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Modern State of Online Media Progress: European Experience and Ukrainian Practice

This article deals with the current state and trends in online media in the European, particularly Scandinavian countries and the possibility of introducing their experience in the Ukrainian information environment.

Key words: online media, social networks, social media, new media, traditional (old) media, web journalism

The last years were marked with the explosive growth of online media, in particular, with the increase of users of social media, the most popular among them remains Facebook. This process is a consequence of the globalization of mass communication. As Ukrainian mass communication researcher Professor Volodymyr Rizun noticed: “The producers of informational products essentially implement a single role of a communicant in the system of mass communication. Redistribution of these roles leads to the transformation of the system of mass communication, and the transformation of mass communication system causes the appearance of new means of mass communication”[1].

According to the last data this network counts 901 million users in the world [2]. For today, web editions are at the different stages of development in the European countries, embrace different audience and by amount and by structure they are different in profitability and level of hardware. Numerous researches [3] confirm rapid and continuous progress of network technologies trends and plenty of new media. According to Spanish sociologist M. Kastels today we live not in the "global village", but in the cottages that are produced globally, built by order, and distributed locally

[19]. The Ukrainian Internet audience folded the 33,9% population of country in the beginning of 2012. It is the third index from the end in Europe. Therefore for exact and complete prognostication of market of online editions, finding out and establishment of progress rules, correct estimation of audience it is worth to use the experience of the leading states in industry of online technologies and development of online media. Special attention ought to be paid to social media which are closely connected with so called civil or street journalism [5].

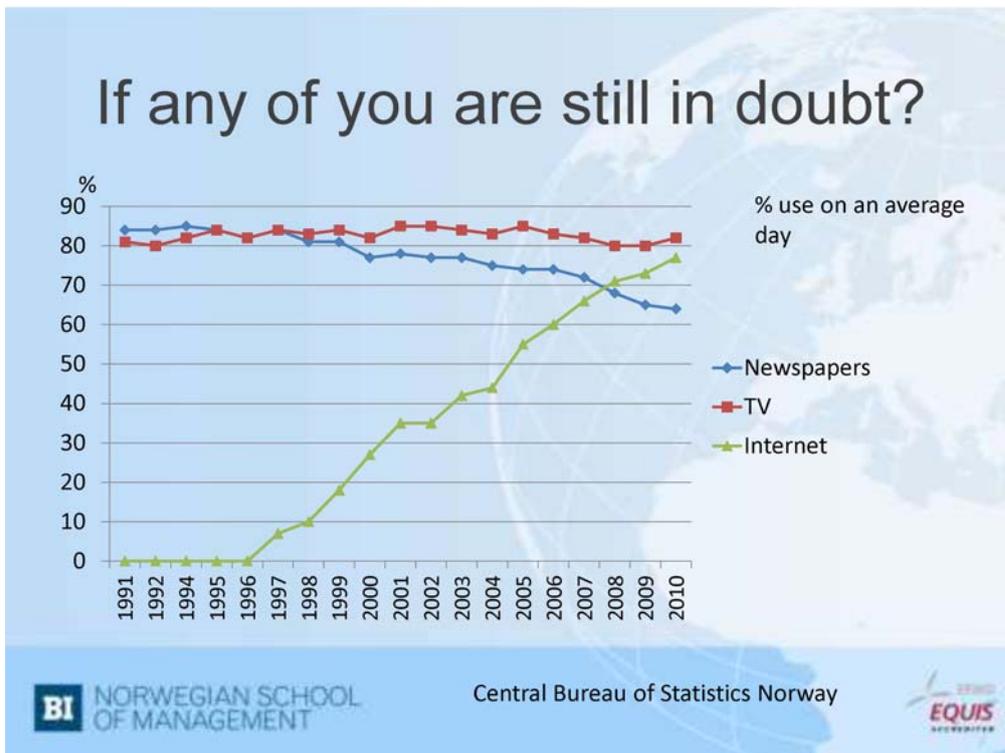
We'll refer the European countries to above mentioned countries where Internet audience forms over 90% of population or by absolute index over 50 million persons have access to the World wide web. In such countries the amount of online media is high enough and allows to see certain rules both in development of mass media and in development of its audience.

