

# The Role and Functions of Social Media in Modern Society. Is social Media Worthwile for Local Media?

Sandra Murinska Gaile

Rezekne University of Applied Sciences  
Atbrīvošanas aleja 115, Rēzekne, Latvia, LV-4601  
E-mail: sandra.murinska@inbox.lv

**Abstract.** *The purpose of this article is to explore if the social media are worthwile for the local media. Currently, all types of the mass media under the influence of the social media experience changes caused by the technologies in the processes of obtaining and consuming the information. The article reveals the representation of the local media of Latvia in the electronic environment, mainly in social networks.*

*The use of social media is analysed in the context of theory of innovations diffusion, considering social media as a novelty in the local media space. The empirical research has revealed that the local media do not implement all the advantages which are possible to develop within the digital environment. First of all, at the level of interactivity, the media do not offer the material which may provoke a comment or a feedback from the user. Secondly, the personalization allows seeing in detail whether the local media were able to adopt innovation and to inform the audience about it or not. It means that a particular interest is necessary to adopt an innovation. Thirdly, the potential convergence of the Internet and the traditional media mostly is seen at the level of images and text. The social networks for local media in this case use the most necessary opportunities; wider activities are performed in the traditional environment.*

**Keywords:** *local media, social media, social networks, theory of the diffusion of innovations.*

## Introduction

The presence of the social media is currently seen in the various ways and means of communication. For example, television, radio and press have created profiles in the social networks in order to remind of their existence, to inform about the latest news regarding the program or content, as well as to represent themselves. The symbols *f*, *t*, *y* have become the signs of digital activity of the media. It means that a significant amount of energy, resources, and effort is invested in and dedicated to the communication in the Internet environment. The social media Web sites are supplemented along with the homepages, thus the notion of the mass media cannot be interpreted only in the usual sense – it is also viewed as a transformation. The social media are the sequel of traditional media, having the correlation of users as one of the most characteristic features: “People refer to Web 2.0, user-generated content, social networking, and other terms to try to encompass the movement toward people becoming influential publishers on the Web and beyond. All of these terms and others have their place in describing useful tools for people to publish to the world” (Blossom, 2009: 29). It is evident that the audience is not just passive receivers of the content; they tend to use the opportunities of interactivity. “These communications tend to be one-to-many, meaning that a person creates something that can be shared with many other people; or many-to-many, meaning that any number of people can share information with any other number of people simultaneously” (Blossom, 2009: 31). Thus, the usual model of journalism is changed, and a journalist is not the only one who is in charge of the content creation. It means that the emerged changes have in general affected the process of journalism as well, and, according to scientists, “the new media technology, in particular Web 2.0, has the potential to turn journalism from a lecture to a conversation (Paulussen et al., 2007), fostering two-way reciprocal interaction between journalists and audiences” (Canter, 2013: 472). The above-mentioned feature is not ascribed only to the social media. The similar influence is also emphasized in the activities of the local media (Stamm, 1985;

Fleming, Steffens, 2009) where a visible link between the journalist and the audience is one of the primary principles of the operation.

In the theoretical literature, the category of local media is referred to a “small” (Jankowski, 2003: 12) journalism, and the opposite is national journalism. The local media remains a significant part of the traditional news sector and thus serve narrow interests, first defined by geography, and despite the exposure of communication technologies is still making information processes of the local space and is able to reach out and captivate its audience. Brian McNair, the researcher of the community media, emphasizes the following: “If news are our window on the world, local news are our window on the part of the world we actually inhabit. In a globalised culture where war-torn, disaster-strewn images from far-off places of which we know relatively little flow constantly into our living rooms, local news tell us what’s happening in our own streets and backyards. Parochial by definition, local journalism is part of the social cement which binds communities together and is widely and rightly viewed as an essential element in the construction of local identity” (McNair, 2006). The local media are viewed as a developer of the local identity, spreading common values and culture, constructing affiliation within the media images and discourse. The most relevant aspect of the local media is a community whose interests it is representing, and therefore the term “community media” is used. The media researcher Kevin Howley asserts that the community media in today’s media culture are a popular and strategical mediator. Unlike the national media, they demonstrate the structures, forms and democratization of the media practices, i.e. the participation and principles of free expression, as well as the commitment to improve relations of the community members and to encourage solidarity (Howley, 2005: 2). As one can see, the local media are opposed to the national media, emphasizing their role in the strengthening of the correlation and inner union of the local community. They form the image of community and allow attending the community’s daily life events, applying various methods of the content. Currently, the mass media under the influence of the social

