and a decline in classified advertisements in the UK. Research in January 2012 revealed that the average UK adult receives 57.4 minutes of news a day, and online news consumption in the UK has been growing rapidly since 2005 (Ofcom, 2011b). The majority of people in the UK who consume news use no more than three providers (78%) and the BBC is still the dominant provider of news with BBC TV news is watched for 27 minutes a day and BBC radio news is listened to for 10 minutes a day, giving the BBC a 47% share of the total news consumption in the UK (Ofcom, 2012, 2013).

It is difficult to ascertain the role of online news consumption in the decline of UK newspaper circulation. Indeed, although online news makes up a large part of a broader news diet, it is accessed by fewer users and for much less time than other online activities such as online shopping, email and games. An Ofcom report noted that in 2010, only 2% of the total UK Internet time was taken up by news consumption (Ofcom, 2011a). In addition, reports indicate that of the top 20 websites visited in the UK, only four are dedicated news providers <sup>36</sup> With the growth of social networking and the blogosphere, it is now more and more difficult to measure and define news. However, with a broader categorization, other research tends to show some significant growth in online news consumption (Freedman & Schlosberg, 2011).

The online news market in the UK is largely dominated by “an emerging oligopoly of online content aggregators, such as Google, Yahoo!, AOL and MSN” (*ibid*,

<sup>36</sup>Note: data collected from Alexa Internet at 20 August 2014, available at <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/GB>

p.16). The news industry as a whole accounts for an average of 6.5% of British online traffic, and British newspapers account for only 0.8% of visits (Robinson, 2010).

The use of digital media and the Internet has also become widespread among urban China households. A survey published by the China Internet Network Information Centre (China Internet Network Information Center, 2011), showed that 513 million people had accessed the Internet during 2011.

The People's Republic of China has the world's largest number of Internet users; by the end of June 2013, the number of Internet users in China had reached 591 million and this figure has experienced a dramatic rise, from only 94 million users to 591 million users in just 10 years from reaching 44.1% of the country's total population (China Internet Network Information Center, 2013). This rise has been seen in all age groups, irrespective of education. Most of the Chinese who have the skills and can afford the Internet already have access to the Internet. Although more than half of the Chinese population could contribute to the growth of Internet usage in future years, the speed of expansion may slow down due to limitations of education and income. Thus, there is unlikely to be a significant increase in the number of Internet users in China for the foreseeable future.

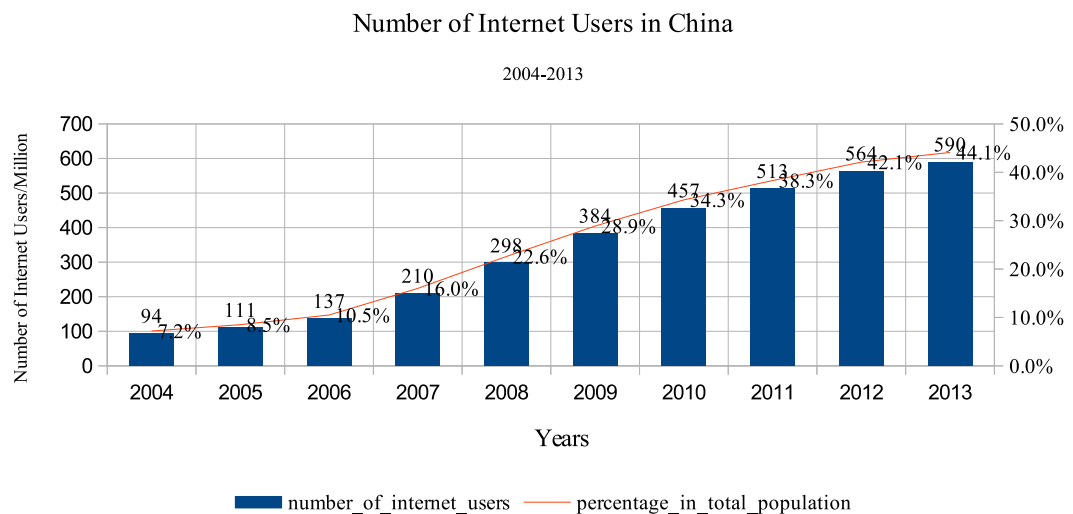


FIGURE 5.1: Number of Internet Users in China, 2004-2013 <sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup>Note: CNNIC, *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China*, published in July 2013, available at <http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201310/P020131029430558704972.pdf> (accessed at 20 December 2013).



In terms of age, China has seen a notable increase in Internet usage among young people aged 10-29 between 2007 and 2010. During 2010, 72.9% of young people in their 20s used the Internet. However, the Internet's popularity among people over 50 did not change very much during those years, with only 7% of people in this age group using the Internet in 2010.

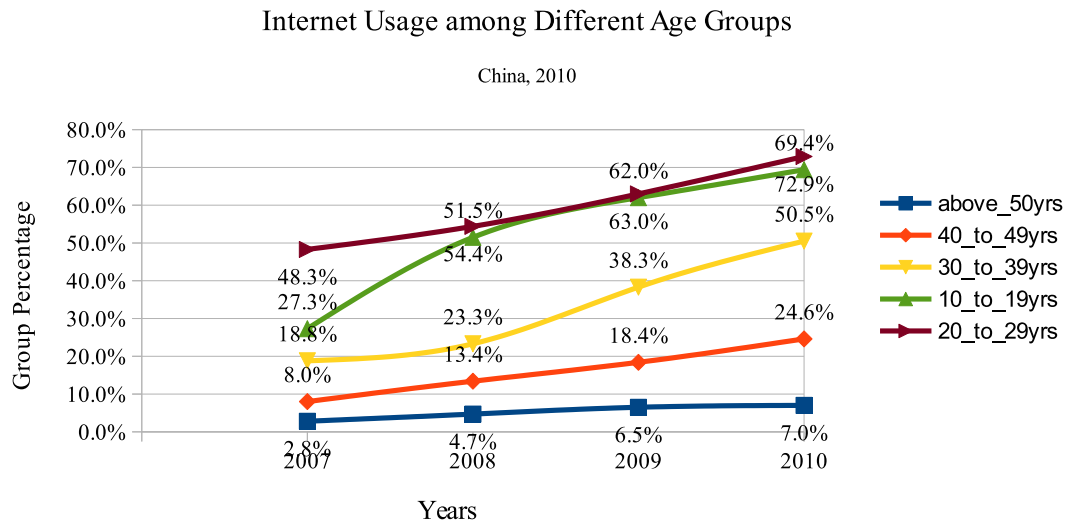


FIGURE 5.2: Internet Usage among Different Age Groups in China, 2010 <sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup>Note: CNNIC, *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China 2011 Report*, published in January 2012, available at <http://english.cnnic.cn/rp/201206/P020120625513252370942.pdf> (accessed at 3 August 2012)

In China, it is very apparent that Internet usage is more common among people with a background in higher education. According to the CNNIC 29th Survey, 96.1% of graduates take up the Internet, while users who experience difficulties with taking up the Internet are most likely to be those who have only attended primary school.

The take-up of the Internet via broadband has also grown steadily in China between 2004 and 2011. By the end of 2011, a total of 3,920 million users, or 98.9% of households, had access to the Internet through a broadband service at home. This was partly due to the Chinese government's investment in telecommunications networks, which led to the reduction of broadband costs.

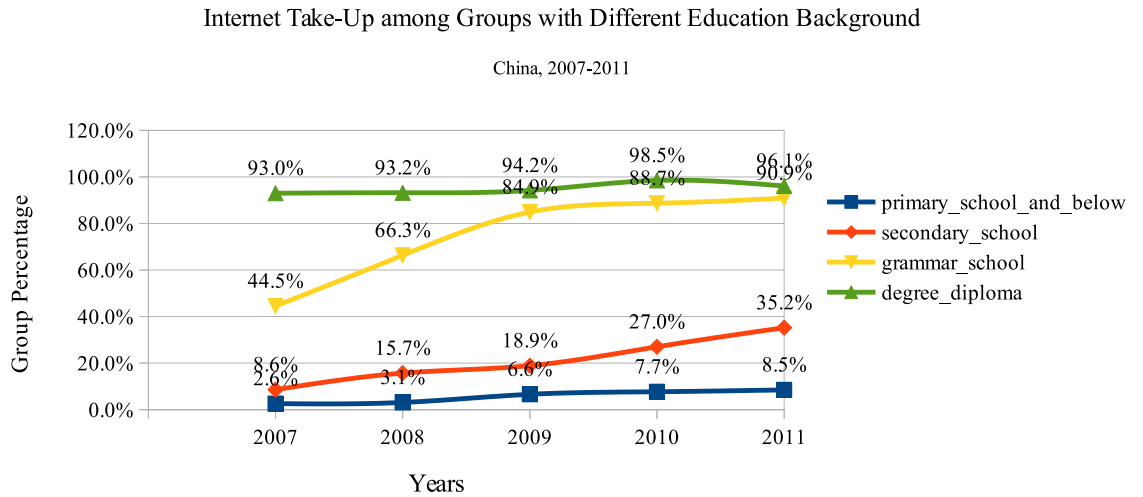


FIGURE 5.3: Internet Take-Up among Groups with Different Educational Backgrounds in China, 2007-2011 <sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup>Note: CNNIC, *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China 2011 Report*, published in January 2012, available at <http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201209/P020120904421720687608.pdf> (accessed at 3 August 2012)

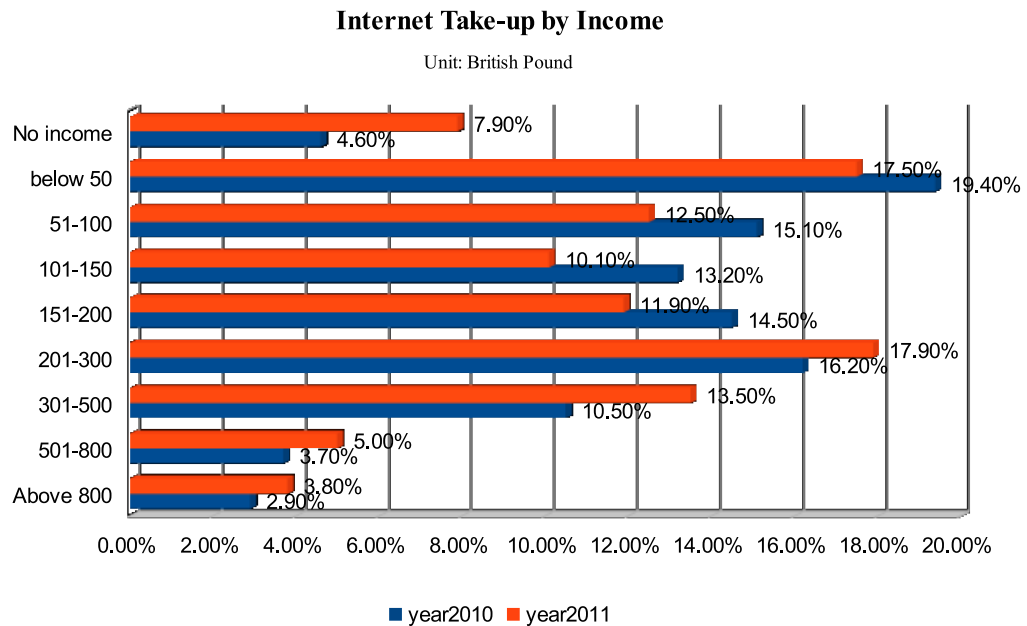


FIGURE 5.4: Internet Take-up by Income in China, 2010-2011 <sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup>Note: CNNIC, *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China 2011 Report*, published in January 2012, available at <http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201209/P020120904421720687608.pdf> (accessed at 3 August 2012)

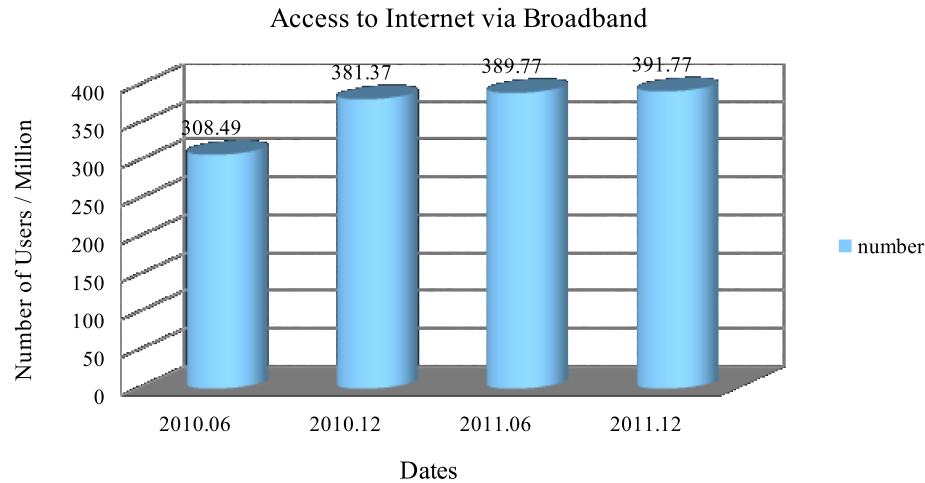


FIGURE 5.5: Internet Access by Broadband in China, 2010-2011 <sup>41</sup>

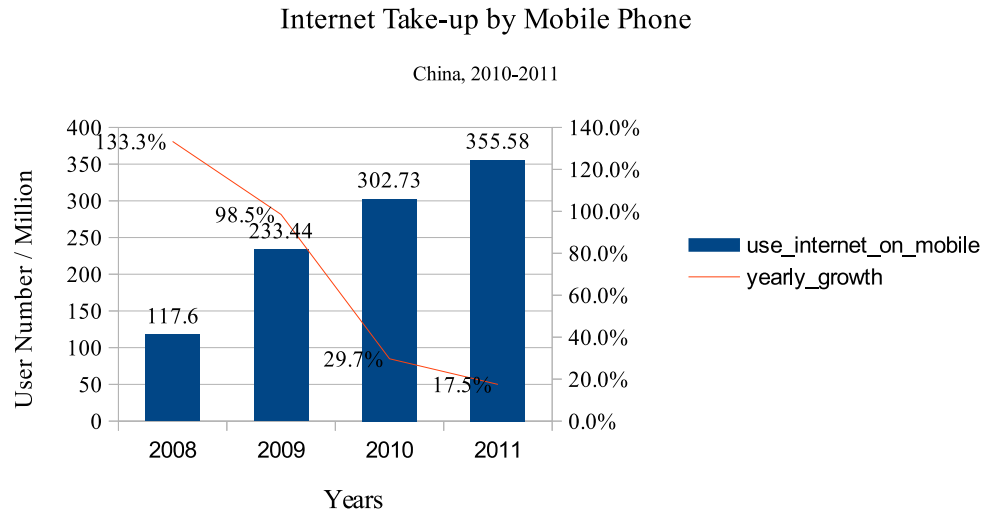
<sup>41</sup>Note: CNNIC, *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China 2011 Report*, published in January 2012, available at <http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201209/P020120904421720687608.pdf> (accessed at 3 August 2012)

Take-up of the Internet via mobile phone has increased significantly, reaching 36.5% of mobile phone users by the end of 2011, driven by the reduction of mobile Internet costs, the rise of smartphone ownership, and the innovation of smartphone applications.

Take-up of the Internet has experienced growth in all 22 provinces, 4 municipalities and 5 autonomous regions. Of the 31 provincial divisions, 21 have more than 10 million Internet users, but there remain apparent divides, particularly on the grounds of media literacy, the quality of access and the cost of access. As shown in CNNIC's 29th Survey, 70.3% of citizens in Beijing use the Internet, while the Internet's popularity in some southeast provinces with a less developed socio-economic situation, such as Yunnan, Jiangxi and Guizhou, is less than 25%. Among the 21 provincial divisions with more than 10 million Internet users, most are situated in the southern and eastern seaboard.

According to the CNNIC 29th Survey, 72.7% of people who have access to the Internet are urban citizens.

By the end of 2011, the total number of websites in China had reached 2.3 million, but this number fell dramatically in 2010 after the government tightened its



**FIGURE 5.6: Internet Take-Up by Mobile Phone in China, 2010-2011** <sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup>Note: CNNIC, *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China 2011 Report*, published in January 2012, available at <http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201209/P020120904421720687608.pdf> (accessed at 3 August 2012)

controls over the Internet. According to CNNIC, there were 1.91 million websites operating in China at the end of 2010, 41% less than a year earlier, mainly due to the prevention of access to online pornography and the leaks of state secrets. However, critics have said that the definition of “state secrets” in China remains vague, and could thus be used to censor any information that the authorities deem harmful to their political and economic interests (Xu, 2011).

Without doubt, the proliferation of news outlets associated with digital media development has dramatically increased the diversity of news services available in China. As a result of digital expansion and changes in media consumption behaviour, a series of changes in China’s media ecology has taken place. The most significant of these has been a dramatic increase in online news consumption, particularly through microblogs.

According to the CNNIC’s 2011 Survey, online news consumption in China has been growing steadily over the past six years. In 2006, online news readership increased from 73.3 million, or 53% of total Internet usage, to 366.9 million, or 71.5% of total Internet usage, in 2011 (2012). In 2009, nearly 80% of Internet

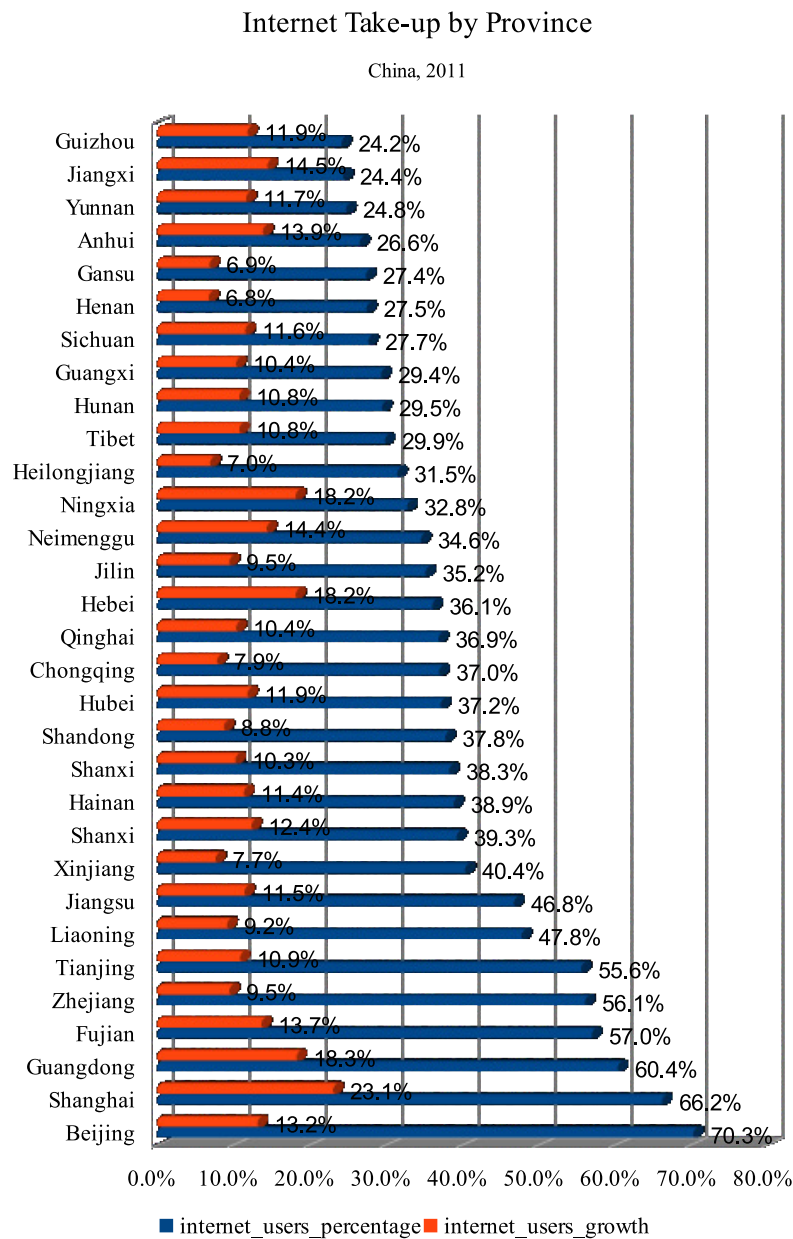


FIGURE 5.7: Internet Take-Up by Province in China, 2011 <sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup>Note: CNNIC, *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China 2011 Report*, published in January 2012, available at <http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201209/P020120904421720687608.pdf> (accessed at 3 August 2012)

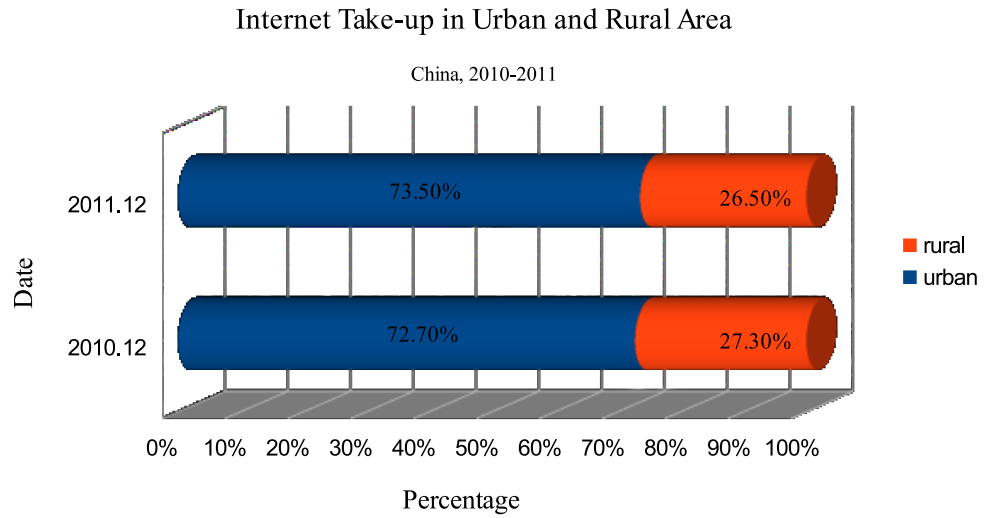


FIGURE 5.8: Internet Take-Up in Urban and Rural China, 2010-2011 <sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup>Note: CNNIC, *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China 2011 Report*, published in January 2012, available at <http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201209/P020120904421720687608.pdf> (accessed at 3 August 2012)

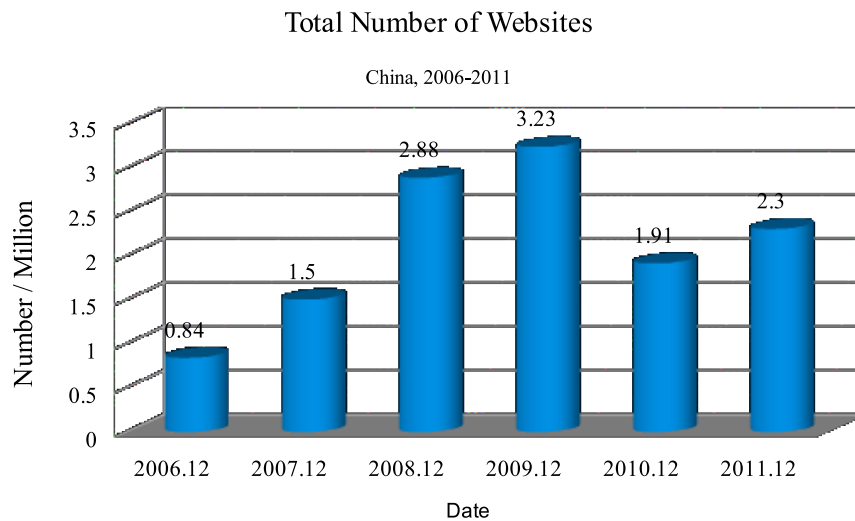


FIGURE 5.9: Total Number of Websites in China, 2006-2011 <sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup>Note: CNNIC, *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China 2011 Report*, published in January 2012, available at <http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201209/P020120904421720687608.pdf> (accessed at 3 August 2012)

users in China read online news, but although the total number of online news readers has increased, its proportion within total Internet usage has decreased.

Although commercialized and party newspapers in China have not been greatly challenged by increasing commercial pressures, it is clear that they have been put under pressure from their readership migrating online.

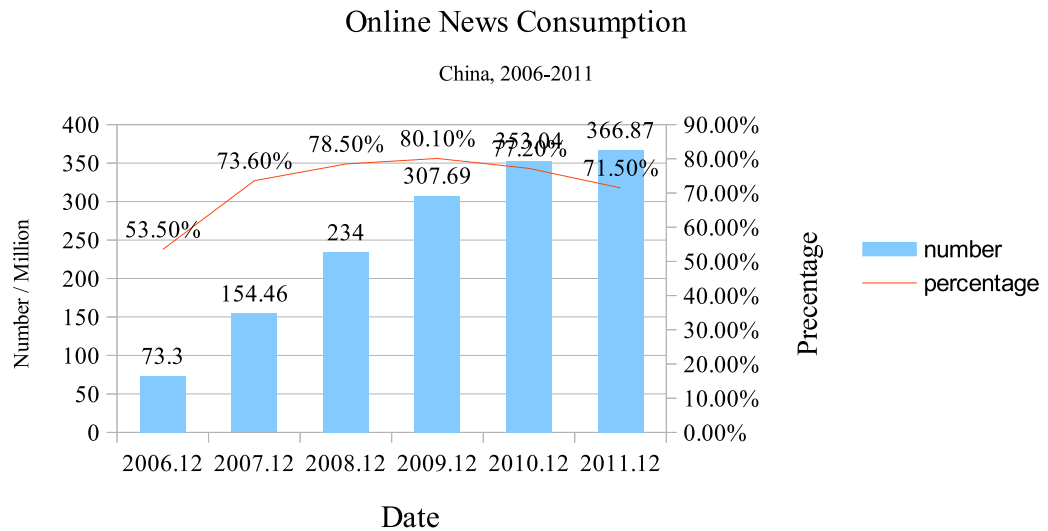


FIGURE 5.10: Online News Consumption in China, 2006-2011 <sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup>Note: CNNIC, *Statistical Report on Internet Development in China 2011 Report*, published in January 2012, available at <http://www1.cnnic.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201209/P020120904421720687608.pdf> (accessed at 3 August 2012)

Benefiting from China’s rapid economic growth, the advertising revenue from its newspapers’ is still increasing. However, the survey reveals that in 2009 the total amount of newspapers printed showed a fall of 6.78% compared with the previous year.

In conclusion, Table 5.3 provides an overview of the comparison between the UK and China of Internet take-up and online news consumption.

TABLE 5.3: Comparison between the UK and China of Internet Take-Up and Online News Consumption

	UK	China
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*continued on next page*

TABLE 5.3: *continued*

	<b>UK</b>	<b>China</b>
<b>Overall Internet Take-up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet covers almost the entire population.</li> <li>• By 2011, 78% of households in the UK have Internet take-up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although Internet take-up is comparatively lower than in the UK, the total number of Internet users is significant.</li> <li>• By 2011, 38.3% of China's population is connected to the Internet. However, the total number of Internet users reached 513 million.</li> </ul>
<b>Internet Usage among Different Age Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no apparently imbalance in Internet usage between different age groups.</li> <li>• There is no apparent difference in Internet usage between age groups 16-54 years. Around 80% of people in this age group use the Internet on a daily basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people tend to use the Internet more.</li> <li>• Internet usage among age group 10-29 years is comparatively higher than in the other age groups. Around 70% of this age group use the Internet. However, Internet usage among people in their 30s, 40s and 50s or older is comparatively lower. Only 25% of people in their 40s use the Internet.</li> </ul>

*continued on next page*



TABLE 5.3: *continued*

	<b>UK</b>	<b>China</b>
<b>Newspaper Circulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In decline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still increasing</li> </ul>
<b>Online News Consumption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBC's website and MailOnline are the dominant providers of online news.</li> <li>• Research indicates that, in 2010, only 2% of total UK Internet time was taken up by news consumption.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content aggregators, such as Sina, NetEase, Sohu and Tencent, dominate online news consumption.</li> <li>• Huge appetite for online news. In 2011, online news readership increased to 366.9 million and made up 71.5% of total Internet users.</li> </ul>
<b>Newspaper Advertising Revenue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In decline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still growing, but slowing down</li> </ul>

## 5.2 FROM PRINT TO INTERNET

McNair (1998) noted that there were only a few dozen online journalism providers in the UK, and that newspapers were still experimenting with ways in which their work could be presented and disseminated online (McNair, 1998). The first experiment in disseminating news electronically in the UK can be traced back to 1979. In that year, the UK General Post Office launched a service which offered news bulletins, home banking, flight bookings and other information through special TV-like monitors. However, until 1986, only 65,000 users had subscribed to these services for various reasons, such as cost and availability (Gunter, 2003; Williams

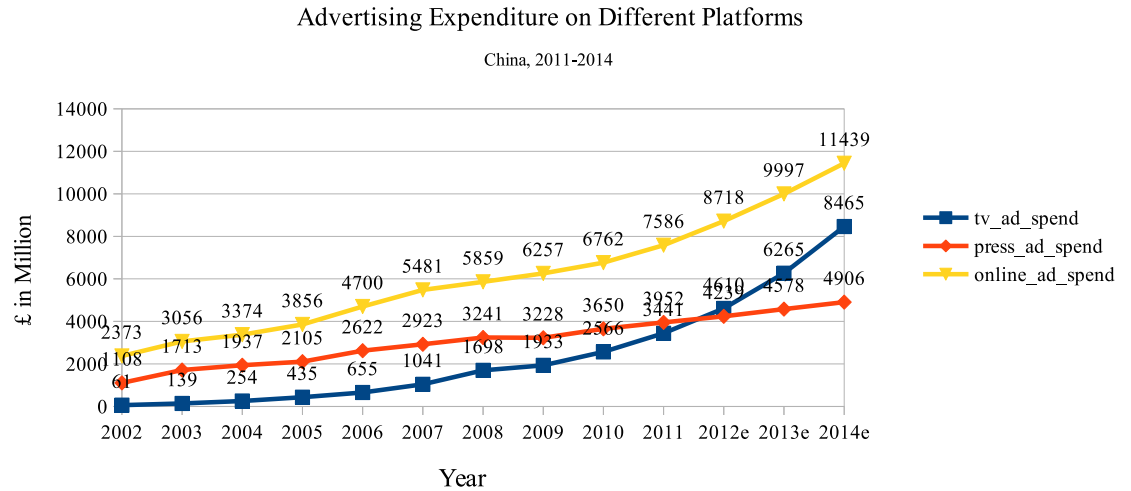


FIGURE 5.11: Advertising Expenditure on Different Platforms in China, 2001-2014 <sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup>Note: DCCI, *Blue Book of Advertisement Network Service in China*, published in 2011, available at <http://www.dcci.com.cn/media/download/49774204bb3be7cd8a889bf73811712ae0c4.pdf>. (accessed at 3 August 2012)

& Nicholas, 1999). Meanwhile, broadcasters in the UK were also experimenting in delivering news in the form of teletext. For example, the BBC developed Ceefax, and ITV developed Oracle, which reported the result of the 1975 men's final at Wimbledon even before the television commentator did. By 1987, 60% of UK households had taken up teletext services (Freedman & Schlosberg, 2011).

With the development of the Internet, the popularity of personal computers and the introduction of communication applications, such as the bulletin board service and RRS, newspapers in the UK, by the mid-1990s, had generally realized the commercial significance of the Internet for their newspapers, and, driven by either caution or fear, they began to expand into the online world. On 15 November 1994, the *Daily Telegraph* launched its online sibling, the first UK newspaper to have an online edition, under the title, *Electronic Telegraph*. At that time, the print version's circulation was around one million copies, and ranked as the fifth most popular national daily newspaper in the country after *The Sun*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Daily Mail*, and *Daily Express*. As its former editor Derek Bishton once said, the *Daily Telegraph*'s attempt to expand to the Internet was mainly driven by its intention to create new revenue streams (Bishton 2001, quoted in

[Pecquerie & Burke \(2007\)](#)). Initially, its website only published the top stories from its print version. *The Times* and *Sunday Times* also started publishing the full content of their print version on the Web as early as 1 January 1996; and was also the first established UK newspaper to have an online forum ([Gunter, 2003](#)). It was also the first British newspaper website to receive an Audit Certificate from ABC/Electronic.

During the early 2000s, British newspapers had witnessed the trend of changing from broadsheet format to tabloid format. However, the *Daily Telegraph* did not follow this trend; although it was the first newspaper of its kind to establish an online presence in the UK, it continued to follow a print-first editorial strategy until June 2006. That meant that every story appeared in the print paper before being available online for free. In 2006, the *Daily Telegraph* unveiled its plan for a complete transformation of its traditional newsroom into an integrated newsroom, and named the project “Byte”.

In 2006, the *Daily Telegraph* unveiled its plan for a complete transformation of its traditional newsroom into an integrated newsroom, and named the project “Byte”.

As McNair ([2009](#)) concluded, the early years of online experiments by newspapers were obviously event driven. During its early years, the *Electronic Telegraph* built up its brand through the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal of 1998. Its publication of controversial articles by the *Daily Telegraph*'s international business editor, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, also led to a huge growth in online traffic in the US and a 331-page report by the Clinton administration office, attacking him.

In the same way, the birth of the *Guardian*'s website and the driving force behind the mass acceptance and awareness of its online existence have also been events. The *Guardian* was a relative latecomer to the business of online news in Britain. In 1995, the *Guardian*'s New Media Lab was officially established, with instructions “to implement the proposed electronic publication of the *Guardian* and *The Observer*” ([The Guardian, 2014](#)). the *Guardian*'s then digital editor, Ian Katz, recalled the birth of guardian.com: “While competitors such as the *Daily Telegraph* built efficient and well-used digital facsimiles of their print editions, the *Guardian* instead established a new media ‘skunkworks’ team, tasked with

dreaming up innovative online ideas, in an airy old warehouse just across the road from its main offices” (Katz, 2009).

In 1996, the team of the *Guardian*’s New Media Lab initiated a curious range of projects, from a wildly ambitious, multilingual website for the Euro’96 Competition, and Shift-Control, a weekly webzine sponsored by Whitbread enabling every issue to be redesigned from scratch, to Recruit.net, which was launched to publish the *Guardian*’s recruitment advertisements on the Internet.

However, when Diana, Princess of Wales died in the summer of 1997, The *Guardian* still did not put the whole of its offline content on its website. Although the New Media Lab received a torrent of calls from people, complaining that they could not find the *Guardian*’s coverage online, they brainstormed endlessly about how news should be treated on the website. Finally, in 1997, the New Media Lab developed a model of supervising a small band of journalism students who would work night-shifts, cutting and pasting stories from the newspaper’s computer system on to the Web.

It was five years later, in 1999, that the Guardian Media Group launched the *Guardian Unlimited* network of websites, later known as guardian.com. The *Guardian Unlimited* network of websites was a combination of News Unlimited, Football Unlimited, Cricket Unlimited, Jobs Unlimited, Film Unlimited, Education, Books, Shopping and Money. These websites now form the fundamental structure of guardian.com.

With the dotcom boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the number of online newspapers grew dramatically, and by March 1999, there were 247 online newspapers (national and local) in the UK. However, there have always been concerns over the expansion of British print newspapers to the Internet. The main concern is about the unclear business model and the danger that the website will “cannibalize” the print version, since providing free news online may steal readers from the print version (Siapera & Veglis, 2012). In the early years of online newspaper publishing, the commercial managers of the print newspapers were also worried about the long-term effects of publishing online. The availability of free, sometimes more entertaining, news online could risk losing a large segment of the newspapers’ readership, particularly the younger generation, so that, in

the long term, reading newspapers in hard copy might not feature in the lives of young people (Gunter, 2003).

All eleven national newspapers in the UK now have online layouts. Most of their websites are free to visit worldwide, while the *Financial Times* and *The Times* charge access to their websites.

By looking at the relationship between the online traffic and the offline circulation of the national titles, it is interesting to find that the broadsheets are apparently more popular on the Internet. Although *The Sun* has the largest offline circulation in the UK, the *Daily Mail* has the largest number of online readers visiting its online layout. Interestingly, we can clearly see from Table 5.4 that the site traffic for these newspapers' online layouts bears no relation to their circulation. This table also echoes findings from previous comparisons of offline and online newspapers in the UK (Sparks, 2003). For example, *The Sun* has almost the same amount of offline readers as its online audience. The online audience of the *Guardian* is almost twenty times more than its parent newspaper's offline circulation.

TABLE 5.4: Monthly Offline Readership/Online Readership for the UK National Daily Newspapers in 2013-2014 <sup>48</sup>

Title(s)	Website(s)	Readers of Print Titles(000s)	Readers of Website <sup>49</sup> (000s)	Online Readership /Print Reader	Website Reader <sup>50</sup> Only(000s)
<b>Broadsheet Titles</b>					
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	telegraph.co.uk	4,136	8,848	2.14	7,574
<i>The Guardian</i>	theguardian.com	3,893	10,439	2.68	8,678
<i>The Independent/i</i>	independent.co.uk	3,901	4,965	1.27	4,179
<i>The Times</i>	thetimes.co.uk	4,513	632	0.14	496
<b>Mid-market Titles</b>					
<i>Daily Mail</i>	dailymail.co.uk	11,075	10,511	0.95	7,611
<i>Daily Express</i>	express.co.uk	3,244	1,866	0.58	1,755
<b>Popular Titles</b>					
<i>The Sun</i>	thesun.co.uk	13,384	1,476	0.11	1,133
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	mirror.co.uk	7,070	5,271	0.75	4,510
<i>Daily Star</i>	dailystar.co.uk	3,385	1,021	0.30	953
<i>Daily Record</i>	dailyrecord.co.uk	1,456	908	0.62	801

<sup>48</sup>Note: National Readership Survey, figures relate to April 2013- March 2014, available at <http://www.nrs.co.uk/downloads/padd-files/pdf/padd-apr13-mar14-newspapers.pdf>, accessed at 20 June 2014.

