

Towards Nuanced Universality: Developing a Concept Bible for Public Service Online News Production

Author: Jenni Hokka University of Tampere, Finland

Abstract

With the advent of popular social media platforms, news journalism has been forced to re-evaluate its relation to its audience. This applies also for public service media (PSM) that increasingly has to prove its utility through audience ratings. This ethnographic study explores a particular project, the development of ‘concept bible’ for the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE’s online news; it is an attempt to solve these challenges through new journalistic practices. The study introduces the concept of ‘nuanced universality’, which means that audience groups’ different kinds of needs are taken into account on news production in order to strengthen all people’s ability to be part of society. On a more general level, the article claims that despite its commercial origins, audience segmentation can be transformed into a method that helps revise PSM principles into practices suitable for the digital media environment.

Keywords: public service media (PSM), universality, online journalism, audience segmentation, production studies

Introduction

In December 2015, the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE initiated a process of producing a concept bible—a practical guide for how to approach different kinds of audience segments in different online platforms, including mobile applications. This project is symptomatic of the way current day public service media companies want to be on the frontline of digitalization and to reach different audiences in the most efficient manner. The whole process within YLE is also connected to a visible anxiety of losing touch with younger generations who are not following broadcast media as eagerly as their predecessors. The case of YLE is of significance because the company has played an internationally recognized role in developing public online services. For example, the report conducted by Reuters Institute (Newman et al. 2016) reveals that in the areas of organizational change, mobile delivery and use of social media platforms, YLE and BBC are the two companies that are ahead of most other public service media organizations with their vast online services based on both factual and fictional content.

In practice, the concept bible identifies different audience segments portrayed as recognizable personas. The document entails recommendations about platforms, story forms, storytelling modes and tones of writing that journalists are advised to use in order to reach each audience segment in a best possible way. The platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and official web pages of YLE News, but traditional channels are also discussed as journalists are spurred to make more links and recommendations between TV and radio and online content. In addition to text, journalists are encouraged to use visual storytelling modes, such as video clips, photographs and graphics, and they are trained to pay attention to the time of the day they publish news to certain audiences.

Given that public service media (PSM) has traditionally valued universality, introducing audience segmentation into the mix creates an interesting tension. Universality is considered one of the three most important principles of PSM; others are citizenship and quality (Born & Posser

2001). It has even been regarded as the most essential one, though these three concepts are strongly intertwined. In theoretical discussions, the universality principle has two dimensions: free access to all the services and diversity of content (Brevini 2013; Debrett 2010: 187). However, since universality principle is strongly based on the age of broadcasting and mass audiences, it is bound to change. Several researchers have suggested that new distribution channels and platforms could be understood as the ‘new universality’ (Debrett 2010: 187; Jakubowicz 2007; Brevini 2013: 43–44; Iosifidis 2011). Yet, how this new universality is implemented in practice warrants further investigation.

Approaching the concept bible creation process from a production perspective, this study analyses the discussions and reflections among PSM journalists who took part in the concept bible project. The main question is how the universality principle was reframed in the PSM setting on the practical level by the journalists themselves. Utilizing production studies methods and ethnographic analysis to observe the reframing of the universality principle, this article shows how journalists’ relation to audience and ways of making content changed through the process. The paper introduces the idea of ‘nuanced universality’, a new kind of approach to audiences that utilizes audience segmentation techniques but also remains true to PSM principles. This re-evaluation of universality principle offers one possible solution to the crisis of PSM journalism in the new media environment.

Audience Segmentation Versus Universality Principle

Audience segmentation is a commercial marketing technique in which consumers are split to homogenous groups so that advertisers can reach the customers in the most effective way. In media market, it has been used to segment subscribers by different variables such as age, race, geographic location or political leaning so that advertisers know how to tailor their advertising to certain groups and leave some groups unnoticed (Chandra 2009.) The method itself dates back to late 19th and

early 20th centuries, but it was used more prominently on media market in the 1920s, as American advertisers began to support magazines and radio stations that reached audience segments they wanted to reach with their specialized content. On television, advertiser interest in audience groupings led to differentiation in content production in the 1980s by cable channels. Strong economic ties with advertisers have transformed the American media system in which mainstream media production is strongly shaped by the interests of advertisers regarding both news and entertainment (Turow 2005). The technology of the online and mobile environments has made it even easier to target advertising to certain kinds of news followers with the help of big data analysis and native advertising (Mody 2012; Jiang et al. 2017).