On January, 1st, 2012 the next European states (in brackets – the indicated percent of Internet audience from the general amount of population or size of audience) were fit with indicated criterion [4]: Germany (79,9%, more than 65 million persons), Norway (94,4%, more than 4 million persons), Russia (43%, more than 59 million persons), Sweden (92,4%, more than 8 million persons), Great Britain(82%, more than 62 million persons). The indicated criteria allowed to plug in this list also Iceland and Monaco, however, having regard to the common amount of population in these countries (311 000 and 30 000 accordingly), it's not worth to talk about regularities. Adding to this list of Russia can cause some denials from the point of view of development of technologies, however it does not cost to ignore almost 60 million's audience.

From this five of the states the Scandinavian countries are the most interesting for the research and comparison. They are the nearest to Ukraine by the absolute amount of Internet audience, but considerably pass ahead it by the level of Internet media and social media development. It is possible to assert that those events and regularities, which are observed in the area of new media in the states of European north, will be marked and in Ukrainian web space.

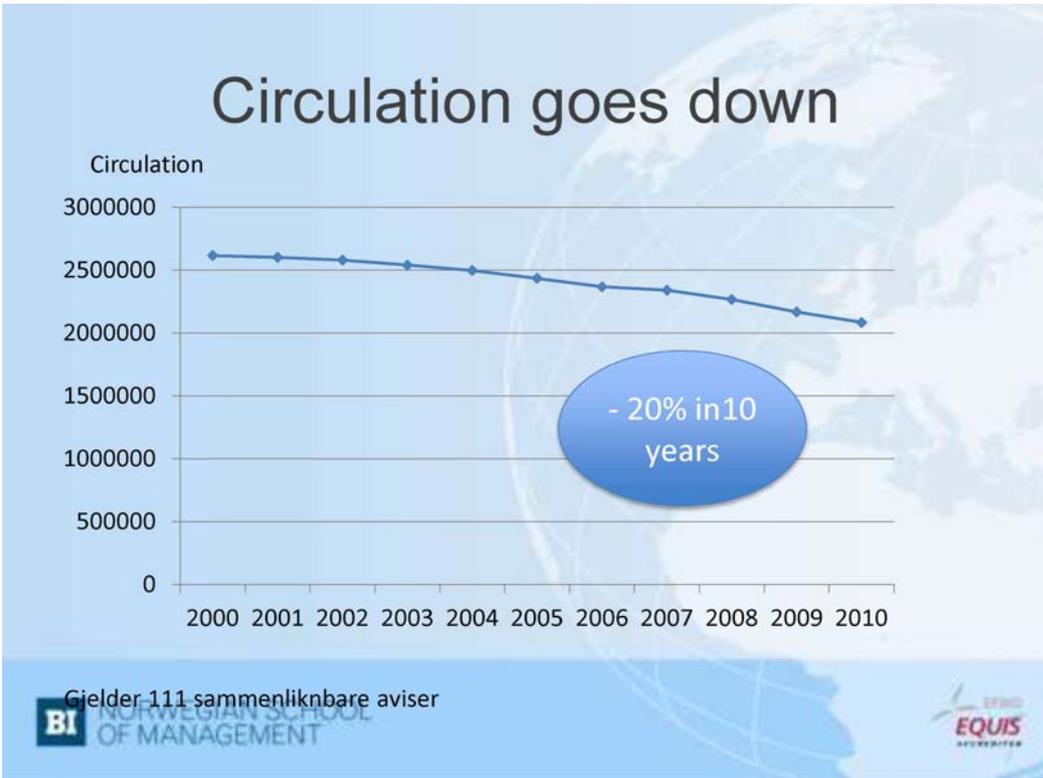
Taking into account the promulgated results of researches of Central Bureau of Statistics of Norway [6] and Norwegian School of Management [7] it is possible to talk about the swift increase of audience of online editions and social media. So for the last

20 years (since 1991 till 2010) the amount of people who read Internet media every day grew from the ground up to 77%, almost going after television – 82% and passing paper editions – 64% (pic.1). Thus it's worth to mark continuous and gradual reduction of audience of traditional paper newspapers and magazines, that for two decades laid down almost 20%.