<sup>49</sup>Visitors to the website (but could also read the print title)

<sup>50</sup>Visitors to the website only ( and do not read the print title)

By looking at the relationship between the offline circulation and the site traffic of tabloid newspapers, middle-market newspapers and quality newspapers respectively, it is interesting to see that the quality newspapers have a better online performance, as most of them attract at least three times more audience online (see Table 5.4). The online audience size of the *Guardian* is almost twenty times more than its offline circulation. Unlike the quality newspapers, the tabloid newspapers do not seem to achieve the same success online. The online audience of the *Daily Star* is only half the size of its offline circulation. The other tabloid newspapers, such as *The Sun* and the *Daily Record*, have the same number of online and offline readers. Two middle-market newspapers, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*, have completely different online performances. The *Daily Mail* has the largest online audience of all the British national newspapers, while the online audience of the *Daily Express* is only half of the size of its offline circulation.

Sparks (2003) also noticed the difference in the size of the online audience of British national newspapers, and he explained the distinction as being the result of the social gradient in distribution of the Internet access in the UK. For example, the readership of the *Guardian* falls into social grades B and C1, and consists of people who have higher than average rates of Internet access. In contrast, the *Daily Star* is popular among the social grades C2 and D, which are the groups who have less access to the Internet. Gunter explains it in an even plainer way: “The traditional hard-copy newspaper requires expensive equipment on the production side and no equipment on the reader’s side. Conversely, the e-newspaper requires less expensive equipment on the production side and sophisticated reception equipment on the consumer’s side” (Gunter, 2003, p.65).

In addition, some of the features in the newspaper’s hard copy are not transferable to the online world. For example, as Sparks pointed out, Page 3 of *The Sun* is “a legendary aspect of the appeal of the offline *Sun* and it is an important contributor to the sense of ‘fun’ the newspaper seeks to instil” (Sparks, 2003, p.118). However, in the online world, although News International tries to keep the feature by providing a link to a separate page, page3.com, the online audience can very easily find a lot of similar content, and more hard-core, elsewhere on the Internet. Thus, the Page 3 feature no longer helps *The Sun* to distinguish itself from other online newspapers.

At about the same time that the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Guardian* were experimenting with publishing news online in the mid-1990s, the Chinese newspapers started their expansion to the Internet. The process of newspapers going online in China can be roughly divided into three stages:

1. The first stage, from the mid to late 1990s, was when most of the Chinese newspapers launched the digital copies of their newspapers.
2. The second stage, from the late 1990s to 2004, was when the Chinese newspapers expanded the digital copies of their newspaper to news websites.
3. The third stage was accompanied by the popularity in China of more Web 2.0 products, such as blog, microblog and social media.

From 1996 to 1998, almost one-seventh of Chinese newspapers had launched digital copies of their newspapers (Peng et al., 1999). In October 1995, a specialist newspaper, China Trade Newspaper, first started publishing a digital version on its website, and its attempt was closely followed by the *Guangzhou Daily*. In 1997, the CCP's national title, the *People's Daily*, launched its electronic version. However, the digital newspapers were merely direct copies of the printed version and had no more information than the printed version.

It was not until 1999 that newspapers in China started not only to publish the digital version of their newspapers, but also to operate a news portal. This interesting development was led by the national and regional CCP newspapers. China's national news agency, Xinhua News Agency, first launched a comprehensive newspaper, Xinhuanet.com, which was not only a platform for publishing the digital version of its sibling newspapers, but a site publishing content that was not available in its printed newspapers. The *People's Daily* also launched www.people.com.cn in 1997, and in 1999 launched China's first political bulletin board service, *Strong Country Forum* or *Qiangguo BBS*, which stimulates discussion on political issues and current affairs. *Qiangguo BBS* was launched after NATO bombed the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia on 7 May 1999. The bombing aroused an outbreak of nationalism in China, and just 48 hours after the incident, *Qiangguo BBS* was launched to stimulate and lead online discussion of the bombing. It later developed into a BBS which specializes in discussions about



political issues and current affairs. The name of the BBS, “Qiangguo”, means “strong country” and has nationalist overtones.

Other national CCP titles, such as the *Guangming Daily* and the *China Youth Daily*, also launched their websites in 1999. Among these pioneers, the *Beijing Youth Daily* was recognized as the most successful, and it established a model later called the “Qianlong model”. Officially launched in 2000, Qianlong.com is a comprehensive website which publishes news from local Beijing newspapers and broadcasters. Its content providers include *Beijing Daily*, Beijing Radio Station, Beijing Television Station, *Beijing Youth Daily* and *Beijing Morning Post*. This website was very popular in the area of China’s capital city, due to its timely updates and the variety of its content. Other cities in China also followed the Qianlong model and launched their city portals to cover the content of their local media platforms in digital versions.

The third wave of newspaper digitalization was marked by the keywords “Web 2.0” and “web-log” (or the short term, “blog”). The term “Web 2.0” refers to a new version of the Internet that enables users to interact and collaborate with each other. Although the technology was already available in 1999, it was not until 2004, with the popularity of the web-log service and the increased usage of personal computers, as well as Internet take-up in China, that Web 2.0 finally made a difference to China’s Internet sphere.

However, the popularity of the web-log service did not enhance the dominant status of the news websites established by the traditional print newspapers; in contrast, it enabled or hastened the growth of the platforms of news aggregators in China, such as Sina.com, 163.com and Sohu.com. McNair defines content aggregators thus: “Online ‘aggregators’ of news means that this site did not gather and research news in the traditional manner, but merely reported the news of other organizations, or provided links to those organizations, taking no responsibility for the accuracy or honesty of the information highlighted for the growing community of internet users” (McNair, 2009, p.139). These news aggregators were mostly established by Chinese overseas students who studied in the US in the 1990s. This generation experienced the dotcom boom of the late 1990s in the US, and seized the opportunity to introduce the latest Internet technology to China in the late 1990s and early 2000. Before the NASDAQ plummeted in May 2000, three web-based companies which was set up by Chinese overseas students

in the US successfully attracted venture capitalists and turned their attention back to China. These three companies, Sohu, Sina and NetEase, are the top three content aggregators.

Under the Chinese government's aggressive programme of high technology development, almost all commercialized newspapers and party newspapers launched their websites during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Studies indicate that, in 2010, 53.6% of newspapers set up their own online presence, while 46.6% of newspapers' online presence was embedded in other online portals.

However, when we look at the relationship between the circulation and site traffic of Chinese national newspapers, we see that the picture is completely different from those of the British newspapers (See Table 5.5). Although some of the newspapers have such a small online audience that the figures cannot be gathered, we can see from the figures available that all top ten national newspapers perform very poorly compared with their popularity in terms of offline circulation. Compared with the low site traffic of the top ten national newspapers, there is a huge number of Internet users who read news online. According to CNNIC's statistics, from September 2010 to July 2011, 362,300,000 Internet users in China read online news, making online news consumption among the top four reasons for Internet usage. That is to say, there is a huge demand for news and information on the Internet, while the national newspapers have failed in building their online brand.

The circulations of four out of the seven national newspapers rely on a mandatory subscription. It follows that, although the circulation numbers of the print party newspaper are large, the numbers of their website's online traffic are significantly lower than their circulation. However, the *Reference News* and the *Global Times* are two newspapers produced by the world's biggest news agency, Xinhua News, which has reporters and bureaux in almost every corner of the world and which also collaborates with numerous world news agencies. They are thus able to attract a large audience by feeding news bulletins in a twenty four hours a day, seven days a week news cycle.

Although the national newspapers do not seem to achieve very much success in terms of building online brands, the regional newspapers in China share a bigger audience (see Table 5.5), particularly those published in the eastern and

southern coastal areas, such as the *Xinmin Evening News* in Shanghai and the *Information Times* in Guangdong. In contrast, the size of the online audience of the *Qilu Evening News* is only one-third of the size of its offline circulation. It is the same for the *Chengdu Business Daily*. Both newspapers are published in provinces that have the densest population and the less prosperous economies.

TABLE 5.5: The Relationship between Newspaper Circulation and Unique Visitors in Top National and Regional Newspapers in China<sup>51</sup>

Title	Website(s)	Print Circulation	Daily Unique Visitors	Daily Unique Visitors /Print Reader
<i>Reference News</i>	cankaoxiaoxi.com	3,500,000	N/A	N/A
<i>People's Daily</i>	people.com.cn	2,800,000	3,066,000	1.10
<i>Global Times</i>	huanqiu.com	2,400,000	N/A	N/A
<i>China Military Daily</i>	81.cn	800,000	54,000	0.07
<i>China Youth Daily</i>	cyol.net	500,000	75,000	0.15
<i>Yangze Evening News</i>	yangtse.com	2,200,000	5,500,000	2.50
<i>Guangzhou Daily/ Information Times</i>	dayoo.com	3,330,000	5,600,000	1.68
<i>Southern City Daily</i>	nandu.com	1,600,000	3,890,000	2.43
<i>Qilu Evening News</i>	qlwb.com.cn	1,500,000	470,000	0.31
<i>Xinmin Evening News</i>	xinmin.news365.com.cn	1,200,000	8,200,000	6.83
<i>Jinling Evening News</i>	longhoo.net	1,200,000	2,600,000	2.17
<i>Yangchen Evening News/Xinkuaibao</i>	ycwb.com	2,300,000	2,900,000	1.26
<i>Chengdu Business Daily</i>	echengdu.cn	1,120,000	120,000	0.11

<sup>51</sup> Figure generated from soubao.com and Alexa.com at 10 October, 2011. Some newspapers' online site attracted too little traffic so that could not be detected by Actionable Analytics for the Web.

## 5.3 CASE STUDIES

In chapter 3, the author explained the purpose case studies and illustrated criteria for the selection of newspapers (see section 3.2.1). The following sections in detail review the journalistic tradition, newsroom culture and organizational structures of the four selected newspapers. In further it identifies the actions, practices and strategies they have already taken in response to the development communication technologies.

### 5.3.1 The *Guardian* and guardian.com

Originally entitled The Manchester Guardian, the newspaper was founded in 1821 in the liberal interest to support reform, and had a reputation as “an organ of the middle class”. The ethos of public service has been a part of the *Guardian*’s DNA ever since. The former *Manchester Guardian* editor, CP Scott, who held the post for 57 years and helped the newspaper to achieve national and international recognition, outlined the paper’s value in his editorial piece to celebrate the newspaper’s centenary as “honesty, cleanness, courage, fairness, a sense of duty to the reader and the community” (5 May 1912).

The *Guardian* is a British national daily newspaper owned by the Guardian Media Group which owns newspapers, radio stations, print media and New Media. The Guardian Media Group is owned by the Scott Trust, a charitable foundation set up in 1936 following the death of CP Scott in order to secure the legacy of its independent liberal journalism. CP Scott’s son, John Scott, voluntarily renounced all financial interest in the business for himself and his family, and put all his shares into the Scott Trust, resulting in a unique form of press ownership in Britain. The aim of the Trust was to protect the *Guardian*’s editorial independence, maintain its financial health and ensure that the newspaper did not become vulnerable to takeover by for-profit media groups. In 2008, the Scott Trust’s assets were transferred to Scott Trust Limited, which holds the same principles as the previous Trust.

The core purpose of the Scott Trust is addressed as (quoted from the constitution of the Scott Trust):

To secure the financial and editorial independence of the Guardian in perpetuity: as a quality national newspaper without party affiliation; remaining faithful to its liberal tradition; as a profit-seeking enterprise managed in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

All other activities should be consistent with the central objective. The company which the Trust owns should: be managed to ensure profits are available to further the central objective; not invest in activities which conflict with the values and principles of the Trust.

The values and principles of the Trust should be upheld throughout the pecquerie2007trends Group. The Trust declares a subsidiary interest in promoting the causes of freedom in the press and liberal journalism, both in Britain and elsewhere.

It is believed that the *Guardian* is still following the same principles, and it is internationally recognized as the ultimate statement of values for a free press. Since 2003, the *Guardian* started to conduct an annual social, ethical and environmental audit to examine whether the *Guardian* has safeguarded its journalistic freedom and liberal values. The *Guardian*'s ownership determines that it is the only British newspaper to conduct this kind of audit and also the only British newspaper to employ an internal "readers' editor" to handle complaints and corrections.

In 1924, John Scott bought the *Manchester Evening News* which was a highly profitable enterprise at that time and shared offices with the *Guardian* in Manchester. This purchase marked the beginning of the company as a diversified media group, rather than a single newspaper. After the acquisition of the *Manchester Evening News*, the organization continued its expansion and bought other evening papers in Manchester. In 1972, the organization changed its name to The Guardian Media Group to reflect its increasing breadth of its assets.

In 1982, the Group bought a controlling stake in NorthWest Automart. It later became *Auto Trader* magazine, with its own website, autotrader.co.uk, Europe's largest automotive classified site. The Trader Media Group is The Guardian Media Group's publishing house, specializing in classified advertising, and has

brought significant financial benefits to the *Guardian* over the years, which enabled the Group to buy the world's oldest Sunday newspaper, *The Observer*, in 1993.

Although, in the past twenty-five years, the *Guardian* has survived intense competition, competing for readership with *The Independent*, established in 1986, and with *The Times*, which triggered a price war in 1994, both the *Guardian* and *The Observer* have been consistently loss-making. It has been revealed that *The Observer* lost £49.9 million in 2006, and the Guardian Ltd made losses before tax of £33 million in 2011. The national newspaper division of the Guardian Media Group is therefore believed to rely heavily on cross-subsidization from profitable companies within the group, including Auto Trader. With the growing popularity of the Internet and broadband in the UK from the mid-1990s, the regional service of the *Guardian* has suffered from loss of its classified advertisements, particularly those for property and jobs. The Guardian Media Group had to sell its regional media business to Trinity Mirror in 2010, which included its flagship newspaper, the *Manchester Evening News*.

The *Guardian* has always given much attention to format design. The introduction in 1992 of its features section, G2, as a tabloid format supplement, was widely copied by the other British "quality" newspapers. It was also the first British newspaper to move to the "Berliner" format for its main sections, with taller pages than those of the traditional broadsheets, normally recognized for the convenience of reading on public transport. The *Guardian*'s transfer to the Berliner format in 2004 was followed by the adoption of tabloid format by *The Independent* and *The Times*. The investment in format change was rewarded with a circulation rise in 2005 and the G2 supplements, mentioned above, are the *Guardian*'s unique feature. When they were first introduced, they were entirely printed in half-sized tabloid format. After changing to the Berliner format, they were printed in "magazine-sized" demi-Berliner format. There is a different G2 supplement every day: *Sports and Media Guardian* on Monday; *Education Guardian* on Tuesday; *Society Guardian* on Wednesday; *Technology Guardian* on Thursday; and *Film and Music supplement* on Friday.

The *Guardian* was a relative latecomer to the business of online news in Britain. In late 1994, Europe's first daily web-based newspaper was launched by *The Daily Telegraph*. Under the name "Electronic Telegraph", the website initially only

published the top stories from the print edition of the newspaper, but gradually increased its coverage until nearly all the newspaper's content was available online, together with some exclusive online stories too.

In 1995, the *Guardian's* New Media Lab was officially established, with instructions "to implement the proposed electronic publication of the *Guardian* and the *Observer*"<sup>52</sup>. As the *Guardian's* digital editor, Ian Katz recalled the birth of guardian.com: "While competitors such as *The Daily Telegraph* built efficient and well-used digital facsimiles of their print editions, the *Guardian* instead established a new media 'skunkworks' team, tasked with dreaming up innovative online ideas, in an airy old warehouse just across the road from its main offices" (Katz, 2009).

In 1996, the Guardian New Media Lab team undertook a curious range of projects, from a widely ambitious, multilingual website for the Euro'96 Competition, and Shift-Control, a weekly webzine sponsored by Whitbread enabling every issue to be redesigned from scratch, to *Recruit.net*, which was launched to publish the *Guardian's* recruitment advertisements on the Internet.

When the Guardian New Media Lab team first brainstormed possible website names, they had agreed that they would "convey a leap from the constraints of the printed page" (*ibid*). This webcentric spirit of the New Media Lab inspired later plans for the online Guardian. Instead of just attempting to transfer the paper online, the team of programmers and journalists wanted "to build deep specialist sites in a range of areas and then join them up in a network ... and the *Guardian* is committed to developing content that exploits the new medium's strengths rather than simply recycling its print product" (*ibid*).

However, when Diana, Princess of Wales died in the summer of 1997, the *Guardian* still did not put the whole of its offline content on to its website. Although the New Media Lab received a torrent of calls from people complaining that they couldn't find the *Guardian's* coverage online, they brainstormed endlessly about how news should be treated on the website. Finally, in 1997, the New Media Lab developed a model of supervising a small band of journalism students, who would

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<sup>52</sup>Quoted from from History of guardian.com, the Guardian Website, available at <http://www.guardian.com/gnm-archive/guardian-website-timeline>



work night-shifts, cutting and pasting stories from the newspaper's computer system on to the web.

It was five years later, in 1999, that the Guardian Media Group launched the *Guardian Unlimited* network of websites, later known as the guardian.com. This network of websites was a combination of News Unlimited, Football Unlimited, Cricket Unlimited, Jobs Unlimited, Film Unlimited, Education, Books, Shopping and Money. These websites now form the fundamental structure of guardian.com.

The web-based *Guardian* has grown rapidly since it was launched. By the end of 1999, the site already had over one million users, and by March 2001 the network of the *Guardian Unlimited* had over 2.4 million unique users, making it the most popular UK newspaper website. Since then, the Guardian has gained most of the important web newspaper awards. In 2000, Guardian Unlimited won best design for an interactive newspaper at the prestigious US EPPY™ Awards; the best newspaper on the web in the Newspaper Society Awards; and the online news service of the year at the British Press Awards. In 2005, 2006 and 2007, the site won the Best Newspaper category in the Webby Awards, beating *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal* and *Variety*. The site also retained the Best Online Daily Newspaper Award at the Newspaper Society Awards for four consecutive years. In 2006, it reported its first profitable year, with income deriving mostly from recruitment and display advertising.

It is essential for the *Guardian* to keep the competition between its online and physical newspapers well balanced. In December 2009, the *Guardian* announced the closure of its G2 Technology supplement. According to the *Guardian's* Technology editor Charles Arthur, "In part it has been the Internet that has hastened the end of the physical version of this section, as more classified job adverts have migrated to online job sites such as jobs.guardian.com; there have also been the arctic winds of the recession, which seem to be hitting the UK harder than many other countries around the world" (Arthur, 2009). He added that "the huge advantage of going online, of course, is that it frees us from the space constraints of print. Games and gadget reviews can be longer and more plentiful, features are untroubled by the tyranny of the word count, and interactivity comes to the fore, both in how we present data and how you can respond and inform us about the topics you find interesting and important" (*ibid*).

In June 2006, the *Guardian* introduced its “web first” service, which made it the first British national newspaper to allow major news from foreign correspondents and business journalists to be placed online before appearing in the newspaper. This strategy change marked the end of the established deadline-based newsroom routine, which used to be “once-a-day” publishing. Some exclusive stories were held back for the newspaper, in order to maintain the quality levels of the print version.

The purpose of this change was to strengthen the *Guardian*’s strong track record on breaking news and to benefit the newspaper’s expanding global readership. Also, this change shifted the once-a-day deadline to hourly deadlines for foreign correspondents and business journalists. They were asked to produce more versions of wider scope beyond the limits of the print paper. Figure 5.12 shows the integrated newsroom structure in the *Guardian*’s new building near King’s Cross, London.

From a regional newspaper in Manchester to a major national newspaper, the *Guardian* considers itself as a byword for serious, trusted, independent journalism, with a digital first strategy and an international audience.

The *Guardian*’s online platform, [guardian.com](http://guardian.com), now contains most of the content of the *Guardian* and the *Observer*, as well as a substantial body of web-only work, including a rolling news service. The site is made up of a core news homepage and a network of niche websites covering topics such as sports, culture, business, money, lifestyle, travel, environment, media, education, society, science, technology and law.

### 5.3.1.1 Comment is Free

On 14 March 2006, the *Guardian* launched its Comment Network, entitled *Comment is free*. The name of the service derives from a sentence in a famous essay written by the *Guardian*’s editor, CP Scott: “Comment is free, but facts are sacred . . . The voice of opponents, no less than that of friends, has a right to be heard” ([The Guardian, 2012](#)); this underpins the core values of the newspaper. On *Comment is free*, there are hundreds of discussions and debates on a wide

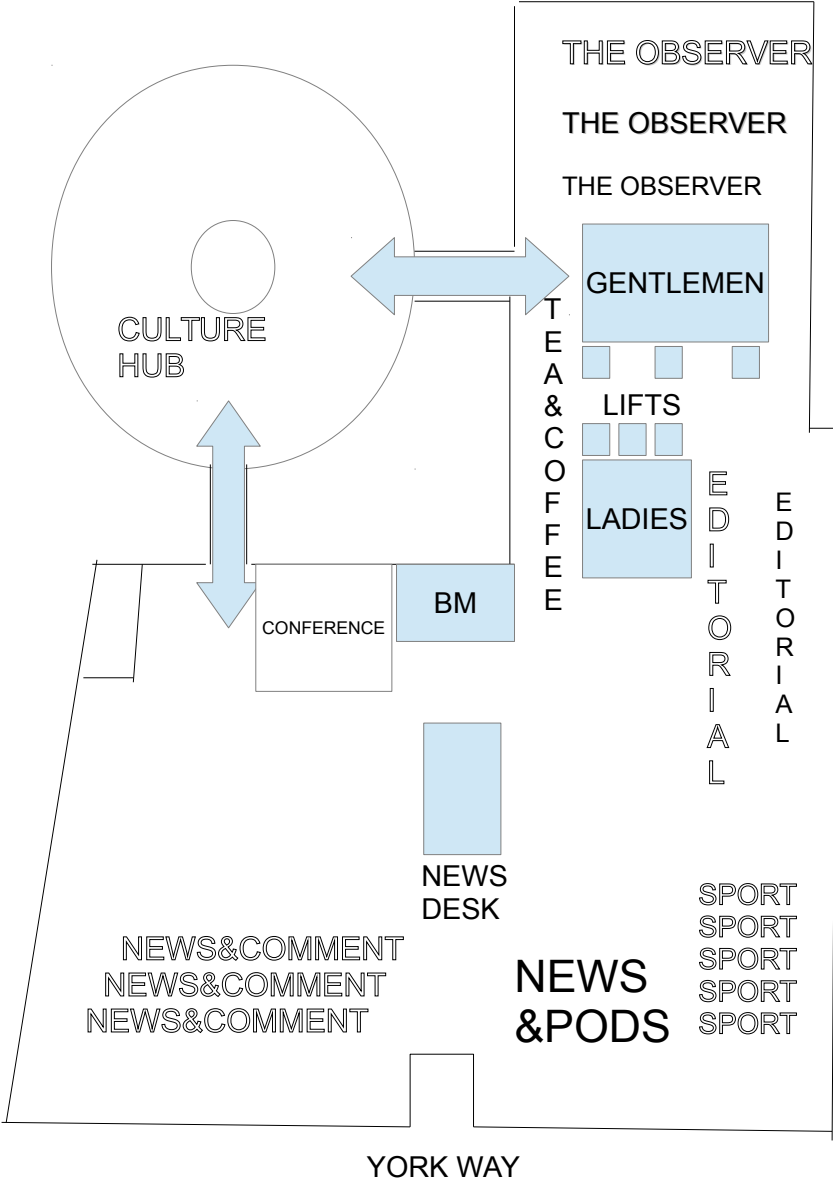


FIGURE 5.12: The *Guardian's* new Building, London

range of topics. The editorial principle of *Comment is free* is to provide “a plurality of voices, but keep the centre of gravity as a progressive, liberal, left-leaning newspaper”.

*Comment is free* (*Cif*) was originally designed as a blogging platform, and now functions as the home of the opinion pieces from the *Guardian* and *The Observer* newspapers, as well as for contributions from more than 600 other writers. It also allows readers to post comments on articles selected by *Comment is free* editors. Meanwhile, contributors have to keep within the Guardian Community Standards.

The *Comment is free* website allows anyone to go for a pitch to the editor. For those who want to become contributors to *Cif*, or in other words, to have blog files on *Cif*, they just need to send their ideas and a brief outline of their piece to the editor. If the editor likes the idea, a specific number of words and a deadline will be set. The bloggers are encouraged by the editors to include several links within each blog entry, which connect the single blog to the wider network of information beyond. They are also encouraged to participate in any subsequent discussion of their pieces.

The site contains a feature for recommending posts on “the editors’ picks” and “selected contributors”. It also includes a feature for seeing what others are reading, and offering comments on “the most commented pieces” and selected contributors. The sub-sites on the website gather up comments on the same topics into individually edited areas, including the “*Comment is free*’s Twitter feeds”, “America”, “Europe” and “Middle East” sections. It also contains the Guardian Comment Network, which brings a selection of the best comment from the *Guardian*’s partners across the Web, such as The Arabist, BuzzMachine, Chinadialogue, etc.

The *Guardian* is regarded as generous to its contributors for paying a comparatively higher fee for the content it commissions. The pieces picked up as “the editors’ picks” of the day, for example, could earn the blogger £90, or for a Guardian Leader cartoon, the rate applied could be £450.

The *Comment is free* website strictly follows its website policy by moderating comments after, and even before, posting. According to the community’s standards and participation guidelines, the aim of Moderation on *Comment is free* is

to “ensure this platform is inclusive and safe, and that the *Guardian*’s website is the place on the net where you will always find lively, entertaining and, above all, intelligent discussions”.

The Community Moderator Team is responsible for the moderation service for the *Guardian*’s online presence. It consists of a small group of moderators, who are required to enforce the community standards neutrally and consistently on the websites. Yet, like other online communities, *Comment is free* does not have a moderator on duty for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As one moderator himself admitted, “We do not have 24-hour moderation, and moderators do not read every comment posted on the site. With the *Cif* community, as with many other online communities, we do in part rely on commentators alerting us to problematic comments. This is part of the offer we make to those wishing to take part in discussion on the site”.

On the *Comment is free* website, readers are encouraged to contribute suggestions as to what the editor and reporter might cover on a thread called “You tell us”. On average, the editors receive 300 suggestions a day, and on a peak day more than 1,700. On another thread, called “You told me”, editors gather together articles inspired by suggestions from “You tell us” and pieces commissioned through *Comment is free*.

**Comment is free** also has its critics, mainly for allowing a display of misogynistic and anti-Semitic comments. For example, the expression of “one (secular) State” repeatedly appears among the comments. As the Readers’ Editor, a unique position in the *Guardian* for dealing with readers’ complains, Chris Elliott responded, “Natalie Hanman, who edits *Cif*, has worked hard to encourage women to battle through any perceived misogyny on the site to bring about a site that more women want to visit. I think she believes it is important to get into the debate, no matter how tough, to create a different atmosphere”.

### 5.3.1.2 Open Platform

On 10 March 2009, the *Guardian* launched its Open Platform project, which is the suite of services that enables partners to build applications through the

*Guardian*. The idea behind the Open Platform service is to provide more opportunity for application developers to develop digital products and application with The *Guardian* and its websites. The basic features of the Open Platform are available in two different ways: one is to allow the application developer to be integrated within the *Guardian* network; the other is to allow partners to use the *Guardian*'s online and offline content to build applications for other digital platforms.

Traditionally, newspaper organizations build walls to protect their content being used by others, but Open Platform allows a blogger with WordPress to reuse any of the *Guardian*'s articles in the database without removing or altering any text, links or images on the original copy. In addition, the partners of the *Guardian* and its website are allowed to use their articles in full, on condition that they retain the embedded advertisements, performance tracking and a watermark within the articles. They can also keep any associated revenue earned. In this way, some smaller publishers who want to enhance their online presence by using the *Guardian* and its website's content can easily benefit from the Open Platform model.

The *Guardian* has already successfully launched several projects within the framework of Open Platform. For example, a free, customizable application for iPad and iPhone, which was developed with Taptu and powered by the *Guardian*, has received thousands of downloads from the Applestore and has achieved a rating of 4.5 out of 5 in the Applestore. More examples are the "Enjoy English" project working with VisitEngland, a platform that encourages the *Guardian*'s audience to take a break in England; and the recipe search MicroApp, developed with an individual programmer, Daniel Levitt, who had already successfully launched a recipe search engine WhatCouldICook.com.

It is believed that, through the Open Platform campaign, the *Guardian* not only enhances its reputation for its commitment to openness, but also encourages the New Media industries to develop applications to recycle the *Guardian*'s content and expand its online influence.

### 5.3.1.3 Open Journalism

The *Guardian*'s two-minute television advertisement on Channel 4 about “three little pigs” kicked off the newspaper's repositioning campaign on 29 February 2012. It is the *Guardian*'s first television advertisement for twenty-five years and shows how a story from the paper's front page headline flows to social media discussion, and finally to an unexpected conclusion. It is a repositioning campaign following the *Guardian*'s brand marketing and audience review in 2011, aiming at “reaching progressive audiences and show them why they should spend time with the *Guardian*” (Sweeney, 2012). Its emphasis is on how readers can participate in a news event with the *Guardian* online and offline, through various platforms, including the physical newspaper, tablet, mobile and computer.

Building on the idea that journalists are not the only experts in the world, the *Guardian* launched its idea of “open journalism”. According to the *Guardian*'s editor-in-chief, Alan Rusbridger, “Open journalism is journalism which is fully knitted into the web of information that exists in the world today. It links to it; sifts and filters it; collaborates with it and generally uses the ability of anyone to publish and share material to give a better account of the world . . . and is based on a belief in the open exchange of information, ideas and opinions and its power to bring about change”, adding that the Open Journalism campaign “is designed to bring that philosophy to life for new and existing readers” (The Guardian, 2012).

To be more specific, The *Guardian*'s editorial team outlined ten definitions of open journalism: (The Guardian, 2012)

- It encourages participation. It invites and/or allows a response.
- It is not an inert, “us” or “them”, form of publishing.
- It encourages others to initiate debate, publish material or make suggestions.
- We can follow, as well as lead. We can involve others in the pre-publication processes.
- It helps form communities of joint interest around subjects, issues or individuals.

- It is open to the Web and is part of it. It links to, and collaborates with, other material (including services) on the Web.
- It aggregates and/or curates the work of others.
- It recognizes that journalists are not the only voices of authority, expertise and interest.
- It aspires to achieve, and reflect, diversity as well as promoting shared values.
- It recognizes that publishing can be the beginning of the journalistic process, rather than the end.
- It is transparent and open to challenge – including correction, clarification and addition.

The Guardian's editorial team believe that the twenty-first century idea of journalism is different from that of the twentieth century. For newspapers to take the nineteenth- or twentieth-century view that editors can generate content entirely in the newsroom, that journalists do not need to link to anybody else, and that reporters can build walls around their content, is no longer regarded as a good approach to journalism. Being more open, more participative, more networked, is likely to give newspapers a better approximation of the truth, which is the reason they are in journalism.

The *Guardian* has been experimenting with open journalism for more than three years, and its most significant achievements have been its reports on the MPs' expenses scandal and Ian Tomlinson's death during the 2009 G20 protests in London. After the Daily Telegraph had exposed the MPs' expenses scandal, the *Guardian's* newsroom received more than 400,000 documents at once. It is impossible for any newsroom to process 400,000 documents, and to solve the problem the *Guardian* built a little widget and recruited 23,000 readers to help the reporters to process all the documents. Another notable example was the death of Ian Tomlinson during the G20 protests in London, when the *Guardian* appealed to the people who had been in the crowd that day, saying, 'Did you see this?', 'Have you captured this digitally?' This produced the evidence from



a manager from New York which proved that Ian Tomlinson died as a result of being hit by policemen.

Over the past three years, the *Guardian's* newsroom has had a strong commitment to the ideal of open journalism. The reporters have been encouraged to inform their readers at every step along the way, usually over Twitter, as they develop stories. Traditionally, most journalists believe “secrets are the currency of their trade” (Haupt, 2012) and they would not even share what they were working on with their colleagues. But now, the idea of open journalism, known in journalism as “crowd-sourcing”, has become the *Guardian's* core belief and central to its brand, in asking journalists to reveal what they are working on for the next day's newspaper.

The idea of open journalism has been built into the newsroom culture that influences many sections now. For example, the *Guardian's* software, developed by the in-house technology team, is an open source, which means that any programmer or amateur can contribute to it.

However, as the *Guardian's* editor-in-chief admitted, 80% of the *Guardian's* revenue is still from the physical newspaper, and it is important to preserve exclusive features for the newspaper. For example, the *Guardian* reporter Rupert Neate had accused the British defence minister Liam Fox of regularly bringing along his friend Adam Werritty to high-level meetings and misrepresenting him as an official advisor. However, it was not until Neate had a response to a Twitter feed about this report from a random reader, directing him to a YouTube video showing Fox and Werritty meeting the president of Sri Lanka, that Fox resigned. Scoops are still important for selling newspapers, but anyone can look at Rupert Neate's Twitter feed and be linked to the YouTube video – so how can journalists keep the exclusive? Finally, Neate's work turned out to be a web-first report, which was finished within one hour after the Twitter feed reply was revealed.

In fact, the *Guardian's* coverage on the biggest media story for more than a decade – the News Corporation phone-hacking scandal – was a result of the old-fashioned “closed journalism”, with one reporter, Nick Davies, working on the story for more than two years.

In addition to the above services, The *Guardian* provides a service called *Guardian 24*. This allowed readers to download stories scraped from The *Guardian's* sites

automatically and to print them as a PDF. The purpose of promoting this service, as the head of client sales at The *Guardian News & Media*. Mark Finney states, “is to enter the London free newspaper market, but get our readers to pay for the paper and the ink and not have to pay for distribution”. However, this experiment turned out to be a failure.

### 5.3.2 The *Daily Mail* and MailOnline

#### 5.3.2.1 The *Daily Mail*

The *Daily Mail* is a British national daily newspaper owned by the *Daily Mail & General Trust* (DMGT), with a turnover of £1,990 million in 2011. As a publicly listed company on the London Stock Exchange, the DMGT runs operations in over 40 countries, based mainly in the UK, the USA and Australia. It is now also expanding to Europe, Asia and the Middle East since it acquired Hungary’s largest regional newspaper, *Kisalföld* in 1989, and purchased a number of websites in Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia and the Slovak Republic. DMGT’s largest unit is *Associated Newspapers Ltd*, publishing newspaper titles, including the *Daily Mail*, *The Mail on Sunday*, the *Metro* and other Northcliffe Media regional titles. DMGT also owns over 200 websites, covering news, property, cars and recruitment. Among these, are a number of well-known brands, such as *Dailymail.co.uk*, *Findaproperty.com*, *Primelocation.com*, *Jobsite.co.uk* and *Teletext Holidays*. In addition, DMGT Broadcasting owns the national *Classic FM* (radio, TV and magazine), a national jazz music channel and 32 local radio stations. DMGT also owns *Euromoney Institutional Investor PLC*, which is one of Europe’s largest business and financial magazine publishers, publishing more than 100 magazines, newsletters and journals.

Two brothers, Alfred Harmsworth, 1st Viscount Northcliffe and Harold Harmsworth, 1st Viscount Rothermere, founded the news group in 1896, and their family still own the *Daily Mail & General Trust*. It is the only such family business in the British media to survive from the late 1800s (de Burgh, 2008). Founded by Lord Northcliffe, who was born into a lower-middle class family in Dublin and became a freelance journalist in the late 1800s, the *Daily Mail* was created as a “a Penny

Newspaper for One Halfpenny” and “The Busy Man’s Daily Newspaper”. Having previously founded the weekly magazine, *Answers* (original title: *Answers to Correspondents on Every Subject Under the Sun*), Lord Northcliffe strongly believed that Britain needed a newspaper aimed at the newly literate “lower-middle class market, resulting from mass education, combining a low retail price with plenty of competitions, prizes and promotional gimmicks” (Manning, 2001). Lord Northcliffe had an intuitive gift for anticipating what the public wanted even before they did. He noticed that “there were halfpenny papers already, but they were cheap in every sense; there were penny papers, too, but they were wordy and dull. Even the so-called great newspapers of the age lacked initiative and were remote from the people” (Harris, 2013). On 4 May 1896, the *Daily Mail*, the first newspaper in Britain to cover stories in simple language, shorter lines and a more readable style, was published in London and quickly became highly successful.

The editorial style of the *Daily Mail* was first experimented on in Lord Northcliffe’s first magazine, *Answers*. Founded on 2 June 1888, *Answers* covered all kinds of human interest topics, from “What does the Queen eat?” and “Can fish talk?”, to “What colour are the Prime Minister’s socks?” or “How long can a severed head remain conscious after a decapitation?” All these topics were covered within three or four lines. The magazine also promoted its circulation through competitions. In every issue, readers were invited to answer questions like “How many people pass London’s Tower Bridge every day?” and the winner could win a considerable prize. By promoting circulation through competitions and providing interesting topics, suitable for conversation over middle-class family dinners, the *Answers* magazine helped Lord Northcliffe to gather his first fortune. In 1894, he brought the closing *Evening News* and two years later, he founded the *Daily Mail*.

