Journal of International Scientific Publications:
Media and Mass Communication, Volume 2
ISSN 1314-8028, Published at: http://www.scientific-publications.net

E -ZINES - GENOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF DEVELOPMENT (ON POLISH MARKET) RECONNAISSANCE RESEARCH

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Abstract

The article treats on electronic press, that exists in several different types in the Internet market. Due to media convergence new Internet journalism genres like e-zins were invented and evaluate constantly. The author of this research attempts to classify the characteristic features of the internet magazines and is trying to define newly created e-zines. There have been done genological analysis of Internet magazines, and there also have been shown their development over the time. Thanks to interactivity development, mass media communication model changes. The engagement of the sender and receiver is the clue for the proper functioning of this new-born journalism type, which is a key contributor for rapid importance gain vs traditional media types.

The author reveals plot of increasing contribution of graphical, visual aspects of internet media models comparing to "paper" media, which often seems to be underestimated by publishers and explains its importance for the internet media identity creation.

Key words: *internet, hypertext, magazines, media, convergence, genres, interactivity*

INTRODUCTION

From the genological point of view - what is commonly known - in the case of e – zines, we have to deal with the phenomenon of media convergence. Both – internet journalism genders and other internet mass media including e -zines have been annexed to traditional "analog" media. Only after the development of the "new" medium, there have become creations as Wiesława Wozniak says, "stricte Internet, categorically difficult to grasp because of its openness, diversity of the sender, and the semantic value of texts" [Woźniak , 2010, p. 56]. The most interesting is the way of development of each "new phenomenon" of journalism before they reached and permanently anchored in the internet. By examining this way, researcher needs to determine whether they have undergone modification, or changed their pragmatics , and if they fulfill its role very well? Electronics' press history is not long - dating back to the 80's of 20th century. Of course , like most of Internet phenomena e-zins have born overseas in the United States (the first title of "The News & Observer" - the online version: "Nad O Times") , then created afterwards "EIES" - Electronic Information Exchange System) and the "BLEND" which is its equivalent in the UK.

The development of E-zines on Polish market has been mainly caused by computer magazines, which firstly placed online advertisements of a "paper" version , and later settled as a separate title in the network. At that times newsletters gained on significance, as their role was to encourage reading e-mags. Often, one could download e- zine as a compressed zip or rar archive and burn to disk, only to quietly browse and check it offline aferwards. Discussing the history of e- zines one should always take into the consideration the development of the Internet. It looked completely different in the 80s, 90s and at the beginning of the 21st century. At early stage internet was based on so called BBS (Buletin Board Service) technology, which has been characterized by not advanced graphic and high cost of use. Step change appeared in the mid 90's when Gopher and groundbreaking Mosaic Web browser turned up, which started a dynamic development of this type of online journalism. Thanks to continuing

acceleration of Internet connections, we are witnesses of the births of the new possibilities to compose online magazines. Page load speed no longer became a problem, so one could invest more time in a graphic form. To this day, the more interesting e- zine shows in terms of graphical appearance the greater interest it gains among readers. There is a need to remember that the Internet is a medium of graphic design, and the first rule is the shackling of our vision, which arouse the interest. In 1996 the first proffesional e-zin was created in Poland (unfortunately no longer exists) entitled "Reporter" (www.magazyn.reporter.pl). This was a breakthrough year in the development of electronic press in our country.

At the beginning of the development of internet journalism e- zine fulfill another function - namely, low-cost storage media, with almost unlimited range. The first e-zines not connected financially with a traditional publisher are "the effect of crossing the digital method of publication with the organization and mode of operation applicable to paper editors" [Olszański, 2006, p. 31]. As usual, in this case, an important condition for the development of the popularity of this type of periodicals is the speed of the composition and the lack of start-up costs actually incurred . Many e – zines' publishers started with a very slim budget. Therefore no coincidence that among online magazines there are so many not commercial titles on art and culture, often existing thanks to state subsidies and aid foundations supporting cultural life [Ładosz].