When introduced to television in the 1980s, audience segmentation and audience targeting were trumpeted as a means to provide relevant content to everyone. However, several researchers (see e.g., Kant 2014: 384–390; Smith-Shomade 2004) have since highlighted its contrary impact in strengthening the hegemonic structures in media consumption. Sunstein (2007) has warned that fragmentation of the public, group polarization and cyber-cascades of online environments will lead to a deeply polarized political climate when audiences and users are able to block unpleasant perspectives. Andrejevic (2013: 62–65) has cautioned that because the Internet works primarily on market logic, it has created conditions where access to media does not advance shared understanding but instead boosts the proliferation of irreconcilable narratives. It has been suggested, that in the future, personalisation may lead to a situation in which not only the adverts around the news are personalized, but also the news content is versioned according to the user profile (Couldry & Turow 2014). The commercial news organizations have already changed their news selection criteria according to audience segmentation and analytics (Welbers et al. 2016; Mody 2012), and different kinds of personalized news applications for choosing interesting subject areas are already available (Helberger 2016; Andersson Schwartz 2016). In pessimistic visions, digital media will

only accelerate the shift from a citizen-centred society to an individual consumers' market (Nissen 2015: 102–104).

In Europe, where public service broadcasting has traditionally had a major impact, the situation has historically been somewhat different, especially concerning news. For the European public service broadcasting, universality principle has been essential since its beginning. The purpose of the universality principle has been to educate the nation; according to John Reith, the father of the BBC, it was essential to bring the best of human knowledge into every home (Brevini 2013: 42–43.) While these conceptual thoughts originated in Great Britain, they have been very influential for Nordic social and political thought as well (Seeleib-Kaiser 2006: 197–199; Kuusi 1964). Although some forms of audience segmentation have been applied in PSM scheduling during the 1980s and 1990s, the idea of 'general audience' and the principle of universalism has continued to be highly appreciated at YLE (Hujanen 2002: 118–127).

However, active use of social media platforms has already changed the PSM practices in various ways (Hokka 2017). Several other projects have analysed the ways PSM organizations have used audience segmentation and audience analytics for developing new kinds of targeted content and personalized services (Andersson Schwatz 2016; Bruun 2014; Vanhaegt & Donders 2016.) In principle, PSM organizations could use new technological possibilities in a reversed way to commercial ones by exposing audiences to content they would not necessarily select themselves (Helberger 2015). Yet, my prior research shows that attempts to combine essentially commercial social media logics (Van Dijk & Poell 2013) with traditional public service principles is a challenging task for PSM companies (Hokka 2017). Though public service companies do not directly sell time or place for advertisements, they are still competing for audiences as they have to prove their necessity through audience ratings, and this puts them into an increasingly vulnerable position.

In PSM literature, universality principle is comprised of two dimensions. First, a provision of free service accessible for all in order to reach and form the mass audience and create a shared public space for public discourse (Debrett 2010: 186–187.) Second, universality has meant diversity in content, as public service should also give space to minorities and marginalized voices (Goodman 2013: 199–200; Brevini 2013: 42–44).

It is essential to notice that on the conceptual level, universality of content refers to the whole of programming, not just to journalism or news as such. While universality does include diversity of tastes and interests on the conceptual level, both in theoretical thinking (Goodman 2013: 200–201; Debrett 2010: 36–37, 188–189) and in practice it has been mostly implemented in minority and/or cultural programmes. Universality of content has not been applied to journalism, which traditionally has been an area of expert knowledge. Previous research has shown how journalists make news judgements according to their intuition without thinking of the different kinds of audiences (Schultz 2007; Lee & Chyi 2014). My research reveals that in PSM news journalism, this traditional journalistic ethos has prevailed until today.