As Paul Harris wrote in the *Daily Mail*’s official history, the beginning of the twentieth century has been “of adventure and disclosure, of courage and crusading” . . . and the *Daily Mail* “has probably contributed more to progress than any other newspaper. It has campaigned on issues ranging from bread to barrage balloons, from aviation to unleaded petrol, and has constantly pushed forward the boundaries of communication. It has kept watch over politicians, influenced the minds of leaders and changed the thinking of governments” (*ibid*).

The *Daily Mail* was an immediate success and Lord Northcliffe's understanding of what people liked to read was proved to be right. By the end of 1899, the *Daily Mail's* circulation had reached 500,000 a day. By the end of the Boer War, the circulation was over a million, making the *Daily Mail* the most popular newspaper in the world.

The *Daily Mail* is also famous for its innovations. It was the first British newspaper to provide features specifically for women, and the first newspaper to send out a female war correspondent. It is now the only British newspaper whose readership is more than 50% female. Lord Northcliffe also included a competition feature in the *Daily Mail*, something that had contributed to the success of his first weekly magazine, the *Answers*. He sponsored flying competitions (in 1906) for the first flight across the Channel and the Atlantic.

Although now, according to a 2004 survey, 53% of the *Daily Mail* readers vote for the Conservative Party, the newspaper has taken substantial and controversial political positions over its history. The *Daily Mail* currently publishes about 80 pages a day, covering serious topics, supplemented with a "beguiling line-up of novelty stories, animal stories, personal essays, barely disguised press releases, recipes, gossip, crosswords, obituaries, amusing pictures and heart-warming fluff" (Collins, 2012). Its editor, Paul Dacre, is the longest serving editor on Fleet Street.

### 5.3.2.2 MailOnline

In 2005, DMGT launched its online news service, MailOnline, which contains almost all the stories from the *Daily Mail* and the *Mail on Sunday*. The launch of MailOnline, also called [dailymail.co.uk](http://dailymail.co.uk), resulted from DMGT's online acquisitions. Presenting the DMGT Annual Report for 2004, Chairman Viscount Rothermere spoke of the company's online strategy thus: "Convinced that the Internet will become more and more important in our lives, I am encouraging our consumer publishing enterprises to increase their investments in it with the aim of building a leading presence in key channels" (Rothermere, 2004). The reason for his encouragement originated from DMGT's acquisition of several online advertising platforms, covering motors, jobs, property, dating and personal finance. In the following year's Annual Report, he outlined the challenges and opportunities

that the Internet posed to DMGT: “The Internet has been a boon, for example, enabling cheaper and quicker delivery of EDR’s environmental reports and of *Euromoney’s Euroweek* magazine. For our consumer businesses, it is a challenge and an opportunity. Associated has developed a new division based on the acquisition of leading national recruitment and property advertising sites. Jobsite, in particular, has taught us much about doing business on the Internet. Northcliffe is making good progress in developing local Internet offerings to defend and grow its markets. To date, they have seen little or no sign of migration of advertising to the Internet, not surprising given the local nature of much of their advertising” (Rothermere, 2005).

Although the Rothermere was optimistic about the extent to which the migration of advertisements from offline media to online media might affect his physical newspaper, he also talked in the same speech about how the regional division of Northcliffe had been hit by a decline in recruitment advertising and property advertising. The decline was not only due to the reduction of costs and staffing in both private and public sectors, but also because of the immigration of classified advertising to online job searching platforms and online property searching platforms in the UK.

In the 2007 Annual Report, Rothermere finally admitted that the Internet “is having a fundamental effect on all media business” (Rothermere, 2007). By the end of 2007, DMGT had invested more than £150 million to create one of the UK’s largest online consumer networks, covering jobs, property, personal finance, travel, and motors and dating.

Like the *Guardian’s* publisher, MailOnline’s executive also believes that giving content for free online will ultimately prove more lucrative than the paywall alternative implemented on Rupert Murdoch’s UK titles (Robinson, 2010). For that reason, MailOnline has from its inception offered access free of charge, with a stand-alone staff. As the *Daily Mail* had been a highly successful newspaper and the executives of DMGT “did not want to do anything that was going to compromise that” (quoted in (Collins, 2012)), they made an early decision that MailOnline should not be integrated with the *Daily Mail*. It has aggressively pursued online traffic aggressively from the start, by a huge amount of material on its homepage (more than 400 news stories) to maximise its ranking in Google’s search results: “We just decided to go hell-for-leather for ratings . . . anything relating to

climate change, American politics, Muslims – we just chased the numbers very ruthlessly” (quoted in (Collins, 2012)).

By 2007, MailOnline had become the UK’s second largest newspaper website, and by 2010 was ranked as the largest. Research shows that, in 2010, around 1.8 million readers visited MailOnline 10 times a month or more; and 2 million people consumed 60% of its pages, making up 35% of all online traffic for UK newspaper (Robinson, 2010). In the 2011 British Press Awards, it won the Award for Digital Innovation and the Website of the Year Award in 2012.

At the same time, the *Daily Mail’s* circulation is one of the most steady among national titles in the UK. The popularity of MailOnline therefore also demonstrates that the success of an online platform does not necessarily come at the expense of the physical newspaper.

MailOnline has extended its international influence by opening offices in Los Angeles in 2010 and in New York in 2011. According to the *New Yorker*, MailOnline’s front page has become prevalent in Manhattan (Collins, 2012). In 2011, MailOnline’s American traffic was up by 62% and overtaken *The New York Times* as the most popular online English newspaper in the world. However, in the interview with the *New Yorker*, the editor of MailOnline Paul Darce stated that the American newspapers “are not in our competitive set . . . I did think they were spectacularly sore losers, but I could not care less if we overtake the *Times*. What matters to me is: Are we bigger than MSN? Are we bigger than Yahoo?” (Darce quoted in Collins (2012))

It is believed that Fleet Street traditions strongly influenced MailOnline. The parade of celebrity content has definitely driven much of MailOnline’s traffic growth in the past six years. MailOnline’s homepage is unusually long, with far more pictures and big, bold headlines than its competitors. Actually, “the site breaks all so-called ‘usability rules’ and ‘is user-friendly for normal people, not for Internet fanatics” (Collins, 2012). However, MailOnline is quite distinct from its parent newspapers, from which it derives only about 25% of its content. MailOnline is even more enthusiastic and more irreverent about celebrity than its parent newspaper. As the *New Yorker’s* article said, MailOnline “emanates tabloid energy, focusing on human-interest stories, fashion, entertainment, popular science, and

crime, but it gives somewhat shorter shrift to the right-wing politics that turn people off the *Daily Mail*" (*ibid.*).

MailOnline is also very different from its competitors and is much more picture-driven. With an unusually long column of stories on the right-hand side of its homepage, chronicling the most trivial events, or non-events, of celebrities' lives, supplemented with bold headlines and pictures, the homepage of MailOnline averagely contains more than 400 articles a day, which is almost seven times more than the articles presented on the homepage of the *Guardian*'s website. The *Daily Mail*'s executive expressed in an interview with the *Guardian* reporter that just under 25% of its online traffic was generated by "showbiz" content. But he also admitted that MailOnline had "a far wider canvas on which to paint . . . One advantage of being a middle-market title is we can stretch our legs either way" (from an interview by an anonymous executive of the *Daily Mail* with [Robinson \(2010\)](#)). To some extent, the long side bar in *Femail* actually plays a role in attracting traffic with good-looking women, scantily dressed, on holiday. The *Guardian* encourages its reporters and contributors to use as many internal links as they can to provide reference and background information for its readers, while MailOnline rarely embeds keyword links in stories, yet provides links to relevant stories.

As the website of a Fleet Street newspaper and with the *Daily Mail*'s heritage, MailOnline has achieved a lot of online success. However, many researchers believe that the celebrity-driven and picture-oriented character of MailOnline may underestimate the power of the Mail brand ([Robinson, 2010](#)).

### **5.3.3 The *Southern City Daily***

The *Southern City Daily* (*Nanfang dushi bao*) is a Chinese middle-market tabloid format daily newspaper published in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province in South China. It is the sister newspaper of Guangdong Province's party newspaper, the *Southern Daily* (*Guangzhou Ribao*), and is part of the Southern Media Group, one of China's 40 newspaper groups. Officially launched on 1 January 1997, the Guangzhou-based newspaper is now the most popular paper in the Pearl River Delta area which covers 12 cities and publishes more than 100 pages each



day. According to data from the World Newspaper Association, the newspaper's average daily circulation reached 1.91 million copies in 2010 and ranked in the top 18 most popular daily newspapers in the world <sup>53</sup>.

The Southern Media Group, the Chinese media giant of which the *Southern City Daily* is a part, owns a total of 12 newspaper titles, 10 magazines, 5 websites and other sideline businesses. With a turnover of 3.66 billion RMB (approximately £305 million), in 2010, the Group runs operations in over 20 cities across China, mainly based in the Pearl River Delta area. It has also had offices in Beijing and Yunnan since its acquisition of Beijing's middle-market tabloid format daily newspaper, the *Beijing News* (*Xin Jinbao*) and Yunnan city daily, the *Yuan Information Times* (*Yunnan Xinxi Shibao*). The Group's newspaper titles are combined with different market shares, including 2 party titles, 5 specialist titles, 3 middle-market tabloid papers, and its affiliated media group, the Twenty-First Century Newspaper Group, owns the other two newspapers.

The structure of the Southern Media Group is presented in the Table 5.6 .

### 5.3.3.1 Local Party Newspaper

The media group's leading newspaper, the *Southern Daily* is the party newspaper of Guangdong Province. Founded in 1949 as the CCP Guangdong Committee's official paper, it completed its transformation from a state-owned public institution to a business in the early 2000s. Its editorial branch is now a state-owned public institution, while its business branch is running as an enterprise.

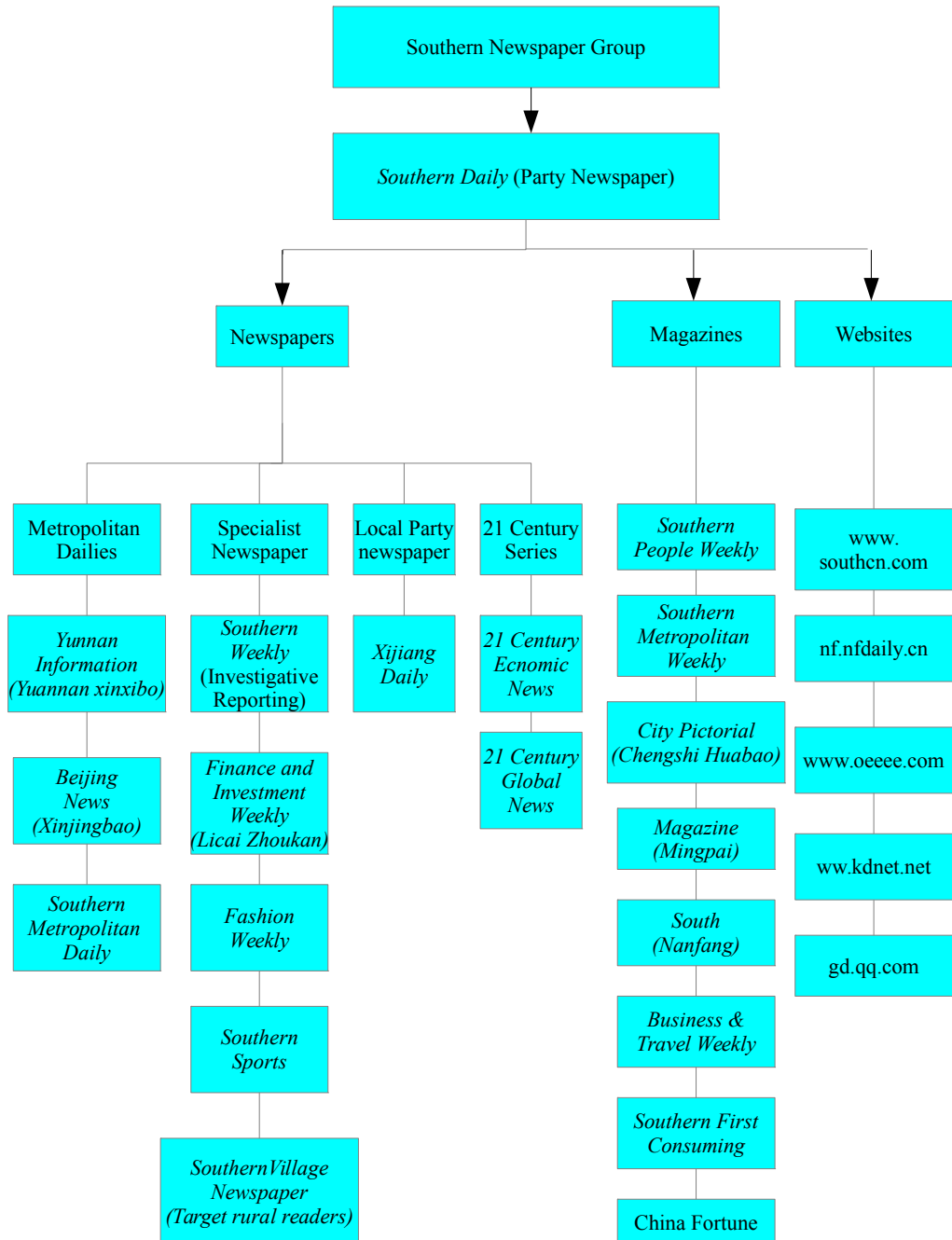
The launch of the Southern Media Group's first middle-market tabloid paper, the *Southern City Daily* in 1997 was the result of China's progress in reform and of its opening up policies. Its success has been accompanied by large-scale urbanization in the Pearl River Delta and the rise of China's middle class. With the slogan "Voice of the Citizen", the newspaper has clearly positioned itself as a paper appealing to middle-class and city immigrants.

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<sup>53</sup>Figures from International Federation of Audit Bureaux of Circulations and World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers, available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_newspapers\\_in\\_the\\_world\\_by\\_circulation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_newspapers_in_the_world_by_circulation) , generated from 30 July 2012



TABLE 5.6: The structure of the Southern Media Group



As discussed in Chapter 2, although all newspapers in China were still state-owned in the early 1990s, they had tended to enjoy greater financial independence and had become more commercially driven. In 1995, China's first metropolitan title, the *Huaxi Metropolitan Daily*, was founded by a party newspaper, the *Sichuan Daily*, and was launched in Chengdu. It quickly became a huge commercial success, due to its middle-market tabloid format, concise, bright and entertaining stories and efficient distribution system. Many party papers in China soon started to follow its success and started to experiment with publishing middle-market tabloid newspapers. Being in the front line of China's economic reform, Guangdong Province is believed to have been given more freedom by the central government for trying out different ways of increasing economic growth. As the Party newspaper of the Guangzhou CCP Committee, the *Southern Daily* therefore decided to launch a middle-market tabloid title and first tried it out in 1995; officially, however, the *Southern City Daily* began publishing on 1st January 1997. During the following decade, Party newspaper the *Southern Daily* generally established or acquired its other newspapers and sideline businesses. Finally, in July 2005, with the trend towards media conglomeration, the *Southern Daily* founded the Southern Media Group.

### 5.3.3.2 Editorial Style

Although, as discussed earlier, the Propaganda Department could indirectly influence the content of the Southern Media Group's publications by keeping the power to appoint its senior management, newspapers founded by the Southern Media Group were still known for their investigative reporting and attempts change the role of journalists from "Party organ" into watchdog. The *Southern City Daily* is one of its newspapers noted for its "muckraking" reports.

When it was founded in 1997, the *Southern City Daily* published just 16 pages a day and had a team of less than 100 staff. In the first year, its daily circulation was only 80,000 copies and it was losing money. However, the Deputy Chief Editor of the newspaper, Chen Yizhong, believed that this newspaper should follow the editorial policies and journalistic professionalism set up by Western newspapers, such as the Washington Post. Thus, the concept of newspapers providing revelatory information, exposing wrongdoings and taking risks has been

deeply rooted in the newspaper from the very beginning. One experiment tried by Chen Yizhong and his team was to include international news on the front page: Examples include coverage of Princess Diana's death in August 1997, and former US President Bill Clinton's Lewinsky Scandal. The newspaper also reflected public opinion very well during the massive protests in China against America, when China's Embassy in Belgrade was bombed and three Chinese reporters killed on 7 May 1999, during the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia by US guided missiles. Its 12-page coverage of the protest helped the newspaper to stand out from the other middle-market tabloid titles that were silent on these politically sensitive topics.

By 2000, the *Southern City Daily* had developed into China's most expensive but also "thickest" middle-market tabloid newspaper. Chen Yizhong was appointed as the newspaper's Chief Editor and its distribution also expanded to Guangzhou's nearby cities, such as Shenzhen. However, its expansion to Shenzhen was not easy. To a relatively narrow market and a more conservative propaganda department, the *Southern City Daily's* expansion was regarded as the arrival of a watchdog over local government and a new competitor to local newspapers. The newspaper's distribution was therefore restricted to Shenzhen, until the newspaper employed a team of 1,000 distributors, handing out the newspaper for free in Shenzhen for a month, which upgraded the conflict to a public issue. In 2000, the newspaper's circulation reached 1 million copies.

Although, as explained earlier, the *Southern City Daily* is still under the control of the Propaganda Department of the CCP Guangdong Committee, it is nevertheless a provincial newspaper and therefore enjoys a higher administrative rank than city newspapers and cannot be touched by the power of the city propaganda department. Thus, the *Southern City Daily* used its advantage and carried on its muckraking reports, as well as exposing wrongdoing. By 2003, its circulation had reached 1.4 million, while its advertising revenue totalled 1 billion RMB (about £6.6million). In the same year, the *Southern City Daily* expanded its influence to Beijing. With help from the Guangming Newspaper Group, the Southern Media Group was permitted to publish a middle-market tabloid title, *Beijing News* (*Xin Jinbao*), and went on to copy the success of the *Southern City Daily*. The then Chief Editor of the *Southern City Daily* and part of the newspaper's editorial and management team were also responsible for its Beijing-based sister newspaper.

However, the *Southern City Daily* was never out of the strict supervision from the Guangdong Province's propaganda department. In 2002, it was the first media outlet to publish reports on the outbreak of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), although this topic was on the Propaganda Departments' list of forbidden topics. The disease broke out across China during Spring 2002, when the annual NPC (National People's Congress) and CPPCC (Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference) were being held in Beijing. The times during which the two meetings are held each year are usually "silent periods" with regard to investigative reporting, since the central and local propaganda departments usually issue a list of forbidden topics, in order to tighten their control over public opinion and create a more harmonious" society. However, a journalist from the *Southern City Daily* interviewed the deputy minister of the National Health Department on the day before the NPC started and then published a front-page story, calling for international experts to make China face up to the outbreak of SARS. In this article, the journalist also quoted the deputy minister of the National Health Department, saying that the government had completely lost control over the disease. This article infuriated Guangzhou's leaders and the newspaper was forced to dismiss several journalists and editors.

In 2003 the *Southern City Daily* again challenged the authority's bottom line when it published an investigative story on an unusual death in a custody centre, later known as the "Sun Zhigang Case". On 20 March 2003, a 27-year-old university graduate, Sun Zhigang, died in the medical clinic of a detention centre. He had been asked by the police on his way to an Internet Bar to produce his ID card, but found that he had that he had forgotten it. According to law, people living in Guangzhou must always carry a local residence permit or a temporary living permit. Since he was unable to demonstrate that he had any permit to live in Guangzhou, he was sent to the detention centre, where three days later he was found dead. This story finally forced the central government to abolish the Custody and Repatriation Act. Despite that, the editor of the *Southern City Daily*, Chen Yizhong, and three other senior editors were charged with corruption for reporting the case, along with other offences. This was widely seen as the government's warning to the newspaper to maintain political correctness.

The *Southern City Daily* also established its reputation through its comment and opinion pages. As a middle-market tabloid format newspaper, it first started its

comment page in 2002, the year when comment and feature stories became the selling point for Chinese newspapers. The *China Youth Daily's* feature stories supplement, *Freezing Point* (*Bingdian zhoukan*), and comment page, *Ice Comment* (*Bingdian shipin*), were the most successful models of their type.

In the *Southern City Daily's* 2003 New Year edition, the editorial stated: “In the coming New Year, we will keep our positive and stable endeavour, to interpret events and provide opinion on current affairs. We will, as we have done before, provide you with revelatory information, various angles, to help you with exploring new thoughts and constructing your understanding of the reality . . . we will put all our effort into creating a ‘round table for free thoughts’ and get every valuable voice heard”.

This editorial piece marked the newspaper’s transformation from a successful “news paper” to a successful “opinion paper” and from a “thick newspaper” to a “deep newspaper”. In order to expand its “depth”, in March 2003, it started publishing a daily editorial page on page two, which only published comments and opinions from its own editorial board. In April 2003, the newspaper expanded its editorial page, placing comment pieces on the opposite page, and called the page “Letters” (*Lai lun ban*). The “Letters” page was ‘for articles that express the opinions of a named writer, who is not affiliated to the newspaper’s editorial board’ and from April 2003, the *Southern City Daily* published at least two pages of comment every day. These two pages are called “Opinion on current affairs” (*Shi pin ban*). The newspaper’s “op-ed <sup>54</sup>” design of the opinion pages is the same as that used by the broadsheet newspapers in America.

In October 2006, the *Southern City Daily* added another page for comment, which published opinion pieces selected from the Internet, and was entitled “Internet Eye” (*Wang Yan*). The newspaper had noticed that citizens in China were generally co-existing with, or replacing, the traditional media in agenda setting. In fact, from 2006, many media events were initially exposed on the Internet and then picked up by the traditional media. The *Southern City Daily's* “Internet Eye” played a role as a selector that picked up a few commentary pieces every day from hundreds of thousands of lines of online discussion. For example, on 23 November 2008, a local citizen posted online a document that listed the local

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<sup>54</sup>Note: op-ed is short for opposite the editorial page and it refers to the article published by newspapers to express the opinion of a named author.

government's expenses on international training. He claimed that he had found this lost budget by chance on the way home. The expenses form showed that the local government officials had spent a huge amount of money on travelling around the tourist sites during the training period and this aroused huge anger on the Internet in just a few days. On 27 November 2008, the *Southern City Daily's* "Internet Eye" page first picked up the story and published an opinion piece, calling for details of government expenses, and this article was soon reprinted by other newspapers and spread around the Internet. During the evening of 28 November 2008, China Central Television's flagship news programme, "News 1+1", also covered this story and renewed the call for openness about government expenses at a national level. This is a typical case of how an online story became upgraded to a national media event.

### **5.3.4 The *China Youth Daily***

The *China Youth Daily* (*Zhongguo qingnian bao*) is the official newspaper of the Communist Youth League (CYL) of China and is a daily national broadsheet. The mission of CYL is to unite and lead the young people of China and transfuse new blood from the youth into the CCP. Following CYL principles like many of the other "youth titles", such as the *Beijing Youth Daily*, the *China Youth Daily* is a state-owned public institution and targets young readers in urban cities by providing comprehensive domestic and international news on politics, the economy, sports, business and education. However, unlike the other comprehensive national titles in China, the *China Youth Daily* carries a large proportion of news stories on education, young entrepreneurs, sports and entertainment news which are more appealing to its target audience.

Like all other newspapers with a CCP background, the *China Youth Daily* is directed by the Propaganda Department of the CCP. Although this does not imply that the Propaganda Department will often directly influence the newspaper's editorial, it often passes "topic restriction" (*jing ling*) notices to the newspaper, asking it not to cover particular key words, issues or stories.

Established in 1950, the *China Youth Daily* was original a weekly newspaper and became a daily title in 1989. However, in the 1980s, the *China Youth Daily* was

one of the most influential newspapers in China, mainly because of a significant growth in university students in the 1980s, following the reinstatement of university entrance exams in 1977. During the 1980s, the *China Youth Daily* was one of the few profit-generating newspapers in China.

The *China Youth Daily's* weekly supplement, *Freezing Point*, best represents the newspaper's editorial style. First launched in 1995, *Freezing Point* was originally a weekly supplement covering news, current affairs, opinion and feature stories. Instead of focusing on the "overheated topics" or "focus points" of public opinion, *Freezing Point* positioned itself as a paper that covered the less-heard vulnerable groups. For example, in the first edition of *Freezing Point*, its journalist featured the utility waste collectors in Beijing (*Beijing zuihou de fentong*).

In 1998, the *China Youth Daily* extended the brand of *Freezing Point* by opening an opinion column, *Freezing Point Opinion*, in the daily newspaper. Although the supplement, *Freezing Point Weekly*, and the daily opinion column covered many controversial topics and became very influential, *Freezing Point Weekly* was forced to shut down at the end of 2006, and its editor Li Datong was dismissed. Its closure is believed to have been due to the publication of an article that questioned the accuracy of China's official history of the war between China and Japan in the 1930s and 1940s.

The website of the *China Youth Daily*, [www.cyol.net](http://www.cyol.net), was launched in 2000 and was China's first independently operated central government news media website; that is to say, the operation of the website is independent of the newspaper's print version. The website not only publishes the entire content of the print version of the *China Youth Daily*, but also has exclusive online stories and provides video streams.

# Chapter 6

## INITIAL FINDINGS FROM TWO EXERCISES OF CONTENT ANALYSIS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

After identifying the commonalities and differences between press journalism in the UK and China (see Chapter 4) and building up the contextual background of newspapers' transformation as response to the development of communication technologies (see section 5.1, 5.2) as well as reviewing the journalistic traditions, journalistic values, organizational structures and new media initiatives of the four selected newspapers (see section 5.3), we select four newspapers for a closer examination on whether and how newspapers have changed the content they produce changed

1. the ways in which they distribute content;
2. the diversity of their content;
3. the use of multimedia and interactive elements;
4. the source and originality of their content,



and in further we discuss how the changes we find above reflect the ways in which they conduct journalistic practices and how they organize their journalistic practice in the two countries. Therefore, this chapter analyses the findings of two exercises of content analysis that are designed to answer the following questions:

Q1: What are the commonalities and differences between the online websites of well-established newspapers in the UK and China?

Q2: What are the commonalities and differences between the offline and online presences of well-established newspapers in the UK and China?

The author has defined the notion of “content”, reviewed the possible ways to collect data online for content analysis (see section 3.2.2) and discussed the limitations of conducting content analysis online (see section 3.3). To remind the reader, in the first exercise of content analysis, this thesis examines the format of online website presentation. The concept of “content” therefore refers to headlines, text, multimedia and interactive elements, source and originality as well as update speed. In the second exercise of content analysis, this thesis applies the concept of “content” to headlines, text, pictures, graphics and time of publishing to reveal the presentation of content on the newspapers offline and online editions. Based on this notion, this chapter starts with the introduction of the research design and follows with explanations of the key findings.

## 6.2 SELECTION OF NEWSPAPERS

Although this thesis has illustrated the three criteria for the selection of newspapers and their comparatively in the chapter of methodology (see section 3.2.1) , here again, the author presents the basic facts of the four selected newspaper for an easy referring to the following finding. The four newspapers selected are the *China Youth Daily*, the *Southern City Daily*, the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*. The four newspapers’ websites were: *China Youth Daily*, [www.cyol.net](http://www.cyol.net); *Southern City Daily*, [nf.nfdaily.cn](http://nf.nfdaily.cn), [www.nandu.com](http://www.nandu.com); the *Guardian*, [www.theguardian.com/uk](http://www.theguardian.com/uk); and the *Daily Mail*, [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk). The following table 6.1 has been designed to present the comparability between the selected samples:

TABLE 6.1: Selected Newspapers from the UK and China

	Britain		China	
Title	<i>the Guardian</i>	<i>Daily Mail</i>	<i>China Youth Daily</i>	<i>Southern City Daily</i>
<b>Circulation</b>	<p>Daily national newspaper</p> <p>Owned by a charitable foundation</p> <p>Average daily circulation of 196,425 copies</p>	<p>Daily national newspaper</p> <p>Commercially driven</p> <p>Average daily circulation of 2,044,347 copies and is the second biggest selling daily newspaper in the UK</p> <p>Readers from social grades B, C1 and C2</p>	<p>Daily national newspaper</p> <p>Owned by the state and managed as a public institution that serves public interest</p> <p>Average daily circulation of 300,000.</p>	<p>Regional daily newspaper; however its website is accessible nationwide</p> <p>Commercially driven</p> <p>Average daily circulation of 1.4 million copies and is one of the top three best-selling metropolitan newspapers in China</p> <p>Readers from social grades B, C1 and C2</p>
<b>Format</b>	Broadsheet	Mid-market tabloid	Broadsheet	Mid-market tabloid
<b>Website</b>	<p>www.guardian.com</p> <p>Free access</p> <p>Publishes entire content of its print version and has exclusive online stories</p>	<p>www.dailymail.co.uk</p> <p>Free access</p> <p>Publishes entire content of its print version and has exclusive online stories</p>	<p>www.cyol.net</p> <p>Free access</p> <p>Publishes entire content of its print version and has exclusive online stories</p>	<p>nf.nfdaily.cn &amp; www.nandu.com</p> <p>Free access</p> <p>Publishes entire content of its print version and has exclusive online stories</p>
<b>Journalistic tradition</b>	Serious news and comment	Human interest stories	Serious news and comment	Human interest stories

## 6.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

### 6.3.1 Comparison between the Online Websites of British and Chinese Newspapers

The first exercise of content analysis compares the online content of four selected samples, the *Guardian*, the *Daily Mail* from the UK and the *China Youth Daily* and the *Southern City Daily* from China. the following detailed questions were answered:

1. Is there a standard layout for online news websites in China and the UK? To answer this, attention has been paid to the number of articles on the homepage, image usage, webpage length, navigation, etc.
2. To what extent does the layout of news websites enable interaction between producer and viewers? For instance, with regard to the use of comment space, message board, RSS and links to social media, etc.
3. To what extent is the online news content in China and the UK contributed by in-house production? This was addressed by checking the originality of news stories, links to other partners, and availability of applications.
4. What are the differences and commonalities between the online presence of Chinese and UK newspapers in terms of news presentation, content diversity, interactivity and originality?

In order to answer these questions, the homepage of the four newspapers' websites were retrieved at 6.00pm local time on 26 April, 2011 as the samples and saved in the format of web achieve digitally. It first identifies the layout of the four homepages as to the total number of articles published on the homepage, the diversity of news genre and topics as well as the use of multimedia elements and hyperlinks. The first exercise of content analysis also investigates the content originality and the use of interactive elements on the homepages of the four selected newspapers by a closer examination on all the articles published on them, and finally it looks at their updating speed, together with the type of advertisements that are published on the homepages.

### **6.3.2 Comparison between the Newspapers' Online Websites and their Print Editions**

The aim of the second exercise of content analysis is to identify the commonalities and differences between the offline and online editions of the newspapers for reflections of their journalistic practices, organizational structures and newsroom culture discussed in chapter 7 and 8. This was addressed by examining the publishing time (whether digital first), selection of news (whether there was an exclusive online story), together with the headings and use of graphic content. Therefore the following questions were asked:

1. How many stories did the physical newspapers cover per day, and how many stories were presented on their websites' homepage per day?
2. Were the news stories and comments first presented online or offline?
3. Did the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* keep exclusive stories for their online websites?
4. With regard to the stories presented on both platforms, how did the two versions differ from each other?
5. Was there any difference in the way that news stories and comments were supported with graphics, pictures and multimedia content in their online and offline versions?

In order to answer these questions, two types of samples have been gathered from the print and online editions of the four selected newspapers. The first type of samples are articles selected from the print editions of the four newspapers. The second type of samples are the online articles selected from their websites.

In the first group of samples, print articles were selected from the *Guardian's* front page, news, national, international and comment sections, published on 17 and 18 April 2012. As the *Daily Mail* is not structured in sections, the first 30 stories as well as the columns were selected for the same two days. What needs to be noted here is that since readers buy newspaper not only for information, but also for analysis, comment and investigative report, the comment pieces on each

newspaper were also included in the sample group. Thus, 60 articles from the *Guardian* and 75 articles from the *Daily Mail* were selected as the first sample group.

In the comparison of the physical newspapers of the *China Youth Daily* and the *Southern City Daily* with their websites' homepage, this section follows the same sample selection approach that applied on the comparison between the physical newspapers and the websites' homepage for the two British cases. Since the *China Youth Daily* runs different sections during the week, five sections selected from the physical newspaper of the *China Youth Daily* on 11 March 2013 were front page (Tou Ban), main news (Yao Wen), comprehensive news (zonghe xinwen), comment and Opinion (Sixiang zhe) and education/science (jiaoyu kexue); five sections selected from it on 12 March 2013 were front page (Tou Ban), main news (Yao Wen), law and society (Fazhi yu Shehui), investigative news (Qinnian Diaocha), comment and opinion (Gongqin Shidian). In total, 50 stories were selected. The same approach was applied on the selection of sample articles on the *Southern City Daily*. Articles appeared on the first five sections on the newspapers were selected and they are from: front page (feng mian), editorial and comments (shelun ji gelun), domestic news, international news and sports, published on the same two days. In total, 133 articles were selected. As same as the selection of samples on the two British newspapers, not only news articles but also comment and opinion section are included.

The purpose of selecting samples from print newspapers is to discover whether certain article was made exclusive to the print version to encourage sales. By studying whether the selected articles published on the newspaper were available online and when they became available online, it could first suggest the newsroom routines and in further indicates possible newsroom structure. In addition, by comparing the text of the selected articles, the research would suggest to what extent their online news presentation differed from their offline news presentation, in terms of headlines and use of multimedia content.

The second sample group includes articles presented on the homepages of four selected newspapers. The UK samples were collected on guardian.com and MailOnline on 17-18 April 2012. Each day, 20 news stories were selected from each platform; so 80 online news articles were then selected as the second sample group. The homepages were retrieved at 11.00 pm on 17 April 2012 and 12.00

midday on 18 April 2012. The Chinese samples were collected on [www.cyol.net](http://www.cyol.net) and [www.nandu.com](http://www.nandu.com) at 14:00 pm on 11 March 2013. Also, 40 news stories were selected from each platform making the total number of sample as 80.

By examining whether the articles presented on the newspapers' websites were also covered by the printed newspapers and when they were covered, the research would, first, suggest whether the content on the newspapers' websites were produced by the same or different group of journalists and whether the offline edition and the online edition of the newspaper ran the same news agenda; second, it would indicate whether the newspapers prioritise online publishing and if yes whether that applies to any articles.

In order to do so, for the UK samples, the LexisNexis news service was used to track whether the selected online news items were picked up by the parent newspapers within two days. For example, for articles appearing online on 18 April, the author checked the newspapers for the next two days to find out whether they were picked up. The Chinese samples were examined manually.

To summarize the above purposes, the following five sub-research questions were designed:

1. How many stories do the physical newspapers cover per day, and how many stories are presented on the newspaper websites' homepage per day?
2. Are the news stories and comments first presented online or offline?
3. Do the four selected newspapers limit exclusive stories to their online versions?
4. As to the stories presented on both platforms, how do the two versions differ from each other?
5. How do the print and online versions differ over their use of graphics, pictures and multimedia content?

## 6.4 INITIAL FINDINGS

### 6.4.1 Initial Findings from the First Content Analysis

#### 6.4.1.1 Number of Articles on Homepage

About fifteen years ago, digital pioneers and media scholars optimistically assumed that the Internet could provide an limitless space for presenting deep analysis and satisfying the readers' hunger for more information (Neuberger et al., 1998). Therefore, many of the predications about the potential of Internet newspapers were centred on the idea of the "limitless news space", in contrast to the limited inches on print paper. As admitted by Quandt,

The limited space, the static layout of paper-based news, the pressure of a linear medium like TV and other limiting factors do confine the news production to a rather inflexible and limited coverage (Quandt, 2008, p.724).

Online newspapers have the advantage of being able to use pictures, graphics, video and audio content to enhance the news story and to provide background information with hyperlinks to assist the audience, while with the traditional newspaper, the reader is restricted to the information printed on the page. By examining the number of articles published on the homepage of the four selected newspapers, the author notices two distinctive approaches of newspaper homepage design (as shown on 6.2). One approach concentrates on the number of news items that can be published on the homepage, represented by the two selected Chinese newspapers and the *Daily Mail*. The other pays attention on the selection of news for homepage display, represented by the *Guardian* with only limited number of links to articles were published on homepage. However, in the case of the two Chinese newspapers most of the headlines were presented in the same font with very few of them were presented in a large font, as newspaper editors normally do as a practice to show their editorial judgment on the importance of a news event, and very few images and videos were used on the homepage too. For example, Table 6.3 shows that as to the pixel dimensions of the homepage, the *Southern City Daily* website is the smallest in size (512\*1248), just one-third of the size of

the *Daily Mail*'s online layout (512\*5950), and yet it covers the highest number of stories headlines, almost seven times more than on the *Guardian*'s website. In contrast, the *Guardian*'s website presents only 56 news items on its homepage, which is the lowest; but 84% of the news items on the homepage are far more detailed with headlines, a few words summarizing the stories and a picture or video that appeal to the readers to click into the stories. It is the same for the *Daily Mail*'s website, where 77% of the news items on the homepage are shown under large bold headlines, plus text and multimedia content.