media experience changes caused by the technologies in the processes of obtaining and consuming information. In particular, the Internet media are considered as one of the aspects threatening the operation of traditional or local media. Therefore, it is important to clarify how the local newspapers, radio and television use or not the possibilities of technologies in the process of journalism.

Recently, many studies have drawn attention to the interaction and effects regarding the use of social media and journalism (Garrison, 2001). However, it is a question of innovations and how they are adopted in the society. The Theory of Diffusion of Innovations seeks to explain how the innovations are perceived as new by their audience. The Internet entered the environment of traditional media in order to obtain and disseminate the information, to communicate with audience involving it into the development of the media content, as well as to represent itself, currently being as a marketing tool. Mark Deuze, researcher of the communication processes, asserts that the Internet has changed the role and tasks of the journalist's profession as well. The Internet "has the potential to make the journalist's role as the essential intermediary force in democracy more or less superfluous; it offers the media professional a vast array of resources and sheer endless technological possibilities to work with; and it has created its own type of journalism on the Net: the so-called digital or online journalism" (Deuze, 1999: 373). The practice in the digital environment tends to overestimate the skills of a journalist, because these are new ideas, for example, various information collection opportunities, which require knowledge regarding the searching, finding, aggregation, and dissemination of information.

Nevertheless, a slight research has been conducted to clarify the role and effect of the social media on the local media. Considering the fact that many readers of the newspapers are still using the post services, i.e. send letters to the newspaper by post, the following question arise: what is the role of the social presence of, for example, *facebook.com*? The editors of newspapers admit that the audience is mostly of a middle age

and seniors, although the young people are active social media users. Does it confirm the desire to follow the mass society tendencies and to form the society virtually, or maybe it demonstrates some practical and actual meaning? The present article mostly focuses on the role of social networks in the daily life of the local newspapers, television, and radio.

### **Literature review and hypothesis**

The influence of the social media regarding the journalism has been widely discussed during the communication of journalists and the audience. Communicating the information through the media has faced constant challenges. “In a technology-driven process of accelerated change, journalism is being transformed in the ways that it is produced, distributed, and used. We are witnessing the emergence of new tools and practices, phenomena that are yielding both a flurry of new ways to produce information and a redefinition of the place of professional journalism in this new information system” (Castells, Parks, van der Haak, 2012: 2923). Researchers of the media explain that the most relevant changes which have forced the media to change the methods of addressing the audience and dissemination of the information have emerged due to the changes of consumption habits: “They must make it easier for audiences to upload and share online information while distributing content in as many platforms, products, and social networks as possible (Vukanovic, 2009, cited from Gade 2011: 25). This means that the habits and ways of the media consumption should be changed: “News media are acknowledging the difficulty of getting people to start their news consumption on their websites” (Gade, 2011: 25). Thus, the social media are perceived as a particular innovation, making reevaluate the strategies of the media consumption, comprehension, interpretation, and analysis, as well as daily habits in general, because the new media are characterised by fragmentation, dynamics, intertextuality, and interactivity.

However, the digital interactivity is a novelty as well. “In the digital environment in which journalists now work, new facts are being

unearthed daily; more audience feedback is being integrated; more voices are being heard; more diverse perspectives on the same news stories are being presented; more stories are available, archived and searchable for longer periods of time; more men and women of power are being watched more closely; and more people are engaged more actively with the changes in the world – by taking photos or making videos of key moments, by commenting on blogs, or by sharing the stories that matter to them” (Castells, Parks, van der Haak, 2012: 2923).