What makes the concept bible case distinctive is that it tries to permanently change news production that is the core essence of the PSM by bringing audience segmentation into this area. This is noteworthy, as PSM news making has until recently remained a safe haven for broadcasting-like, one-directional understanding of communication for the general audience. However, unlike commercial media or other projects in which PSM organization have previously used audience segmentation, it is not used for targeting particular segments such as young people (Vanhaegt & Donders 2016) or politically-oriented adults with a likeness for edgy entertainment (Bruun 2014), leaving other audience segments unnoticed. On the contrary, the concept bible project still maintains the idea of universality by trying to reach the general audience even better than before only using varying kinds of new means that digital media provides. Further, the project basically

strives for making all the subject areas interesting for all the segments whereas in commercial use audience segments are mainly catered with subject areas that they are presumed to take interest in.

A number of PSM researchers seem to agree that in order to survive, PSM should better respond the needs and expectations of the audiences that are accustomed to the current-day digital media environment. Many scholars actually perceive the new distribution channels and platforms as the ‘new universality’ (Debrett 2010: 187; Jakubowicz 2007; Brevini 2013: 43–44; Iosifidis 2011). Yet, there is very little discussion about how exactly PSM news content should be developed in practice to reach this new ideal. The concept bible project is an illuminating example of the concrete challenges related to this.

Methods and Data

This research draws from the tradition of production studies and investigates the process of creating a concept bible as a specific site in the culture of PSM online news production. As Banks, Connor and Mayer (2015) state, production studies examine production cultures as interpretative communities formed by the organizational structures, professional practices and power dynamics they are a part of. In line with the production studies research approach, this study provides grounded analysis of the journalists’ experiences, observations, conversations and interactions.

The empirical data was collected through participatory observations and thematic interviews. After some negotiation, I was not only granted permission to observe and record the conversations of the working group, but also strongly encouraged to take part in the discussions. When I began to attend the meetings, I quickly realized that my role as one of the ‘developers’ created a more collegial, and thus more trustworthy, relationship with the journalists than a fly-on-the-wall set-up would have provided. During the process, I utilized the ‘ethnographic self’ technique (Munnik 2015); I openly revealed to other developers that I had no journalistic training and offered them suggestions that were more or less ‘out of the box’ in relation to their daily

journalistic working practices. Some were based on my personal experiences as an audience member, but more often, they were connected to my professional knowledge on new media and to my theoretical understanding of the roles of PSM. When observing the conversation in the meetings, I was curious about the different understandings concerning the PSM organization duties and the audience, and sometimes I asked additional questions. Asking questions and making suggestions together with their feedback in the meetings helped me better understand the practical challenges of developing online journalism in a PSM company.

During the meetings, I made field notes and recorded the conversations of the working group. The attendees were asked permission to do that, and they were guaranteed anonymity. When analysing the recorded material, I paid attention to the suggestions made, how they were received, what things that attendees agreed or disagreed on and what kinds of experiences they used as the basis of their reflections. This kind of data provides unique insight to the process where a management-level strategy is transformed to a worker-level practice. It reveals challenges and juxtapositions that are not possible to grasp by reading strategy documents or interviewing managers.

After the launch of the concept bible, in-depth thematic interviews were conducted with all the editors of the YLE News sections. Editors were chosen as informants since they were responsible for implementing the concept bible into the journalistic working practices of their respective news sections. As superiors of their sections, it is their responsibility to balance between the rush and stress of the daily news reporting and the long-term development projects, such as the concept bible. Thus, they were in a position in which they not only had to adapt their own working practices but also had to negotiate with their subordinates regarding how to tackle the reform launched by the management.

The structured interviews of 14 questions explored three areas. First, I asked how had the concept bible, including its detailed instructions and audience personas, been received by the

journalists in each section. Second, I probed to ascertain whether the concept bible had resulted in some concrete changes in journalistic practices, and I requested examples. Third, I explicitly asked whether the interviewees saw audience segmentation as an appropriate method for a public service company that had traditionally functioned according to the universality principle. During the interviews, I asked some additional questions regarding whether the informant brought up issues that were particular to that specific section, but basically the questions were identical for each informant. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then they were coded into thematic categories (Kuckartz 2014). Following Nikunen (2014), the answers were analysed both as information about the practical changes the journalists had made but also more widely as self-reflective interpretations of work practices in the PSM company.