#### 6.4.1.2 Content Diversity

It is clear that the websites of all the four titles have diverse characteristics, despite including standard genres such as news, comment, features, interviews, opinion polls and even branded content (see Tables 6.2). On examining the diversity of homepage content, the author notices that the *Guardian*'s website is more of an "opinion paper", with nearly 20% of its homepage articles being comment. Meanwhile, apart from the *China Youth Daily*'s website, the three other newspapers all have a fair number of feature stories, taking up 20% – 30% of their online homepage space. It is interesting to see that the two Chinese websites also include opinion polls on their homepage to initiate public discussion, while they are not included on the British websites. It is interesting to notice that the *China Youth Daily*'s homepage also includes almost 30% of branded content on its webpage. It is unique among the four newspapers and findings regarding to their commercial displays are discussed later in this chapter.

Early researchers have also drawn attention to the Internet's potential to break geographic boundaries and provide a "worldwide journalism". However, by examining the diversity of news topics (see Tables 6.3), the author notices that although the market is global, the content of the four newspapers is still mainly focused on local communities. This finding echoes Chyi and Sylvie's research on online news diversity:

Technologically, the Internet enables online newspapers to seek a worldwide market. Practically, most online newspapers are owned by their print counterparts, which also serve as online editors' primary content providers (2001, p.4)



Table 6.4 shows that the middle-market newspapers in both China and the UK have a strong focus on community and social news. As much as half of the homepage's space was given to domestic and local news on the websites of the *Southern City Daily* and the *Daily Mail* while the *Guardian's* homepage indicates a more international approach. At the same time, a significant emphasis on entertainment news, showbiz topics and sports was identified on the homepage of the *Daily Mail* where 20.6% of its homepage content were about these topics. In comparison, the *China Youth Daily's* website contains more content about education, employment and science, because the reason being that most of the newspaper's readers are college students from the younger generation in their 20s and 30s.

TABLE 6.2: Homepage Format <sup>55</sup>

Titles	Articles	Headline+Text		Pic/Photo/Graphic		Audio/Video	Dimensions
		N	%	N	%	N	
<b>cyol.net</b>	222	16	7	30	14	1	512*2812
<b>nf.nfdaily.cn</b>	403	32	8	24	6	0	512*1824
<b>guardian.com</b>	56	47	84	41	73	6	512*2245
<b>dailymail.co.uk</b>	228	176	77	156	68	0	512*5950

<sup>55</sup> Figure originated from the four newspapers homepages on 26 April, 2011

TABLE 6.3: Diversity of News Genre <sup>56</sup>

Title	News		Comment		Feature		Interview		Opinion Poll		Branded Content	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>cyol.net</b>	104	46.8	21	9.5	15	6.8	8	3.6	8	3.6	65	29.3
<b>nf.nfdaily.cn</b>	265	65.8	16	4.0	85	21.1	25	6.2	12	3.0	0	0.0
<b>guardian.com</b>	28	50.0	11	19.6	17	30.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>dailymail.co.uk</b>	151	66.2	4	1.8	57	25.0	16	7.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

<sup>56</sup> Statistics retrieved from the four newspapers' websites on 26 April 2011

TABLE 6.4: Diversity of Topics <sup>57</sup>

Title	Society /Community		Inter-national		Economy /Finance		Culture /Art /Media /Travel		Enter-tainment		Sport		Education /Employment		Tech.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>cyol.net</b>	47	21.2	21	9.5	11	5.0	55	24.8	13	5.9	7	3.2	41	18.5	27	12
<b>nf.nfdaily.cn</b>	187	46.4	47	11.7	61	15.1	58	14.4	14	3.5	10	2.5	20	5.0	6	1.5
<b>guardian.com</b>	14	25	11	19.6	4	7.1	16	28.6	2	3.6	4	7.1	3	5.4	2	3.6
<b>dailymail.co.uk</b>	106	46.5	22	9.6	7	3.1	16	5.7	47	20.6	14	6.1	3	1.8	12	5.3

<sup>57</sup>Statistics retrieved from the four newspapers' websites on 26 April 2011

### 6.4.1.3 Multimedia Content

The potential of the Internet and digitalization to offer content with more multimedia components has been discussed by many researchers. As Singer has pointed out, immediacy, brevity and visual impact are the most apparent strengths that online journalism can offer, and the visual capacity has become much clearer with the improvement in transmission, processing and display speeds, and the technology for users to disseminate their own visual information clearly and easily is now widely available (Singer & Ashman, 2009). However, there is still too little research on the format of multimedia story-telling. When considering how multimedia content is combined with text on the homepage (see Table 6.5), the comparison shows that the both of the Chinese newspapers' websites have much less multimedia elements on their homepages with the majority of stories presented only with their headlines. However, in sharp contrast, the *Guardian's* homepage presents almost 85% of its news items with a combination of headline, image, video or audio, while, the *Daily Mail's* website combines multimedia content with two-thirds of the articles headlines on its homepage. The routine format for multimedia story-telling on the *Guardian's* homepage is a combination of a big headline, a picture/video, a synopsis of the event or story as well as several headline links in smaller font that direct the readers to a variety of articles which are related to the main story or event. In comparison, the *Daily Mail's* website adopts large pictures and big, bold headlines combined with text in a small font on its homepage. In addition, the homepages of the two British newspapers both provide internal search function which enables readers to proactively retrieve information that they are interested from their database.

By examining the internal and external hyperlinks provided on the webpage of all the articles promoted on the homepages of the four selected newspapers, the author finds that although with inbound links direct to only 56 stories from the homepage compared to 403 on the homepage of the *Southern City Daily*, the *Guardian's* embedded hyperlinks within and after all the 56 homepage stories (see Table 6.6) through keywords in the main text of the stories or hyperlinks provided at the end of the stories that guide the readers to background informations as well as articles on the same topics. This approach priorities the online editors' role as gatekeeping by providing only limited number of news agendas on the homepage but makes efforts to extend the readers knowledge and reading experience

on a specific story or event by linking them to more relevant online materials. Also, nearly half of the articles on the *Guardian's* website have links to partner organizations, while the other three have almost no links to external Partners. In contrast, the website of the *Southern City Daily* does not provide any hyperlink to support its homepage stories; and 40% of the articles on the *China Youth Daily's* website can only lead the audience to articles within the same website.

TABLE 6.5: The Format of Inbound Links <sup>58</sup>

	Headline+Image		Text+Image		Headline+Video/Aideo		Text+Vudio/Audio		Internal
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
<b>cyol.net</b>	23	10.4	13	5.9	5	2.3	0	0.0	NO
<b>nf.nfdaily.cn</b>	17	4.2	7	1.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	NO
<b>guardian.com</b>	1	1.8	40	71.4	6	10.7	0	0.0	YES
<b>dailymail.co.uk</b>	16	7.0	140	61.4	0	0	0	0.0	YES

<sup>58</sup>Statistics retrieved from the four newspapers' websites on 26 April 2011

TABLE 6.6: Internal and External Hyperlink Provided with the Homepage Stories <sup>59</sup>

Direction of links	cyol.net		nf.nfdaily.cn		guardian.com		dailymail.co.uk	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hyperlink within the story	11	5.0	0	0	56	100.0	0	0.0
Link to articles of the same website	87	39.2	0	0	56	100.0	193	84.6
Link to articles of partner organization	0	0.0	0	0	26	46.4	14	6.1
Link to social media	0	0.0	0	0	16	28.6	0	0.0
Link to publications of the same organization	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Links to PR/AD	10	4.5	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Others	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0

<sup>59</sup>Statistics retrieved from the four newspapers' websites on 26 April 2011

#### 6.4.1.4 Source and Originality

By examining the source, the author expected to discover possible collaboration in the online news production process and the main actors in content contribution (see Table 6.7). All the articles on each of the four websites name a specific source, which enhances the credibility of their news content. However, only 20% of the articles on the *China Youth Daily's* website have a named journalist, and much of the rest has been re-written or copied directly from news agencies, other news organizations or other online portals. The *China Youth Daily* also leaves a fairly large space for user-generated content, although such content is carefully selected from the external bulletin board service as claimed by the web editor at the end of the stories. The *Southern City Daily* website uses the largest number of articles from its own journalists, but much of the content is e-copied from its sister newspapers. It is also interesting to note that the *Guardian* use a substantial amount of agency news, mostly on international issues. The *China Youth Daily* covers sensitive topics by adapting articles from the state news agency and other newspaper organizations to avoid political risks. According to Tables 6.6 and 6.7, it is reasonable to conclude that journalists from the parent newspapers of the online websites still occupy a key role in online content contribution, particularly for the *Daily Mail*, the *Guardian* and the *Southern City Daily* since most of their homepage content were named under their journalists, editors or freelancers while only 20.3% of the *China Youth Daily's* homepage content was generated from its front-line journalism.

TABLE 6.7: The Main Actors in Online Content Contribution and Content Originality <sup>60</sup>

Title	Specific Author		Journalist		Editor		News Agency		Other News Organization		Other Online Portals		User Generated Content		Other Source (PR)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>cyol.net</b>	222	100	45	20.3	4	1.8	23	10.4	57	25.7	46	20.7	37	16.7	10	4.5
<b>nf.nfdaily.cn</b>	403	100	389	96.5	8	2.0	5	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>guardian.com</b>	56	100	42	75.0	0	0.0	11	19.6	3	5.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>dailymail.co.uk</b>	228	100	214	93.9	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	6.14	0	0	0	0

<sup>60</sup>Statistics retrieved from the four newspapers' websites on 26 April 2011



#### 6.4.1.5 Interactivity

Print newspapers in both the UK and China have traditionally had to compete for readership markets, yet online competition is different, with continually updated technologies, making two-way communication possible. On one hand, the development of user-friendly online content management tools enables the public to create their own websites online and facilitates a rapid growth in citizen journalism (Thurman, 2008). On the other hand, professional news media are also creating opportunities for the news audience to participate in news production and delivery, and are adopting increasing numbers of user-generated content, such as the South Korean online newspaper OhmyNews.com, which in 2008 had 37,000 registered contributors. Thus, the adoption of interactive elements on the websites determines to what extent the audience can contribute to online news content production and delivery.

The author examined the usage of the following interactive elements on the four newspaper websites. The exercise, conducted during 1-7 July 2011, revealed eleven major formats for audience participation, as follows:

1. Contact Details: including how to contact the editorial board and individual journalists via email or telephone, and whether the journalists can be followed on social media via hyperlinks.
2. Comment Space: publish audience's comment without moderating it first.
3. Bulletin Board Service (BBS): live message board which allows audience to upload and comment on text, images or multimedia content.
4. Twitter/Microblog: columns showing the discussion on Twitter or microblog on the same topic as the news story.
5. Blog: columns allowing freelancers, opinion leaders and bloggers to upload text, images and multimedia content.
6. RSS feed: giving automatic updates to the reader
7. Share with social media: can share content with social media.
8. Opinion Poll: electronic poll online.

9. Push/Pull (like or dislike): allow the audience to express their preferences.
10. Email to friend/yourself: allows story to be emailed direct to friends or to the reader.
11. Add to my story: allows the audience to store the news in a personalized homepage and retrieve the stories.

Table 6.8 demonstrates that the websites of the *Daily Mail* and the *Guardian* adopt all eleven formats, providing the audience with the largest number of interactive channels while the two Chinese websites were more reluctant to offer interactive formats.

TABLE 6.8: Use of Interactive Elements <sup>61</sup>

Interaction	cyol.net	nf.nfdaily.com	guardian.com	dailymail.co.uk
Email/Contact address	✓	✓	✓	✓
Comment space		✓	✓	✓
BBS	✓	✓	✓	✓
Twitter/Microblog	✓		✓	✓
Blog	✓		✓	✓
RSS		✓	✓	✓
Share with social networks	✓	✓	✓	✓
Opinion Poll		✓	✓	✓
Push/pull	✓	✓	✓	✓
Email to			✓	✓
Add to my story			✓	✓

<sup>61</sup>Statistics retrieved from the four newspapers' websites on 26 April 2011

It is interesting that to learn from Table 6.8 about the collaboration between professional newspaper websites with the social media. The websites of both the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* provide hyperlinks to encourage the audience to share news content on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Digg, Newsvine, Delicious, Myspace and Reddit. The *Guardian*'s website even provides a side-bar showing its own journalists' Twitter feeds and promotes the use of Twitter by encouraging their audience to follow the journalists' Twitter feeds. In contrast, the *China Youth Daily* website prefers to use in-house social media applications rather than direct their readers to other platforms. For example, different from the approach that the *Guardian* or the *Daily Mail* take which borrow Twitter's capability of reachness to navigate their readers, the *China Youth Daily* developed its own brand microblog service with a similar basic function to microblog service provided by established social media platforms such as Sina or Tencent (the Chinese equivalent of Twitter). However, since the number of active users of its own microblog service is much more smaller than the established Sina or Tencent brands, its function to attract online traffic and disseminate its brand and content to a wider audience is very limited.

As shown on Table 6.8, two other features are identified. First, the two UK websites show a large amount of reader comment after stories; in contrast, while the *Southern City Daily* website does offer a comment space, the readers have first to be registered members of the newspaper, and even then only the comments filtered by the web editor will appear online, which means that very few comments are left on a story. The two UK websites encourage audience to self-police the comment content by reporting any abuse, and they offer the audience every possible opportunity to vote for their preferences, not only on the journalistic comment, but also on the user-generated comments. This format represents the principles of selective democracy.

Second, the two UK websites take more advantage of the digital data archive by creating journalist profiles, whereby a journalist's previous work and contact details are listed. In addition, the two UK websites provide storage space for the audience to save the story or the link of the story for later reading. This enables readers to create their own personalized news homepage. The role of the online newspaper is thus extended from being merely a showcase of news stories to being

a professional content provider, which allows users to select content from them free of charge, and reorganize the content on their own news online layout.

#### 6.4.1.6 Updating speed

Going online provides opportunities for newspapers to compete with broadcasting journalism in presenting breaking news more promptly. However, as Singer points out, the immediacy and brevity of the Internet demands a steady stream of fresh and easily digested information (Singer & Ashman, 2009). By using the RSS feed software, Netvibes (www.netvibes.com), the author monitored the update speed of the sample news websites during 10-15 October 2011 (see Table 6.9). Since the *China Youth Daily* website does not provide RSS feed, the result only shows the update speed of three samples. However, this exercise still provides clear and strong evidence of the commonalities and differences between British and Chinese online news services.

The research shows that the two UK websites provide news bulletins in a twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week cycle, with news feed updated almost every half hour. This means much of the content published on the websites are “for web use only” and web editors do not need to wait for the circulation of next day’s newspaper before updating the website with the same content as the offline paper.

The two UK websites are better able to build up their online brand, because they can compete with television and radio in keeping ahead with breaking news, while being able to compete with citizen journalism through providing professional content.

TABLE 6.9: RSS Feed Update Speed <sup>62</sup>

Title	RSS Feed per day						
	10th Oct	11th Oct	12th Oct	13th Oct	14th Oct	15th Oct	16th Oct
cyol.net	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
nf.nfdaily.cn	24	26	17	25	20	29	21
guardian.com	75	47	64	95	77	74	59
dailymail.co.uk	85	72	84	61	83	78	79

<sup>62</sup>Statistics retrieved through Netvibes.com during 13-15 October 2011

The author also summarized the format in which interactive elements were combined with stories in four newspapers, as shown in Figures 6.1 6.2 6.3 and 6.4.

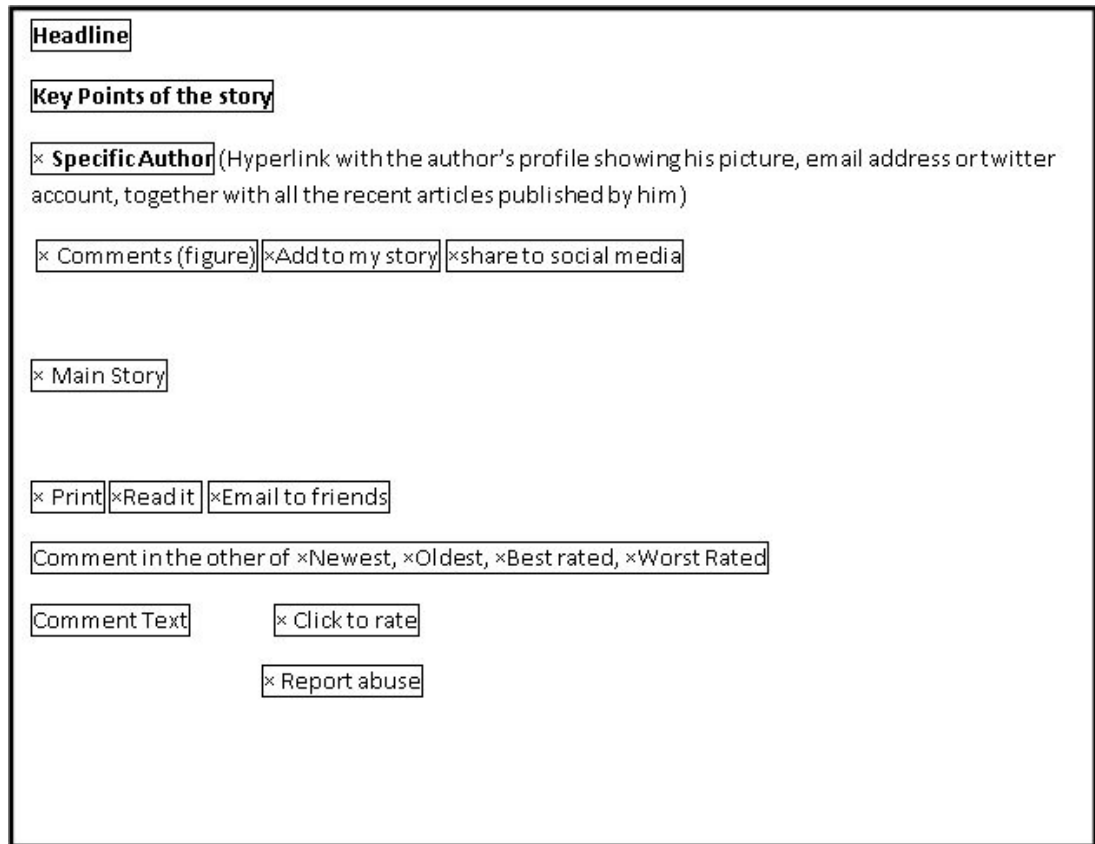


FIGURE 6.1: The Classic Format of Stories on the *Daily Mail's* Website

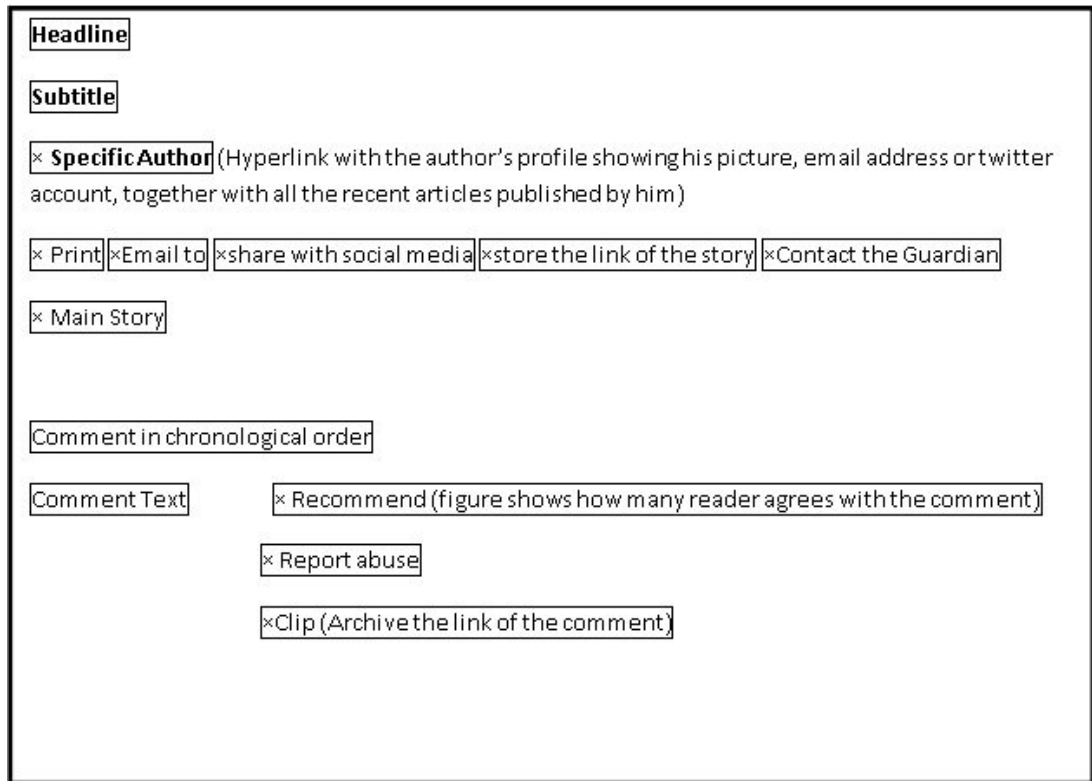


FIGURE 6.2: The Classic Format of Stories on the *Guardian's* Website

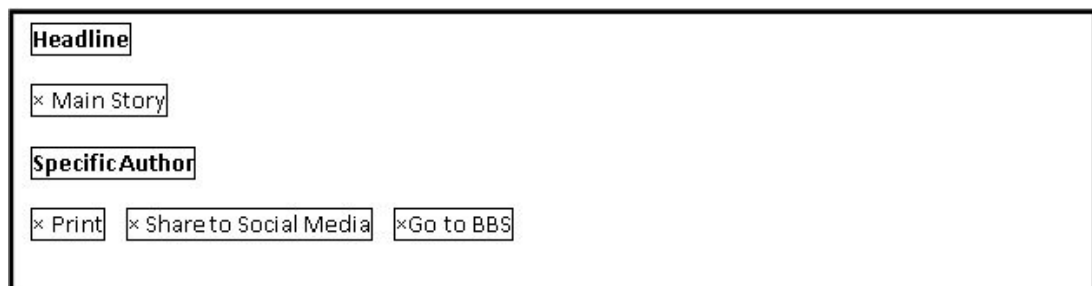


FIGURE 6.3: The Classic Format of Stories on the *Southern City Daily's* Website

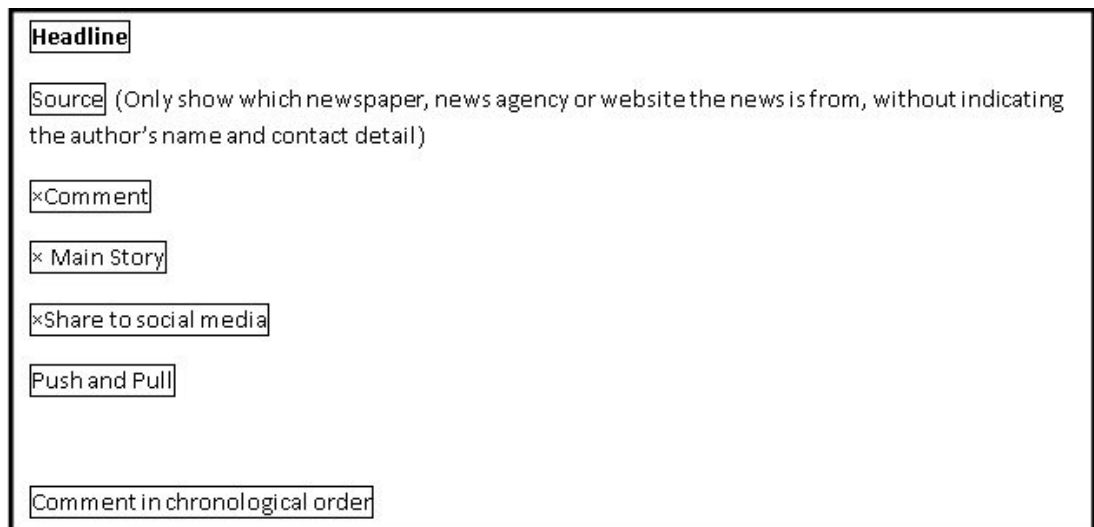


FIGURE 6.4: **The classic format of stories on the *China Youth Daily* website**

#### 6.4.1.7 Advertising

It is argued that advertising was the midwife of press freedom in Britain, as Ivor Asquith wrote:

It was the growing income from advertising that provided the material base for the change of attitude from subservience to independence. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the growth of advertising revenue was the most important single factor in enabling the press to emerge as the Fourth Estate of the realm (Asquith, 1975, p.703)

This is also true in the online world. It is argued that the credibility, professionalism, brand recognition and long-lasting relationship of advertisers with well-established newspapers could give online newspapers a better chance of surviving on the Internet.

The author therefore also examined the format of advertisements on the homepage of the four samples. By looking at whether headbar advertisements, sidebar advertisements, GoogleAD, BaiduAD and branded content were used on the homepage, a rough picture of the relationship between the online websites and advertisers could be revealed.



It is interesting to see from the result on Table 6.10 that the *Southern City Daily* website does not have any advertising on the homepage at all, and it only promotes its sub-title newspapers and magazines by showing the cover page.

TABLE 6.10: Advertisement Type <sup>63</sup>

Advertisement	cyol.net	nf-dail.com	guardian.com	daily-mail.co.uk
Headbar Ad on homepage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sidebar Ad on homepage		✓	✓	✓
Google Ad	✓	✓	✓	✓
Branded Content	✓		✓	✓

<sup>63</sup>Statistics retrieved from the four newspapers' websites on 26 April 2011

The websites of the *Guardian* and the *China Youth Daily* are similar in having no advertising on the homepage, but they do include some branded content. This finding reflects the previous exercise on news genre and topics, where the author found that 30% of the *Guardian* website's homepage articles were "feature stories", most of which were sponsored; while the *China Youth Daily* website contains nearly 30% branded content. However, it is interesting to point out the differences between the branded content on the two websites. On the *China Youth Daily* website, the branded content is mainly local city branding, national park promotion, and promotion of state-owned businesses. In contrast, the branded content on the *Guardian* is mainly about hi-technology. Among the four newspapers, the *Daily Mail's* online presence contains the most advertising, with brands from digital devices and banks, to telecommunications services and supermarkets.

To sum up, by comparing the online presence of the four professional newspapers from the perspectives of homepage format, content diversity, multimedia content, interactivity, originality, hyperlink, update speed and advertisement types, the author found that the British and Chinese professional newspapers have responded to the possibilities provided by the Internet at different levels. In the UK, the newspapers have expanded their brand and rebuilt it with a professional multimedia online presence via various content-delivery platforms. In contrast, the online layouts of the Chinese newspapers did not contribute to building brand credibility, because they are less well designed and make less use of multimedia.

The two selected British newspapers, the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* both attracted growing numbers of international readers, particularly from English-speaking countries, such as the US and Australia. However, their advertisements are still mostly for British brands targeting the British domestic market. The popularity of the two British newspapers abroad may cause a negative reaction from British advertisers, and that is partly why the British newspapers' websites are still not strongly supported by advertisers.

## 6.4.2 Initial Findings from Second Content Analysis

### 6.4.2.1 Online Publishing Time

By examining the online publishing time of the selected samples from both the print newspapers and their websites, the study has the following findings.

During the two days when the study was carried out, all the articles on the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* had an online presence on their respective websites. The author examined 60 articles published in the *Guardian* and 75 articles published in the *Daily Mail* on 17-18 April 2012. Nearly all of the sample articles were published online first.

Among the 60 articles selected from the *Guardian*, some were published online one day before the newspaper went on sale. For example, on 17 April 2012, the *Guardian's* Australia correspondent reported on the cardboard cathedral being built in Christchurch, New Zealand, and the story was available online at 8.00 am on 16 April 2012, one day before it could be read in the printed newspaper. There were a variety of online publishing times for the articles selected from the *Guardian*. For example, the online publishing time of the 30 articles published on 17 April 2012, varied from the early morning on 16 April, through the day to midnight on 17 April. This indicates that once an article had been written by the reporter and edited by the editor, it would be available online first. There was no sign that an exclusive story would be retained for the printed version of the *Guardian*; and it was not only news stories that were first available online, but also analysis, features and opinion pieces. For example, on 17 April, The *Guardian* ran a feature on the cyber war between China and the UK, with one news story and one analysis, covering half the front page and two inside pages.

The *Guardian*'s website published both the news story and the analysis at 1.00 pm on 16 April, with full text of the content in the printed newspaper the next day. Another example was the coverage of a British businessman's death in China and how the death involved a senior Chinese politician. The newspaper used a whole page to cover the story, using the main news story, one opinion piece and one piece of background information. The combination of the three items was also available online first at 1.15 pm on 16 April, with hyperlinks linking the three pieces together, then appeared on the next day's newspaper in full text.

Unlike the *Guardian*, most of the 75 articles selected from the *Daily Mail* were published between 11 pm to 2.00 am during the night before the newspapers were available from newsagents around the country. This indicates that the once-a-day deadline continued to exist for the offline newspaper. Once the articles were ready to be published in the physical newspaper, they would be published online as a "package" during the night. The MailOnline homepage covered more than 400 articles a day, while that of the *Daily Mail* contained just 120; thus, two-thirds of the content of MailOnline were web-only, which would indicate that there is a separate team running MailOnline while the website's editors and reporters were working to rolling deadlines, yet the offline staff were keeping to their once-a-day routine.

All the selected articles from the print version of the *Southern City Daily* and the *China Youth Daily* were published online on the same day as the newspapers go on sale. The publishing time on the website of the *Southern City Daily* can be retrieved and it is 5am in the morning for all of them. Although on the website of the *China Youth Daily*, the online publishing of newspaper articles did not indicate specific time, however, it can be confirmed that they were all be published together automatically by the computer system since for the web only articles, detailed publishing time was given. It suggests that the journalistic practice in both of the two newsrooms of the print Chinese newspapers has still been organized based on a once-a-day deadline. Yet, the 40 selected articles from the homepage of the *Southern City Daily*'s website were all published throughout the day while 16 of the total 40 selected articles from the homepage of the *China Youth Daily* were also published in different time slot during the day. This demonstrates that the editorial team of the both newspapers' websites have introduced rolling deadlines to catch up with fresh stories and breaking news.

#### 6.4.2.2 Content

Although many scholars have pointed out the difference between writing for online and offline platforms, this does not seem to apply to reporters and editors of the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*. Most of the selected articles, 119 out of 135, are exactly the same online and offline. The stories prepared for the *Daily Mail* are normally copied online without making any changes to the text. The *Guardian*, however, has some of the articles in the printed newspaper being different from their respective online versions, but the changes are minimal, usually made by deleting the last lines or paragraphs from the stories, without touching the beginning and middle. This indicates that reporters who write for the *Guardian*'s website develop their stories by leaving the less important arguments or facts to the end, in preparation for cutting off by the editors. It is the same writing routine followed by traditional journalists, who anticipate a possible truncated version when newspaper space is limited.

For developing stories, the *Guardian*'s website releases articles around the topic continuously throughout the day, while MailOnline provides more diversity than depth. For example, the front-page headline of the *Guardian* on 17 April 2012 was Breivik's trial in Oslo. With a long article in the printed newspaper, three developing stories were published on the *Guardian*'s website during 16 April at 13:16, 14:27 and 20:37 respectively. This enables the online readers to catch up with the trial in real-time through the *Guardian*'s website. Another example was the *Guardian*'s coverage of the Abu Qatada case on 17 April 2012. Since the case was developing over the two days, 16 April and 17 April, with additional official figures and interviewees providing comment on the case, the *Guardian*'s reporter Paul Lewis published three articles on the Web over the two days to provide real time developing stories and in depth analysis.

TABLE 6.11: Examples of How Stories are covered on the *Guardian* and guardian.com

Cases	Offline Title	Publishing Time	Online Title	Publishing Time
<b>Abu Qatada Case</b>	Home Secretary will not oppose Strasbourg’s Qatada ruling	17 April 2012	Abu Qatada case: Theresa May will not appeal against Strasbourg ruling	16 April 2012 13.44 BST
			Theresa May to make Abu Qatada Commons statement	17 April 2012 09.47 BST
			Abu Qatada arrested ahead of fresh deportation attempt	17 April 2012 13.18 BST
<b>London Metropolitan Police: Racism Complaints</b>	Police watchdog launches review of Met racism complaints	17 April 2012	Eleven Met Police cases of alleged racism	16 April 2012 19.17 BST
			Police officer accused of racially abusing black suspect is charged	17 April 2012 12.12 BST
			Met Police chief pledges to drive out racist officers	17 April 2012 14.37 BST
<b>Breivik’s Trial</b>	Breivik cried during his own propaganda film; but he was unmoved by his victims’ screams	17 April 2012	Norway braces itself for Anders Behring Breivik trial	16 April 2012
			Anders Behring Breivik cries during his own propaganda film	16 April 2012 13.16 BST
			Anders Behring Breivik is unmoved by tape of his victims’ screams	16 April 2012 20.37 BST

The *Guardian's* selection of news stories seems to be the same on both of its platforms. On 17 April 2012, the main stories chosen for the printed newspaper were Breivik's trial in Oslo, fracking for gas in the UK, cyber war between China and the UK, and Britain's flu jab strategy. These stories were also central to the *Guardian's* online homepage throughout that day. What also worth noticing is that the online and offline versions of the *Guardian* both covered a significant amount of international news on the two days that the study took place.

Meanwhile, the research found that MailOnline is very distinct from its parent newspaper in terms of agenda-setting and understanding of news value. Among the 20 stories on MailOnline's homepage on 18 April 2012 (retrieved at 1200 midnight on 18 April 2012), only six of them were published in the same day's newspaper; the remaining 14 were all fresh stories exclusively on that day to MailOnline, published between 3.00 am and 11.21 am on 18 April 2012, nevertheless a further four of them were published in the parent newspaper on 19 April 2012. This would indicate that the MailOnline editors run their newsdesk separately from the offline newsdesk. Among the sample articles selected from MailOnline, 50% of them were not selected by the editor of the offline newspaper, although they were presented by the MailOnline editor in a central position on the homepage. Research finding also echoes this assumption that in 2010 six out of ten of the 1.2 million UK readers who visit MailOnline each day will not buy the printed newspaper, and half of them arrive at the site directly (Robinson, 2010). That means, the *Daily Mail* and MailOnline may target at different readerships and to some extent, have been competing with each other for readerships.

Table 6.12 shows the comparison between the stories which were only presented on MailOnline and those which were also picked up by the *Daily Mail*. It is interesting to observe that the web-only stories were very multimedia-driven; for example, the amusing video that shows how a cat wakes up its owners at 5.00 am was presented in a dominant position on the Web. The editors of MailOnline also selected a Pulitzer Prize-winning picture and a video showing how an 11-year-old boy was frogmarched off a bus, as they were suitable for online news consumption.

Although the *Daily Mail* is the only British national newspaper with more female readers than male, there is no research to show whether the higher female audience is matched by its website. However, there are clear indications that MailOnline attempts to court a female audience, in particular through its *Femail* section.

TABLE 6.12: Comparison between Web-Only Stories and Those picked up by the *Daily Mail* on 18 and 19 April 2012

Web-Only Stories	Web Stories picked up by the <i>Daily Mail</i>
Skinny Victoria Beckham	Grieving mother targeted by Facebook bullies
Terrified boy, 11, frogmarched off bus	Britain's interest-only mortgages
Soldier survived seven months unharmed on Afghan frontline	Scotland Yard handles phone-hacking case against four journalists
Video: How cat wakes up owners at 5.00 am	Pippa's gun-toting driver is a LAWYER
The picture that won the Pulitzer Prize	Banker who bought Lord of the Manor title for £1
Aung San Suu Kyi to visit Britain	Unemployment figures fall
PicStory of tiger playing with its food	MPs call for automatic block on all on-line porn
Swedish minister cut cake in the shape of a naked woman	Save our elderly savers
Wikipedia contains factual errors	Osborne is hammered by his own MPs
School accused for being a "military school"	Foreign doctors are asked to have language skills checked

Unless stories were specifically about male figures (for example, a male politician), nearly all the articles were supported by pictures of women, children and animals. For example, next to the story of about pension issues, the editor presented a picture of an elderly woman. Among those MPs who called for an automatic block on all online porn, the editor selected a picture of a female MP, Claire Perry.

In sharp contrast, the comparison between the *Guardian's* printed newspaper and its website indicates an altogether different policy. The homepage of guardian.com was also retrieved at 12.00 midnight on 18 April 2012. The comparison between the website and the *Guardian* published from 17-20 April shows, that of the 20 top news stories retrieved from the *Guardian's* website, five were published in the printed newspaper on 18 April, fourteen were published in the printed on 19 April. Only one of them was not published in the newspaper about the London 2012 Olympic Games. Table 6.13 shows how many of the 20 main news stories presented on the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail's* websites, retrieved at 12.00 midnight on 18 April 2012, were picked up by their parent newspapers on 18 and

19 April. The author also checked whether any of the stories were picked up on 20 April, and found that none of them were shown in the newspapers then.

TABLE 6.13: **How Many Sample Articles from the Newspapers' Websites were picked up by the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* on 18 and 19 April 2012**

	Sample Stories	19 April's Newspapers	19 April's Newspapers	None
<b>Guardian.com</b>	20	5	14	1
<b>Dailymail.co.uk</b>	20	6	4	10

This comparison shows that nearly the entire sample articles published on the *Guardian's* website was picked by the printed newspaper on the same day or one day later. This demonstrates that the *Guardian's* website and printed newspaper share the same news agenda. It is probably because the online team and news-desks working for the offline newspaper make news plans together. Also, there is no sign to indicate that reporters may save exclusive stories for the newspaper.

