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Recognizing the Future? Russian Academia Responding to Media Industry Demands

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A Need for Academic Update?

- Why?
 - Geopolitical Change
 - Challenge of BRICS and 'the Rest'
 - Socioeconomic Change
 - Digital Change
 - Drive for Interdisciplinary research



Media Transformations

Social transition of the recent decades = Legislators and audiences

- New legislation and new relationship among major socio-political actors, including media, within new forms of social communication
- Rise of the media industry as a segment of national economy

Digital media revolution = Industry

- Convergence in newsrooms, new patterns of content production and distribution, interactive communication of media professionals with audience

Educational reform = Educators + Academia

- BA and MA programmes to form different students' competences for multi-layer job tasks at the converging labour market



Conceptualizing Journalism as Profession

- Profession which combines a set of professional skills and talent-based creativity (Prokhorov, 2011; Lazutina, 2010)
- One of the key (social) institutes in a modern society (Prokhorov, 2011; Korkonosenko, 2010)
- Historically defined societal and cultural mission, an integral part of a civilizational construction (Svitich, 2014)



Key Features of Russian Media Industry

- **Economic, audience and information domination of terrestrial TV** According to the *Communication Agencies Association of Russia* the total advertising revenues of terrestrial TV in 2015 were about 1.5 times higher than income of the closest competitor (online media).
- **Prevailing of advertising-based business model.** Press is the only segment where copies sales are an essential part of balance sheets but across the whole media industry ad sales are dominant.
- **High level of concentration in the leading segments of media industry in combination with large stake of state in media capital.** Researchers figure out the decrease in commercial capital in 2000s and the growth in state capital and mixed (state and private, non-media) capital. The largest media companies belong to the government-controlled structures (VGTRK, Gazprom-Media) or to the private companies with main interests outside media sectors (NMG)
- **Economic, audience and information dominating of central (federal) media companies.** Almost all the largest Russian media are being produced in Moscow. Regional media holdings are much smaller in terms of revenues and audiences



To Predict the Future

- New research approaches and methodology: scenario analysis, delfy, foresights
- Objects of the recent study are the segments of Russian media system: TV, radio, press, online media, as well as related industry segments (TV content producers, pay TV operators and content aggregators - in particular, online services aggregating and distributing the content)
- 60 interviews with media managers



New Professions

- **Quasi-specialities:**

- ‘technical’ specialists (in particular, those dealing with online products), as well as journalists with technical/technological competencies
- specialists in creating and promoting an integrated editorial content (productologists, marketers, content managers, project managers, producers, legal managers, etc.).

- **Still:**

- the key competence of an editorial employee – the ability to work with text, intended for distribution to a mass audience – will be in demand, which will sustain the professional identity of newsroom staff



What does Media Industry Expect from Academia?

- Convergence of higher professional education and the industry, the creation of joint programs, the adaptation of those currently existing;
- Shift of the focus of training from high school to industrial training programs, the creation of adaptation systems to industry requirements for graduates;
- Recruitment of specialist professionals from niche areas into journalism



The Role of Academia

- Harmonization of theoretical conceptions of the media at the levels of society, the state, the media industry and the academic community
- Development of new theoretical concepts clarifying the nature, goals, tasks, principles and consequences of media operations in modern Russia