A source of the case study in journalism and the new media among the researchers are mostly newspapers selecting different approaches and aspects. For example, in the United Kingdom, the impact of the social media is analysed by the content of multiple social media profiles in the daily regional newspapers; it has been possible to determine how interactivity between journalists and readers is being shaped. The research has identified the spectrum of interactivity, which indicates that individual journalists are engaging with their readers in an informal, personal and reciprocal manner via the social media platform (Canter, 2013). “Evidence suggests that the proliferation of the use of social media platforms by news media in the past 5 years has continued to maintain the status quo rather than create greater interaction between journalists and readers” (Canter, 2013: 473). This issue arises the following question: how the new technologies or innovations have been accepted in society, especially the acceptance and the speed of it, e.g., between journalists and the process of news organization, between journalists and collaboration with the audience, and between journalists and the new media.

Thereby the introduction of the social media into the operation of the traditional media is viewed as a practice which is being adopted gradually: “Adoption of new ideas, technologies, and practices requires time in any social system, even a small and highly focused professional system such as journalism” (Garrison, 2001: 221). The sociologist and communication scholar Everett Rogers researched the impact of innovation adoption and introduction. He called it the process of diffusion.

The author asserts that “it is a special type of communication, in that the messages are concerned with new ideas. Communication is a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. This definition implies that communication is a process of convergence (or divergence) as two or more individuals exchange information in order to move toward each other (or apart) in the meanings that they ascribe to certain events” (Roggers, 2003: 17). This means that innovations allow inspecting how the society adopts social changes and the process of this action. It reveals the practice, needs and collaboration of journalists with audience, because the interactivity or interaction between the journalists and audience is a significant social networking feature. In the process of diffusion the author distinguishes several stages: (1) innovation, (2) an individual or other unit of adoption that has knowledge of or experience with using the innovation, (3) another individual or other unit that does not yet have knowledge of the innovation, and (4) a communication channel connecting the two units. A communication channel is the means by which messages get from one individual to another. The nature of the information-exchange relationship between the pair of individuals determines the conditions under which a source will or will not transmit the innovation to the receiver, and the effect of the transfer (Roggers, 2003: 17). The transition to the operation in the Internet environment demonstrates challenges the journalists have to meet; however, they are mediators as well, representing these innovations to the audience. Consumers, adopting each innovation, experience the following five steps: (1) one learns of an innovation’s existence, (2) he or she forms a favorable or unfavorable belief toward the innovation, (3) the individual makes a decision to adopt or reject the innovation, (4) if adoption occurs, the individual chooses to implement the innovation, and lastly (5) the individual seeks confirmation of his or her decision. The main elements in the diffusion of new ideas are: (1) an innovation, (2) which is communicated through certain channels, (3) over time, (4) among the members of a social system (Roggers, 2003: 35). This

chain is very close to communication models, and it reveals the most important components of getting information and of interaction with others.

This means that the research of diffusion is a particular type of communication research. The interdisciplinarity allows including different research approaches and traditions (*network analysis*). The theory, in general, is oriented towards the analysis of diffusion process; however, it is important to clarify what is the basis of the content of innovation or idea. Thus, it is possible to clarify potential reasons why the innovation is more or less adopted, because every idea is characterised by particular features and benefits which allow to determine whether it has the opportunity of development in the society or not. The characteristics of innovations, as perceived by individuals, help to explain their different rate of adoption:

1. Relative advantage – the degree to which an innovation is seen as better than the idea, program, or product it replaces.
2. Compatibility – how consistent the innovation is with the values, experiences, and needs of the potential adopters.
3. Complexity – how difficult the innovation is to understand and/or use.
4. Triability – the extent to which the innovation can be tested or experimented with before a commitment to adopt is made.
5. Observability – the extent to which the innovation provides tangible results (Roggers, 2003: 15–16).