As the *Guardian's* teams of reporters are working for both its online and offline versions, a greater number of innovations can be seen through their approach to live reporting. Among the 20 sample stories shown on the retrieved homepage on 18 April three were live reporting, or so-called "live blogging". Live reporting means that news articles are being edited hourly or even more quickly, offering fresh facts and arguments. For example, one rolling news story on 18 April was about the Eurozone debt crisis and the key events across the financial spectrum. At 7.45 am, the reporter started writing his first lines, saying:

Good morning, and welcome to today's rolling coverage of the Eurozone debt crisis, and key events across the financial spectrum. Coming up ... Portugal's prime minister has admitted that his country may require more help. Writing in the Financial Times today, Pedro Passos Coelho said there were 'no guarantees', but insisted that he will deliver on economic reforms. Full details and reaction shortly. Elsewhere ... the International Monetary Fund's spring meeting continues in Washington. Today we get the Global Financial Stability Report. In the UK, the latest unemployment data is released this morning, along with minutes from the last meeting of the Bank of England's



monetary policy committee. City traders reckon European stock markets will open calmly after yesterday's rally.

At 7.58 am, the reporter added:

7.58 am: Pedro Passos Coelho, Portugal's prime minister, insists that he remains optimistic about his country's future.

And at 8.10 am, more information about Portugal's debt was revealed. The story developed through the day with another 26 pieces of news information added at different time slots.

All the 133 selected stories from the *Southern City Daily* were published online and most of them have not been changed to the content of their text. In a sharp contrast, however, by examining whether the stories presented on the homepage of the *Southern City Daily* were picked up by the print newspaper, this research found that among the total 40 articles, none of them were picked up by the same day's newspaper and only the top headline was picked up by the next day's the *Southern City Daily*. It indicates that they are different teams responsible for the content of the *Southern City Daily* and its website and they run different news agendas. In addition, by examining the originality of the 40 samples, this study found that 37 of them were not generated by neither the online editorial team nor the print editorial team of the newspaper, but mainly from news agencies or copied directly from other news portals. For example, 13 homepage articles came from China's state owned news agencies, for example Xinhua News Agency and China News Agency.

In terms of agenda setting, there is no sign of female-oriented or celebrity focused trends as in the MailOnline. However, by comparing the web-only articles with those that were picked up by the newspaper, this research found that as the website of the *Southern City Daily* which are only available in the Pearl River Delta cities in south China, the website of the newspaper seems not restricted by the print version's geographical accessibility but shows a clear concentration on national news. In addition, the website of the *Southern City Daily* has responded to breaking news, disaster news and investigative stories much quicker. Although these online articles are not necessarily generated by its own journalists but have

just been disseminated by the website, which in other words, helped the newspaper to avoid possible political risks, this editorial strategy helps the newspaper to build up brand and credibility that its print version has limitation to reach.

TABLE 6.14: Comparison between Web-Only Stories and Those picked up by the *Southern City Daily* on 11 March 2013

<b>Web-Only Stories</b>	Heilong jiang Mine Explosion, 25 people confirmed got trapped
	Shanxi Forest Still in Fire, People responsible for the fire has been arrested
	Media Claimed Witness of Japan Warship faces China ships near disputed island
	North Korea leader said the second Korea War is Inevitable
	A Man hijack supermarket cashier in Zhenzhou
	Member of People's Congress Criticised Fake Provisional Release
	Dead Pig found floating in the Huangpu river are confirmed from Zhejiang province
	The wholesale price of Milk Power from Holland in China is 1/3 higher than the price of them in Holland's supermarket
<b>Web Stories picked up by the <i>Southern City News</i></b>	Yu Zhengsheng elected chairman of National Committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

The entire sample of articles selected from the *China Youth Daily* on 11 March 2013 and 12 March 2013, in total 50, was also published on the newspaper's website. Meanwhile, most of them were published on the homepage of the newspaper's website, with almost the entire first screen of the homepage fulfilled with the same news agendas run on the same day or next day's print newspaper. In cross-examination of whether and how many online articles were picked up by the same day and next day's print newspaper, this research found a completely different picture from the case of the *Southern City Daily*. Among the total of 40 articles selected from the homepage of the *China Youth Daily's* website, 18 of them were published on the same day's newspapers and other 6 of them were published on the next day in the same text or adapted version. This indicates that to a large extent, the communication between the online editorial team and the print editorial team in the *China Youth Daily* is taken in a more frequent daily basis and the two teams very much the same news agenda. Although there

is no indication of the *China Youth Daily's* website being more female oriented or celebrity and show business concentrated, it clearly carries more comment and opinion pieces than the print newspapers. For example, among the 40 selected samples from the *China Youth Daily's* website, 8 of them were web –exclusive opinion pieces contributed by readers. Table 6.15 illustrates that in total how many online sample articles were picked up by the respective parent newspapers on the same day and the next. It is interesting to notice that, very similar to the results gathered from the case of the *Daily Mail* and MailOnline, the website of the *Southern City Daily* also runs different agenda from its print newspapers. Yet, different from MailOnline which is more concentrated on female-oriented news and celebrity news than its parent newspaper, the website of the *Southern City Daily* carries more breaking news, disaster news as well as national and international news.

TABLE 6.15: **How Many Sample Articles from the Newspapers' Websites were picked up by the *China Youth* and the *Southern City Daily* on 11 March and 12 March 2013**

	Sample Stories	11 March's Newspapers	12 March's Newspapers	None
<b>www.cyol.net</b>	40	18	6	16
<b>www.nandu.com</b>	40	0	1	39

### 6.4.2.3 Headlines

In order to show how differently the offline and online editors draw news headlines, the author compared the headlines of those articles among in the sample that were both picked by the print newspapers and their websites. The comparison shows the following findings. First, although the stories appeared online and offline are similar in text, the online headlines are normally longer than in the offline titles. Second, the comparison also indicates that online editors may more often suggest the “five Ws” (Who is it about, What happened, Where did it take place, When did it take place, and Why did it happen?) as headlines. Third, By comparing the headlines of selected stories from the *China Youth Daily* and the *Southern City Daily*, this study found what is unique to the Chinese case is that online headlines were often rewrote with controversial arguments or fresh key facts to attract readers' attention while the print headlines were more impartial and balanced.

For example, in two articles that both focused on the investigation of the floating pigs in Huangpu River in China, the headline for the print version was “Dead pigs found floating in Huangpu River was confirmed from Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province” and according to the articles, this was the key fact revealed in a press conference on that day. However, the online stories picked up a fact summarized from the last paragraph of the news articles about whether the floating pigs carried virus. The general idea of that paragraph is that researchers have undertaken closely examination on six viral pathogens in the sample pigs and only one pig was tested positive of porcine circovirus. The headline for the online version was sample shown porcine circovirus positive was found among the floating pigs in Shanghai. Another example was that for two stories which both are about proposal made by members of National People’s Congress on food health and safety issues. The print edition selected the meeting agenda as its headline while the online edition picked up a controversial arguments made during the discussion.

#### **6.4.2.4 Usage of Multimedia Content**

The comparison between online and offline news presentation shows that MailOnline is more picture-driven than the *Daily Mail* itself and the online and offline versions of the *Guardian*.

Among the 135 sample stories that are presented both online and offline, 75 articles were selected from the *Daily Mail*. On average, the *Daily Mail* articles were presented with more than three multimedia elements on the website, even when the articles were only presented in text in the printed newspaper. Some of the pictures presented on MailOnline would never be published in the newspaper, as they would be too out-of-date to reflect the current news situation.

Among the samples selected from the print and online editions of the two Chinese newspapers, this study found that there is no significant difference in the ways in which stories are presented with multimedia elements. No hyperlinks, videos or audios were provided to tell stories online with the Internet’s hypertextuality, interactivity, immediacy and multimediality.

## 6.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, two exercises of content analysis were designed as a heuristic device to understand, first whether the traditional newspapers' responses to the Internet technology and New Media innovations have made similar or different impacts upon the newspapers' online and print content; second, what perspectives this study should take to understand how the commonalities and differences at content level are related to the changes in journalistic practices, newsroom culture and organizational structure.

Therefore, the first content analysis compares the online presence of the four newspapers, during which five research questions were applied (as seen on Page 6.3.1).

The first exercise of content analysis produced the following findings:

### 1. Number of Articles on Homepage

- The *Daily Mail's* homepage has the largest dimensions (512pixel\*5950pixel), which means that it can be very long and include more than 200 articles with a brief context for each. *The Daily Mail's* website also contains the largest amount of multimedia content, with most of them in picture format.
- Of the four newspapers, the *Guardian* offers the fewest articles on its homepage, with only 56 articles.
- The two Chinese websites contain a large number of stories on their respective homepages, but generally list the titles only. For example, although the *Southern City Daily's* website includes 403 news items on its homepage, they only appear as headings.

### 2. Content Diversity

- The *Guardian's* website is more like an "opinion paper", as nearly 20% of its homepage articles consist of comment.
- Unlike the website of the *China Youth Daily*, the other three newspapers all have a substantial number of feature stories, taking up 20%–30% of their online homepage space.

- The middle-market newspapers in both China and the UK largely focus on community and social news. Nearly half the content on the websites of the *Southern City Daily* and the *Daily Mail* come into this category.

### 3. Multimedia Content

- The online presence of the two British newspapers is immediately seen as more colourful. Almost 85% of the homepage news articles on the *Guardian*'s website are supported by image, video or audio; while the *Daily Mail* website is highly picture-driven and combines multimedia content with two-thirds of its homepage articles.
- The *Daily Mail*'s website adopts large pictures and big, bold headlines, combined with text in small fonts on the homepage.
- The websites of the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* both support all their stories with hyperlinks within and after each story. Hyperlinks within the story are normally keywords, which are highlighted and linked to other stories tagged with the same keywords.
- By contrast, the site of the *Southern City Daily* does not provide any hyperlink to support the homepage stories, and 40% of the articles on the website of the *China Youth Daily* only leads to articles within the same website.

### 4. Source and Originality

- All articles on these four newspaper websites name a specific author, which enhances the credibility of their news content. However, only 20% of the articles on the *China Youth Daily* website are attributed by its own journalists, with almost all the rest re-written or copied directly from news agencies, other news organizations or other online portals.

### 5. Interactivity

- The websites of the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* both provide hyperlinks to encourage the audience to share the news content on social

media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Digg, Newsvine, Delicious, Myspace and Reddit. The *Guardian* website even provides a column showing its own journalists' Twitter feeds, and promotes Twitter usage by encouraging the audience to follow the journalists' Twitter feeds.

- By contrast, the website of the *China Youth Daily* prefers applications that are created in-house. Although *China Youth Daily* provides a microblog service, this service is provided by an in-house team, rather than relying on outsourced support.

## 6. Update Speed

- The *China Youth Daily* website does not provide RSS feed.
- The two British websites provide news bulletins in a twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week news cycle, with news-feed updating almost every half an hour.
- The *Southern City Daily* website provides only about 20 news-feeds a day, which means that only a limited number of articles on the website are updated daily, as the total number of articles on the homepage is only around 400.

To sum up, by comparing the four professional newspapers' online presence in terms of homepage format, content diversity, multimedia content, interactivity, originality, hyperlink, update speed and advertisement type, this study found that the British and Chinese professional newspapers have responded to the opportunities provided by the Internet in different ways. In the UK, the newspapers' brand has been expanded and rebuilt with its professional multimedia online presence via various content delivery platforms. By contrast, in China, the online layouts did not contribute to rebuilding their brand credibility.

The second exercise of content analysis helped to reveal to what extent a newspaper's website was different from or similar to its parent newspaper in the UK and China. The design of the research questions and the research methods have resulted in the following findings:

1. All the selected articles from the four selected newspapers in China and the UK were first published on the websites, and then picked up by the parent

newspapers. The *Guardian's* and the *China Youth Daily's* articles were published in different time-slots throughout a day, which indicates that newsrooms in these two newspapers are no longer running a once-a-day deadline, but a rolling news service. Most of the selected articles from the *Daily Mail* were available online between 11.00 pm and 1.00 am, i.e., during the night before the printed newspaper was available from newsagents, demonstrating that the *Daily Mail* may still run a once-a-day deadline. There was no indication of the exact time for newspaper articles' online publishing on the website of the *Southern City Daily*, this study can only confirm that these stories were published online first automatically.

2. By examining whether the news stories presented on the selected newspapers' website were picked up by their parent newspapers, the author found that almost all the articles presented on [guardian.com](http://guardian.com) and [www.coly.net](http://www.coly.net) were picked up by the *Guardian* and the *China Youth Daily* and published on the same day or the following day, while only half of the sample articles from MailOnline were picked up by the *Daily Mail* and the majority of sample articles from [www.nandu.com](http://www.nandu.com) were not picked up by the *Southern City Daily*. This result indicates that MailOnline and the *Southern City Daily's* website may run by separate newsdesks from their print team and with different news agendas, but the *Guardian's* and the *China Youth Daily's* reporters work for two platforms at the same time.
3. By comparing MailOnline's web-only articles with those that were also picked up by the newspaper, the study also found that MailOnline was even more female-oriented than was the *Daily Mail*, as it covered more stories and pictures about women, children and animals. Meanwhile, this research found the editorial team of the *Southern City Daily* may have found a way of avoiding the limitations that its parent newspaper has as commercial title under the supervision of the state power. It tends to have a much quick response to breaking news, disaster news and covers more investigative stories as well as national and international topic.

To sum up, the content analysis reveals the distance between the ideals and the reality by testing to what extent the Internet features such as hypertextuality,



interactibility, multimediality and immediacy have been developed in online journalistic practice. However, exploring these features should not be seen as the destination for online journalism, but should instead be examined as a factor that interacts with others (Domingo et al., 2008). For that reason, the following chapters will add empirical data to illustrate the causes and consequences of the gap between ideals and reality, and examine how the differences and commonalities identified at the content level in this chapter are related to the changes that traditional newspapers have been made as responses to the Internet technology-Internet technology and New Media innovations in terms of journalistic practices, newsroom culture and organization structure?

## Chapter 7

# HOW THE CHANGES OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE ARE RELATED TO THE NEWSPAPERS' RESPONSE TO INTERNET TECHNOLOGY IN THE UK AND CHINA

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

From cross-national studies that have been conducted over the years on newsroom organizational structure, journalists and scholars have already realized that newsrooms in different nations are organized in different ways (Esser, 1998; García Avilés et al., 2009; Meier, 2007; Pecquerie & Burke, 2007; Quandt, 2008; Zhang & Su, 2012). Major differences have been found in journalistic practices and organizational structures between Anglo-American /Anglo-Saxon tradition of newsroom organization and Central European tradition. It is believed that over the past 100 years, the Anglo-American and Anglo-Saxon newsrooms have had a clear

work division between editors and reporters, while the central European tradition has made a distinctive division between different news departments that are responsible for a variety of works (Meier, 2007).

Internet technology has been so rapidly transforming the speed of newsgathering and production, the channels of content distribution, the platforms from which audience consume information, and the ability of readers to become journalists and publishers themselves. Traditional newspaper organizations who once lost their battle to provide fast, rolling news when competing with a 24-hour television and radio news service, have regained their status by providing breaking news and rolling stories in a twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week news cycle on their online platforms.

Although scholars have looked at many aspects of newsroom convergence in China and the UK separately, from the convergent process to the content produced by integrated newsrooms, from journalistic job satisfaction to new workflow (Boczkowski & De Santos, 2007; Chan et al., 2006; Shang & Zhang, 2012; Thurman & Lupton, 2008; Zhang & Su, 2012), no research has been undertaken to compare the differences and commonalities between the integrated newsrooms of Chinese and Anglo-Saxon newspapers in terms of how they are structured, how journalistic practice has been conducted, and how the workflow has been designed to cope with rolling deadlines.

In order to answer the question of whether Internet technology and New Media innovations have been homogenizing press journalism in the UK and China, it is essential to examine the newsrooms. The Internet is certainly not the first “disruptive technology” to change the structure of newsrooms (Paul, 2008). Other innovations have also radically changed newsroom structure, such as the change from hot to cold type in the late 1970s, which fundamentally transformed the process by which the newsprint page was constructed and the pagination, which consequently changed the workflow of story production.

Academic researchers and industry analysts have explored many aspects of how the Internet has changed the methods of newsgathering and production around the world. However, what has been missing is a study with a global scope and empirical evidence on:

1. the question of how established newspapers adjusted their organizational structure in order to provide content for two platforms;
2. how far the organizational structure of the “new” newsrooms reflects their newsroom culture, editorial values and brand identity;
3. whether the new facilities provided by the Internet that have enabled traditional newspapers to produce content for two platforms have been homogenizing press journalism in the UK and China.

In addition, it is inevitable that the relationship between the newspapers and their parent organizations can strongly influence the ways in which their newsrooms adapt to produce content for multiple platforms. Thus, in order to understand how newsroom structure has changed, it is necessary to consider the traditional differences and barriers in the relationship of the print titles with their parent news organizations. This provides the background context to newsroom transformation and, to some extent, illustrates why a particular integrated newsroom is structured in such a way.

This chapter, therefore, presents the comparison on newsroom structure on three levels. The macro level of comparison examines the relationship between the newspapers with their parent news organizations, and therefore aims to provide a context for why the micro level of newsroom practice and workflow are designed in a particular way. It then reviews the meso level of newsroom structure, which looks at the relationship between the offline and online teams. The third level of comparison focuses on the micro level of newsroom structure, revealing how journalistic practice and workflow in a particular newsroom are designed and conducted.

## **7.2 PRINT CONGLOMERATION AND THE MACRO-LEVEL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Three of the four selected newspapers are operated by media giants, with print and online media as their core business. These three newspapers are: the *Daily*

*Mail*, operated by DMG Media, which is affiliated to Daily Mail and General Trust (DMGT); the *Guardian*, owned by the Guardian Media Group; and the *Southern City Daily*, affiliated to the Southern Media Group. The only newspaper that is still independently operated is the *China Youth Daily*, which is a state owned national newspaper, and traditionally serves as the organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China.

Looked at from the macro-level of organizational structure, the three media conglomerations are all headed by a collective group, known as the “Board” by GMG, the “Leadership Team” by DMG, and the “Committees” by the Southern Media Group. However, there are differences in the way that the “collective groups” are structured, the role they play and their responsibilities. To a large extent, the ownership structure of these news organizations determines how their leadership teams are structured.

As reviewed in section 5.3.1, that Scott Trust is the sole shareholder of the news organization, and safeguards its editorial and financial independence. The Trust then appointed the board for the Guardian Media Group (GMG) (seen in Figure 7.1). The current GMG board has eleven board members and consists of: Chair, Chief Executive Officer, Editor-in-Chief of Guardian News & Media, Company Secretary, Senior Independent Director and five independants. The Chair is responsible for leadership of the board and for ensuring its effectiveness in all aspects of its role. The Editor-in-Chief is appointed by and reports directly to the Scott Trust. The current Editor-in-Chief, Alan Rusbridger, also sits on the board of the Trust. He oversees the *Guardian* newspaper, its website and *The Observer*.

Under GMG’s management structure, the media organization owns three news brands: theguardian.com, the *Guardian* newspaper and the *Observer* newspaper. The website and the two newspapers are under the umbrella of Guardian News & Media, with Alan Rusbridger as the Editor-in-Chief of all the three publication platforms. The other investments owned by the Scott Trust are independent of Guardian News & Media, and help to secure its journalistic independence. Therefore, with its unique ownership, the Guardian Media Group claimed itself to be driven by its efforts to maintain quality, independent and liberal journalism and its attempts are safeguarded by its financial independence.

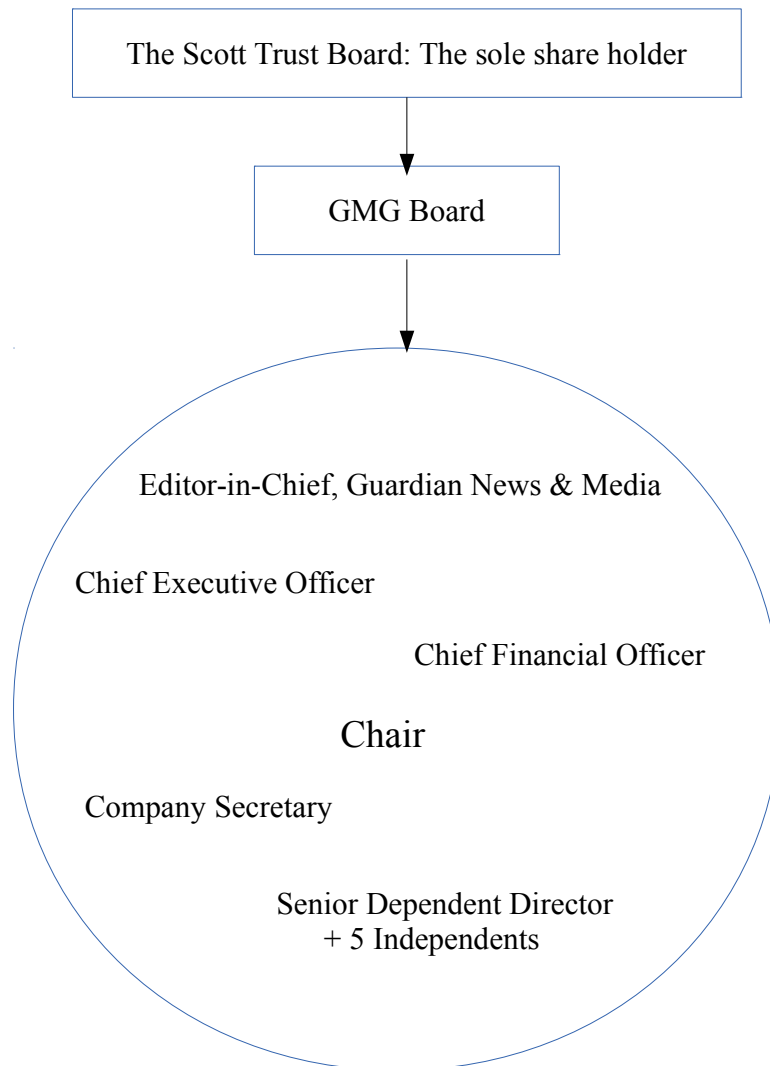


FIGURE 7.1: The Leadership Structure of the Guardian Media Group

The *Daily Mail* and its parent company DMG Media are more commercially driven. Started as a family newspaper business, DMG Media has had over 100 years in newspaper publishing industry, and is now home to a portfolio of popular media brands, including MailOnline, the *Daily Mail*, *The Mail on Sunday* and *Metro* newspapers, as well as websites such as Jobsite and Zoopla. The parent company of DMG Media, the Daily Mail and General Trust (DMGT), is an international group quoted on the London Stock Exchange, and is responsible for the financial turnover of its shareholders and investors.

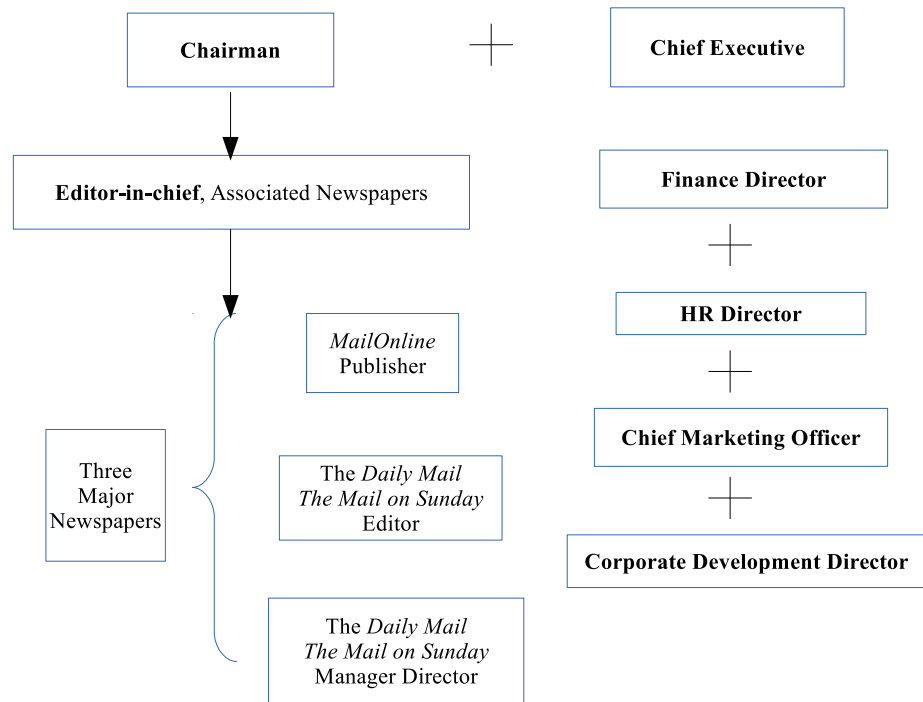


FIGURE 7.2: Organizational Structure of DMG

However, as shown in Figure 7.2, the DMG Media’s leadership also includes the Editor-in-Chief, who oversees all print titles and websites published by DMG Media. The current Editor-in-Chief is a long-serving Fleet Street editor, Paul Dacre. In the divisional leadership team, the publisher of MailOnline ensures the daily operation of MailOnline brand, while the Managing Director of the two Mail newspapers also acts as the business manager. The leadership structure of the DMG Media ensures that the managing directors are responsible for the business operation; while the editors and publishers are there to secure the content production optimize the chance for it to be commercially successful. The overall multi-platform strategies derive from the leadership team, led by the Chief Executive, Editor-in-Chief and the Corporate Development Director. The newspaper brands and MailOnline have their own editorial decision makers, who sit in the divisional leadership team to implement DMG’s overall strategy on multimedia publishing. By selling the *London Evening Standard*, DMG Media now owns just one daily newspaper brand, one Sunday newspaper brand, one free title and one news website.

As a media giant with newspapers, websites and mobiles, and tablet news applications as its core business, the Southern Media Group has a similar but more complicated management structure than DMG Media. The management structure of the Southern Media Group indicates its attempt to operate the news organization as a commercial organization, and yet also to maintain the Communist Party's control over its editorial and management decisions.

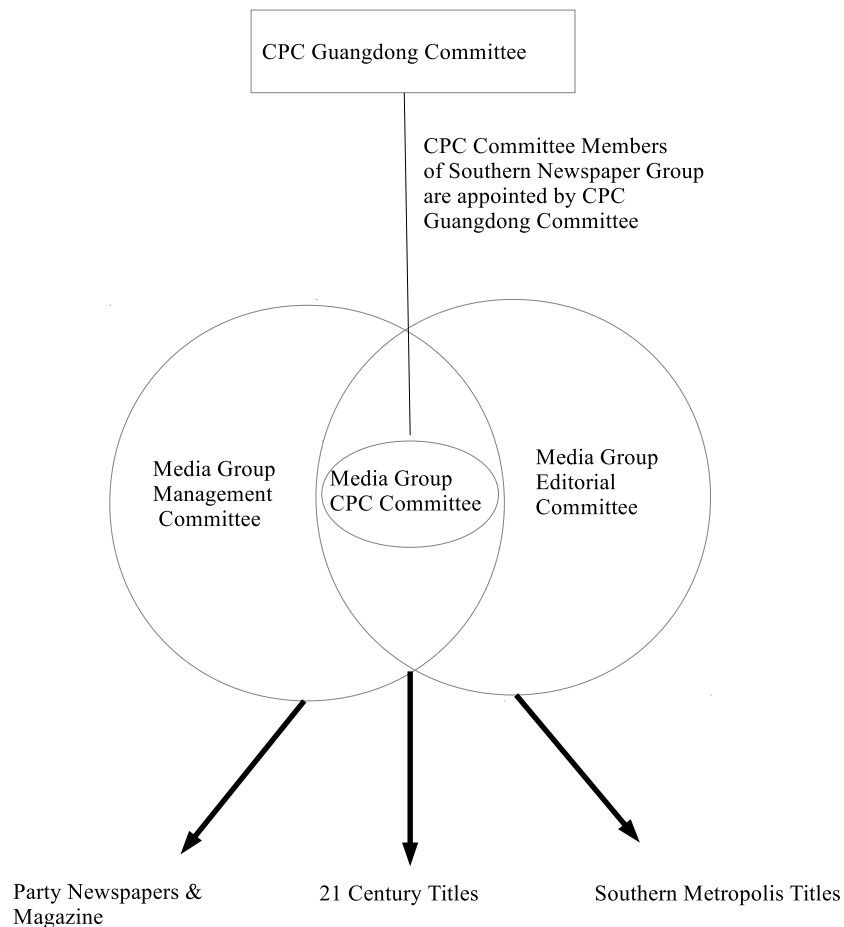


FIGURE 7.3: **CCP Propaganda's Influence on Editorial and Management Staffing**

As shown in Table 7.3, the top management level of the media group consists of three committees: the CCP Committee (*dang wei*), the Editorial Committee (*bian wei hui*) and the Management Committee (*guan wei hui*). Although the CCP Committee does not act as a corporate body or have any direct control over management or editorial decisions, it is believed that members of the media



group's CCP Committee are responsible for the ideology and political correctness of that organization and therefore report direct to the Propaganda Department of Guangdong Province. Only the most influential members of the editorial and management committees sit on the news group's CCP Committee, and they are also thought to occupy a higher rank, as well as a greater chance of being promoted to a government post.

The Management Committee is responsible for the overall management of the media group, while the Editorial Committee meets weekly to discuss any editorial issues, from the selection of news to opinion trends, and in particular decides what their newspapers should say on a range of issues.

The person who is Secretary of the Southern Media Group CCP Committee also occupies the position of Director of its Management Committee and Director of the group's Party newspaper, the *Southern Daily*. Since the Southern Media Group was founded in 2005, the same person has usually occupied all three positions simultaneously, and has been selected from the media group's own management or editorial team<sup>64</sup>. However, in 2012, Yang Jian, who has had no previous experience of working for the Southern Media Group, but had worked in the provincial Propaganda Department, was appointed as Secretary of the Southern Media Group CCP Committee, and in 2013 also took over as Director of the Management Committee from Yang Xingfeng. This was seen as an indication that the Party had tightened its control over the Southern Media Group during the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China<sup>65</sup>. Mo Gaoyi, who had also spent most of his career in the CCP Propaganda Department, took over Yang Jian's position when Yang was promoted to a position on the CCP Central Committee.

The Editorial Committee members include the Editor-in-Chief (*Zong Bianji*), who is responsible for the editorial content of the group's publications, such as newspapers, magazines, websites and books, and the Deputy Chief Editors (*Fu Zong Bianji*), who are responsible for various affiliated newspapers.

It is widely accepted in China that the Southern Media Groups have a strong content production team and comparatively strong journalistic principles. For this

<sup>64</sup>See from <http://china.caixin.com/2012-05-03/100386337.html>

<sup>65</sup>See from <http://china.caixin.com/2012-05-03/100386337.html>

reason, the newspaper group started an “expertise exporting strategy”, which allows small local party newspapers in Guangdong Province to join the production chain of the *Southern Daily* and nationwide metropolitan titles to join the production chain of the Southern City titles. After joining the production chain, the “Southern titles” would work jointly with the other newspapers in exporting their journalistic principles, workflow, expertise and management and by sharing distribution channels.

Because of this, there are now three affiliated newspaper series: the Party newspaper series, led by the CCP Guangdong Committee of the *Southern Daily*; the metropolitan newspaper series, led by the Southern Media Group’s first metropolitan title, the *Southern City Daily*; and the specialist business newspapers, led by the 21 Century Business Herald. The Editor-in-Chief of the Party newspaper, the *Southern Daily*, also sits as the Editor-in-Chief of the Southern Media Group’s Central Editorial Committee. The Deputy Chief Editors of the Southern Media Group’s Editorial Committee are responsible for overseeing the sister titles which are under the umbrella of leading newspapers. For example, from 2008 until now, the Deputy Chief Editor of the Editorial Committee, Jiang Yiping, took the role of overseeing the 21 Century titles.

In total, the Southern Media Group has 23 different websites, as shown on Table 5.6 in Chapter 5. The titles and magazines that belong to the Southern Media Group each have a separate online presence and these make up 17 of the total 23 websites. The remaining six branded websites are affiliated to the Southern Media Group, rather than to any single newspaper or magazine. All 23 websites are operated either as a company affiliated to its parent newspaper, or as a department under the umbrella of its print title.

As shown on Table 7.3, there is a crossover between the Editorial Committee and the Management Committee. As the Editor-in-Chief and the Deputy Chief Editors of the Editorial Committee also sit on the Management Committee, the Deputy Chief Editors are not only responsible for the content production of the leading newspapers and their affiliated titles, but are also involved in the decision-making process regarding the management and business operation of the Party newspaper series, the metropolitan newspaper series, and the 21 Century series.

Members of the Editorial Committee take the role of Chief Editor or Deputy Chief Editors of the *Southern Daily's* sister newspapers or magazines. For example, Huang Chan, Chief Editor of the group's national weekly newspaper, the *Southern Weekend*, also sits as a member on the Central Editorial Committee.

Although the editorial of the newspaper titles are tightly controlled by the Central Editorial Committee, most of these press titles were given the freedom to carry out their own experiments in multimedia publishing. Thus, nearly all the newspapers and magazines under the umbrella of the Southern Media Group have their own websites. The Historical reasons are responsible for the fact that the media group also owns six branded websites. For example, the brand southcn.com is a website which operates under the administration of the Guangdong CCP Committee Propaganda Department and is licensed by the State Council Information Office as one of the "new national websites" which are allowed to have their own political news reporters. It was launched as the online platform for e-governance and also as a distribution platform for all state-owned media in Guangzhou, including the Southern Media Group, the *Yangcheng Evening Post* and the SARFT Guangdong Bureau's publications.

Table 7.1 and Table 7.2 shows that besides the two brands that serve as the official portals for Guangdong's newspapers and the Southern Media Group itself, the other four brands all have established ties with Internet companies to produce more value-added online content. For example, Gd.qq.com is a brand launched by the Southern Media Group with China's Internet giant, Tencent. The tie-up was regarded as part of an attempt to push the state-owned conglomeration of print media towards a digital future, after years of losing ground to Internet portals and social network sites.

From the macro level of organizational structure, it is not difficult to find that the Southern Media Group are facing two dilemmas. The first one has been created by its social and political function as a CCP organ. It has to lead public opinion in a direction that is favoured by the Party and set up media agenda in accordance with the orders and restrictions imposed by central and provincial government. This means that the group not only has to maintain the Party newspapers and magazines which have a low circulation and rely heavily on subsidies from government bodies, state enterprises and public sectors, but also have to work hard

to increase the influence of the Party titles on the Internet by investing in and developing their online presence. For these reasons, the news organization continues to maintain a separate website for the newspaper's overseas edition as a showcase for "China's going out" attempts. The second dilemma is created by the nature of the media organizations as traditional newspaper operator. This means that it does not respond as well to new technology as do the Internet companies which have an understanding of technology as basic to their nature. Examples are the failure to invest in a Bulletin Board service and to allow each of its affiliated newspapers to have their own websites, which has resulted in serious duplication in brand values, together with confusion for online readers.

As a state-owned national newspaper, the *China Youth Daily* operates its website as a separate legal unit and business company. With a similar structure to the print newspaper, the content production team of the newspaper's website are divided into different newsdesks, based on topics, but do not yet occupy the same office space as the print team. The *China Youth Daily* has set up its online operation along similar lines to the *People's Daily*, the *Beijing Youth Daily* and some other state-owned titles. By acquiring an Internet company and expanding it to become the newspaper's website operator, these newspapers expected their websites, as a separate legal unit, to enable them to build up a valuable asset, which could be floated on the stock exchange. In theory, after becoming a public company, the online operation would then be able to afford expensive front-line news gathering and investment in new technologies. The website of the *People's Daily* successfully floated 40 million shares on the Shanghai Stock Exchange in 2011<sup>66</sup>. The *Beijing Youth Daily* was also listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in 2004. However, there is no evidence to indicate that the *China Youth Daily's* website company also has plans to go public, and it is clearly having difficulties in putting the necessary investment into front-line newsgathering and technology for its website.

