

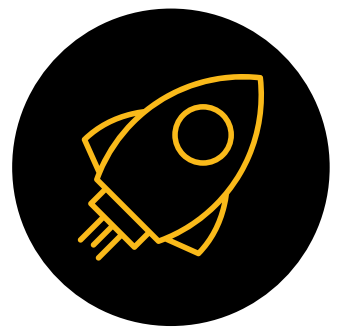
Journalists' role in MIL

ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS' ROLE IN MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY (MIL) IN FRENCH-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND

unine^o

Université de Neuchâtel
Académie du journalisme
et des médias

Chair in Digital Journalism
Thesis under the supervision of
prof. Nathalie Pignard-Cheynel



Background

The media industry can be involved in supporting MIL for **five reasons** :

- public relations can be a **response to negative perceptions** about the media industry,
- the objectives of MIL function as **re-purposing news and entertainment** media for educational purposes,
- it **enhances the image of the media** as corporate citizens in a community philanthropy,
- it **develops the audience**, especially towards young public, and promotes the sophisticated appreciation of media content (Kathleen Tyner, 1998),
- it may **reinvent the place of audiences** in accompanying the new uses linked to the convergence of digital tools, in a more active and participatory approach to information.

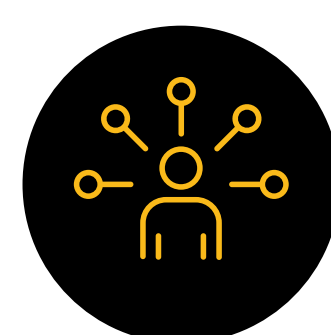
But MIL devices also blur the boundaries of the journalistic profession because they contribute to **distancing journalists from their profession**, by encouraging them to pursue non-editorial activities (Simon Mangon, 2021).

Research questions

- What is the role of journalists when they engage in MIL actions in French-speaking Switzerland ?
- What are their motivations, expectations, aims of interventions and pedagogical practices ?
- What balance do journalists strike between **protecting** the most vulnerable audiences and **stimulating** their digital creativity ? i.e. between :
 - ◊ A **normative approach** that enhances the value of traditional media by **modifying the learners' representations** of journalists, defining the « right way » to inform oneself, use digital technology or perceive the media.
 - ◊ An **emancipatory approach** that develops new skills in the learners, in a **self-esteem dynamic**, the perspective of a **collective commitment** and an action of social transformation (Kervella, 2021).

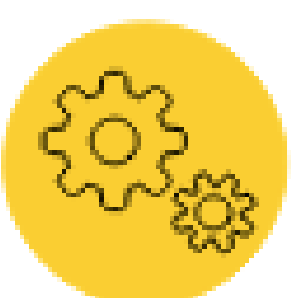


© The Council of Europe



Theoretical framework

- Journalists' roles consist of a **renegotiating discourse** in which actors struggle to preserve or transform journalistic identity along four overlapping dimensions (Thomas Hanitzsch & Tim Vos, 2017) :
 - ◊ normative ideas (what journalists should do),
 - ◊ cognitive orientations (what they want to do),
 - ◊ professional practice (what they really do),
 - ◊ narrated performance (what they say they do).
- In the Swiss academic world, quantitative approaches on the young public are preferred and have a rather **depreciatory view of youth information practices** that forsake traditional media. **Suggested by algorithms** from social media responding to **individual preferences**, the information consumed by young people would be more and more segmented, atomized and focused on their interests, expectations and virtual communities (Gfs.bern, JAMES studies of the Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Fög research institute).
- But international institutions remind that MIL is a **lifelong citizenship training**, where users broadcast and produce their own information on social media. Faced with the plethora of non-hierarchical and sometimes unverified information on the Web, where users' data are used for commercial purposes, MIL may respond to these challenges by developing **critical thinking**, **intellectual autonomy** and **creative media practice**.
- Journalists can work on **evaluating the reliability of information**, to help learners distinguish facts and interpretations, and adopt a **reflective approach to their own media consumption** patterns. This clarification would reduce the risks of imposing one's own « partisan judgments » on learners (Laurence Corroy, 2021).



Methodology

- **Qualitative and « transliterative » approach** (combining media, information and digital literacies)
- Based on the **observation** of various educational experiences and on **semi-structured interviews** conducted with journalists and their institutional or associative partners.
- Four scientific articles relied on a **typology of practices** (media education *on*, *in* and *via* journalism, Maarit Jaakola's, 2020) corresponding to the MIL devices in which journalists participate :
 - ◊ interventions in schools with students,
 - ◊ broadcasts or newspapers dedicated to youth,
 - ◊ training actions with teachers (from kindergarten to university),
 - ◊ partnerships with civil society to reach audiences outside school.



Usefulness

Understand journalists' viewpoints and positioning in existing educational systems and set up new actions to further develop the effective participation of journalists in such systems for :

- **French-speaking Swiss media** industry,
- **political institutions**, such as the Intercantonal Conference on Public Education for French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino (CIIP),
- **MIL trainers**, especially those who work in pedagogical colleges (HEP),
- **future journalists** at the Academy of Journalism and Media.

References



Julien Perrot
julien.perrot@unine.ch
Extended abstract's
presentation for Redmil
22 Summer school
(UCLouvain, Belgium)
September 6th 2022