The levels of adoption reflect the fact that innovations may differ. The decision to adopt or reject an innovation and the length of time it takes to reach the decision is often determined by the innovation itself. The adoption may be explained by the importance and necessity of an innovation to the particular media. The functions of innovation define how long it will take to acquire or adopt it. The social media as an innovation, first, takes time to perceive that information will be disseminated openly, and second – whether all local media users have necessary skills and opportunities. Although the Internet is not a novelty today,



however, according to the data of the Latvian Internet Association, the Internet is used by 62% of inhabitants. This means that a particular part of inhabitants are using other communication channels or belong to the group of users which are somehow limited, for example, by age. If the Internet is perceived as a form of the media, it can be asserted that traditional media users have changed the communication channel.

The three keywords in the debate about quality online content and the differences between the traditional media and the Internet:

- interactivity;
- personalization, or rather individualization;
- convergence (Deuze, 1999: 377).

In fact, these are the three features the local media users and developers encounter; these are the innovations which the traditional media users meet as well. Although one can assert that the traditional media offer interactivity as well, however, the interactivity of the Internet manifests oneself “in potential to make the reader / user part of the news experience” (Deuze, 1999: 377). Through analysis it is possible to outline at least four types of approach to the concept of interactivity. The first is a technically informed or structural vision of interactivity in which interactive potentials are built into the hardware and software of different media systems. The second defines interactivity in terms of human agency, and sees human involvement and freedom of design or use as the defining variables. Third, interactivity can be used as a concept to describe the communication among users, which is mediated by the new media and which gives rise to new possibilities for interpersonal communication. And finally, interactivity can be seen as a political concept which is tied to broader changes in governmentality and citizenship (Beer, Gane, 2008: 97). The interactivity is important not only at the media level; it testifies about the participation of society in general as well. The media can be used as a tool to acquire it, because it shows not only a reality, but it encourages involving oneself, thinking, and feeling the affiliation to a particular territory by choosing specific topics, places, participants and a content. Thus, they are jointly respon-

sible for the development of innovation, especially regarding the local media, which has the influence in the local communities regarding the formation of opinion or it has a role of an authority.

The publication clarifies how the theory of diffusion can be applied in the study process of the local media practice, because the mass media channels are often the most rapid and efficient means to inform the audience of potential adopters about the existence of an innovation, i.e. to create the awareness-knowledge. In the practical part of the study, the media undertake both the role of the informant and the user of innovations.

### **The local media market**

The local media market in Latvia is stable, especially among the printed communication tools. In each region of Latvia there are issued local newspapers two or three times a week with the number of copies 5000–6000. Among the regions of Latvia, there are differences among the newspaper's systems; for example, in the Latgale region several newspapers are issued in two languages – Latvian and Russian, having an identical content. It is defined by the region's multi-ethnic environment. The local media market consists mostly of newspapers which encompass local towns and the nearest rural territories. There are few newspapers that encompass the whole region. It takes more human resources and finances to encompass a wider information space. Most newspapers are a private property; several regional media enterprises are formed by the structure *Reģionālā preses Diena* of the joint stock company *Diena* which consolidates nine regional newspapers in the Vidzeme and Kurzeme regions (Rožukalne, 2013: 300). The content of the newspapers mostly contains local information regarding the politics, news about the social issues and, especially, infrastructure, heating, and management, as well as culture and education. A significant place takes also the category of social empathy – congratulations, condolences, and advertisements.

The activity in the field of electronic mass media in comparison with the printed media is quite low. Televisions mostly have to deal with broadcasting issues and the finances controlled by the limited range of advertisers and other circumstances. Many of them have become the communication tools of local municipalities. Their informative materials regarding the work of municipalities and local events can be seen mostly in the regional municipality web pages. Radio channels in their turn are characterised by the dominance of music and local events. They are thinking less about the introduction of an original content, because the financial resources are necessary to create news or informative and analytical broadcasts.

The landscape of the media system is mostly characterised by the tendencies of local newspapers' operation: a stable number of community newspapers attracted to the local territory, the interest and stability of local press readers and localization of journalism.