The *China Youth Daily's* website is free to report on whatever the printed newspaper is allowed to cover, but without the investment in technology and front-line journalism, the website team cannot afford to carry out front-line news reporting and is obliged to rely heavily on stories originating from the print team. This is a dilemma for the *China Youth Daily's* online team: the advantage of operating a

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<sup>66</sup> <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-investor/>

TABLE 7.1: Southern Media Group's 6 Branded Websites

No.	Website(s)	Purpose	History
1.	<a href="http://www.southcn.com">www.southcn.com</a>	Online publishing platform for Southern Media Group, <i>Yangcheng Evening Post</i> , Provincial Bureau of Radio, Film and Television	Launched in December 2001. Licensed by State Council Information Office and listed on the "National News Websites" websites.
2.	<a href="http://www.Nfmedia.com">www.Nfmedia.com</a>	Official online profile of Southern Media Group	Launched in 1999 and has been the official portal of Southern Media Group ever since.
3.	<a href="http://www.nandu.com">www.nandu.com</a>	The official portal of all the <i>Southern City</i> titles	Launched in 2005 after acquiring an Internet company and its service. Operated by an Internet technology company affiliated to the <i>Southern City Daily</i>
4.	<a href="http://www.kdnet.net">www.kdnet.net</a>	Southern Media Group's bulletin board service	Launched in 2000, by taking over an Internet company and its service. It was an attempt to launch its own bulletin board service.
5.	<a href="http://Gd.qq.com">http://Gd.qq.com</a>	Guangdong Province News Portal, co-produced by Southern Media Group and Internet giant, Tencent.	Launched in 2011 as a joint initiative by Southern Media Group as content provider, and Tencent.
6.	<a href="http://www.nfdaily.cn/special/1021/hwb/hwb/htm">www.nfdaily.cn/special/1021/hwb/hwb/htm</a>	The overseas edition of the Party newspaper, the <i>Southern Daily</i>	

TABLE 7.2: Online Presence of All Southern Media Group's Publications

No.	Newspaper Title	Domain Name
1.	<i>Southern Daily</i>	www.nfdaily.cn
2.	<i>Southern Weekend</i>	www.infzm.com
3.	<i>Southern City Daily</i>	www.nandu.com
4.	<i>21st Century Business Herald</i>	www.21cbh.com
5.	<i>Southern Weekly Magazine</i>	www.fengshangweekly.com
6.	<i>Xijiang Daily</i>	www.Xjrb.xjrb.net
7.	<i>Money Week Magazine</i>	www.lczb.net
8.	<i>Southern Legal News</i>	www.gdga.gov.cn
9.	<i>Meizhou Daily</i>	www.Mzrb.meizhou.cn
10.	<i>Southern Magazine</i>	www.nfyk.com
11.	<i>Mangazine Magazine</i>	www.infzm.com/mangazine.shtml
12.	<i>Southern People Weekly Magazine</i>	www.nfpeople.com
13.	<i>21st Century Business Review Magazine</i>	www.21cbr.com
14.	<i>Business Travel Magazine</i>	www.travel.dooland.com
15.	<i>Online shopping for shoes and bags</i>	www.fb163.com
16.	<i>China Fortune Magazine</i>	www.chinafortune.dooland.com

website independent of the printed paper would be to build up an asset for listing on the stock exchange, and then in turn to invest in front-line newsgathering and new technology, thus further increasing the value of that asset. Unfortunately, the online team of the *China Youth Daily* did not take the initiative to go public and so did not have the investment required for front-line newsgathering and technological updates. The result of having two separate online and offline production teams means that there need to be strong communication links between the two teams, in order to enhance the website performance in terms of updating speed, interactivity, and multimedia storytelling. In addition, it requires strategic forward planning with regard to the website's editorial style. This editorial strategy determines whether or not the website shares the same editorial values as the print newspapers. There is no indication from the interviews that the editors and managers of the *China Youth Daily* have thought through how to make effective improvements to their communications and enhance their editorial style while carrying out their daily routine.

To sum up, due to its unique ownership, the GMG's management structure exists

to secure the journalistic and financial independence of its newspaper and website, while the *Daily Mail* and MailOnline are driven purely by commercial interests and its management team and brand identification are also structured to secure the optimum commercial results. However, the parent media organization of the *Southern City Daily* has not yet made effective multimedia publishing strategies to reduce brand duplication, and this not only creates confusion among its readers, but also weakens their brand identities.

The following section will look, first, at the meso level of newsroom structure, particularly the relationship between the online and offline teams; and, second, examine how the workflow and journalistic routines combine to produce content for two platforms.

### **7.3 MESO LEVEL OF NEWSROOM STRUCTURE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ONLINE AND OFFLINE TEAMS**

When it comes to the meso level of newsroom structure, the key question is how the online and offline teams of a newspaper work together to produce content for two platforms. Previous research has found that there are generally two types of convergence:

1. the completely integrated newsroom, with the same content production team producing content for both online and offline platforms;
2. the print-web collaboration model (Erdal, 2009; García Avilés et al., 2009; Meier, 2007; Vobic, 2011; Zhang & Su, 2012).

Under the “print-web collaboration” model, the online production is separate from the offline team, and specializes in making content for the website with little or no crossover with the print team.

The best illustration of a completely integrated newsroom is the one used by the *Daily Telegraph*, as shown in Figure 7.4. The transformation of the *Daily Telegraph* was triggered by moving to another building in 2007. Central to the floor



## Newsroom concept at the Daily Telegraph UK



FIGURE 7.4: Newsroom Concepts at the *Daily Telegraph* <sup>67</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Picture sourced from <http://schantin.wordpress.com/2008/06/25/moving-tables-is-not-enough-to-succeed-in-a-multiple-media-world/>

layout is the News Hub, and emanating from the hub are the so-called “spokes”. The editorial and production teams sit along the spokes’ base on subject matters. The head of the section normally sits at the end of the spoke closest to the central News Hub. The technical support team sit on the digital spoke, looking after the technical aspects of the website.

It has often been observed that moving buildings or changing the office seating plan is generally the trigger for physical newsroom integration. Physical integration can take two forms: one is a completely integrated production team reporting to different online and offline editors, as is the case with the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Guardian*; the other is for the online and offline teams to sit together on subject matters, but working as separate production teams.

The key purpose in having two separation production teams sitting together is to foster internal communication and therefore prevent overlapping on stories and cost. In order to do so, the seating plan is structured under subject matters, and the newsroom has a circular structure, with the desk of the inner circle’s Editor-in-Chief as the so-called “Tower of Power” or News Hub. However, this does not always work. In Austria, for example, because of the restrictions on media



company cross-ownership and the delay in opening up private radio and television markets, only the newly-established newspapers have taken steps to become integrated newsrooms (García Avilés et al., 2009). Although a circular layout, with sections radiating out from the inner circle, was designed for an Austrian national daily newspaper, the *Österreich*, the concept of increasing collaboration by having two separate teams sitting together did not work. By contrast, the website, *derstandard.at*, launched in 1995, and its newspaper *Der Standard*, achieved commercial success without any integration at all (*ibid.*).

There is no academic evidence as to whether a particular country or culture prefers one or other of the models. Based on the interviews and observation in the four selected newspapers, this research found that the *Daily Mail* and the two selected Chinese newspapers all took the approach of having web-print collaboration model, while the *Daily Mail* was also experimenting with an integrated multimedia production approach by asking the sports department to produce content for both online and offline platforms since summer 2013. However, the *Guardian* has a completely integrated newsroom, with its online and offline editors sitting next to each other and commissioning stories from the same production team.

TABLE 7.3: Newsroom Integration Model in Different Countries

Country	Newspaper	Type of Integration
UK	<i>The Guardian</i>	Complete integration
	<i>Daily Mail</i>	Sports Department: Complete integration; Others: Web-print collaboration
	<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	Complete integration
	<i>The Times</i>	Web-print collaboration
China	<i>Xinhua News Agency</i>	Web-print collaboration
	<i>People's Daily</i>	Web-print collaboration
	<i>Beijing Youth Daily</i>	Web-print collaboration
	<i>China Youth Daily</i>	Web-print collaboration
	<i>Southern City Daily</i>	Web-print collaboration
Austria	<i>Österreich</i>	Web-print collaboration
	<i>Der Standard</i>	No integration
Spain	<i>La Verdad Multimedia</i>	Integrated newsroom
	<i>El Mundo</i>	Web-print collaboration
Germany	<i>Die Welt/Morgenpost</i>	Integrated newsroom
	<i>Hessische-Niedersächsische Allgemeine</i>	Web-print collaboration

As illustrated in the previous section, the websites affiliated to the Southern Media Group and the online presence of the *China Youth Daily* are operated either as separate companies under the umbrella of the media organization, or as separate departments alongside their parent newspapers. It is not unique in China that the operation of a newspaper's website is separate from its parent newspaper and operated as an independent business unit. Xinhua News Agency, the *People's Daily*, and the *Beijing Youth Daily* have all found that "having two separate editorial units, online and offline, run own channels with little crossover" (Zeng, 2009, p.783).

### 7.3.1 The Web-Online Collaboration Model

Three of the four selected newspapers, other than the *Guardian*, take the Web-Online Collaboration Model. They have separate teams producing content for the newspaper and the website, and the two teams, to some extent, collaborate on

1. sharing material and content;
2. reporting on subject matter;
3. cross-platform campaigns.

The effectiveness of sharing material and content is based on the function of the content management system (CMS), while collaboration on news coverage, particularly live reporting on breaking news and big events, is relies on communication between the two teams. Cross-platform campaigns are always related to the newspaper's advertising policy, but that is not the focus of this study. The observations and interviews with editors and journalists are therefore aimed mainly at discovering how far the newsroom structure helps with internal communication between the online and offline teams. In view of the proliferation of devices, screen sizes and resolutions now involved in publishing content online, the CMS used by a newspaper is crucial to its journalistic practice. For that reason, this study will examine the way in which a CMS makes multi-platform publishing possible, and the design of any CMS automatically mirrors the organizational structure it serves.

In the case of the *China Youth Daily*, the online team is located on a different floor of the same building as the newspaper team, and is operated as a separate business unit. Although the newsdesks of both teams are arranged according to subject matter, the online and offline editorial units run their own platforms with little crossover. The editorial desk of the online team is in an open-plan layout, with most of its staff working as editors. The website of the *China Youth Daily* has a video team, which produces short video interviews with young entrepreneurs and senior government officials for their opinion on political or economic issues. The setting up of the video team to produce interviews is thought to be an innovation influenced by a similar initiative launched by China's most influential national party newspaper, the *People's Daily*. The author's interview with the deputy chief online editor of the *China Youth Daily*, Wang Xinya, revealed that both newspapers use the video interviews programme as a brand showcase for entrepreneurs and government officials to make their voice heard and to present a positive image to readers of the two websites, many of whom are thought to be government officials at all levels. The presentation of a positive image can clearly be beneficial for a businessman's commercial activities, and, for a government official, may lead to promotion. A high fee therefore has to be paid by the interviewee for the privilege, usually the equivalent of £20,000 per show.

The *Southern City Daily* is affiliated to the Southern Media Group, which has six branded websites, but is also the leading newspaper among sister metropolitan newspapers and magazines, including the *Yunnan Information Times* and the *Nandu Weekly Magazine*. It has two online presences: oeeee.com is operated by its affiliated Internet company and positioned as the news portal for Shenzhen, one of the most prosperous cities in Guangdong Province; and nandu.com, which is operated by the Digital Media Department of the *Southern City Daily*.

This Digital Media Department was initiated in 2007 to modernise the traditional newsroom and change it into an integrated one. Merging with the previous graphics department, the digital team uses equipment with state-of-art image-gathering facilities. Apart from the photo journalists, the only other journalists in the digital team are purely editorial staff, who are responsible for the daily maintenance of the website nandu.com, the iPad and mobile application, and the newspaper's official microblog accounts. The online and offline teams have access to the same CMS, but interviews with reporters and editors from the Southern

Media Group discovered that it was mainly designed for print newspapers and did not provide the online editor a comprehensive function, such as viewing the website while editing, and introducing hyperlinks and multiple images into the stories (Interview No. 2, 3, 5).

The online production team of MailOnline has always been separate from the offline team of the *Daily Mail* and *The Mail on Sunday*, but the ways that the two teams collaborate with each other are significantly different from those of the two Chinese samples. First of all, the online team is led by the MailOnline publisher, who is part of the Divisional Leadership Team, within the second tier of leadership in DMG Media, and the equivalent of managing director of Associated Newspapers Ltd. Thus, the position of MailOnline's production team in the media group differs from that of the *China Youth Daily's* online production team, which operates as a separate business unit; and it is also different from the Digital Media Department of the *Southern City Daily*, which is a department parallel with the other departments in the offline team, such as the political or economic news departments.

The second difference is that MailOnline's UK production team sits in the same floor as the *Daily Mail* and *The Mail on Sunday*. The website team sits in an open-plan office, and consists entirely of editors for different subjects, such as news, showbiz, female, etc. In addition, MailOnline has two editorial teams overseas, 20 editorial staff based in New York and 10 editorial staff based in Los Angeles (Interview No. 31). Both the UK and US-based editors are supported by hundreds of thousands of news agencies and freelancers working all over the world, providing with them the latest stories, and images of the stories in particular (Interview No. 32). This means that the stories run by the website each day are not necessarily from the journalists of the *Daily Mail*.

The third point is that, in March 2012, MailOnline launched a new content management system, "Node", which allows the editors to view the layout of the page while editing the stories. The online and offline teams can both work on the Node system, which performs well in multiple image publishing, and automatically links stories that are related to each other.

### 7.3.2 Completely Integrated Model

The *Guardian* has a completely different newsroom structure from the other three sample newspapers. The editorial team and the production team sit in an open-plan office. The editorial team includes the online and offline editors, as well as the editorial staff for different subjects. The online and offline editors sit side by side, so that they can work together on selecting the news agenda on a daily basis and are close enough to exchange comments as they work. The Online Editor of the *Guardian's* website admitted that the new structure “allows us to speed up the process of actually getting articles published and improve them, because we have got the News Editor sat next to the person who is doing the production on it. So if there is a particular headline they want to take, it is not sort of being sent down the room to be guessed on as to what it should be. More conversations now take place around that, between those in close proximity.” (Interview No.12) Then the newsdesks specialize in different subjects and commission stories from their reporters and freelancers. The Online Editor of guardian.com said, “It is not the case that we need this for the paper and we need that for the website. We decide what we want to cover together, and then we commission the stories for that. The stories go to each of the platforms. The newsdesk is the point of contact for reporters, to keep it straightforward, so that they are not working for two different editors. Instead, they are working for one desk rather than working for two occupations”. (Interview No. 12)

Before moving to their new offices at King's Cross, the *Guardian* had a newsroom structure similar to that of the *Daily Mail*, with the online and offline teams separated from each other, and very little interaction or communication. However, with the new integrated newsroom structure, the reporters are expected to work on the same stories, but for different platforms. It is “very much that we do a story once”.

The *Guardian* designed its in-house content management system. The software architects and editors have agreed and followed a common technical vocabulary, which means that the software was designed around a set of editorial concerns. Thus, any items published on the website are strictly tagged with the keywords shown below, and the tags determine where a story belongs on the website, and allows it to appear in more than one place:

- Content type: i.e. text, audio, video, live blogging
- Publication origin: i.e. *Guardian*, *Observer* or Web
- Contributor: i.e. author or photographer
- Section: i.e. the main area of the site to which they belong
- Tone: i.e. a news article, a comment piece, a match report, a review, an obituary
- Subject: around 9,000 topic keyword tags

The *Guardian's* CMS has a human interface. By reading a note that has been left, such as, "This article belongs to Martin Hearn, please contact him about all updates", and by checking the status of the story which shows the exact time when it was last saved and by whom, the reporters, editorial staff at the newsdesk, and the online and offline editors who are in charge of the overall output of the day, will all have a clear picture of to whom each story is commissioned to and on the latest progress. It also indicates where a story is to go, and whether it is ready to go live. In this way, the CMS provides the reporters, freelancers and editors with a common-room, where they can communicate easily with each other.

However, The *Guardian's* CMS does not support multiple image publishing. Its online editors believe that this is a disadvantage of its CMS which needs to be addressed.

## **7.4 THE MICRO LEVEL OF CONVERGENCE: WORKFLOW AND JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE**

### **7.4.1 The *Southern City Daily* and the *China Youth Daily***

As discussed in the previous section, the two selected Chinese newspapers have separate online and offline production teams. The *Southern City Daily's* website is affiliated to its print counterpart, and does not have the SCIO-issued certificate

## Our CMS is some homebrew called “R2”

The screenshot shows the Guardian's CMS interface with the following sections:

- Navigation:** A top menu with links like 'Home', 'Tools', 'Index', 'Article', 'Gallery', 'Video', 'Audio', 'Cartoon/Graphic/Picture', 'Code object', 'Interactive', 'Poll', 'Quiz', 'Competition', 'Table', 'Min by min', 'Page', 'Ed index', 'Media uploader', 'Newspaper feed', 'Manage tags', 'Batch tag', 'Merge tag', 'Urls', 'Commercial folder', 'Manage Folders', 'Ready to Live', 'Mapping Manager', 'Slot Index', 'Packages', and 'Log out'.
- Buttons:** 'Save', 'Preview', 'Launch', 'Take down', and 'Expire'.
- Status:** 'Live Last saved: 25/07/2011 13:54:32 By: Martin Belam' with a checkbox for 'Related editorial off'.
- Notes:** A text box containing 'This article belongs to Martin Hearn. Please contact him about all updates'.
- Ready to live:** Radio buttons for 'No' (selected) and 'Yes', a 'Summary Information' section, and a 'Generate summary information' button.
- Publication:** 'guardian.co.uk publication', 'Page number' field, and 'Issue Date' set to '25/07/2011'.
- Web publication:** '25/07/2011 13:50' and a checked box for 'Set web publication date time manually'.
- Launch Date/Time:** A date/time field and a 'Cancel scheduled launch' button.
- Expiry Date:** A checkbox for 'Expires in a month', a date field, and a 'Relaunch to set expiry date' button.
- Geo Location:** 'Latitude' and 'Longitude' fields with a 'Set location' button and a note: 'Latitude and longitude are in decimal format.'
- Badges off:** A checkbox.
- Internal tags:** A table with columns 'Internal Name', 'Section', 'Type of Tag', and 'Lead'.
 

Internal Name	Section	Type of Tag	Lead
Privacy (information section)	Info	Keyword	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help	Help	Keyword	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information	Info	Keyword	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help (Tone)	Global	Tone	<input type="checkbox"/>

theguardian

FIGURE 7.5: Example of the Content Management System set by the *Guardian* and guardian.com<sup>68</sup>

<sup>68</sup> From <http://www.slideshare.net/currybet/taking-content-strategy-to-people-who-already-think-they-have-one>

which allows the website to have its own reporters. The newspaper has therefore set up a digital media department which supervises and manages the title’s website. The *China Youth Daily’s* website does have the SCIO certificate, permitting it to have its own reporters for covering any news topics, including political and economic news. Thus, the *China Youth Daily’s* online team is operated as a separate legal unit and business company. However, as discussed in the previous section, for both of the Chinese newspapers, there is little or no communication or collaboration between the online and offline production teams. The following section discusses the characteristics of their daily work routine and newsroom workflow. It is interesting to find that both newspaper newsrooms have kept the same editorial routine as in the traditional newsroom which only produces content for the print newspaper. The collaborative mechanism between the two teams does not allow their websites to commission extra coverage and exclusive stories from front-line reporters, which means that they have the problem of merely being

a shadow or electronic copy of their print counter parts. Taking the example of the *Southern City Daily*, the newspaper's online and offline teams have a different series of news meetings every day. Traditionally, as a daily morning newspaper, the content production team of the *Southern City Daily* has had three meetings a day, and it still follows the same editorial routine. The newspaper's offline team runs three editorial meetings a day, all of which are all purely newspaper focused.

The first news meeting takes place at 11.00 a.m. Before the meeting, reporters are asked to submit a synopsis of the stories that they are going to follow or submit for publishing that day to their newsdesk's duty editor, who is usually the deputy editor of their department. The duty editors for each newsdesk then collect all the news agendas together and bring them to the news meeting. One member of the editorial committee will chair the meeting, normally the Editor-in-Chief or the Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper. In the story synopses submitted by reporters, it is necessary to apply the "5Ws" and to provide an estimated word-count. The aim of this first meeting is to gather news agendas from each newsdesk, so that the editorial committee can have a clear idea of what to expect by the end of the day. The Editor-in-Chief then balances the news agendas proposed by each newsdesk, and gives an indication of which page they should go to and what level of priority they should have.

At 3.00 pm, the same group of editors attends the second news meeting. The priority of the second meeting is, first, to update the Editor-in-Chief on what has happened during the day and how their reporters are dealing with breaking news; and, second, to report on the progress of stories commissioned by the Editor-in-Chief at the first meeting.

The third editorial meeting happens at 8.00 pm, attended by the editors on evening duty. There are two deadlines during the day. For news agendas submitted at the 11.00 am meeting, the deadline for the editor's review is 3.00 pm. The second deadline is at 6.30 pm, and is for breaking news and events of the day. This deadline is flexible up to an hour or an hour-and-a-half later. The fixed deadline for the final draft of the copy-ready newspaper is during the night, at 1.00 am.

Despite having separate online and offline production teams, the *Southern City Daily* claimed to have a strategy to encourage multimedia newsgathering and



news production. Instead of updating the old content management system, the newspapers bought every journalist and editor an iPhone, urging them to cover potential stories, no matter where or when, and to use various formats, such as text, image, video and audio.

In the newsroom of the *Southern City Daily*, despite having separate online and offline production teams, reporters who traditionally only work for the newspaper are expected to provide content, and particularly breaking news and rolling coverage, for the website as well. The duty editor of the website is the point where the newspaper reporters and the website's editorial staff link up. Reporters who cover breaking news are encouraged to contact the website duty editor and brief him or her with the story. The website duty editor then decides whether or not to commission extra coverage from the reporters, including text, image and video. If a decision is taken to run the story on the website as breaking news or rolling news, the website duty editor informs the reporter of the type of coverage expected for the website. The website duty editor will also appoint his or her own editorial staff to collaborate with the front-line reporters in covering the breaking news or rolling news.

The collaboration of the website editorial staff with front-line reporters is quite straightforward. The front-line reporter sends back text, image and video. Using a variety of platforms, such as email, Cloud storage, instant messaging services and so on. However, the content management system used by the online editorial staff does not allow the newspaper reporters direct access either through their workstation computers or through their personal devices such as laptops, iPads or mobile phones. It is therefore the responsibility of the website editorial staff to upload the materials received from the front-line reporters to their CMS. They are also responsible for deciding how to use these materials: for example, the website editorial team decides whether to include hyperlinks, providing background information for a story, or whether to package the stories with material from news agencies and, sometimes, from citizen journalists.

Although the reporters are encouraged, expected and even facilitated to have multimedia skills, , coverage for the *Southern City Daily* is still their chief priority, as the newspaper has strict publishing deadlines for them to meet. Once the two teams start collaborating, the communication between the website editorial team

with a front-line reporter is usually one-way, with the website editors being relaxed about it, passively receiving material.

In addition, although the print version of the *Southern City Daily*, includes two pages entitled “Net Eyes”, which reflect the hot online news topics, the topics covered are not necessarily editorially suggested by the online team or are connected with it in any way.

### **7.4.2 The *Daily Mail***

Like the two Chinese examples discussed above, the *Daily Mail* also has completely separate online and offline teams. However, the editorial routine and daily workflow of its online team enables MailOnline to run a different news agenda from that of the newspaper, to run rolling news throughout the day, and to package stories in an approach more oriented to online traffic. This is in sharp contrast to the two Chinese newspapers, whose website versions are merely the shadow or electronic copies of the print newspapers.

The *Daily Mail* and MailOnline both have twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week operation. Editors of MailOnline are mainly office-based. (Interview No.10) The deputy managing editor of MailOnline explained that:

They [online editors] speak to people on the phone, but they don't really go out on stories, because they don't really have time . . . Also, the newspaper's reporters are out all the time, and are feeding stories back to the newsdesk, which the online team has access to.

The online editors do not only edit stories which have been published in the print version, but also follow the stories as they develop during the day and after they have been published in the newspaper. Martin Clarke, Editor of MailOnline, revealed that “sometimes the two teams work on stories in parallel”, but that the news organization “does not consider that is a waste of effort and time, and accepts a certain amount of duplication to make sure that both the print and the Web products get exactly what they want, rather than come to a compromise”. The MailOnline team also works on exclusive stories which cannot wait for the

next day's paper. At those times, the online editors will therefore receive stories direct from the *Daily Mail* reporters, freelancers, freelancers' agencies, or have been contacted by them, asking if they are interested in the stories that they have.

The empirical research at MailOnline revealed that its editors take "staggered shifts", which means that the online editors may start their day-shift at different times and finish at different times. During the night, there is always one duty editor, whose shift starts at 1.00 am, and continues through the night until 9.00 o'clock the next morning. This shift system ensures that there is always at least one online editor on duty.

The *Daily Mail's* print and online teams run separate news conferences during the day. The routine of the traditional print conference stays the same, while the online team runs three news conferences a day, which take place at 8.00 a.m., 1.00 p.m. and, finally, at 5.00 p.m. Interviews revealed that there was very little routine contact between the offline and online teams each day. The most frequent contact between the two teams was by telephone, exchanging and updating information as stories developed.

Later in the evening, a joint conference is held, at which the offline duty editor runs through the projected news agenda for the next day's newspaper with the online editor, to decide how to lay out stories on the website's homepage overnight.

Although the online and offline teams hold separate news conferences, the empirical evidence showed that the editorial staff of MailOnline do not feel that there is a lack of communication between the two teams, as they constantly share the list of stories on which the newspaper reporters are focusing. The editorial team of MailOnline sit at their desks and talk with reporters, freelancers and agencies all the time. More importantly, the content of MailOnline relies heavily upon support from freelancers and news agencies from around the world, and particularly freelance photographers. Martin Clarke admitted that MailOnline hugely benefits from the UK network of freelancers and news agencies. He believes that the newspaper used to waste a significant amount of content from contracted freelancers and new agencies, but that now the MailOnline editors can work on all the resources and package them in a way that attracts the largest audience and the most traffic.

### 7.4.3 The *Guardian*

As discussed earlier, unlike the three other sample newspapers, the *Guardian* has had a completely integrated newsroom since 2009, and its online and offline editor's commission stories from the same group of reporters. Thus, the journalistic routine and newsroom workflow is different from the previous two cases as well.

There are three news meetings per day, held in the *Guardian*'s newsroom. The first one, at 9.15a.m., is primarily web-focused. Its priorities are:

1. the selection of the news agenda for live reporting in the morning and through the day;
2. forward planning for events known to be happening during the day and how they are to be covered.

As the *Guardian*'s online editor explained, they would think about and decide at the earliest stage of the story, "Is it going to work as a long piece, or should it be presented as interactive piece?" The second news meeting takes place at midday, and is predominantly paper-focused, and consists of more non-live stories and exclusive stories. This meeting looks ahead to which stories will appear in the next day's newspaper, and reviews the progress of the stories that reporters may have been working on for days, or even weeks. The third news meeting, held at 4.00 p.m., is the final one, and is more web-based and focuses on forward planning. Editors are expected to have a rough idea about what to cover on both platforms, and in particular what live stories to follow on the next day's website.

## 7.5 CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to reveal how the four selected newspapers in China and the UK have responded to the need to produce content for multiple platforms, and whether Internet technology has been homogenizing newsroom structure and journalistic practice in the two countries, based on interviews with editors, reporters and newspaper managers from both countries. To do so, this chapter first examines how the traditional relationship between the selected newspapers and

their parent news organization is related to the ways in which the newspapers transform their newsrooms. It then summarizes two models of newsroom convergence. These are the web-print collaborative model, which is best represented by the *Daily Mail*; and the completely integrated model, best represented by the *Guardian*. Moreover, it illustrates the way in which journalistic practice and workflow in the four newsrooms are used to optimum effect.

The author discovered from earlier research that established newspapers striving for organizational and journalistic integration seek a “synergetic model of production” (Boczkowski, 2004; Deuze, 2004; Erdal, 2009; Singer, 2004) . This refers to a model where media content, including text, image, graphics, audio and video, is shared by online and offline teams, and travels across media boundaries. By examining the relationship between a newspaper and its parent news organization, it became clear that a strong strategic coherence, as well as the synergetic model of production, was crucial to the transformation of the newspapers’ newsrooms. Both the *Guardian* and its website are owned by the Scott Trust, which safeguards their editorial values and journalistic and financial independence, and from the start they have both followed the same set of editorial principles and journalistic values.

This echoes the findings from the content analysis in the previous chapter that the *Guardian*’s website covers almost the same news agenda as its print newspaper, but runs its news stories with rolling deadlines and in website package format. This enables readers to enhance their reading experience through multimedia storytelling, interactive elements and a twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week rolling news-feed. In order to retain the editorial values and journalistic principles of the quality journalism required of the *Guardian*, the online production team finds that the most effective approach is for the reporters to provide content for the website and the newspapers. This policy not only helps the news organization to avoid quality journalism being wasted in duplication, but also frees it up to make a huge investment in front-line newsgathering, and thus to maintain the same editorial values on both platforms. To assist the production of content by the same production team for multiple platforms, the *Guardian* has set out its “digital-first” strategy, together with a statement that all reporters must meet the same deadlines. This has changed the reporters’ mind-set, because when they are working on a story, they are not only required to feed the news to both platforms,

but also to meet the different deadlines required by each platform. The strategic coherence model is also seen in the case of the *Daily Mail* and its website. The print newspaper and the website share different editorial values, as shown by the content analysis in the previous section; however, they are alike in being commercially driven. While this characteristic could be viewed as being driven by readership for the newspaper and by online traffic for the website, the main driving force behind production is the advertising revenue. With evidence indicating that the online traffic strongly influenced by the combination of picture consumption, celebrity gossip, sport and female topics, and enhanced through hyperlinks, linking one story to another, the MailOnline places greater emphasis on these sections and makes the editorial style of the website significantly different from the print version. However, a different editorial style will require different editorial values and journalistic principles, which is why the Editor of MailOnline, Martin Clarke has admitted that “the mind-set and skills the MailOnline editorial team require is different from its long-running middle-market British newspaper”. Yet, in order to make best use of the website’s characteristics of hypertextuality, interactivity, immediacy and multimediality, its website requires not only consistent but huge amounts of feeding story, images, video and audio content. The interview with MailOnline’s editors clearly indicates that they have found a solution, which is not to rely on the in-house print reporters or invest heavily in front-line newsgathering for the website, but effectively use the network of freelancers and news agencies which have existed in the UK and around the world for many years, and have an established business model for working with the *Daily Mail*.

Thus, the *Guardian*’s website retains its brand identity as a platform offering quality journalism, analysis and comments by having the same group of reporters working for both website and newspaper. It has also rejoined battle with the 24-hour television news service through providing breaking stories and rolling news services through its digital-first strategy. At the same time, the *Daily Mail*’s website has adapted its newspaper’s nature and legacy as a market-driven title by using a different editorial style produced by a separate team. In addition, it has effectively taken advantage of the newspaper’s long-serving worldwide network of freelancers and news agencies to create the world’s largest online homepage for a newspaper.

However, based on the content analysis in the previous chapter, this study found

that the online layout of the two selected Chinese newspapers did not contribute to the rebuilding of their brand credibility and online identity. First, as a newspaper that is affiliated to the Southern Media Group, the website of the *Southern City Daily* is one of the 23 websites under the newspaper group's umbrella. Without a clear New Media strategy from senior management, the 23 websites target a similar audience and have no clear brand identity. This not only confuses the readers with the complication of the 23 websites, but also causes unnecessary internal competition for readership and advertising revenue.

Second, operated by a separate department which is of the same size and bureaucratic level as a newsdesk that specializes in a particular subject, such as politics or economy, the *Southern City Daily* website does not have the required authority to use resources that it requires to maintain a website with a rolling news service and to adapt to the different features of the Internet.

Third, there is no evidence for a clear and coherent editorial strategy being applied to the website of the *Southern City Daily*. As a middle-market newspaper, the title has a rich legacy in providing investigative journalism, exposure of corruption and wrongdoing. In order to obtain quality journalism, the operation of the website requires a significant amount of investment in frontline journalism and technology. There is no evidence of that a similar concern exists in the editorial and management team of the *Southern City Daily*. In contrast, the strategies applied by the *Guardian* to extend its quality journalism to its website was to enhance the website coverage of news analysis, content and investigative reports through its "Comment is Free" project and the "open journalism" project, both of which are illustrated in Chapter 5.

To sum up, the approaches that different news organizations take to change their newsroom structure are based on the recognition of the established newspapers' brand identity, reputation, editorial principles and newsroom culture. What has to be addressed is that full integration is not necessarily the only way of adopting Internet technology by any news organization.

## Chapter 8

# HOW NEWSROOM CULTURE IS RELATED TO THE WAYS IN WHICH NEWSPAPERS IN CHINA AND THE UK HAVE RESPONDED TO TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES

### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters have examined the commonalities and differences between British and Chinese newspapers with regard to how the development of press journalism in the two countries have been brought about by the complex interplay of social, economic and political factors. They have, moreover, questioned whether the development of communication technologies has been homogenizing press journalism in the UK and China, producing greater commonalities to or differences between Chinese journalists and British journalists in their approach to work. To answer this, the textual products of four newspapers in the UK and China were first compared to discover whether they have been producing similar online content to fulfill Internet's features, such as hypertextuality, interactivity



and multimediality and immediacy. Then selected samples from the on the online and offline editions' of newspaper were compared to identify the commonalities and differences between the two editions. Following that, Chapter 7 compares the changes of organizational structure among the four selected newspapers and how they are related to the finding of the content analysis.

This chapter in further aims at investigating how journalistic practices, skills, standards and newsroom culture have been changed due to the newspapers' response to the development of communication technology and whether Internet technology and New Media innovations have been homogenizing press journalism in terms of how they have define the notion of their crafts and how they practice their journalistic values.

Besides empirical data collected from the interviews, the arguments in this chapters have also been drawn from

1. the historical reviews of press journalism in the two countries (see Chapter 4);
2. the contextual background for newspapers' adoption to Internet technologies and New Media innovation (see Chapter 5);
3. the review of what scholarly work and secondary documents have been written about the journalistic tradition, existing newsroom culture, organizational structures and new media initiatives of the four selected newspapers(see section 5.3)

Specifically, this chapter aims to answer two questions in the two countries:

1. how journalistic practice and values have interacted with the social and technical dimensions of the Internet;
2. what kind of cultural negotiation has been made in the newsrooms as responses to the change of organizational structure and journalistic practice.

## **8.2 HOW JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE AND VALUES HAVE INTERACTED WITH THE SOCIAL AND TECHNICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE INTERNET**

### **8.2.1 General Attitude Towards Change**

Interviews with editors and journalists from China and the UK both indicate that having the Internet integrated to newsgathering and production is no longer a technical problem for them. Using the Internet as a tool to search and receive information, access to institutions, experts and files are all now part of their daily routine, rather than new skills to learn.

#### **8.2.1.1 Response from British Newspapers**

First, this study noticed that the British journalists and editors tend to respond to the development of communication technologies as an opportunity rather than challenge to keep, enhance and extend their journalistic traditions and values from the print to the World Wide Web. Interviews have shown that although most of the UK newspaper editors and journalists mentioned the change in industry ecology, due to readerships and advertisers migrating from the “old” media to the Internet, they did not regard the impact of the Internet upon traditional newspapers as a challenge or a threat, but as an opportunity for the newspapers to compete with 24-hour television news channels in providing breaking stories and rolling news services. They were more proactive in responding to changes in journalistic practice, and were equipped with top-down strategies and training. Interviews also revealed that in the newsrooms of the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*, respondents from senior management team down to the production team, were well aware and in agreement that embracing the Internet was an opportunity to enhance their brand identity, and spread their journalistic principles and editorial values.

Second, interviews also revealed that leadership and a top-down strategy are believed to be indispensable for building up a proactive newsroom culture that embraces the changes brought about by the Internet. The interviews also reflect the importance of a precise and practicable digital strategy. The digital strategy of both the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* has provided front-line reporters and editors with clear guidance in their daily practice as to how newsroom structure should be reorganized. Although the online editorial and offline teams hold parallel positions in the management structure, both the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* have introduced a digital-first strategy to their newsrooms. This has solved the continual dilemma met by reporters and editors every day over where and when to publish. A managing editor of the *Guardian*, Elisabeth Ribbans, described the digital-first strategy initiated by her newspaper in 2011 as a change of mind or attitude that is the-state-of-the-art since it gives the newsroom a shared understanding of how the *Guardian* staff see themselves as an organization and how they rate their priorities and resources.

In addition to the overall organizational strategy, the attitude or preference of middle level management and the editorial team are also essential for the transformation of the traditional newsroom. One example was observed in the *Daily Mail's* newsroom: after seven years of operating the MailOnline and the *Daily Mail* separately, the news organization launched a “leader sheep” project, which merged the online and print production teams for the sports section into one integrated team. It was called the “leader sheep” project, because the amalgamation of the two sports sections was intended to test whether a full integration of the online and offline teams would better fit into the news organisation’s future development, and, lead other “sheep” along the same path, if so. With a total of 150 staff, the management team is led by the Head of Sport, Lee Clayton, supported by one online editor and one print editor. Clayton said in his interview that “as the head of the team, once I stood on one side of the two teams, that team would be the priority. Therefore, I stand on the side of online, and everyone in my team knows that online is our priority.” (Interview No.32)

Third, there is no sign that British reporters and editors are having difficulties in redefining their self-identity. There is no evidence from the author’s interviews with the UK editors and journalists to indicate that journalists working for the website are regarded or self-perceived as being marginalized or less important

than the newspaper journalists. In general, the UK reporters, editors and online production teams reaffirmed that the primary mission of their newspapers' websites was to deliver information, enhance their brand and editorial values, and to extend the authority of the print newspaper to the website as a trusted platform, accessed by readers for the same reasons that they would have read the parent newspaper.

Fourth, the UK reporters, editors, online news producers and mobile/iPad editors are more spontaneous about retaining the traditional journalistic principles and editorial values which are deeply rooted in their news organizations. Although the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* have distinctive journalistic traditions and newsroom culture, they are similar in terms of keeping to the journalistic practice which has proved successful, rather than create a different journalistic style for their online team. Lee Clayton used the sentence "loyal to the newspaper, and being part of the change" to describe his survival tip for reporters and journalists who have gone through the transformation from a traditional newsroom to the new online world. His emphasis on loyalty meant that the *Daily Mail's* online strategy was to extend and utilise the type of journalism that the news organization has already found successful. As Clayton noted, there is no sign that journalists and editors are suggesting improvements for the journalistic values and integrity that distinguishes their news organization from the rest. The *Guardian* also stated that its New Media initiatives aim to make its serious journalism accessible to readers wherever they are, and to support the growing digital revenue as the organization responds to various online opportunities employing the same journalistic practice and values as the *Guardian* newspaper had been doing for years.

