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DIGITAL INNOVATION IN THE VALUE NETWORKS OF NEWSPAPERS

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ABSTRACT

After decades of digital developments, we are now entering a truly digital era. Digital information and communication technology has become a naturally embedded part of the designed environment we live in. Most parts of life are today pervaded by digital products and services. Evidence of such immersion can be noted in, for instance, media consumption. This development is gradually shaping and cultivating a media environment that is ubiquitous. Such ubiquity is manifested in media's constant presence and the changes in media consumption in the purview of digital innovation. Indeed, digital innovation is not only a shift in technology. It alters existing value networks and calls for rethinking existing value perceptions. While this disruptive change driven by digitization can be found in many industries, this thesis focuses on its impact on value networks in the newspaper industry.

The digitization of newspapers started with the introduction of the internet in the 90's and soon emerged into new media innovations. While these new media innovations have not replaced existing media, they have been disruptive to newspaper value networks. Recently, the emergence of yet another digital innovation is specifically interesting when studying changes to value networks of the newspaper industry: the e-paper. This innovation (a screen technology very close to print on paper) exhibits inherent values that make future replacement of print on paper a possibility. It is therefore regarded as a very promising technology in the newspaper industry.

This thesis can be positioned at the intersection of the friction between forces to embark on a new media trajectory and forces to hang on to the established structures and control. The research question addressed in this thesis is: *How are value networks of newspapers influenced by digital innovation?* Addressing the research question, a multi method approach was adopted to gain a broad understanding of how digital innovation influences value networks of newspapers. Drawing on digital innovation literature, the thesis presents a theoretical perspective with which to understand how digital innovation influences value networks. This perspective is instantiated as a model of value network configuration. The model emphasizes the multi-layered, dynamic, dialectic, and diametrical character of value networks in digital innovation. The model is offered as a basis and analytical tool to further explore value networks in digital innovation. This tool is useful for newspaper stakeholders when entering the digital era.

Keywords: digital innovation, value network, value network configuration, ubiquitous media environment, e-paper, e-newspaper, newspaper industry

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