## Research design

The research data basis consists of three Latvia's local media forms – television, radio, and press. Each of these forms is represented by five media from all regions of Latvia (see Table 1). The most visible and popular media, as well as those with a large number of copies, e.g., newspapers, were chosen for the research.

**Table 1.** Latvia's Local Media.

<b>Television</b>	<b>Radio</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>
Vidzemes televīzija	Saldus radio	Kurzemnieks
Ogres televīzija	Ef-Ei	Latgales Laiks
Latgales Reģionālā Televīzija	Kurzemes radio	Bauskas Dzīve
Talsu televīzija	Radio 1	Auseklis
TV Kurzeme	Rietumu radio	Kursas laiks

Considering that the social network *draugiem.lv* among the Internet users in Latvia is the most popular having 86.9% of the audience, the *Facebook* in its turn has the second place with 77.3%. In general, *draugiem.lv* is daily used by 48.9% of the respondents, but the younger ones in the age group from 14 to 29 comprise 66.1% of the respondents and those over 50 years 38.2% of the users.<sup>1</sup> The communication in the networks occurs in different ways: in diaries and active columns one can express the opinion, create groups of interest, exchange photographs, upload audio and video files, send messages, etc.

By the quantitative analysis, the presence of the media was established in the social networks *draugiem.lv*, *facebook.com*, and *twitter* in 2014. The prevalence of local media in the social networks was determined by evaluating the information given in a particular media home page and by writing it into the search tool of the social media.

In order to clarify how the local media is using the social networks, several categories of functions were distinguished: to inform, to entertain, to share, to make activities, and the type of information was characterized. This helped to establish the expressions of interactivity of particular media and thus the level of adoption of innovations as well.

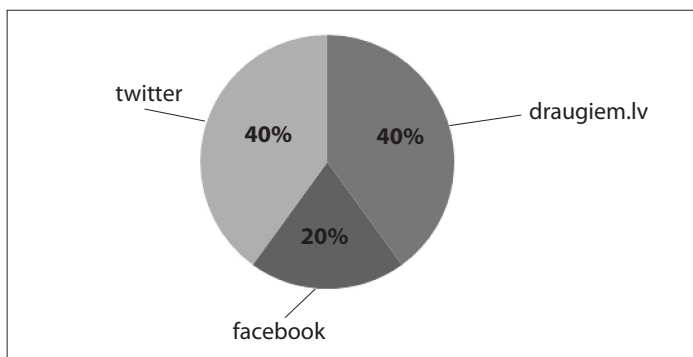
## The use of social media

The gathered quantitative data regarding the use of social networks among the local media show that the local media are integrated in the Internet environment differently. The amount of the extent and frequency the mass media use the social media and those who have not got their own profile is different; moreover, many of the media have not even considered the possibility to use them.

Among the local media, newspapers demonstrate the most evident tendency. As one can see, they use *draugiem.lv* and *twitter* accounts frequently. The entrance of *draugiem.lv* may be explained by the fact that it

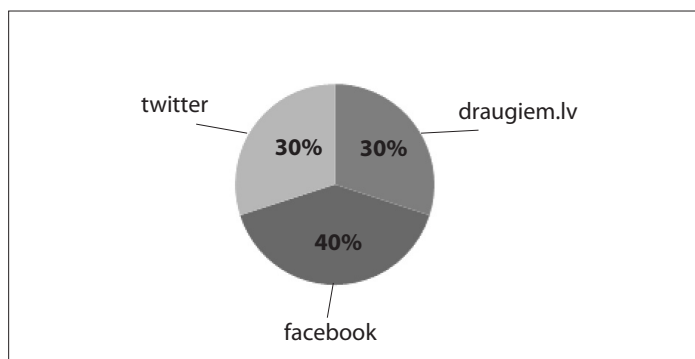
---

<sup>1</sup> Populārākie sociālie tīkli *Facebook* un *draugiem.lv* (2014). Available at <http://www.7guru.lv/zinas/popularakie-socialie-tikli-facebook-un-draugiem-lv>