Development Process of the Concept Bible

From January to April 2016, the working group that was invited to create the concept bible, met on a weekly basis in the headquarters of YLE. The working group consisted of five to ten people including editorial staff and the head of audience insight. This first phase also included a one-day workshop in which the collected YLE staff developed new kinds of news stories in teams. At the end of the day, these new concepts were presented to audience groups representing key audience segments, and audience feedback was later discussed in the working group.

The development work was based on the idea of ‘audience personas’, a method widely used by commercial companies in marketing and product design. The working group was invited to create eight different personas based on key audience segments. In the following phase, the task was to invent new ways of telling news stories that would suit the lifestyles of these named personas. The objective was to explore how the different personalities would be served in the best possible way; that is, when, from what kind of perspective, on which online platforms, and by which storytelling techniques YLE should provide news to them.

The outline of the personas was based on an audience study conducted by a private market research firm in 2013–2014. The results of this research included findings of the preferred devices and media platforms of the audience segments and whether they liked to watch videos and images or preferred to read texts. Among other things, the study provided information on the hours these segments most often followed news and explicated whether they preferred long, analytical stories or mostly only read the topics. Most importantly, the respondents also reported their use of YLE web news. At the same time, the study had some shortcomings. It did not entail the exact survey questions that would have helped to understand some contradictory answers. The report also lacked information on the subject areas that the respondents found most interesting.

Lack of needed information on the audience segments caused some frustration among the journalists. A few of them questioned what the point of creating detailed personas was when important facts were missing. After some hesitation, the group agreed that the personas should be considered more like tools for developing one's journalistic work than actual living examples of the audience.

Yet, the fact that the previous market research did not reveal the detailed interest areas of the segments was probably the most beneficial for the project as it led to substantial discussions of the overall aim of the project. At first, it was clearly difficult for the participants to keep the journalistic point of view, storytelling techniques and platforms separate from the subject area of the story. Furthermore, there was a tendency to understand audience segmentation in a more commercial spirit by offering particular kinds of subject areas for particular kinds of audience groups based on their intuition of the constructed personas, but the head of audience insight relentlessly pointed out that the concept bible would not have an effect on the subject areas of journalistic work. Instead, the journalists were just encouraged to use a broader range of tools than before. In the concept bible, this idea was outlined as follows:

Tiia [one of the personas] and others are tools to help plan the tone, framing and point of view of the story. This does not mean that we should dramatically change our topics nor to diminish them only to subject areas that we imagine some audiences want. But we should serve and justify our chosen subjects better than before to different kinds of audiences using different means adapted for them. This is, among other things, public service journalism in 2016.

Phase 1: Taking the Audience Seriously

The one-day workshop that was organized to launch the concept bible development work was run by a small advertisement and design firm. An opening talk addressed how brands create relationships with clients. This starting point clearly steered the discussions, and the participants were impressed with the ways in which some commercial companies—not only media companies—were in contact with their clients through social media. Inspired by the examples provided by the advertisement firm, the participants of the development group began to discuss what a public service media company actually sells.

We are selling understanding. Our capital is to make people more enlightened.

(Participant 1)

But that is not enough. If we are selling understanding, nobody is buying. We must say that we are selling you understanding that you need in order to manage.

(Participant 2)

Prior research has explored whether the use of social media commercialises public service broadcasting, as current-day social media is commercial by default (Hokka 2017; Johnson 2013;

Nissen 2015; Van Dijk & Poell 2013). The discussion above could possibly be seen as an alarming example of how this threat has come to pass. Yet, what the participants of the group were somewhat ironically addressing here was how to motivate people to follow news and engage in public discussion of social issues. On one hand, the competition that public service sector is facing compels the journalists to consider how they could more effectively tempt people to use the content they produce. On the other hand, universality principle obligates PSM journalism to try to also reach those audience groups that are not particularly engaged with news to start with. Although universality principle was rarely explicitly mentioned in the discussions, journalists never questioned the idea that they should also reach those audience groups that were not actively following YLE online news. On the contrary, journalists were worried that they would totally lose a hold on them. This, of course, does not only stem from principles but from the knowledge that PSM companies whose purpose of existence is to educate people, will lose their relevance if they do not succeed in doing this. At the same time, the different means of personalisation in digital media enable people to filter out everything they are not interested in.

