

Management, Management, and the Problematics of Modern Media: Navigating Journalistic Genres in an Era of Organizational Complexity

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Abstract:

This article critically examines the dual imperatives of management within contemporary media organizations, interrogating how systemic challenges—financial instability, technological disruption, and ethical ambiguities—intersect with the evolution of journalistic genres. Drawing on case studies from legacy and digital-native outlets, the analysis posits that effective managerial strategies must reconcile the preservation of traditional reporting formats (e.g., investigative journalism, op-eds) with the demands of a fragmenting audience and monetization pressures. By framing media management as both a structural and creative discipline, this article advocates for a reimagined approach to organizational leadership that prioritizes genre adaptability without compromising journalistic integrity.

Keywords: Media Management, Journalistic Genres, Organizational Complexity, Ethical Governance, Digital Disruption

Introduction

A paradox defines the 21st-century media landscape: while technological advancements have democratized information dissemination, they have simultaneously exacerbated systemic vulnerabilities within media institutions. At the heart of this tension lies *management*—a term whose redundancy in this article's title underscores its critical, yet often overlooked, role in sustaining journalistic practice. Media organizations, whether public broadcasters or algorithm-driven platforms, operate within ecosystems where managerial decisions directly shape content production, genre evolution, and public trust. This article argues that the "problematics" of media—financial precarity, audience polarization, and regulatory flux—cannot be disentangled from the strategic and ethical frameworks employed by media managers.

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The Dual Mandate of Media Management

Media management operates under a dual mandate: to ensure organizational viability while safeguarding journalistic mission. This duality is complicated by the erosion of traditional revenue models ³ and the rise of platform monopolies ⁴. For instance, the decline of print advertising has forced legacy outlets to adopt hybrid genre formats—such as “explainer journalism” or immersive multimedia features—to cater to digital audiences ¹. Yet, such adaptations risk diluting the rigor of established genres like investigative reporting, which demands time-intensive resources incompatible with click-driven metrics ².

Journalistic Genres as Managerial Artifacts

Journalistic genres—news reports, editorials, features, and their digital progeny—are dynamic products of managerial and cultural negotiation. The proliferation of “listicles” (list-based articles) and branded content reflects managerial responses to algorithmic preferences and sponsor demands ⁴. However, genre hybridization raises ethical questions. When op-eds morph into “sponsored narratives” or investigative pieces are truncated for social media, the integrity of journalistic taxonomy is compromised ⁵. Managers must thus navigate a fraught terrain: genres serve as both branding tools and pillars of public discourse ³.

Case Study: The Ill-Fated “Pivot to Video”

The mid-2010s “pivot to video” strategy adopted by outlets like *Mic* and *Fox Sports* illustrates the perils of managerial myopia. Driven by the allure of higher ad rates for video content, executives mandated a shift away from text-based journalism, only to confront plummeting traffic and layoffs ¹. This misstep underscores a broader failure: prioritizing monetization trends over audience needs and genre relevance. Video journalism, while valuable, demands distinct skills and narrative structures ill-suited to all contexts ².

Toward an Adaptive Management Paradigm

To address these challenges, media managers must adopt a *genre-conscious* approach aligned with organizational goals and journalistic purpose. This entails:

1. **Resource Allocation:** Prioritizing funding for genres that fulfill civic functions (e.g., local reporting, accountability journalism) ².

2. **Audience Co-Creation:** Engaging communities in genre development to foster loyalty and relevance 9.
3. **Ethical Audits:** Evaluating how monetization strategies impact genre integrity 5.
4. **Technological Literacy:** Leveraging AI and analytics without capitulating to platform determinism 1.

Conclusion

The future viability of journalism depends not only on adapting to technological advances but, more crucially, on reimagining media management as a dynamic discipline. This discipline must balance economic viability with cultural and democratic responsibility. Rather than viewing traditional journalistic genres as obsolete, media managers should approach them as living forms—flexible, responsive, and in need of strategic cultivation. In doing so, they can counteract the growing threats of disinformation, audience disengagement, and financial precarity.

This transformation calls for bold leadership. Media managers must resist the allure of immediate profits that compromise journalistic integrity. Instead, they should pursue sustainable innovation that strengthens trust and enriches the civic sphere. Crucially, this involves reaffirming journalism's foundational role: to inform, to scrutinize power, and to serve as a platform for diverse voices. In reconciling business models with public values, media management becomes not merely a tool of survival but a force for the renewal of journalism as a public good in the 21st century.

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