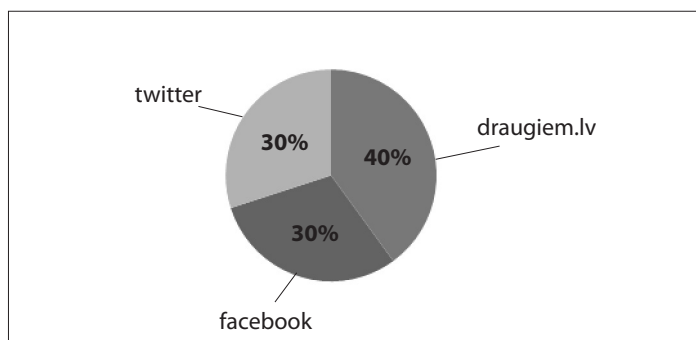


**Figure 1.** Latvian newspapers

is the most popular social network in Latvia, however, the importance of the *twitter* is acknowledged by the offered possibilities – short, simple statements, phrases, and quotes. In the local newspapers, these are mostly the headings of publications and the most relevant information which can be read in a particular newspaper’s issue. However, the electronic media – radio and television – are quite active users of all the above-mentioned social networks. The content of the electronic media, unlike the press, is also more diverse. The local radio is quite an active category of the media as well. The collected data show that only the radio uses the elements of interactivity. The contests are a striking



**Figure 2.** Latvian television



**Figure 3.** Latvian radio

example, indicating that the media maintain the relation with listeners. This means that electronic media have faster adopted the social media as an innovation and use its functions.

As can be seen, the Latvian social network *draugiem.lv* is the most popular among the local media. However, there is no great difference among the three networks. This means that the local media use several networks, however, the amount, content of information and activities what they carry out are important.

What are the social networks representing? First of all, the analysis of the content shows that the local media use it as a tool to represent themselves, yet in a passive manner, because the created profiles mainly give only a common information, for example, contact information, the way of occupation, and a specific character of the media. The newspaper *Latgales Laiks* in the portal *draugiem.lv* provides the following information about itself:

*The local newspaper "Latgales Laiks" is published in Daugavpils on Tuesdays and Fridays in Latvian and Russian. We write about Daugavpils, rural territories of Daugavpils, Ilūkste, and Southlatgale in general.*

As one can see, the information is official. The information is rarely created and presented in a way which would attract people. The num-

ber of the newspaper followers is 16, although the number of the portal users is 1 200 000<sup>2</sup>. It is possible to place in the portal different information, to share news with others, to offer news, and to upload photos and videos. The same newspaper has a profile in the portal *facebook.com* as well, and 136 followers like this page. However, the other local newspaper *Bauskas Dzīve* has 312 likes. By this medium, the media confirm that they use social networks; however, the methods of representation they have chosen are passive. During the process of diffusion of innovations which affect the adoption of innovations as the most relevant factor, the local media may be related with the time and a social system. Today, the following connection can be seen: the younger the respondent, the more he or she is willing to get the information through the Internet, thus the profiles of press publications have a small number of users or followers.

The private or subjective information is quite typical among the *twitter* users, however, these are mainly messages regarding a particular event, successful work, positive greetings or even flirty advertisements:

***Saldus Radio*** @SaldusRadio · Jul 22

*We, the awesome girls from @SaldusRadio, would like to represent the municipality in a women rally (have to search the checkpoints) on 23.08. Is there anyone who could lend us a car?*

This sort of information is usually seen in the electronic media profiles. It demonstrates an open communication with the listeners, as well as a potential cooperation. However, a purely practical information is possible as well, for example, job advertisements. This means that the activity of the particular media depends on its courage as well as on the necessity and adoption of innovations.