This means that, in the newsrooms of the *Daily Mail* and the *Guardian*, when journalists are asked to write for the online platforms, they still feel that they are serving the same recognizable brand and journalistic values, and therefore experience a higher sense of achievement in their work.

### **8.2.1.2 Response from Chinese Newspapers**

China, however, is completely different. Interviews with the Chinese editors and journalists revealed that they were under greater pressure in terms of profitability

and professional recognition, as well as from the change of practice and journalistic values. Many of them admitted that they find that fulfilling their mission to inform the public was becoming more and more challenging. Although the Chinese interviewees had not encountered any technical difficulties with having the Internet so deeply embedded in their work and life, they felt that their job satisfaction had been significantly reduced.

On top of the pressures for newspapers in competing with 24-hour television news, their news routines have been further accelerated by social media. Both Chinese and UK reporters and editors admitted that they were under pressure of losing credibility. They all mentioned that there was an expectation for online journalism to be immediate, open and diverse. As a former editor of BBC Current Affairs, Tim Suter, observed (Interview No. 28):

If a news organization doesn't appear to be moving at the same speed as the event, then it may lose credibility. If a story has already happened, has broken and different websites have already started running the story, using certain parts of the material, then an organization like their newspaper is not going to publish that piece of information or is not running that story, it looks like it is not a proper news organization.

However, the challenge from social media to the traditional media's authenticity is even more an issue for Chinese newspapers than for the UK titles. It was apparent from interviews that there was a deeper concern among Chinese editors and journalists, particularly those who had been influenced by, or had trained in, Anglo-Saxon journalistic traditions. While claiming to be institutions who inform the public and are funded as a commercial enterprise by advertising, Chinese newspaper organizations are still under the administrative control of the CCP. Newspaper journalists in China admit that they find it increasingly difficult to compete with social media and news portals for speed, reach and impact, while constantly having to check the Party's agenda guidance on a daily basis, at the same time as considering the editorial value of the news stories.

Regarding the impact of social media upon traditional journalistic practice and newsroom culture, Niu Siyuan, a journalist from the *Southern City Daily* explains that:

Social media, in particular the Chinese equivalent of Twitter, Microblog, has spread in China at an incredible speed and scale. By 2012, there were 309 million Microblog users registered in China and anything they post will be instantly public. Government wrongdoings and corruption can be instantly exposed through social media. That has empowered the grassroots significantly, and acts as a check and balance to power. Social media are gradually replacing the traditional media's authority and credibility as to informing the public, and has become the most powerful tool that pushes Chinese society into becoming more aggressive, transparent and open.

He also gives an example of how instant and powerful social media can be in terms of creating positive social impact:

The Director of the Shanxi Provincial Administration of Work Safety was nicknamed 'Watch Uncle', after news photos showed him smiling at an accident site in 2013. Within just one day of the photo of him smiling at the tragedy being exposed online, more photos of him wearing different luxury watches came out online through crowd sourcing. A public servant who supposedly should not be able to afford this was accused of corruption by the public, and within a month he was prosecuted. This is just one of many examples of how social media is pushing the government into being more transparent and open. In comparison, we can do much less, and our response is much slower than the social media. Very often, news was no longer news when we were permitted to publish it, and the stories had already been dug and analyzed from every possible angle online by amateurs.

Social media in China have empowered the public to demand social fairness and transparency and has meanwhile accelerated the erosion of Party journalism and their self-perception.

## 8.2.2 Changes of Journalistic Practices

Newspaper content may be seen as the result of an organized and professional routine, limited by time, space and layout. However, these organizational factors and priorities have changed since newspapers have had to produce content for both online and offline platforms. The once or twice-a-day deadline has been replaced by rolling deadlines, and at the same time there is comparatively unlimited space on the websites for journalists to fill. In addition, they have to consider tactics to increase the ease of navigation for readers on the layout of the newspaper's website. This section therefore analyses

1. to what extent the newsroom culture in the four selected newsrooms has changed due to the shift of organizational structure;
2. to what extent the change of newsroom culture is related to the social and technical dimensions of the Internet.

### 8.2.2.1 Rolling Deadlines

Before the proliferation of alternative news consumption platforms, a newsworthy item that best fits into the rhythm of a newspaper's deadline had a higher chance than others to be picked up by print journalists. However, immediacy is one of the Internet's most significant attributes, and this characteristic has given the public an expectation for the Internet news platforms to provide instant coverage of breaking news, respond to events, offer real-time commentary, and provide analysis and in-depth stories in a much faster news cycle. In addition, the availability and popularity of affordable smartphones in the UK and China have further speeded up the news cycle, since content strategy for publishing on smartphones and tablets applications relies even more heavily on continual updating.

However, the interviews revealed that the four selected newsrooms have made different efforts to embrace the Internet's characteristic of immediacy and the opportunities provided by the popularity of smartphones and tablets. The two British newspapers both consider themselves in competition with 24-hour television news channels, online news portals and social media platforms in terms of

providing trustworthy, original and immediate news stories. Unlike the Chinese editors and reporters, who emphasized the change of newsroom culture more from the perspectives of journalistic values and storytelling skills, interviews with the two British newspapers showed a stronger reaction towards the changes resulting from rolling deadlines.

Interviews with the British editors and reporters revealed that the key elements of when to publish and on what platform to publish held the highest priority for them. Tal Gottesman, the Deputy Managing Editor of MailOnline, pointed out that the rolling deadline was the most significant difference between working for the print and online teams (Interview No. 21):

I don't think that the newspaper [the print team of the *Daily Mail*] has really changed the way it works; it's just that Online is getting bigger and bigger, and we work in a completely different way, obviously, because the newspaper has one deadline every day, and we have a deadline all the time.

She also said that (Interview No.21):

Every time [when] some reporter is working on a story, the publisher is waiting for that story, we're thinking. How long is it going to take him to finish writing? How long is it going to take till the pictures are finished? Whereas for the newspaper, they know that they're going print at the same time every day.

Lee Clayton, the Head of Sport at the *Daily Mail* and MailOnline, expressed the same feeling, and when asked how he worked with the two editors from the online and print teams, he stressed that he had the ultimate responsibility for the decision on timing, rather than the decision on what to publish. He said, "We constantly work closely to decide when to publish". He also gave an example of the tension that reporters and editors live with, and how the atmosphere in the newsroom has been changed by the rolling deadlines (Interview No. 32):

When we just worked for the print newspaper, the most exciting time to work on the sports desk was during a busy match time. One night,



Arsenal was beating Tottenham 4:2. They had played for 90 minutes, the game was almost over. Everyone was watching their watches, the newspaper was set, headline, pictures, words, and we were ready. Then Tottenham scored 4:3 and again 4:4. We had to tear up everything three minutes before the deadline. Now we are producing content for two platforms and it is like this every single day.

As Clayton and Gottesman noted, unlike the traditional newsroom, where the editors have a fixed deadline to meet, and therefore only worry about the speed issue once a day, the editors and reporters of the newspapers' online platforms have to make rolling decisions on a minute-by-minute basis. Interviews showed that the two British newspapers realized that they had to develop more precise tactics and timing arrangements to enable traditional print journalism to compete in the online world. The interviews indicated that having an online presence and news applications as extensions of their print titles, the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail's* newsgathering and production teams have to consider the following timing arrangements:

1. when to publish stories on their websites that also appear in the print version;
2. whether to keep exclusive stories for the website and, if so, when to publish these as an online exclusive;
3. how to respond to breaking news promptly.

However, the interviews also revealed that among the editors and managers of the two British newspapers, the answers to these three questions were based on their attitudes towards two balancing acts in newsroom culture; the tension between speed and accuracy, and keeping a good balance between online traffic and print circulation.

### ***The Tension between Speed and Accuracy in a Newsroom with Rolling Deadlines***

It is argued that the online competition for speed may sacrifice the quality of professional journalism, and accuracy in particular. With a rolling deadline,

reporters and editors are constantly under pressure to respond quickly and accurately. They cope with the tension between being fast and being right by providing guidelines about the precise timing arrangements for online news by assessing it on a minute-by-minute basis.

Both British and Chinese reporters admitted that there was a dilemma when they had to compromise between speed and accuracy. The most frequently mentioned scenario was during riots or major events. At those times, the online teams have to digest a huge amount of information and very often some of that information already exists on social media and has been widely disseminated. Both British and Chinese journalists would then ask a series of questions, such as “Which piece of information can we use?”, “How do we use that information?”, and “What do we know about this piece of information?” However, when considering the answers, the British print journalists from quality newspapers, such as the *Guardian* and its website, would only need to compromise between accuracy and speed, while the two selected Chinese newspapers would need to consider the political guidelines and official tone, as well as the other journalistic principles imposed on them. Tim Suter, a former BBC Current Affairs Editor, observes that (Interview No. 28):

The decision on when and how to use the picture of the man with blood — in a television environment you have quite a lot of time to make that decision and quite a lot of control on how those pictures will be used. In an online environment, you have less time, because the pictures are out there and there are people looking at them from their mobile phones [and] computers, so you have less time and you have no control over the environment in which they are looked at. On television, we can say, we will show them at 6.00 p.m. and at 10.00 p.m. Online, you can't make that decision. There are challenges about how you use the material that are complete different online and on conversational media, because they have different degrees of control over the way the material is going to be used. So that is a challenge.

Interviews with editors, reporters and managers from the four selected newspapers, particularly with the two selected British newspapers, found that the difficulty of balancing speed with accuracy was more of an issue for an integrated

newsroom with reporters covering for both online and offline; but if the online and offline operations were separate, the best balance between speed and accuracy was mainly determined by how far the website trusted the source of a story.

As shown in the content analysis in Chapter 6, the *Guardian*'s website runs almost the same news agenda as the newspaper, while MailOnline carries a significant amount of content exclusively for the website. In Chapter 7, this difference was shown to be the result of different newsroom structures. The *Guardian* was found to have an integrated newsroom, with online editors and print editors commissioning stories from the same group of reporters. This newsroom structure is seen as a way of expanding, while retaining as far as possible the journalistic values that the brand has already created online. The *Daily Mail* and MailOnline have separate content production teams, which enables the online team not to concern itself about the print title at all, but to concentrate on what will attract traffic to its website. As mentioned by the Editor of MailOnline, Martin Clarke, having a different group of journalists who just work for the website is quite unusual, since most newspapers tend to get the same people producing content for both; however "that has been a very good thing for us since it means we can specialise in producing content for the Internet and do not need to worry about what the paper wants" (Interview No. 31).

By looking at the contribution and originality of the content on MailOnline, it is not difficult to understand why, for the editors of MailOnline, it is a good thing just to produce content for the Web with the pressures of a rolling deadline and the tension between speed and accuracy. The content on MailOnline is a combination of four categories:

1. what the newspaper covers, written and edited by the print team;
2. follow-up stories if what have been published on the paper as they develop during the day;
3. exclusive stories which cannot wait for the next day's paper;
4. exclusive content which would not be published in the paper.

The interviews found that because the MailOnline has newsgathering and production teams that operate separately from the print version, it does not need

to only rely on the *Daily Mail's* print reporters but can also account on local and global agencies and freelancers for breaking news. As the Deputy Managing Editor of MailOnline, Tal Gottesman, said (Interview No. 21):

Certainly newspaper reporters can phone our newsdesk and our newsdesk [will] tell them if something is going on. There is certainly communication between editors on the paper and editors online ... The online editors are mainly office based. They make calls to news agencies and freelancers about things on the phone, but they don't really go out on stories, they don't really have time.

Gottesman also observed that the social media, particularly Twitter, are also platforms which the editors watch closely in order not to miss breaking news (Interview No. 21):

I find Twitter a really good way of looking up the very latest news. A lot of news organisations, like Sky and the BBC, have really fast breaking news Tweets, and it's always good to keep an eye on it.

Content analysis and interviews revealed that the news sources for MailOnline are mainly:

1. the *Daily Mail's* print team;
2. local and global news agencies and freelancers;
3. social media platforms.

The editors of MailOnline therefore rely heavily on the print team, news agencies and regular freelancers for accuracy, and are only responsible for source checking on the breaking news that they pick up from social media platforms. This removes a significant amount of pressure from online editors on a daily basis when they have to compete over speed. The interviews with the editors of MailOnline echoed this conclusion. They admitted that greater priority has been given to speed, rather than source and accuracy checks. Ted Thornhill, senior reporter for MailOnline, with over ten years' work experience at the Mail on both print

and online teams, pointed out the difference in priorities between working for the print and online platforms as (Interview No. 20):

Reporters put greater emphasis on getting original quotes and accuracy [on the newspaper], while more emphasis is put on speed and responding to events when they are happening online.

Thus, with separate teams for its online and print operations, the example of the MailOnline/the *Daily Mail* illustrates that in order to report and edit both quickly and accurately, it is important, first, to have a reliable network of freelancers and news agencies to feed stories with freshness and newness, and to commission digging out new stories and facts; second, it is essential to have a good and effective communication between the online and print teams; and, third, it is beneficial if editors are careful to cross-check the various social media platforms on breaking news.

In the case of the *Guardian*, which has an integrated news production team, with reporters covering for online and offline outlets at the same time, the acceleration of the news cycle has left the pressure of developing stories quickly and accurately to the group of reporters who have to respond both to the online rolling deadline and the once-a-day print deadline; while the online editors are responsible for editing and presenting the stories in an accurate and timely manner on the website. The online news editor of the *Guardian*, Jonathan Haynes, admitted that when working side-by-side with the offline editors, the most significant difference between their focus is that for him (Interview No. 23):

It is a constant revolving set of news in terms of the timing factor [which is much more important], whereas the paper is looking for the more definitive. Freshness and newness is more important to me than it would be to the paper editors.

Thus, for the *Guardian*'s reporters and editors, the pressure of developing stories quickly, without sacrificing the *Guardian*'s reputation for in-depth and investigative journalism, is also paramount. However, unlike the MailOnline, which eases the tension by relying heavily on communication and story-feeding from print reporters, freelancers and news agencies, what the *Guardian* has developed in

particular is the presentation of “broadcast news” or, in other words, “live news blogging”.

By conducting live reporting, the *Guardian* tends to move at the same speed as the development of the story, similar to the live broadcasting news channels and wire services. Jonathan Haynes compared his job as the web news editor of the *Guardian* with his previous work as news editor for the Press Association. He observed that both positions required a strong ability to respond to live breaking news and move with the story as it developed in real time: “Working for a wire service, I was always working with live breaking news. As soon as something happens, you need a story on it, so that’s exactly the same as the Internet, really” (Interview No. 23).

He also explained how live reporting works in the newsroom of the *Guardian* which requires reporters to feed all platforms. The first news meeting each day is held at 09:15 and is attended by both online and offline editors, though it is primarily web-focused. The online and print editors go through what is happening during the day and will focus more on how the online editor wants reporters to cover these stories live. The later 12:00 news meeting is more about non-live stories being worked on by the *Guardian*’s reporters during the day, week or even month. Findings from the content analysis in Chapter 6 also echoed this practice. Of the top 20 news stories selected from the *Guardian*’s website, all were picked up the *Guardian* newspaper published the next day or the day after that. Meanwhile, three of these 20 articles were reported online in a live blogging style. Jonathan Haynes said that “by live reporting, we keep updating what has been confirmed and what is unknown, and therefore the process of source and fact checking itself became part of the story and effectively avoided time relay” (Interview No. 23).

Former managing editor of the *Guardian*, Elisabeth Ribbans, gave some further details about the deciding factors in judging which story was better covered in live reporting style. She said that the *Guardian* had always looked for stories with “added value” (Interview No. 22). By “added value”, Ribbans referred to the *Guardian*’s journalistic values, represented by the brand and practised by its reporters, such as Nick Davis, Davis Lee and Robin Ellison, and others. She said that by having an integrated newsroom, the *Guardian*’s was expected to expand and get the maximum benefit from the journalism already created by the print title. Although the website of the *Guardian* contains features, in-depth

analysis, investigative reporting and comment and these genres are more easier to be produced in a way that represents the *Guardian's* journalistic value, reporters and editors cannot do every story in-depth or in these news genres. Therefore, in a daily basis, editors and reporter have to deal with many stories and events that due to their nature or the time be given, it is difficult to add the *Guardian's* journalistic value into them. In this case, the *Guardian* encourages its editors and reporter to cover them in the style of live blogging. Content analysis in Chapter 6 revealed that the *Guardian* employs the style of live blogging more often in its event-oriented stories, such as court trials, sports and music events, as well as economic and political conferences.

Live reporting is also used by MailOnline as a means to balance between speed and accuracy. The editor of MailOnline's *Femail* section, Deborah Arthurs, also mentioned the advantage of using live reporting, saying, "With online, you can constantly develop and add and respond, and it is alive" (Interview No. 19). However, in the case of MailOnline which targets a more popular market and has a significant amount of coverage on showbiz and celebrities, they have developed a rule of always breaking the "one fact" stories online first.

The "one fact" breaking stories are common in sports, celebrity and showbiz reports, in which the MailOnline specializes, and the concept refers to items of breaking news that contain only one strong fact. The Head of Sport at *Daily Mail*/MailOnline, Lee Clayton, gave an example of the website's breaking the news of David Beckham's retirement from playing football as a world exclusive on 16 May 2013. There is only one solid fact in the story, being David Beckham's retirement from playing football, and if MailOnline had waited for the next day's paper to cover the story, it might have been broken by its competitors. The story was therefore published on the *Daily Mail's* Twitter account, followed by an exclusive story on the website, and was then picked up by global broadcasters and newspapers, and spread quickly on social media; but, most importantly, all cited the brand of the *Daily Mail*. Lee Clayton explained (Interview No. 32):

For the story of Beckham's resignation, this is what we call a "one fact" story. We think it is most valuable as breaking news. Our name and brand goes global with the breaking news, and we are recognized as a serious sports breaking news provider. The circulation of the

newspaper on the next day is healthy. If we delay for the newspaper and if BBC sends it out first, we've lost everything. So if we put the story on the Daily Mail, the other newspapers would have the chance to put it in their late editions, and the BBC could run it on their evening news without citing them. If we break it online, the other newspapers or television channels will not have time to respond and check it. They have to cite us to report it. However, if there is a story that we think has the value in being held for the newspaper and make people rush to buy the paper, it is down to me to make the decision.

In addition, interviews also found that the newsrooms of the *Guardian* and the Daily Mail, both have one editor who is senior to the online sub-editors, and takes a back-bench function, rating and selecting the most important stories of the moment. The Web New Editor of the *Guardian*, Jonathan Haynes said (Interview No. 23):

I am mainly responsible for the sort of larger view of how do we cover a big story. What story will go on the website, what's the most important story at the moment? And so it's news-rank and selection. To an extent, it's a back-bench function of [who has the] right of changing the headlines, or writing headlines, on key bits of content.

Their editorial judgement is based upon their journalistic professionalism, but is more and more significantly influenced by a real-time online traffic tracking service, now available in most of the newsrooms of national UK newspapers. This chapter will later return to the influence of real-time online traffic monitoring on journalistic practice. However, it is a different picture in the newsroom of the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*. Interviews found that online editorial work in both newsrooms is safeguarded by editors who have previous print newspaper or even wire service experiences. Editors who were regarded as the "old" generation in the two newspapers are now respected by the younger generation as pioneers in embracing new technology, while safeguarding the newspapers' brand and journalistic values. For example, MailOnline is also led by its Editor Martin Clarke, who has rich print work experience, while the *Guardian*'s new media march is led by the editor of the paper, Alan Rusbridger.



### ***Balancing Online Traffic with Print Circulation***

Besides the pressure of being fast and accurate, editors and reporters in the four selected newspapers often find themselves in a further dilemma, which is whether the content they produce online will undermine the newspapers' print circulation. It is arguable that the free feeding of breaking news, analysis, investigative reporting and comment online may result in fewer people being prepared to pay for print subscription, and thus eventually undermine the business model that the modern newspaper industry has relied on for centuries. In particular, the questions of whether a story should be published on the website first or wait for the next day's paper once it is ready, and even whether to keep exclusive stories for the website to stimulate its traffic, all point to one central question: whether the growth of the newspaper website's online traffic will undermine the print circulation.

Interviews with editors, reporters and managers from the four selected newspapers found that the two British newspapers were more aggressive in terms of transforming their newsroom to a digital-first culture. While in the newsroom of the two selected Chinese newspapers, the author found that journalists were less concerned about whether the online presence of the newspaper represented the journalistic values and brand created by their newspapers.

In terms of the priority between online and print, both the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* have adopted a digital-first strategy. Unlike the web-first strategy which the *Guardian* used to have, with an emphasis on publishing content when it is ready, the digital-first strategy, explained by managing editor of the *Guardian* Elisabeth Ribbans, is more like a decision about direction (Interview No. 22):

I am very hesitant to say "priority", because although the print editor is still hugely important, commercially as well as philosophically, for our readers, it is about being available in any way that the readers want to access our journalism. And digital-first is really about an attitude in a world of scarce resources, where we actually should be aggressing and progressing. And also, from that, how we use digital to meet our other aspirations that about collaboration, open and imitating reader. We do not see the publishing of a story as the end of the process or perhaps the beginning or the middle.

Since adopting the web-first strategy in 2000, the *Guardian*, as revealed in the interviews, did go through a period in which there was a bias in the newsroom that working for the newspaper was working for the *Guardian*, or else there was no point in doing a story. The managing editor of the *Guardian* Elisabeth Ribbens said (Interview No. 22):

We used to have a situation where some reporters and correspondents were more inclined to feel [that] if it wasn't going in the paper, why were they doing it? They saw the paper as being the *Guardian*, and the website was just something else. That's changed entirely over the last few years, so there's not really amongst any of the reporters a feeling now that it's more important that it's in the paper than it is on the website.

With regard to the question of whether the free-to-view model would undermine print circulation, both the *Daily Mail* and the *Guardian* have adopted the free model approach, while other national titles, such as *The Times* and the *Financial Times* introduced a pay-wall. Interviews found that the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* both aim to attract a wider audience. As a mid-market popular title, the *Daily Mail* sells about 1.7 million copies per day, while the *Guardian*, as a broadsheet, sells only around 200,000 copies a day. Therefore, by targeting a broader audience, the *Guardian* aims to expand its journalism on a global scale, while MailOnline, as stated by Guy Zitter, Managing Director of the Mail Newspaper Group, targets a younger audience and a global audience in a more popular market with a female emphasis. He explained that (Interview No. 30):

If you just reproduce what you do in your newspaper on a free website, you're likely to cannibalise your own newspaper sales and not put on [a] new and different sale, or get a new audience. The objective of having a different consumer target is that we don't cannibalise our very lucrative and large print audience; and we do expand the 'word of the bible', which is the *Mail*, of course, into a range of new audiences, demographically, in the UK, and geographically, because, obviously, with print and distribution we are very much a UK-based brand, but with the Web you needn't be.

However, in the case of the *Guardian*, its website attracted two times more unique viewers online a day than its print circulation (see Chapter 5). In fact, its digital revenue has already started to help offset its continuing decline in income from print operations.<sup>69</sup> Interviews revealed that, compared to the *Daily Mail*, that the web news editors of the *Guardian* were more concerned and cared about how the *Guardian*'s journalism could influence the agenda of media and politics in the UK. By conducting tactics such as publishing breaking in-depth stories as “splash stories” at four o'clock on the website first, the *Guardian* could start debates before people went home and thus influence the twenty-four-hour broadcast during the evening and the next morning's BBC Radio 4 Today programme. However, the web news editor of the *Guardian* also admitted that the newspaper editor sometimes still did not like the paper to go out with everything in it having been read on the website the day before (Interview No. 23):

Sometimes the paper editor doesn't like the paper to go with everything on it having been read the day before, all over the front page, which is understandable, so we usually try and have an element of the front of the paper that's not been around until about ten o'clock at night. But we have found, often, actually doing our splash stories [at] about four o'clock in the afternoon – the old-fashioned way we would think of splash stories for the paper – it can get a huge amount of traction then, because you can break before people have gone home from work. So it can travel very quickly around social media and it can then influence twenty-four-hour broadcasts in the evening versions, and it can still be playing on the *Today* programme the following morning, having gone at that sort of time. So we kind of make sure we've got big stories of our own at points throughout the day.

Interviews also indicated that there were also circumstances when the *Guardian*'s website carries a large number of live reporting on the day, the online news editor may draw back the release or pre-exposure of the next day newspaper's big story since too much attention from the audience may have been distracted by the content of the fresh live reporting.

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<sup>69</sup>From <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2013/jul/16/guardian-cuts-annual-losses-digital-revenues>

However, more interestingly, an interview revealed that unlike the MailOnline which has a separate budget and production team from the print title, the *Guardian's* integrated newsroom has a total budget for the website and the print newspaper:

There isn't a budget for the Web, because we can only do this much journalism, because there is only this much revenue online, and there is the budget for print. There is generally a combined revenue and budget (Interview with Elisabeth Ribbans, managing editor of the *Guardian*, Interview No. 22).

The interviews with editors and reporters from the two selected Chinese newspapers found that, unlike the *Daily Mail* or the *Guardian*, the print journalists were more loyal to the brand of the print title, while still considering that writing for the newspaper's website as a burden.

An Guangxi, the former director of the multimedia department at China's *Oriental Morning Post*, observed that the development of the Chinese newspapers' multimedia strategy was based on the transformation of the newspapers' photography and graphic design department into a multimedia production centre, capable of producing audio and video content. The deputy web editor of the *China Youth Daily* also observed the trend of Chinese newspapers during their massive expansion towards hiring audio and video production teams, from around 2010.

Unlike the two selected British newspapers, which had built up their newsroom convergence by adapting the journalistic practice and values that the newspapers had created with much success, the two selected Chinese newspapers failed to establish the journalistic style of their websites, because when setting up their online production teams, they recruited mainly university graduates with little or no print experience. Thus, some print journalists often retained their articles for online publication, particularly as web-first or digital exclusives, the main reason being the lack of trust in the professionalism and editorial practice of the online editors. Dai Xikui, a reporter at the *Southern City Daily* admitted that (Interview No. 2):

I am quite reserved about having my news articles published on the newspaper's website. Since the online editors are less experienced and less sensitive to political bottom lines, they are less capable of safeguarding the political correctness of my news articles, compared to the experienced print sub-editors. More importantly, once there is a political danger, if my news article is published online, then it would be the editor and sub-editor to take the political risk, while if it is published on the website, it would be the journalist himself to be blamed.

### **8.2.2.2 Space and Layout**

In Chapter 6, this study analysed the website homepages of the four selected newspapers from China and the UK in terms of the diversity of news genre and topic, use of hyperlinks, and the adoption of multimedia and interactive elements. The content analysis revealed that both of the British newspapers had fully explored the possibilities provided by the development of communication technology to extend their journalism and to maximise the contribution of their audience in the news production and dissemination process. It found that the use of multimedia elements on the website homepage of the *Guardian* and MailOnline was significantly higher than that of the two Chinese newspapers, with MailOnline being driven by the use of pictures. The two British newspapers more often provided the completeness to an event or an argument by using hyperlinks to explore the broader context of a story. In terms of involving the audience, the two British newspapers have been providing: Contact detail/E-mail, Comment Space, Bulletin Board Service, Twitter Account, Blog Service, RSS feed, share to social media networks, Opinion Pool, Story Push/Pull function, and a reader's website account to store their favourite stories.

To some extent the content analysis found that the differences reflected newsroom culture in the four selected newspapers showed how the social and technical dimensions of the Internet had interacted with newsroom culture and caused the differences between the two countries. This section tried to answer these questions by looking at how the other two organizational factors, space and layout,

had changed and impacted on newsroom culture. With regard to the examination of the change to publishing space, this section tries to assess the awareness and proactive use of hyperlinks to extend the depth and width of a story. As to layout, this section aims to reveal the different practice in the four selected newsrooms to keep and involve the audience, to create two-way conversation, and to provide content navigation.

As found in the content analysis, interviews with the editors, reporters and managers from the two selected Chinese newspapers found little to no awareness of the benefits to online journalistic practice in using hyperlinks to provide a broader context for a story, and thus to provide a more comprehensive picture. Interviews found that there was no encouragement in the newsroom to stimulate the use of hyperlinks manually and, instead, the editors expected the back-stage technology to link stories.

Keywords and hyperlinks could also be retrieved automatically by computer programmes on the content management system in the newsrooms of the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*. In the newsroom of the *Guardian*, however, hyperlink optimization is still largely safeguarded using editorial judgement. Editors at the *Guardian* regarded the selection of hyperlinks as an important process in their journalistic work, representing the ability of the brand to compete not only with speed and accuracy, but also with depth and width. The web news editor of the *Guardian* described the shift of the role of editor from gatekeeper to curator, who have been enabled by the development of communication technologies not only to select news agendas, but to package the agenda with all kinds of information available to provide a more comprehensive picture. He said that in the scenario of live reporting, the use of hyperlink even more significantly enhanced the role of journalists as the observers of an event (Interview No. 23):

There could be a danger that you could be too focused on what's happening right now, and not drill down into it, but our experience has been that actually it allows you to be far wider and far more in-depth with your reporting. So if you are using a live blog to cover something, you can do it much easier on that, [and] you can link out to all sorts of other bits of information. If the Telegraph has done an amazing interactive that tells a part of the story better than we do,

we can just link them to that and say, “Hey, look at this; this is really good!” It allows you to become curators . . . so you’re working with everyone’s content, rather than just your own content. Certainly, it’s not stopped us from delving deep into topics; we still have reporters who go away for weeks on end and work on the story and delve around in it, and you have now the ability to do it really live as well.

It is not only the use of hyperlinks that change the daily routine and the editors’ role perception, but also the use of other multimedia and interactive elements, particularly the use of pictures and the interaction between reporters and editors with readers through comment boards. The case of the *Daily Mail* represents an extreme of how the editor’s daily responsibilities have been driven by the use of multimedia elements.

The homepage of the MailOnline is described by its editorial staff as “legendary”. The homepage on an average day is 32,000 pixels long and on a regular day, there would be 180 articles on the sidebar (Figure retrieved from Interview No.21). Interviews revealed that there are two editors for MailOnline, one based in London and one in New York, whose job is to do nothing except choose which articles appear on that list.

MailOnline has a large picture desk. The editor who worked for both the *Daily Mail* and MailOnline stated that one of the biggest differences between working for online and offline is the use of pictures. Deborah Arthurs, the editor of MailOnline’s *Femail* section, said that for the website, very often her job is to write text based on the interesting pictures and videos. With the same stories published online and offline, the website version often contains far more pictures than does the paper, as the editor admits (Interview No. 19)

I suppose the most obvious thing is [that] it [MailOnline] is much more picture-driven, massively more picture-driven; whereas the *Daily Mail*, it might perhaps have a 2,000-word story with a picture, we’ll have a 2,000-word story with up to — I mean, I’ve had stories where we’ve worked on stories with about thirty pictures.

Supported by a large picture desk, as well as freelancers and news agencies all over the world, the editors of MailOnline did not mention any difficulties in sourcing

and editing pictures and graphics. The editors of MailOnline said, “We have quite a big picture desk, and we’re able to cut, we’re able to do kind of mosaics of lots of different images and put them up and make it a bit more interesting.”

In addition, MailOnline launched a new content management system, “Node”, in March 2012. It allows the editors to view the layout of the page while editing the stories. Based on the new CMS, the technical team have developed a platform known as the “real-time analytics” to help editors to decide where the articles are to go. The editor has the real-time report on the rating of the articles that appear on the 32,000 pixel page, and he makes decisions on a minute-by-minute basis as to which article should be at the top.

To sum up, newspapers in both countries are not only enabled by technologies to produce and disseminate content in a twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week news cycle, but are also under pressure to do so, as their authority and legitimacy as a public institution for news and information rely heavily on the speed and accuracy of the content they produce. Interviews with editors, reporters and managers from China and the UK revealed that, in general, the technical dimensions of the Internet with its characteristics as hypertextuality, interactivity, immediacy and multimediality and have made a stronger impact in changing newsroom culture at the *Daily Mail* and the *Guardian*. Rolling deadlines have been introduced into the daily journalistic practice of these two newsrooms, and the changes of journalistic routine have developed a broadcasting mind-set about reporting stories live and open-ended in the two traditional print newsrooms. In addition, under the constant pressure of being fast and accurate in the newsrooms, editors and reporters from the two British newspapers found that their journalistic practices were supported by the technical features of the Internet in terms of real-time traffic monitoring, and by story generating on social media platforms.

Interviews found that editors and journalists in both China and the UK had already adapted their newsroom routines to produce content for both platforms in a news cycle which differs from the traditional once-a-day deadline cycle. However, the social dimensions of the Internet have made a greater impact on the change of newsroom culture in the two selected Chinese newspapers. The social dimensions of the Internet refer to its function in China as a balancing force to encourage social transparency, openness and fairness, and to the way in which the balancing force has challenged the newspapers’ authority and brand integrity as trustworthy



institutions aiming to inform the public, and is gradually accelerating the erosion of Party journalism in China.

### **8.3 WHAT KIND OF CULTURAL NEGOTIATION HAS BEEN MADE IN THE NEWSROOMS IN RESPONSE TO THE CHANGE OF JOURNALISTIC PRACTICE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

In the light of technological, economic and readership changes, the adoption of new communication technologies by news organizations for content production and distribution has not only changed the newsroom structure, but also the practice of journalists and newsroom culture in China and the UK. The quality of journalism in an integrated newsroom is determined by an array of elements, and yet the most fundamental parts are the skills required for excellence in online journalistic practice.

Interviews revealed that reporters and editors are still practising the basic skills that a print newsroom requires, including storytelling, page design, investigative reporting and community building, but have also developed new skills or have realized the need for new elements, such as navigation, multimedia richness, live reporting and user interaction.

Some argue that the constant pressure of rolling deadlines and the requirement for new skills will stretch journalists too far. This gives rise to various questions. Have the rolling deadlines and the requirement for a new journalistic skillset undermined the basic skills and standards of journalism? Have the accelerated news cycle and reduction in budget for investigative journalism undermined the function of public service in professional journalism? Has there also been a shift in the standards of journalistic professionalism and the criteria for excellence? What cultural negotiations have been made in response to the changes in newsroom structure and journalistic practice, while the newspapers' brand, trustworthiness and journalistic integrity are under threat?

This section tries to reflect the arguments, concerns and worries that managers, editors and reporters have in the four newsrooms and to illustrate how far newsroom culture can influence the ways in which a newspaper responds to the possibilities provided by the development of communication technology.

Defined as “a particular set of ideas and practices, by which journalists legitimize their role in society and render their work meaningful” (Hanitzsch, 2007, p.369), the concept of newsroom culture refers to “a set of culturally negotiated professional values and conventions that operate mostly behind the backs of individual journalists” (Hanitzsch et al., 2010, p.1). Although, in general, results of the interviews have shown no indication that journalists and editors from the two countries are against the idea of producing content for multi platforms or have found them technically impossible, they have revealed some of the tensions between online journalism and traditional journalistic practice and new journalism standards that have been introduced into the integrated newsrooms. Therefore, this section first concentrates on identifying the tensions caused by the development of communication technologies and in further argues how the change of newsroom culture is related to organizational structure and the existing journalistic traditions.

### **8.3.1 The Danger of the Absence of Editorial Judgement**

This study found that both in the UK and China, the role of newspaper journalists in setting up agendas for other media and the public has changed. The introduction of real-time online traffic monitoring systems, as well as the availability of instant and direct communication between journalists and readers on social media platforms and newspaper websites, has reduced the importance of the editorial judgement of journalists in setting up the news agenda for the public.

Both of the British newspapers have introduced a real-time traffic monitoring system to trace the online popularity of news articles, audios and videos. There is evidence from the interviews indicating that the editors often use the monitoring result to assist their editorial judgement as to what is important for the audience to know, and the priority to be given to a news event. The online editor of the *Guardian*, Jonathan Haynes, admitted that although the newspaper’s news

agenda was mainly based on his team's editorial judgement, but being provided with the real-time statistics, he feels more comfortable that he is making the right decisions. The Editor of MailOnline, Martin Clarke, also admitted that "print journalists are used to telling people what to think, in particular in the UK. In digital it is much more even between the readers and the journalist" (Interview No. 31)

In addition, interviews with the Chinese and the UK newspapers found that editors also use social media, as well as other online news content aggregators, to check whether they have missed anything that is worth reporting. The flow of news frequently starts in the social media and is picked up by newspapers and television news later on. Twitter in the UK and microblogging in China are sources of new stories for newspapers and their websites, and are regarded as instantly useful by journalists from both countries. However, one role of a journalist is to provide the public with factual narrative about the world beyond their immediate experience. Interviews found that editors and reporters from the *Guardian* concentrated more on providing real-time analysis and comment, in order to distinguish themselves from social media and online news aggregators.

Beside the real-time traffic monitoring system, both British newspapers have also opened a comment space at the end of most of their news stories, and this is the first time that newspaper editors and reporters have been given the chance to communicate with their audience in real-time. Interviews found that, to some extent, editors and reporters of the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*/MailOnline have reacted to the comments, not only by having conversations with readers online, but by changing headlines or other editorial content. The senior reporter of MailOnline, Ted Thornhill, admitted that (Interview No. 20):

We also do keep an eye on reader constancy and see how people are responding to the story that way as well. There have been instances where people have put up complaints about things and we've responded to it, and tweaked headlines as a result, and things like that.