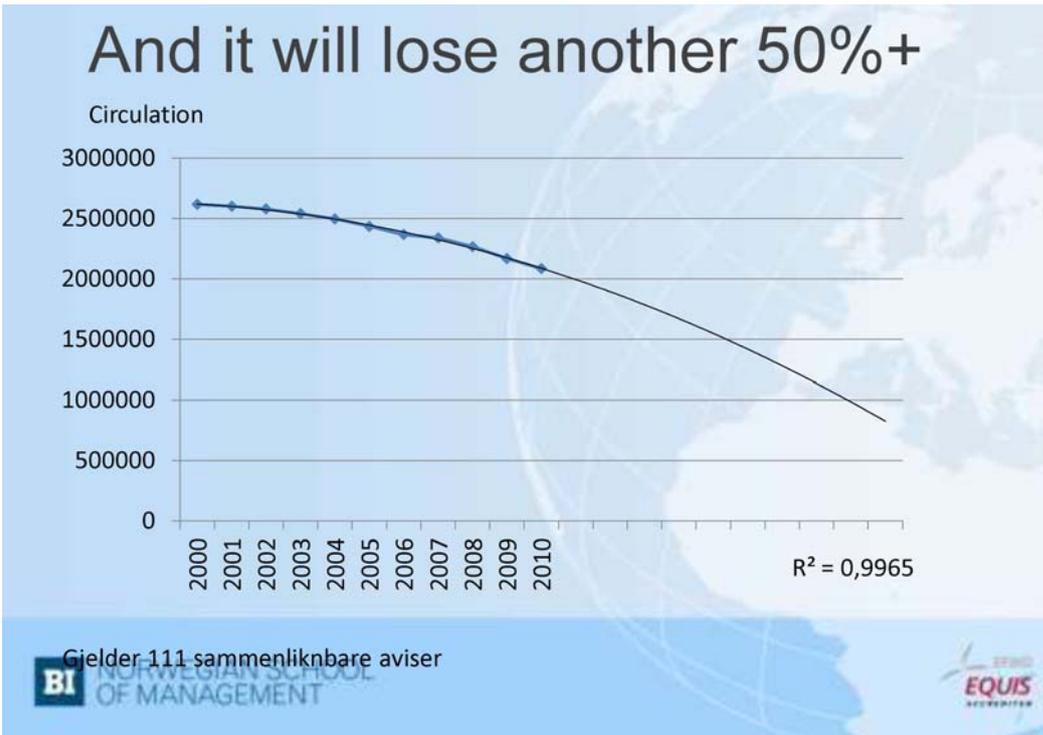


pic.1

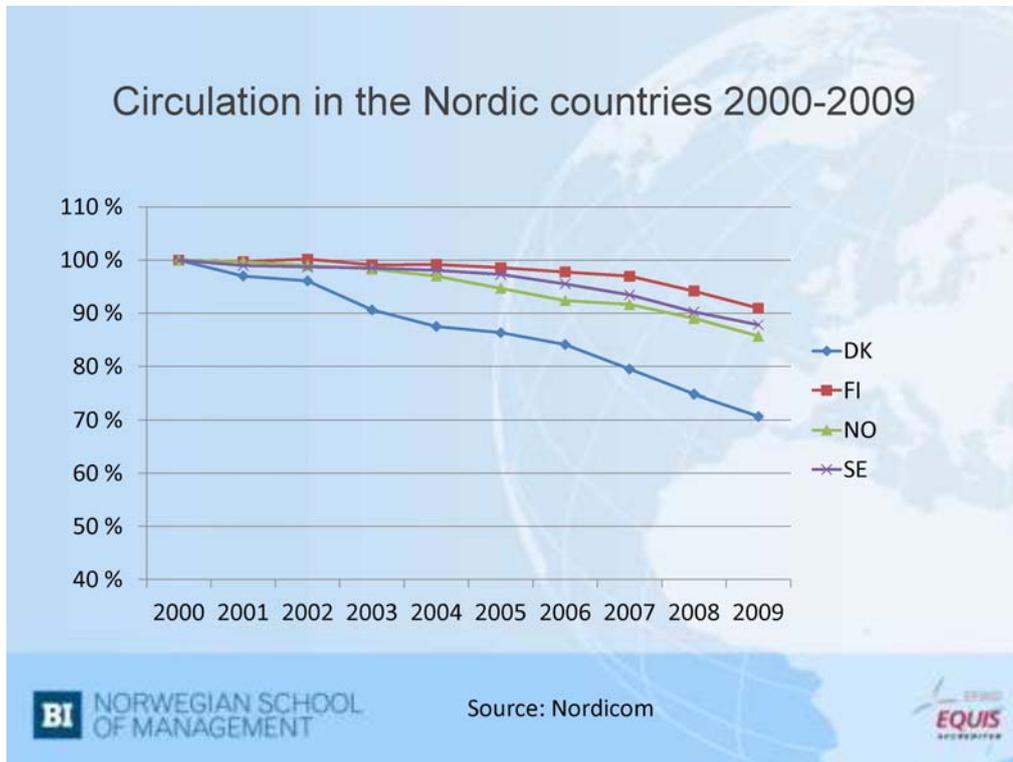
General circulation of 111 the most popular newspapers in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland from data [6], [7] grew short by 20% for the last ten years (pic. 2), and by prognoses in nearest 10 years it will grow short more than by half(pic.3). These data are confirmed by independent research [8] – falling of the paper circulation in the Scandinavian countries since 2001 reaches 30% (pic. 4).