The traditional media use the social networks as a news dissemination channel. This means that it is another tool which can help to address the society. However, according to the examples, the media in the

---

<sup>2</sup> Draugiem.lv (2014). <http://bizness.draugiem.lv/lv>

social networks publish only the most topical subjects or news. Mostly these are topical news, a relevant event or intriguing headings, meaning that only some part of the information comes to the Internet, which does not reveal the nature of the media. In the emergency situations, the media are the ones who inform the society about the danger. Today, with the aid of social networks, it is possible to do it very quickly. This possibility is used also by the local media. For example, they warn and inform about the situation:

*Municipalities warn the inhabitants living in areas which are under the danger of flood not to be frivolous! Be prepared for the flood! Information is available also in "Latgales Laiks"!*

The connection of the local media with the audience is developing poorly at the level of individualization or personalization. It anticipates, for example, the selection of individual news or other information, yet the homogeneous and incomplete content of the profile is restraining it from realization.

According to the M. Deuze, the interactivity of the Internet environment allows the reader/user to form the news' experience (Deuze, 1999: 377). The environment offers different possibilities for the audience to express their opinion and to be present during the process of creating the content. This tendency is characteristic of the *twitter*. It was revealed during the examination of the local media profiles in different environments. Maybe the poor amount of symbols allows the media to be active and accept it as a communication tool, because with only 140 symbols they outline an idea without the further explanation. The interactivity of the local media is characterised by uploaded photos and videos as well. The available galleries demonstrate some kind of interactivity, too, thus urging the audience to be active, in some cases photo reports as well, thus testifying to the participation in a particular event. The publishing of photo reports allows the users to learn about the ongoing events, and at the same time it confirms the operational capacity of a newspaper. This is both an entertainment and an opportunity to



participate in the work of television. The involvement of the audience into the activities of the media is a common feature of the local media:

*Retweeted by Ogres televīzija  
O-TV.LV @OTV\_LV · Jun 18*

*Be the 200<sup>th</sup> follower and get a unique opportunity to film your own greeting. You will choose the recipient! Your OTV!*

During the formation of connection with the audience it is important to find out its opinion, but the mentioned examples do not depict an active communication with users. Although both newspapers mentioned above are users of the *twitter*, this profile also demonstrates a low activity.

It may be concluded that the social media have entered comparatively recently the daily life of the local media. The main functions the social networks manage for the benefit of the local media are informative, i.e. dissemination of the media content and public relations, or the representation of the image. The content is rather homogeneous. For the most part, the local media are put on the news agenda, but its character is depicted by contact information, wherewith the adoption of new ideas (mainly for local newspapers) of social networks reflects communication integration. Accordingly, the following question arises – who is integrated? The local media integrate the social media or the social media promote the activity of the local media? The question complicates the connection between the media, audience, and the communication sources. If the content of the local media is not valuable and interactive, then there is no association between the audience and the local media.

## **Conclusion and discussion**

Although today the electronic possibilities are very wide and accessible, there are communication ways and means which are passive in the mentioned processes of the transformation, and the sector of the digital communication is not the primary aim. In order to operate ef-

ficiently in the social media, there is a need for a person who would realize these activities. Considering that the number of the local media employees is insignificant, such activity may delay the performance of the daily work. An important aspect is also the age of human resources, their willingness, and the degree of involvement.

The research in the area of the social media impact on journalism is challenging, especially at the local media level. Evaluating the main factors which influence the adoption of innovations, it is evident that the social media in the practice of the local media, especially among the local newspapers, are unable to realize the mentioned features, because in this case the social networks do not replace some idea or product; they just supplement the possibilities of the local media communication.

The theory of diffusion of innovations, which explains the social processes of communication among the local media, is implemented only in the electronic environment. For example, in the home pages newspapers mostly indicate that they are available in the social networks, thus meaning that the audience is divided into two groups: the traditional media users and the new media users.