In principle, news and current affairs journalists could use social media to engage people to be more active citizens; this is the vision that a number of media researchers enthusiastically announced at the turn of the millennium (Dahlberg 2001; Fung, Gilman & Shkabatur 2013). Interaction with users and instant feedback from them could be at the core of journalism that tries to facilitate democratic debate. However, public service companies have mostly remained expert organizations that claim to know the needs of their audiences as citizens. This view, which originates from T.H. Marshall's thoughts on welfare society, has meant that the role of the PSM audience has been very passive. Initially, audiences were not seen as active, participatory or creative, and this suits badly the ideals of social media (Collins 2013). In YLE, this starting point still influences everyday journalistic news production. The obstacles for interaction with users are

still very much connected to work routines and methods that date back to the time of old media that sent information to audiences rather than engaging in a dialogue with them.

At the same time, the utopias in this regard have now been replaced by darker visions that are realized as hate speech and fake news. As media companies have become enterprises, the pressure to make profits for shareholders may sometimes be in contrast with the traditional duties of journalism. According to Tandoc and Thomas (2015), editorial autonomy is diminished by audience analytics, as the editorial choices are increasingly made according to the most-read stories, highlighting the popularity of, for example, celebrity stories or traffic news. The PSM companies, for their part, may be in danger of biased journalism in favour of the government that makes the decisions on their budgets. On the level of daily decisions, the obligation to inform and educate people may increasingly rest on the morals of individual journalists who are very well-aware of the 'most read topics'.

Tandoc and Thomas (2015) have suggested that the problem of liberal media market, including audiences who click 'wrong' stories and journalists who try to produce as many clicks as possible, should be solved by bringing back the attitude of journalists as experts who decide what people should know, and in this way, provide the 'sense of belonging' to society. This 'expert attitude' strongly resembles the traditional understanding of the role of PSM.

However, the experiences in the PSM companies show that it is unlikely that the expert attitude would work successfully anymore. According to the study of Dutch young people and their relation to the PSM news, the new generation does not believe in objectivity but insists on multiple perspectives. Further, they feel no obligation to follow news if it is not inspiring or even entertaining to some extent (Costera Meijer 2007). While normative media theories have tended to make a clear-cut distinction between 'audiences' (interested in 'trivial' issues) and 'citizens' (oriented for 'serious' politics), actually, they are the same people (Livingstone 2005). When using Facebook, for example, the user is very much acting as a citizen, as an audience member and as a

consumer because the feed consists of a flow of informative, entertaining and advertising content simultaneously. This mixture is not a new phenomenon as such, but the competition of the attention of users is fiercer than ever before. In practice, ‘understanding’ and ‘enlightenment’ are competing for users’ attention with cat videos and sneaker ads in a very concrete way. Furthermore, the social media platforms essentially offer a place to be an active user whether as a consumer, content producer or citizens—and very often these roles are strongly intertwined with each other. This also means that news journalists must utilize new methods in order to reach different kinds of people.

Phase 2: Understanding the Diversity of Audiences

Idealistically, public service journalism establishes a public sphere, a space for public discussion for citizens. So far, universality principle has been interpreted so that same programmes should be offered for everyone in order to create shared issues and events (Bennett 2008; Born & Prosser 2001). Yet, an audience study done for YLE revealed that the most satisfied audience segment of YLE’s online news, so-called ‘the active followers’, consisted mainly of well-educated males aged 50+. At the same time, one fifth of the ‘socials’, consisting of mainly young people and women, visited YLE’s online news pages more rarely than once a week though they otherwise actively followed news. Therefore, it seems that universality as diversity is not actualized in YLE’s online news. Instead, the online public sphere that YLE provides is more approachable to older men in good social positions than to women, young people and men with lower education.