pic.2

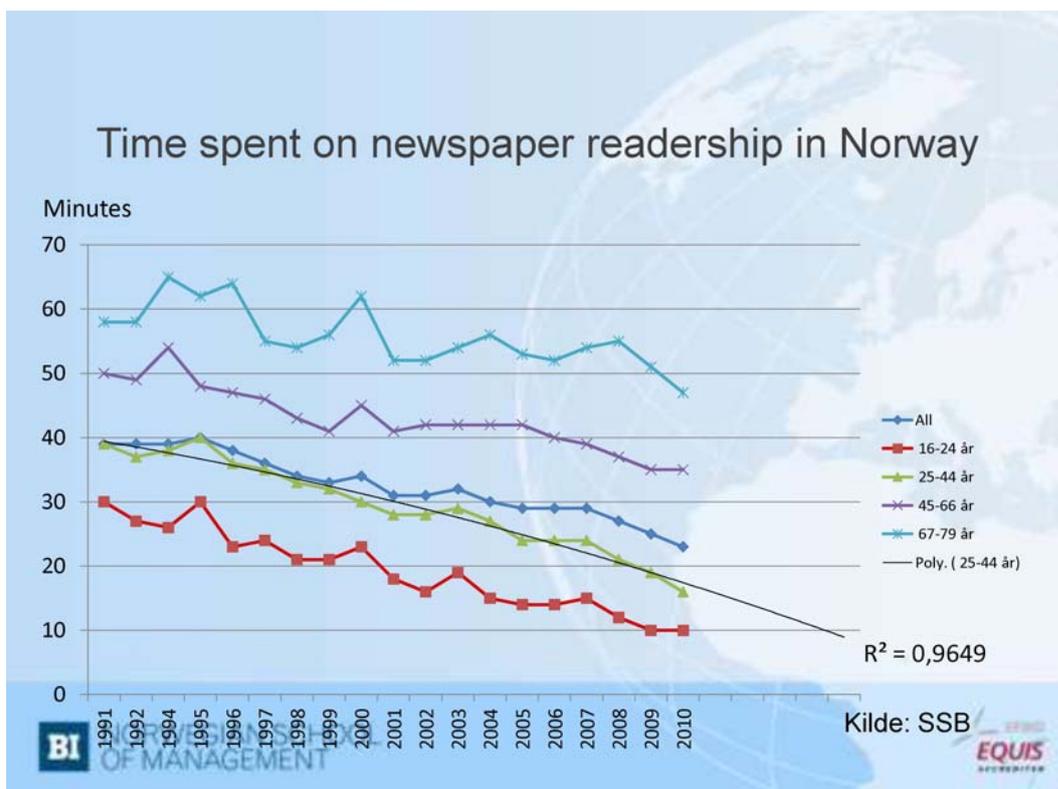


pic.3



pic. 4

For example, in Norway, one of European countries with the greatest level of internetization, during the last twenty years there is a proof slump of interest in paper editions [7]. Thus it touches all age categories of readers – from 16 to 79 years (pic.5). It is marked in diagram how many minutes per day the citizen of Norway spends for reading of paper newspaper.



pic.5

The higher brought results correlate with researches of Ukrainian audience in [9], that talks about similarity of tendencies and allows to use European experience for estimation and prognostication of development of Internet editions in Ukraine.