The empirical research has revealed that the local media do not implement all the advantages which are possible to develop within the digital environment. First of all, at the level of interactivity, the media do not offer the material that may provoke a comment or a feedback from the user. Maybe these are fears from the reaction of users, which in the digital environment is very fast; however, the letters from the readers in the environment of printed media are a very popular way of communication with the audience. Secondly, the personalization allows seeing in detail whether the local media has been able to adopt innovation and to inform the audience about it. This means that a particular interest is necessary to adopt an innovation. It may be achieved by a diverse and user-friendly content. Thirdly, the potential convergence of the Internet and the traditional media mostly is seen at the level of images and text. The electronic media have sounds, too. It offers the possibility to expand the form of the message, as well as to vary with its amount and

visual material. The most relevant changes in the aspect of journalism and social media depict the focus on audience, however, as the number of users and followers shows, the most successful in this case is the electronic media, and especially radio. The radio supplements the traditional elements of the environment in the social networks with the aid of texts, private messages, and interactive moments. The responsiveness and reaction of the audience is an indicator showing whether the innovation is used or not, as it depicts the specifics of the social media – the activity of users.

The most important aspect of the social and local media is the environment: the digital versus the traditional. It is the speed and quantity versus the quality. The social networks in this case use the most necessary possibilities; wider activities are performed in the traditional environment. However, it is possible that simply traditional values such as letters by post outrival the rush and are the part of society to whom most important are the traditional values. The interactivity or other actions are not most relevant for the local media. Being in the environment for them is more important, and not just in the role of users, but as adopters of innovations in the early period. This means that there is no desire to adopt the idea but simply to show the world that they are in the social media and will be popular.

## References

BEER, D., GANE, N. (2008). *New Media: The Key Concepts*. New York: Berg Publishers.

BLOSSOM, J. (2009). *Content Nation: Surviving and Thriving as Social Media Changes Our Work, Our Lives, and Our Future*. Indianapolis: Wiley Publishing.

CANTER, L. (2013). The interactive spectrum: The use of social media in UK regional newspapers. *Convergence*, 19, p. 472–495.

CASTELLS, M., PARKS, M., van der HAAK, B. (2012). The future of journalism: Networked journalism. *International Journal of Communication* 6 Feature 2923–2938, <http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/1750/832>

DEUZE, M. (1999). Journalism and the Web: An analysis of skills and standards in an online environment. *Gazette* 61, 5, p. 373–390.

DICKINSON, R. (2011). The use of social media in the work of local newspaper journalists. Paper presented at 2011 Future of Journalism Conference, Cardiff, 8–9 September 2011.

FLEMING, K., STEFFENS, B. (2009). *Understanding readers of local newspapers and editorial journalism in small communities*. Paper presented at the Mass Communication Division of the 2009 Conference of International Communication Association, Chicago, Ill.

GADE, P., LOWREY, W. (2011). Reshaping the journalism culture. In Gade, P., Lowrey, W. (eds., 2011). *Changing the News: The Forces Shaping Journalism in Uncertain Times*. New York: Routledge, p. 22–42.

GARRISON, B. (2001). Diffusion of online information technologies in newspaper newsrooms. *Journalism*, 2, p. 221–239.

GILLMOR, D. (2004). *We the Media. Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly.

HOWLEY, K. (2005). *Community Media: People, Places, and Communication Technologies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

JANKOWSKI, N. (2003). Community media research: A quest for theoretically grounded models. *The Public* 10(1), p. 5–13.

McNAIR, B. (2006). News from a small country: the media in Scotland. In Franklin, B. (ed., 2006), *Local Journalism and Local Media: Making the Local News*. London: Routledge.

PAULUSSEN, S., HEINONEN, A., DOMINGO, D., QUANDT, T. (2007). Doing It Together: citizen participation in the professional news making process. *Observatorio (OBS\*) Journal* 1(3), p. 131–154, <http://obs.obercom.pt/index.php/obs/article/view/148/107>.

ROGERS, E.M. (2003). *Diffusion of Innovations*. New York: Free Press.

ROŽUKALNE, A. (2013). *Kam pieder Latvijas mediji?* Rīga: Zinātne.

STAMM, K. R. (1985). *Newspaper Use and Community Ties: Toward a Dynamic Theory*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

VUKANOVIC, Z. (2009). Global paradigm shift: Strategic management of new and digital media in new and digital economics. *The International Journal on Media Management* 11(2), p. 81–90.