It is evident that the universality principle of PSM echoes the universalist idea of citizenship that has been strongly criticised by feminist researchers like Iris Marion Young. According to Young (1989), the idea of the public realm of citizenship as expressing a general will that transcends their differences has operated as a demand for homogeneity among citizens. Before the 20th century, the exclusion of social groups that were deemed inappropriate for citizenship, such as women, racialised people, and the working-class was publicly announced and determined by law.

Universalist citizenship is a realm of rationality and freedom, opposed to the heteronomous realm of particular need, interest and desire.

Similar criticism has been directed towards public service media. The universality principle has been seen as a symptom of the paternalism of PSM, which strives to familiarise all the citizens with high and homogenous national culture. Accusing PSM of paternalism, Van den Bulck (2015) claims that PSM has been working in close contact with elites, simultaneously informing common people of what is best for them. The educational aspect of PSM has been used to introduce the wider public into the world deemed appropriate by the elite, and thereby PSM has traditionally been part of hegemony instead of providing a counter-voice.

When the audience profiles were discussed in the development group meetings, it appeared that this actually was the first time that the journalists seriously considered the material and temporal living conditions of their audiences. Unlike the journalists, most people do not constantly follow the news. In the one-day workshop with audience members, it quickly became evident, that the existing forms of journalism were not very efficient in informing people, for example, about long-term or complicated political processes.

Further, when developing the audience profiles and trying to determine how and when, for example, a welder with two teenage children, a female friend and a time-consuming hobby, would follow the news, the group had difficulty coming up with realistic solutions. Eventually, the participants came to the conclusion that so far, they had mainly created stories for readers and followers that reminded them of themselves. What defined most strongly the happiest audience segment, 'the active followers' of YLE's online news, was that they followed news very actively, always looking for trustworthy, matter-of fact and non-biased news. Similar findings have been made in other Western countries (Newman et al. 2016: 88). The 'active followers' reported in the audience survey that it was important for them to be able to fully concentrate on reading long

articles, which suggests that they were also able to do so without disturbance. The journalists in the group concluded that, at least in part, they had produced stories for ‘news junkies’ like themselves.

Thus, people who do not have the capacity to follow news actively (due to the lack of time, lack of education, lack of motive, etc.) have not been approached in a best possible way by YLE. The working group of the concept bible tried to solve these problems by recommending new storytelling techniques that would both intrigue these people and, to some extent, help them to squeeze news into their tight schedules. Top news lists and different kinds of news packages were developed for the busy ones. Short videos, still-photos and queries were listed as means to make the news stories more shareable for the ‘social’ segment that considered sharing important.

Normative media theories have tended to presume that acting as a citizen is the most important identity for a human being. Yet, the audience study revealed how the everyday use of news is strongly shaped by people’s living conditions. In an ideal situation, online journalism that acknowledges different kinds of audience groups could provide a means to follow social and political issues for those with less time and motivation.

Phase 3: New Understanding of the Universality Principle

After the launch of the concept bible, I interviewed the six editors of the news sections of YLE, three male and three female. The news sections involved were culture, business, metropolis, politics, public Finland (domestic news), and science and utility. The questions focused on the response of journalists to the concept bible in each news section, the new kinds of stories they had produced and their thoughts on the suitability of audience segmentation to public service news journalism in relation to the universality principle.

Mainly, the interviewed journalists saw no contradiction in directing public service journalism to segmented audiences. Instead, they were worried about the lack of interest, especially by the youth, and saw segmentation as a potential tool for solving the problem. Yet there were some

differences between the sections. At one end of the spectrum was the economic section in which the journalists did not consider PSM principles as a major factor for their general working practices, and thus saw no problem in utilizing audience segmentation. At the other end was the political section, in which journalists had a strong routine for producing news for a 'general audience' that possesses a 'standard level of knowledge' on political issues. The idea of producing stories for audience segments that do not reach this level was very new to them. On domestic news, the journalists were divided generationally in their relation to the audience segmentation. According to the editor, there were two main reasons for this. First, for many older journalists, the audience personas who did not follow news were not identifiable from their own everyday lives, and therefore journalists considered writing news for them too difficult. Second, many of the older journalists in this section feared that attempts to reach them would result in trivialisation of the news. Thus, some of the older journalists did not see audience segmentation as threat to the universality principle but to journalistic quality while the younger journalists in every section saw audience segmentation as a much-needed tool to reach all kinds of people in the spirit of the universality principle.