Interviews also found that in the case of the *Daily Mail*, the content on its website relies heavily on freelancers, news agencies and editors, who sit in the office all

day and develop stories from the sources that they find online. The MailOnline's content-gathering team do not go out for stories and instead they make phone calls. The editor of MailOnline, Deborah Arthurs, described how the online editors develop stories in the office based on online sources (Interview No. 19):

Often, the *Femail* department call me and say, "Someone's commented on one of our articles, saying, 'Oh, this happened to me' or 'This happened to a friend of mine'", and they'll get in touch with them and take it on and do a print story, and then from that, that will go online and we'll get more comments . . . there's a partnership growing. Sometimes readers add their stories; they'll tell us something, and we can make a story out of what they've told us or sent us.

The most obvious danger of conducting journalistic practice relying on sources from the telephone and the Internet is the checking of its authenticity. However, the other long-term effect is the erosion of the ability of journalism to reflect real life, by going out of the newsroom and meeting real people.

### **8.3.2 The Danger of the Blurred Line between Editorial Content and Monetized Content**

Editors and reporters who work for the online team of the Chinese and UK newspapers are found to be less alert than print journalists to the "infection" of advertisements and e-commerce on serious news. Robert Peston, the Economics Editor of the BBC, and who previously worked for many British national newspapers, including the Daily Telegraph and The Independent, said in his speech at the 2014 *British Journalism Review* Charles Wheeler Lecture that:

As someone who worked in national newspapers for 20 years, I recall a life of constant battle with marketing and advertising departments — over the size of adverts, where they could go in relation to relevant stories, and whether we should allow certain companies to sponsor so-called advertorial pieces.

Although for the print teams of the British newspapers there seems to be a fixed, clear line between the advertising department and the editorial team, as well as journalists being alert to preventing the influence of commercial concerns on editorial decisions, the rapid development of communication technologies has provided these newspapers with more platforms on which to disseminate their content and also to monetise their content, even news. Interviews revealed that editors and reporters at the *Daily Mail* have been aware of their newspaper organizations' strategy to monetise their content, and have been proactively implementing these strategies, including traffic attraction tactics and e-commerce implantation.

Interviews with Chinese newspaper managers, editors and reporters found that the line between the editorial department and the advertising department is blurred, particularly among newsdesks that are responsible for economic and industrial related stories. A journalist covering the motor industry for the Southern Media Group told the author that "journalists covering the motor industry, estate industry, and the food and health industry, are under less pressure to cover breaking news and do front-line newsgathering, but have greater pressure to keep advertising revenue coming in through what they are doing. Annually, their work would be reviewed, not according to the quality and quantity of the articles they have published, but the number of new advertisers that they bring in and whether the existing advertisers stay.

Although both of the selected Chinese newspapers have built up their brand and reputation by producing serious journalism and investigative reporting, they have never been immune to what is now called "native advertisements". Unlike the Anglo-Saxon countries, these native advertisements are written by commercial companies or by journalists for commercial companies, and are also used by government officials and government departments to promote themselves. For journalists who are responsible for government-related stories, such as journalists who cover environmental issues and rely heavily upon the support of the government bureau of the environment to provide them with updated policies, interviews and "dirty stories". In return, they are obliged to help government bureaux to maintain an adequate positive presence on the newspaper. A journalist from the Southern Media Group, who was interviewed for this study, said (Interview No. 4):

“The promotion of government officials is influenced by the media coverage. They do not only need positive coverage, but also need as much as space as they can possibly get for positive coverage. Journalists know that there is a deal between them: the government officials will feed journalists with stories and sometimes even with well-written publicity articles to guarantee that every day the journalists will have some sort of news stories to submit to their editors; in return, the journalist will polish their publicity articles and fight for more space for them in the newspaper with positive coverage.”

Interviews revealed that if a journalist has to expose corruption, wrongdoing or any other form of negative coverage related to the government bureaux for which he is responsible, he may even ask his peers to name the negative article to avoid embarrassment. Reporters frequently do this for each other.

### **8.3.3 The Transformation of Mind-Set**

Although both British and Chinese newspapers have been traditionally structured in the same way, with reporters assigned to newsdesks and newsdesks grouped under subjects, the two selected British newspapers reorganized their traditional newsroom structure and newsroom routine around a digital-first schedule by holding joint news meetings with the two teams on a daily basis, sharing the news agenda and resources. In the British newsroom, the online team no longer suffer a lower status, and have instead held a parallel position, or an even more central one than the print team.

The change of mind-set supported by the organizational strategy and implemented by the senior management team was crucial to the success of the transformation from a traditional newsroom to one that could keep up with the rapid change of technology.

What this study has found out is that despite suffering from migration of readership and advertisers from the print to online world, and not having seen a profitable business model from their multimedia outlets, the two British newspapers have not sacrificed the quality of their online newsgathering and production or their pursuit of strong reporting and good storytelling.

The managing director of *Mail* newspapers, Guy Zitter, explained that what the *Daily Mail* does for its UK target audience is very different from what MailOnline does for its global audience. By this, he meant that, first, the website targets a younger, wider global audience with a female focus; second, it applies the newspaper's editorial traditions and experience to gossip and celebrities; and, third, the online platform differs from the print version, and therefore even the same stories require different layouts. Moreover, the newspaper group believes that duplication of the print title could raise competition between the print version and the website under the same title. The DMGT therefore insists that the layout and presentation of MailOnline is very different from that used for the *Daily Mail*. Reports indicate that there is only a 17% duplication between people reading MailOnline and Mail Plus, and those reading the newspaper (Interview No. 30). In the UK, only 20% of the online content arises from the newspaper. The Editor of MailOnline, Martin Clarke, added that the reality is that the newspaper group allows a certain level of duplication to make sure that both the print and the web platforms get exactly what they want, rather than having to compromise. (see interview with Martin Clarke).

The *Daily Mail* has been targeting women readers since the 1970s and has successfully retained its female audience since then by setting up its political line according to its target readership; the managing director, Guy Zitter, explained how they managed to do that (Interview No. 30):

Those women who adopted it in the '70s and '80s have now obviously got older, so we are really targeting mothers, many of whom are now grandmothers. It's really very simple: it's aspiration, because that's where the money is; and so if you are a young or middle-aged mother, what do you want? You want to be safe in your home, and you want you and your children to be safe on the streets, so you want strong policing. You want a decent education for your children, so clearly you want the best possible education that your taxes are paying for. You also want decent healthcare; you want your husband and your children and yourself to be as healthy as possible, and if something goes wrong, you want to believe that going into an NHS hospital is not a death sentence. You want to be able to pay your mortgage; because you are aspirational, you will own your own house, and therefore you

need the economy to be doing the right things. So if you take those aspirations of that target audience, that then gives you the political line and the content line that the *Mail* will follow. That's really all it's all about, which is really very, very simple indeed.

When considering the editorial strategy for MailOnline, the starting point was, first, who are the audience and what are their interests?; and, second, what capabilities does the newspaper have to meet that demand? The Mail newspapers found that what they have been doing as a Group very well is gossip and news about celebrities, even going back to the days of Nigel Dempster, part of the *Daily Mail's* brand legacy. Guy Zitter explained that “all we've done is gone and designed a website that is specific to the Internet. It is how you would naturally use the Internet, as opposed to how you would naturally read the newspaper with the content on it . . . these stories are focused on a younger target audience and a global target audience — and, I would say, a more popular market, and still with a female emphasis” (Interview No. 30).

Meanwhile, the *Daily Mail* made it clear that the newspaper was not making an effort to attract the younger generations that its website targets, since they believe that the newspaper cannot make someone who is not a natural newspaper reader buy the print paper. However, their emphasis has been on attracting them to Mail Plus, the *Daily Mail's* application for tablets and smartphones.called.

In addition, the *Mail* newspapers have invested hugely in front-line journalism, as Guy Zitter explained, that “in a world of content being available anywhere and everywhere instantaneously, it is only if your content is better, it is more addictive, it is better written, it is better presented and laid out, that you have any chance at all. And therefore we spend an awful lot of money on content, making sure it is as good as we believe we can get it.”

Interviews have revealed that the mind-set of British editors, journalist and managers is based on the two business models that newspapers and websites have routinely relied on. They are the advertisement/circulation model, and the pay-wall model. However, the Chinese newspapers have been moving in a different direction, with more and more discussion about financing the newspapers' content production division with other businesses, such as estate development, publishing, organizing events, and capital investment.



However, the interviews revealed that many Chinese journalists are comparatively more optimistic about their career path and the future of newspapers. They felt that the privilege they used to enjoy of being a journalist in terms of income and social status was no longer there. The income of editors and journalists who worked for the top national and provincial newspapers did not grow at the same speed as in the other media sectors, such as the online portals and the television industry. The former director of the New Media department at the *Oriental Morning Post*, An Guangxi, said that (Interview No. 6):

We burned our youth and dreams in print newspapers, again and again made efforts to make the society more open and transparent by pushing the government's bottom line. However, the impact of the newspaper as well as its financial success has nothing to do with us. The newspaper could not protect our intellectual property, while sometimes it even put us in danger of prosecution when an article was challenged.

In addition, the development of communication technologies has broadened the context of the competition between the newspaper organizations. Interviews revealed that in the UK, newspaper editors and journalists, no longer consider the 13 national titles and three television news channels, BBC, Sky and ITV, as their competitors. Instead, they increased the list of competitors for advertising revenue to include the names of Google, Facebook and Twitter, as well as online news aggregators, for speed and influence. Internet technology have blurred the boundaries that used to exist between newspaper, radio, television and online journalism.

## 8.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the change of journalistic skills, practice, standards and newsroom culture in newspaper organizations as response to the development of communication technology. It further argued the dangers they have brought to the quality of journalism. In this chapter, the author discovered that the British journalists and editors do not feel that there is a change of the understanding

of journalistic professionalism in the online newsroom. Thus, the two British newspapers have thought about how to transfer the traditional standards of journalistic practice in their news organizations into the online world. To be more specific, the online strategy and the practice implemented have indicated that they have considered

1. how to maintain the journalistic values that helped the news organization to be successful as a traditional print paper in their competition with social media, online news aggregators and the expectations from the public about the immediacy of online news reporting;
2. how to make the most of the technological development and characteristics of the Internet in terms of its hypertextuality, interactivity and multimedi-ality and immediacy;
3. how to extend their brand and journalistic values by building up and main-taining communities in the online world.

Although there is no evidence from the interviews indicating that editors and journalists from the two selected British newspapers consider themselves to have experienced increasing difficulties in fulfilling their job descriptions since their newspapers started to produce and disseminate content on multiplatforms, the interviews indicate that the requirement for multitasking, the pressure for im-mediacy, and the concentration on popular stories have created a danger for newspa-per journalism in terms of compromising the quality of serious journalism, as well as the trust and integrity that journalists are expected to maintain to legitimize themselves. For the two Chinese newspapers, however, their credibility, authority and journalistic integrity have been challenged by the social media as a balancing act to encourage social transparency, fairness and openness. In this context, the study of changes in newsroom culture found that the culture dimension, rather than the technical dimension, had had a greater impact. The interviews revealed a possible decline in journalist's self-identity, and an erosion of Party journalism in the two selected Chinese newsrooms.

# Chapter 9

## CONCLUSION

### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis identifies the commonalities and differences in the ways in which newspapers in the UK and China have responded to Internet technologies and New Media innovations. It seeks to know whether British and Chinese press journalism have been homogenizing in terms of the content they produce, journalistic practices, newsroom culture and organizational structure. It analyses what has caused the commonalities and differences. This chapter demonstrates the key findings and the contribution to knowledge and discusses possible perspectives for further research.

### 9.2 WHY COMPARATIVE ONLINE JOURNALISM STUDY?

The influence of technology on human communication has been a topic discussed widely by academics ([Allan, 2006](#); [Boczkowski, 2004](#); [Deuze, 2003](#); [Fenton, 2010](#); [Jenkins, 2006](#); [Pavlik, 2001](#)) since “theory relating to mass communication has to be continually reassessed in the light of new technologies and their applications” ([McQuail, 2010](#), p.136). This thesis therefore provides up-to-date empirical

data and a wider picture from a comparative perspective to understand online journalism in the press industry.

In reviewing the literature about online journalism, the author noticed continuous calls for observations of the latest development of the application of new communication technologies to journalism and mass media studies and a lack of theoretical work that can help to make sense of and contextualize, the empirical data collected from different social contexts. Therefore, this thesis adopted Fidler's *mediamorphosis* theory and in particular the six principles identified by him as (1) Coevolution and Coexistence; (2) Metamorphosis; (3) Propagation; (4) Survival; (5) Opportunity and Need; and (6) Delayed Adoption, as a unified way to examine and analyze the ways in which newspapers have responded to Internet technologies and New Media innovations. .

With the assumption proposed by *mediamorphosis* that mass media transformation is usually brought about by the complex of perceived needs, competitive and political pressures and social and technological innovations, this thesis reviewed the social and economic conditions, the availability of communication technologies and their influence on news consumption behavior in the UK and China as the contextual framework of its arguments. It also takes an historical account of press journalism in the two countries, aiming at including the considerations of the journalistic traditions and existing journalism culture that could influence modern newspapers' responses to Internet technologies and New Media innovations. Therefore, this thesis can also be seen as an attempt to test Fidler's *mediamorphosis* theory and a measurement of the variables he proposed that would influence the transformation of mass media.

Furthermore, this study can be seen as a starting point to understand mass media development with consideration and comparison of empirical data collected from both a Western country and Communist China. It could be seen as one of the many endeavors to "de-Westernize" media studies (for example, (Xin, 2006)). Taking account of accessibility and the time allowed for the study, four newspapers were selected from China and the UK and empirical evidence was collected from them as to what extent press organizations in the two countries have responded to the development of communication technologies in terms of the content they produce, the way they practice journalism, newsroom culture as well as organizational structure.

### 9.3 THE IMPLICATION OF *MEDIAMORPHOSIS* THEORY AND MAIN ARGUMENTS

One of the key findings of the thesis is related to the measurement of the variables proposed in Fidler's *mediamorphosis* theory. He argued that (1997) the variables that may result in the transformation of mass media include perceived needs, pressures of commercial competition and of politics as well as social and technological reasons. Thus this thesis has first mapped out the contextual background with close look at the variables.

In chapter 4, we review what scholars have written about the commonalities and differences between press journalism models and also examine the causes for them taking a historical perspective. We review the historical development of press journalism in the two countries as a result of complex interplay between urbanization, literacy rate, economic development, social movements and political interventions. The thesis argues that press journalism in China and the UK has been influenced differently by these variables in terms of when they happened and how they happened (details in section 4.2 and conclusion in section 4.3). It argues that what has underpinned British press journalism is a culture that favours conflict and debate and therefore what have formed the basic principles for British press journalism are the continuous debates about and fight for the concepts of a free press, liberal pluralism and a free market. Meanwhile, arguably influenced by a strong public service broadcasting tradition, the journalism of broadsheet titles in the UK also share a high professional standard. Yet the authority and legitimacy of modern press journalism are closely related to modern Chinese history which is marked by wars, social movements and political mobilization under the big theme of patriotism. Thus, after years of social movements and mass mobilization led by the press of the "propaganda model" Chinese journalists have first failed to provide themselves with "a justification for the profession of journalism independent of the great patriotic enterprises" (de Burgh, 2003b, p.204). Then, when China's economy has transformed to be more market oriented, open and transparent, and when privately owned news portals joined the competition as news content providers as soon as Internet technologies and New Media innovations are available, the Chinese newspaper organizations have found it difficult to justify their core missions in their new media initiatives as professional institutions

that are on one hand controlled by the Party as to their staffing in order to ensure their support to the Party and the state, while on the other hand they have to compete with commercial enterprises. Therefore, compared to their British counterparts, the Chinese press has more difficulty in extending any journalistic professionalism to the online world effectively and efficiently while the profession of journalist have still needs justifying and they also have more difficulties than the British press in term of setting up content strategies and organizational strategies which present the core commercial value of the newspapers' brand, at the same time as their commercial values are very much authorized by their political status.

Besides the differences between different models of press journalism identified in Chapter 4, the author also argues in that chapter that for three reasons, it would appear that the Chinese newspapers are now under less pressure and motivation to ensure an efficient and effective response to the development of communication technologies (see 4.2.2.4 & 4.2.2.5). First, the implementation of the basic principles for a free market economy in China's press industry is still premature and newspaper organizations have only just started their transformation from state-owned institutions to commercial enterprises. Therefore, they have responded more slowly to meet the huge appetite for online news consumption than the privately owned commercial online portals which are motivated by competition and come about in response to the force of social demand (See section 4.2.2.4). Second, with some print titles still receiving subsidies from the Party and government and with the staffing arrangements being controlled by the Party (See section 4.2.2.5), they have still prioritized political influences and social impacts rather than commercial success in their daily practices and organizational strategies. Third, benefiting from China's economic prosperity in the past decades and the significant process of urbanization and modernization, the business models (advertisement/subscription model and government subsidy model) that the Chinese press have relied on have not been challenged as much as those of the UK newspapers, for example the regional titles in the UK that have been forced to transform due to the failure of their business model that is heavily reliant on classified advertising. Meanwhile, the Chinese press has found alternative means by which to fund its journalism by investing in other ventures, such as land development, and by raising capital from the stock market.

However, all these three reasons for Chinese press having less motivation for success on the Internet are challenged by the author in Chapter 5. With the understanding of press journalism in the two countries and the examination of how it has been related to the complexity of social, economic and political conditions, the thesis further investigates the availability of Internet technologies and New Media innovations as well as its influence on news consumption in the two countries (See Chapter 5). We find that although the Chinese press have been enjoying the prosperity of the country's economy, however, both the advertisers and news readerships have been migrating rapidly to other forms of mass media, in particular television and the Internet (see section 5.1). This thesis argues that due to a dramatic growth of the Chinese television industry in recent years, with the introduction of international television formats, the advertisement revenues of broadcasters have been growing steadily and have even taken share from the print advertising spend. It is very likely that the Chinese press will soon have carefully to reconsider their business models and will in the near future be driven much more significantly by their commercial success online. We also discover that press industries of both countries started to respond to the development of communication technologies at almost the same time and, by making a close examination of the four selected news organizations, it was found that they have both responded to the development of communication technologies by rearranging their organizational structure, by re-organizing daily journalistic work and with their remarkable new media initiatives (see section 5.2).

In addition, although examining from the macro level, press journalism in both China and the UK has been challenged by the development of communication technologies for its authority, credibility and integrity, and in Chapter 5 we also identify the differences between newspapers in the two countries from a micro level in Chapter 5 by examining the four individual cases. We find in Chapter 5 that beside the macro social and economic conditions as well as traditional journalistic traditions discussed in Chapter 4, the micro level of newsroom culture, journalistic practices and newsroom structure have also impacted upon the transformation of individual news organizations. Therefore, later in chapter 5 the author closely examines the development of the online journalistic practices of the four selected newspapers, the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* from the UK as well as the *China Youth Daily* and the *Southern City Daily* from China. After identifying the micro level of journalism traditions, newsroom cultures, new

media initiatives and brand values of the four selected samples, the author further investigates how they have responded to the development of communication technologies and how the complex interplay at the micro levels of organizational structure, newsroom culture and journalistic practices have influenced the ways in which they have responded to technological changes. The *Guardian*, which has a unique form of press ownership and claims to serve the public interest and be faithful to its independent liberal journalism tradition, is different from the other sample selected from the UK, the *Daily Mail* which is clearly more profit driven in terms of its business model and more popularized in terms of its content (see section 5.3.1). With the Scott Trust declared “a subsidiary interest in promoting the causes of freedom in the press and liberal journalism”, the New Media initiatives took by the *Guardian* are its “Comment is Free”, “Open Platform” and “Open Journalism” projects which are all an extension of its liberal tradition online. Yet, the new media initiatives taken by the *Daily Mail* start from its acquisitions of online classified advertisements which used to be the main source of funding for its journalism in local titles owned by the Mail Group (see section 5.3.2). By learning and embedding the nature of the Internet companies into its traditional organization structure, the *Daily Mail* has, as would be expected from its reputation for aggressiveness, extended its populist approach from its print title to the online world. In addition, the set up of MailOnline was separated from the *Daily Mail* as an organizational strategy at the outset. However, the twists and turns that the two Chinese newspapers have experienced are much more complex than the two British titles. Both proved to have a tradition of investigative journalism, the *China Youth Daily* and the *Southern City Daily* are both directly or indirectly controlled by the Party and the government in the areas of their editorial policies, business models that are encouraged and staffing of their editorial as well as management teams (see section 5.3.3 and 5.3.4).

Having understood the journalistic traditions of the four selected newspapers, in chapter 6, the task was to investigate whether Internet technologies and New Media Innovation have influenced the four newspapers similarly or differently in terms of the content they produce. The author first compares the online presence of four selected newspapers in China and the UK as to their homepage design, content diversity, use of multimedia elements, source and originality, interactivity and updating speed, with the aim of identifying the commonalities and differences between them in response to the Internet’s characteristics such as hypertextuality,



interactivity, immediacy and multimediality. The second exercise of content analysis examines the similarities and differences between the print edition and the online websites of the four selected newspapers. These two exercises of content analysis find that the two British newspapers have been much more advanced in the convergence of text, image, graphic, audio, video, user generated content and hyperlinks to package their online content strategy and tell individual stories. The *Guardian* has shown a strong inclination to take advantage of the Internet's feature of breaking the traditional territorial restrictions. Its online site has concentrated more on international news and in-depth analysis and providing opinions. The *Daily Mail* has taken a different approach by also targeting both domestic and international audiences but by providing a much more female oriented, celebrity driven content in the style of a print tabloid newspaper. The *Southern City Daily* has also shown an indication of taking advantage of its website's wider accessibility around China since its online site carries more national and international news than its print title which is only circulating in Guangdong Province. Yet, a more significant finding from the case of the *Southern City Daily* and its website lies in their responses to breaking news and news about disasters and scandals. The website of the *Southern City Daily* apparently responds quickly to breaking news and carries more investigative pieces on scandals and disasters than does its newspapers. Although most of the web exclusive stories are not written by its own journalists but generated as copies from other news portals, social platforms or news agencies, the *Southern City Daily* did use this tactic to enhance its brand online as a newspaper that watches power but without touching the political lines set by the Party and government that are more often applied to its print title. In the case of the *China Youth Daily*, what has been found to be unique about it is the significant increase in the number of opinion and comments pieces on its website compared to the print title, mostly contributed by its bloggers and freelancers. Benefitting from its journalistic tradition of investigative reporting, published in the print title's Freezing Point section, the *China Youth Daily* enjoys a strong position in influencing political and public agendas in China. By enhancing its political influence, the newspaper is also found in this research to benefit commercially from sponsored advertisements funded by state-owned enterprises.

Therefore, from the content analysis, what has been found in common between the British and Chinese newspapers are that

1. they have all taken the advantage of the Internet feature of breaking territorial locations to develop their online content strategy;
2. they have all paid special attention as to the identity of their online content by either emphasizing in-depth analysis or investigative reporting or turning the online site into a tabloid style

However, what have been found to differentiate them are

1. the level of converging multimedia elements in packaging online content and telling of stories;
2. the degree of interactivity of the websites;
3. the specific online content strategies that applied;
4. the diversity, originality and updating speed that their websites have provided.

In chapter 7, the author further investigates what are the commonalities and differences between the four selected newspapers in terms of the changes of their organizational structure as responses to the development of communication technology. In addition, it discusses how the commonalities and differences at the level of organizational structure are related to the findings in chapter 6. Two models of newsroom convergence at the level of organizational structure have been identified. This thesis found that with the *Daily Mail* and MailOnline, the separation of operations of the print title from the online website has at least two advantages. First, a properly set-up separated online operation with essential support, resources and funding provided, could allow the online website to develop without limiting its extent in terms of content diversity, originality, multimedaility and interactivity. In contrast, it is hard to achieve this with integrated online and print operations due to limited staff, lack of capabilities, skills, time and willingness. The findings of the content analysis (in chapter 6) have demonstrated this point. For example, with a separated online operation, more significant differences have been identified from the comparison between the print titles with its online presence; in the case of the *Daily Mail*, it is MailOnline that has the capability to run a different news agenda from its print title and presents its content with

a high level of multimediality and interactivity. Second, separated operations provide the possibility for the website to develop with less influence from the existing journalistic values and newsroom culture, and therefore, to target different demographic readerships whose interests and news consumption behaviour are unlike the newspaper's traditional readers. Separated operations also help management better to focus on the success and competitiveness of its online brand. Also, the differences identified in the content analysis (in chapter 6) between the *Daily Mail* and its website in terms of editorial style and journalistic value has proved the ability to take advantage of the potential of the separated operations model. The limitation of this model is its high requirements for investment in facilities, resources, staffing, technologies and strategic planning. The *Southern City Daily* is the example that has failed to take the advantage of having separated online and offline content production team, but finds itself restricted by its poor collaboration between the two teams and limited investment on online content production. Claiming also to have separated online and offline editorial teams, the *China Youth Daily* is actually investing heavily in its online team by asking print editors and journalists to contribute to its website. As identified in the content analysis that most of the original content on the *China Youth Daily's* website is contributed by the newspaper's print journalists and were published online first, the *China Youth Daily* has started to expand its traditional journalistic values, practices and brand online rather than establishing anew.

The other model of organizational change in responses to the development of communication technologies is the fully convergent model, represented by the *Guardian*. By having the same group of reporters, freelancers and contributors providing content for both online and print platforms, the biggest advantage of the *Guardian's* model, is as has been discussed in the case of the *China Youth Daily*, the possibility of expanding the existing brand value, journalistic practice, newsroom tradition and editorial value to the online world. What has been found in chapter 5 when we examined the history and journalistic value that the *Guardian* claimed itself to have as an brand that provides trusted, serious and independent journalism for the interest of the public, is that the *Guardian* believes that their brand the most valuable asset in itself. Therefore, the *Guardian* is in a better position to benefit from such advantages. However, this model also has limitations. The obvious one is the reduced possibility for the develop of a new type of journalism under its brand and the others include

1. a higher requirement for journalists to master multimedia skills and work under the pressure of rolling deadline,
2. a greater danger of journalists giving away their traditional role of gate-keeping and setting of the public agenda due to limited time given and real time responses from the readers,
3. a heavier dependence on efficient content management systems that do not only have a user-friendly interfaces but also allow deeper levels of sharing of all kinds of content elements for all platforms so that the same person can produce content for multiplatform with the limited time available.

Thus, by comparing changes at the organizational structure level, we have identified the following commonalities and differences between newspapers in China and the UK. What have been found in common are that

1. both newspapers in the UK and China have set up a stand-alone online operation and have assigned print journalists to produce content for multi platforms within an fully integrated newsroom;
2. both have made attempts to explore the separated model and integrated model of newsroom convergence, without any of them favouring one of two models and rejecting the other;
3. the adoption of a structural model in the UK context is more influenced by the newspapers' organizational strategies based on their brand value, journalistic tradition and existing newsroom culture, while in China the adoption of structure model is influenced by the variables at the macro level discussed in Chapter 4 & 5 and section 7.2. For example, it is influenced by the premature free market economy, the indirect or direct encouragement of government policies and a journalistic culture that still marginalize online journalism.

Yet, no obvious evidence has been found indicating that the ways in which Chinese newspapers have responded to the development of communication technologies as the direct consequence of any political intervention. However, there are also some differences. First, the nature of the two British newspapers' ownership has

ensured their earlier and quicker responses to the development of communication technologies, while the two Chinese newspapers have changed their organizational structures at a slower pace and on a smaller scale. Second, the ways in which the two British newspapers structure their online and offline divisions and staff the management teams have enabled a more efficient and effective implementation of their content strategies. Meanwhile the ways in which the two Chinese newspapers locate their online and offline physically and how they design the administrative procedures are unlikely to increase collaboration between the two teams.

In Chapter 7, we furthermore find that, in general, the blur of traditional territorial lines that limited the accessibility of print newspapers have influenced the established newspapers in the UK and China in terms of the reconsideration of their business model as well as their content strategies. However, the British and Chinese titles have responded differently. The two British newspapers, the *Guardian* and *The Daily Mail* have both concentrated on developing their content strategies based on a “free to read” model by contrast with *The Times*’ pay wall. Therefore, they have paid more attention to extend their journalistic values and principle to the online world, represented by the selection of news topics, the presentation of their content and the degree of the interaction between readers and the editorial team. The two Chinese newspapers, by contrast, did not prioritize the choice of a “free” or “pay wall” model in their online strategy but have tried to find an alternative way to fund their online initiatives and journalistic practice. Although it is also the same for British press to fund their journalism by means of other investments, in China, press newspapers were helped by favourable policies and encouragement from the government to prioritize their initiatives of transforming their business model rather than putting the emphasis on building and enhancing their brand that is central to the value of commercial press titles in a mature free economy. Therefore they have both attempted to use their online operation to raise funds from China’s stock market.

In chapter 8, we find to what extent, in the increasingly integrated and multimedia environment, the adoption of Internet technologies and New Media innovations have brought about evolution in traditional journalism skills, standards and newsroom culture in the two countries. From the empirical data collected from the interviews and the comparison between the newspapers’ print version and their

online sites, it was found that the most obvious change of skills for press journalism is related to the change from the once a day deadline to a rolling deadline. The most obvious example of the new skills that online journalism has developed is live reporting represented by the *Guardian*. Other skills include giving priority to the selection of reporting methods, such as text, picture, graphic and video/audio reporting and the skill of rewriting article titles under the principles of search engine optimization to increase the visibility of news articles online.

In the case of the two British newspapers that have both introduced the online system to track and analyse real-time online traffic for their website and individual articles, the danger of losing professional gatekeeping is more obvious than it is for the Chinese press. Although there is no evidence collected from this thesis that indicates that for the British newspapers, the online traffic tracking system has reduced the bureaucratic systems and editor's personal preferences, it has been found from the interviews with the Chinese journalists that they have neither relaxed the bureaucratic order in the Chinese newsrooms nor reduced journalists' awareness of political correctness. In the case of the *China Youth Daily* and the *Southern City Daily*, front-line journalists have not been provided with sufficient training and sufficient content management systems to ensure good online journalistic practice and excellent communications between the online and offline team. More important, they tend to be more reluctant to master multimedia-reporting skills and take greater editorial responsibility. The interviews conducted for this research also indicate a decrease of self-satisfaction among print journalists in China and the resistance from them to take greater editorial responsibility for producing content for their newspapers' online platforms.

In Chapter 8, we identified a danger, sensed from the empirical data, of the absence of editorial judgement due to the introduction of real time traffic tracking systems into the newsroom. In addition, we find the impact of blurring the line between editorial content and monetized content. The author argued that in the case of the four newspapers, although digitalization and Internet connect have provided them with greater availability of information and sources as well as easier ways to conduct interviews and interact with the readers, journalists should always be alert to the danger of sacrificing the quality of their journalism because of the increased work pressures consequent upon multimedia skillset, rolling deadlines and immediate reader response; such an environment makes it

less likely that there will be continuous investment in long-term investigative reporting and ensuring the originality of the journalism they provide.

To sum up, the contextual framework of this thesis draws on comparative journalism studies and online journalism research. Based on the *mediamorphosis* theory which argues that mass media's adoption of technology is usually a complex interplay of social, economic, cultural, political and technological reasons, this thesis provides up-to-date empirical evidence to measure the variables proposed in *mediamorphosis* thesis and compares the influence of these variables in two social contexts. The key findings of this thesis have been identified from the comparison between press journalism in the UK and China as well as from analysis of newspapers' online/ print content and empirical data collected from interviews. We find that the adoption of Internet technologies and New Media innovations by established newspapers in China and the UK are a result of complex interplay of various social, economic and cultural conditions and how these variables differently influence individual newspaper organizations depends on the existing organizational structure, newsroom culture and journalistic values. However, although newspaper organization have responded to the development of technologies in different ways in the two countries, the thesis also identifies the various journalistic practices that have been employed to extend and enhance journalism conducted by these newspapers and points of danger of an erosion of quality journalism online.

## 9.4 PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH TOPICS

Similar to other research that have looked into, the adoption of Internet technology by mass media organizations (for example, Cawley, 2003), and the rapid changes brought about by the development of communication technology have provided us with rich empirical evidence to study, yet have already changed the newsrooms, journalistic practices and organizational structures that our studies have ended up examining. The author is well aware of the limitations of the methods employed in this research as discussed in Chapter 3. Therefore, it is necessary to propose possible research perspective to help the industry to understand their practices better and to help the academia to more precisely conceptualize media's

adoption of technologies. First, with support of sufficient facilities and funding, the analysis of online content could be conducted in a wider scope with more samples collected and analysed for a more precise understanding of good online journalistic practices. Second, with the trend of convergence between news organizations, similar research could also been conducted to understand more complex integration, for example between broadcasters, that have been producing all kinds of content (text, audio and video) for all platforms. Last but not least, there is also a call for studies that from a comparative perspective, establish theoretical contextualization of mass media's adoption of technology and the interplay between social, political, economic, cultural and technological factors.



# Appendix A

## LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

TABLE A.1: List of Interviews

No.	Name	Position	Interview Date	Place
1	Wang Xinya	<i>China Youth Daily</i> , Deputy Online Chief Editor	August 2010	Work Place, Beijing
2	Dai Xikui	<i>Journalist, Southern City Daily</i>	Sept, 2011	Work Place, Guangzhou
3	Zhao Jin	<i>Journalist, Southern City Daily</i>	Sept, 2011	Work Place, Guangzhou
4	Niu SiYuan	<i>Journalist, Nanfang Daily</i>	Sept 2011	Work Place, Guangzhou
5	Chen Xi	<i>Journalist, Southern City Daily</i>	Sept 2011	Work Place, Shenzhen
6	An Guanxi	<i>Journalist, Oriental Morning post</i>	Feb 2012	University of Westminster, London
7	Xiang Mei	<i>Xinhua News Agency</i>	Feb 2012	University of Westminster, London
8	Yang Xing	<i>Editor-in-Chief, Hangzhou Daily Press Group</i>	October 2012	University of Westminster, London

*continued on next page*

TABLE A.1: *continued*

No.	Name	Position	Interview Date	Place
9	Meng lei	Editor-in-Chief, <i>Henan Business Daily</i>	October 2012	University of Westminster, London
10	Li Jingyu	Deputy Editor-in-Chief & Executive Chief Editor, <i>China News Week</i>	October 2012	University of Westminster, London
11	Li Shi-heng	Vice Secretary of the Party Committee, <i>Beijing Youth Daily</i>	October 2012	University of Westminster, London
12	Wang Songmiao	Editor-in-Chief, <i>Procuratorial Daily</i>	October 2012	University of Westminster, London
13	Luo Chang-ping	Deputy chief editor of <i>Caijing Magazine</i>	March 2013	University of Westminster, London
14	Zhan Jiang	Journalism professor, public intellectual, media consultant	March 2013	University of Westminster, London
15	Zhao Hanmo	Journalist, <i>China Youth Daily</i>	May 2012	Work Place, Beijing
16	Wei Xuejun	Journalist, <i>Southern City Daily</i>	August 2012	Work Place, Beijing
17	Xiao Dai	Journalist, <i>Guangzhou Daily</i>	August 2012	Work Place, Dongguan
18	Huang Jiangjie	Journalist, <i>Guangzhou Daily</i>	August 2013	Work Place, Dongguan
19	Deborah Arthurs	Editor MailOnline	April 2012	Work Place, London
20	Ted Thornhill	Senior Reporter, MailOnline	April 2012	Work Place, London

*continued on next page*

TABLE A.1: *continued*

No.	Name	Position	Interview Date	Place
21	Tal Gottesman	Deputy Managing Editor MailOnline	April 2012	Work Place, London
22	Elisabeth Ribbans	Managing Editor, <i>The Guardian</i>	April 2012	Work Place, London
23	Jonathan Haynes	Web News Editor, <i>The Guardian</i>	April 2012	Work Place, London
24	Katherine Le Ruez	Ipad App Editor, <i>The Guardian</i>	April 2012	Work Place, London
25	Subhajit Banejee	Mobile Editor, <i>The Guardian</i>	April 2012	Work Place, London
26	Steve Hewlett	Columnist, <i>The Guardian</i>	March, 2012	Work Place, London
27	Neil Wills	Former deputy editor of the <i>News of the World</i>	April 2013	Café, London
28	Tim Suter	Managing Editor, BBC Current Affair, RISJ Journalism Fellow	May 2013	Home, London
29	Will Gore	Deputy Managing Director, London Evening Standard	May 2013	Work Place, London
30	Guy Zitter	Former Group Managing Director, Mail Newspapers	October 2013	Work Place, London
31	Martin Clarke	Publisher, MailOnline	December 2013	Work Place, London
32	Lee Clayton	Head of Sports, MailOnline/ the Daily Mail	December 2013	Work Place, London

# Appendix B

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*(Full transcripts of all interviews can be provided for examiners on request. This forms only a part of the transcripts:)*

### WARM-UP QUESTIONS

- Please describe your routine work
- Please introduce the structure of your newsroom
- Please introduce the workflow in your newsroom

### CORE QUESTIONS

(It may vary in each interview)

- Explain the commonalities and differences between your online and offline platforms
- Explain how you manage the process of making news for two platforms
- Explain what technological support you have to ensure convergence
- Explain how workflow in the newsroom is arranged to ensure news-making for two platforms
- Explain how you balance the circulation of the physical newspaper and your website traffic. Do you keep exclusive stories for the physical newspaper?

- 
- Explain how you have had to adapt your behaviour to ensure news-making for two platforms
  - Are you aware of what kind of content attracts the most online traffic?
  - Can you explain the international success of your website?
  - What do you think about the challenges to traditional newsgathering and production brought about by New Media devices and applications?
  - How often do you get training on multimedia reporting?
  - Is there any internal guidance on your usage of social media as a journalist?

*Note: Interview transcripts/notes can be provided to examiners upon request.*

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