Analysing web market it worth to take into account such index as amount of unique reviews per a week. For leading Swedish editions it looks like the following (information is given on December, 31st, 2011) :

"Aftonbladet" [10] – 5 700 615;

"Expressen" [11] – 2 588 489;

"Dagens Nyheter" [12] – 1 614 104;

"Svenska Dagbladet" [13] – 1 171 324;

"Dagens industri" [14] – 988 203;

"Göteborgs-Posten" [15] – 467 850.

In general, 121 edition of Sweden from 171 have the web sites in the World wide web. Thus, swingeing majority of newspapers is founded as early as in 19th century.

For comparison: such leading and well-known Internet editions in Ukraine as "Ukrainska Pravda" [16] and "Obkom" [17], have according to 1 539 516 and 251 579 unique revisions. However, they exist only in electronic way.

"Aftonbladet" – the first from the Swedish newspapers declared about possibility of existence only in digital form. That is the level of incomes from the network version of edition allows to yield up printed editions. Other well-known newspaper "Dagens Nyheter" promulgated data according to which profits from traditional version and its Internet analogue are approximately equal. Under circulation of 870 000 printed copies the amount of weekly unique reviews of materials, accommodated in the World wide web, exceeds 1 600 000. But, as Peter Sigfridsson declared, responsible for digital projects of other Swedish newspaper "Barometern" [18], that is published in the south of the country - in Kalmar city and belongs to concern Gota Madia, web version of newspaper is not cost-effective, occupies charges for the existence in volume no more 50% and it exists due to paper version. In the Internet editions are viewed through only 85 000 times per a month. Therefore, for this media the issue of monetization of "web version" stands very sharply.

Question of profitability, both paper and network versions of mass media in condition of real independence of editorial policy, in our time occupy the first places on agenda. Total income of edition in Sweden in average consists of 40% of selling, and 60% of advertising (55% – paper advertisements, 5% – Internet advertisements). 93% editions, including network, are spreading by subscription. For maintenance of circulation, Swedish media use state subsidies to 30% of budget of edition in condition that 60% of materials will be own, and incomes of advertising will not be over 50% of general receivables. If to talk about the country on the whole, then the sum spent for media production makes 500 million crowns(€60 millions), and for distribution – 66 million crowns(€8 millions).

General progress trends of the press of north countries (Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands):

- tabloidization,
- free distribution,
- creation of informative portals,
- development of local TV channels on the base of publishing houses,
- new platforms,
- enlargement and monopolization,
- reduction of circulations,
- search of alternative.

For online editions are its regularities, which must be taken into account at planning of development, namely:

- 38% of events on informative resources take place by means of mobile platforms,
- 50% of Sweden population own smartphones or communicators,
- necessity of creation of site versions adapted under mobile platforms and corresponding additions(applications),
- operative presentation of news,
- new traditions in the consumption of information,
- covering locally close to reader events,
- importance of feed-back with readers that often offer new themes,

– local information collects the larger rating.

Taking into account European tendencies, being in European media, by the universal recipe of survival, including Ukrainian media, there is the necessity to be wherein your reader: in Internet, in tablets, in mobile telephones, in web and traditional radio and television, in paper.

Editorial reality compels journalists and their authorities to use NT (new technologies), new platforms and channels of information distribution, new forms of serve of material, new methodologies of search, new methods of contact with a reader, new thinking. All this leads to appearance and development of new media.

Traditional media aren't aside social networks. Lately they actively use them not only for increasing of communicative interactiveness with the audience but also as the source of information and way to expand the circle of consumers of their informative products. So, for example, the magazine "Correspondent" is widely spread in social networks. On Facebook its editorial office regularly renews four Russian pages: main news, business news, blogs and photo- and video reporting. European newspapers uses just the same method of creation of few pages in accordance with the topical rubric.

"Correspondent" has in social network the page "I am a correspondent", bringing over all users to active participation in creation of informative products. Readers have the opportunity to publish own photos, videos or text materials. "Correspondent" periodically applies to the users of network for help in collection of operative information.

Page of Internet portal of "Ukrainska Pravda"(eng. Ukrainian Truth; this informative resource was founded by Georgiy Gongadze) is one of the most popular Facebook pages in Ukraine. In March of the last year about 15 percents of readers of "Ukrainska Pravda" reached edition from Facebook.

This network resource is filled with numerous materials, considerable part of which carries critical, disrobe character: criticizes power actions and its separate representatives. Often "Ukrainska Pravda" conducts journalistic investigations which results could hardly appear in traditional media. All publications are accompanied by plenty of acute comments, due to possibility of feed-back.