Yet, all the six informants agreed that journalists now think more profoundly about who they actually write for and how they write. Also, the editor of political section explained that they put now more focus on explaining difficult phenomena in a more educative way than before:

Among the good sides of this project is that it has made us journalists think about the general level of knowledge on certain political issues; how much do people know in advance and in what ways are they interested in things. And then, what is the best way to tell about these issues. (Editor 1)

All the informants provided practical examples of new story forms they had developed or tested. A parliamentary discussion that was traditionally written in a long report-like manner was transformed into a story presenting the four focal themes of debate. The idea was to serve the audiences that are not willing or able to read long stories on politics but want to have a brief overview of the discussion. Another new trend was to produce long stories that give a historical or political background to a certain recent phenomenon. Again, the TV news story about national debt with expert interviews was transformed into an online feature in which the user could decide which things the new transaction should cover. Thus, whereas journalists had previously considered online journalism as merely a repetition of broadcasted content (see also Nikunen 2014: 878), now they had increasingly realized that online news stories need to be built in another way than the ones for TV or radio.

According to the informants, the results of these first attempts were diverse. Some of the news stories that were produced according to the concept bible guidelines were very successful in light of user numbers and reading time; others were less so. In order to know more precisely how these stories reached their audience segments, a comprehensive audience study needs to be conducted. Yet, it seems that the most promising results come from the changes in journalistic thinking, as the process has led to self-critical reflection regarding how they had approached their audiences before. Overall, the qualities of implied receivers (Bruun 2014) have changed from the characteristics of a well-educated older man to a more diverse understanding of the needs and interests of the various kinds of audiences.

Conclusion

The challenge that social media has posed to news journalism is also effecting public service media. They too are actively testing new ways of reaching audiences. This study analysed the production process of a concept bible that introduced audience segmentation to YLE's online

journalism. The grass-roots level analysis showed how the developing process of the concept bible changed journalists' understanding of their audience and their ways to make content. The development group went through substantial discussions on their duties as PSM journalists, and on the challenge of informing all kinds audience segments in the new media environment where the competition on people's attention is fierce. Many of the journalists who had thought that they were making stories for a 'general audience' in the spirit of the universality principle, realised for the first time that they mostly served 'news junkies' like themselves. However, the journalists of the development group were very willing to invent new kinds of storytelling forms in order to better reach also other kinds of audience segments. At this phase, the universality principle was remoulded on a practical level to 'nuanced universality'. This means that in the news production, audience groups' different kinds of needs were carefully considered in order to strengthen all people's ability to be part of society. Later, the initialization phase of the concept bible forced the journalists to contemplate how to inform all kinds of people in their respective expertise areas.

Public service media has traditionally had a duty to unite nations by creating shared understanding of the social and political challenges. Yet, the role of the PSM has diminished both in relation to political trends and due to rise of online media and its multitude of available content. However, in the present political situation the main PSM principles: universality, citizenship and quality, would be much needed. Especially execution of universality principle, the purpose of which is to strengthen society by helping all its members to take part in a shared public discussion, could, in theory, smoothen the stark divisions between different kinds of groups. However, until now the implementation of universality principle has not developed much from the age of 'general audience' of broadcasting. Because of this, a number of people have not been reached in a best possible way.

The concept bible of YLE online news is an attempt to revise the universality principle to match the expectations of audiences who are familiar with the varying possibilities of digital media environment. While it is too early to evaluate if different kinds of audience groups are now better

reached, the project is valuable as such as a conceptual re-evaluation of the universality principle. The project showed that despite its commercial origins, audience segmentation appears to be an adequate tool for creating 'nuanced universality'. Still, the project also showed that the use of commercial techniques must be done under strong guidance of PSM principles. Overall, the process led to a more diverse understanding of the needs of the various kinds of audiences, which is essential for PSM's survival in the current digital media environment.

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