TV Channels have their pages in Facebook, in particular, TV Channel "1+1". This channel every day in the morning program "Good morning, Ukraine" encourages audience to review its page and joining admirers of resource. Showing a piece of funny video, the presenter of morning on-air suggests to review it fully in Facebook.

On the web page TV channel accommodates links to the most popular programs, announces novelties, gives opportunity to put a question to well-known personalities, actively answers all appeals of users. Recently the amount of channel friends in Facebook exceeded 10 thousand users. Due to this case channel prepared special present for 10 thousandth friend.

TV channel ICTV has also the page in social networks. It offers users to get the news of channel, gifts and watch exclusive videos. For this purpose it is needed only to push the button Like. Except Facebook, the channel is presented also in Twitter, VKontakte.ru, YouTube and service of information saving – Ex.ua.

Now there is clear aspiring of traditional media to create own pages in social networks. Using social networks, traditional media receive features of social media: interactiveness of dialogue with audience growth in real-time, traditional media grows filled with not only editorial content but also information created or offered by consumers of media product.

Modern digital technologies instantly find their application in online journalism and are used, now, in all powerful editions:

- text messages in LIVE-regime (online),
- Web-TV,
- set of "survival" of reporter,
- software, vigdets and additions,
- live broadcasting via smartphone or communicator (Bambuser).

Service of Internet video broadcasting – Bambuser – deserves special attention in the context of analysed topic. This Swedish company was founded in 2007 and provides broadcasting of live video via mobiles and web cams directly in Internet. The main office of company situates in Stockholm, and its department – in Turk, Finland. Department concentrates mainly for technologies and progress and the main office runs business and marketing. Motto of company – "Live from your mobile"! Interactive

mobile video transmit platform gives opportunity to users not only to transmit video in real-time with smart-phone or unit with web cam, but also to place video operatively in social media or services of micro-blogs, such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, Wordpress and Blogspot.

In 2010 Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE had adapted Bambuser as alternative platform for its on-line and news broadcasting. It gave opportunity to company to increase the amount of "live" video on their web page, and also allowed consumers to support interactive communication with reporters in place of event. Appropriately, that due to such possibilities the Bambuser is actively used by both professional and social media, especially when it goes about such events as, for example, revolution in Egypt. To support freedom of speech and democracy, service decided to distribute the premium accounts to users with active civil position. The team of Bambuser considers that such transmissions can change the world [20].

Bambuser actively supports progress of civil journalism. So recently the users of service (1 million people in 190 countries of the world) got possibility to give video to the news agency "Associated Press". In case of using materials informagency got duty to give references of video authors – in the form of user name on Bambuser.

"Our collaboration with AP (Associate Press) has important value for us and is the natural step" – Hans Ericson, Bambuser Executive chairman, had declared. "Firstly the work of any Bambuser user can be widespread and perceived potentially by all basic media. It is the real gap for content providers, as they can distribute plots with unique shots. "

In accordance with agreement with Bambuser, AP examines possibility to use platform of live video as instrument for information search by the agency journalists. "Content created by users becomes inalienable part of hot news, especially when access to them is limited." – Mark Davis considers, AP Deputy Director of international video. " As organization in collection of news in over than 300 points of the world, AP checks up the video of users and adds them to the stream of own reports. This agreement gives us opportunity to transmit video of users for wide audience via over 700 language networks" [21].

Thus, permanent progress of informative and communication technologies transforms traditional media and causes appearing and growth of new media. They, in its turn, deepen the processes of globalization, influence life of society, distributing fundamentally new models of social integration, communication, way of life, social and political activity, education and etc. Online media affect structure of informative consumption, transform communicative system of society.

Using Internet space, in particular, social networks, gives media opportunity to traditional media to adapt oneself for new conditions of global communication environment. Accounts in social networks increase popularity of traditional media, assist growth of civil journalism. Combination of activity of traditional and new media gives the opportunity to diversify their informative products, to vary them replying necessities and requirements of consumers.

Taking into account the level of ITC growth, and online media, in Ukraine, it is necessary to watch progress of new media trends in European countries with the aim of correcting the process of Internet media growth and intensification of including Ukraine to world informative space.

To increase efficiency of using online media of Ukraine and to enlarge its audience it is necessary to promote the level of media literacy of population, especially senior age.

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