E -zines fulfill very well the publicist gap in the rapidly expanding online journalism. They appear to be used as a bridge between modernity and tradition, at they have attractive graphics and are unlimited thematically. Like every "Web creation" e-zins are obliged to provide information in a clear, concise manner, but also in interesting way. The texts are mostly short, need to be express by the style of a brief, focused on expressive communication, which fits the needs of the "new" media in excellent way, governing the speed of access to information. There is no well-defined framework in which a publication is to be entered. The introduction of a new quality in the transmission of messages (on the internet you will find all the essentials) caused consumers to become accustomed to reading a particular type of text, very similar in construction (...) [Olszański, 2006, p. 79]. The most characteristic feature of e- zines is the use of hyperlinks in order to establish a coherent narrative, organize navigation, enhancing the attractiveness of publication.

"The idea of hypertext appears in the literature in the eighties, which accompanies discovery of the literary potential of computers. Environment of computer hypertext systems (Guide , HyperCard , Storyspace) is then used to create non-sequential, branching stories , novels, and even poetry , where the final shape (at the level of plot, characters, names) was given by the reader through their overflowing decisions. Generally accepted was then the split into the exploration and structural hypertext. The first one allows the reader to read. The second one allows both to modify an existing text or links or adding own text segments" [Pisarski]. The use of a hyperlink is an interesting phenomenon in the creation of information, its ordering and clear cataloging.

TYPES OF ELECTRONIC PRESS

Thematically, e-zines are very diverse. Internet presents a wide range of profiling. There are magazines such as cultural, sport etc., but their range of information is quite wide, they resemble in its design and graphics vortals, only updating specific makes that this creation qualify as an e-press. Also popular are very specified and monothematic magazines, with a very narrow range of subjects. The message on the network has its own specific. The most common mistake is to try to transfer the experience of marketing and the traditional mass media (especially TV) to the Internet. In the classic marketing the sender is editing the whole message. By the hypertext -based Internet transmission the recipient is creating the message based on the materials supplied by the sender. This fact is a strong indication for web developers, designers. The user perceives the e -mag completely different than the designer. To provide

a coherent picture of the site to the visitor, one should provide him the visual hints guiding to key content. A very important task of the designer of the online magazine is to appropriately direct attention of the recipient [Bartoszewski, p. 4].

Designing e- zines is therefore not an easy task as it seems at first glance. The success of such a venture need thoughtful action. To design a good e- zine one should not focus solely on the content of the message. E-zin as an internet medium generates different performance conditions that must be fulfilled. This problem has been recognized and discussed by J. Nielsen [NIELSEN, LORANGER, p.155]. For e- zine , or portal, vortal (vertical portal) to be sufficiently clear and to enjoy relative popularity the following conditions are a must:

• good information architecture (page layout, navigation system, sharing content, etc.)

• eliminating the problems of communication (not adapted to the specific content of Internet communications, redundant content, lack of content desired by the user)

• the e -zine has to be adapted to the presented content and user requirements (graphics, colors and typography , the use of animation and multimedia elements).

ONLINE ELECTRONIC PRESS RELEASE

Electronic press exists in several different guises in the Internet market. The first, and perhaps the most popular form are simply electronic editions of online newspapers. It is a popular way to "extend the senses", to use the words of Marshall McLuhan, that means the development of media in a different level, yet nowadays marketing and identity obligation. It is not only existing in the consciousness of Internet users as a modern, influential title, but to strengthening the brand image. E- zine name is derived from the English word "magazine" and provides its acronym (nomenclature developed for the electronic press is very rich : e- paper , e- zine , e- mag, e- journal, etc.). Obviously, the name as in the case of online journalism used to be, was taken from the 'paper' zine counterpart, which is defined as: "a kind of non-professional magazine created by a person or group of people - fans of a subject (eg, music , science , literature, science fiction , role-playing games , ecology, politics), for people who share these interests . They are issued using their own resources, often irregularly. Zines as independent publications, generally are distributed in the independent circuit and in small number (a few to a few hundred copies)" [Wikipedia]. An electronic version of these publications has of course, unlimited range of distribution - one only need good positioning in search engines for the e-zin title to reach potential customers. Important differences do not end there - in fact, the traditional newspaper uses mainly two ways to convey ones message: photography and text , e- zines often adds to this two, also the TV abilities. An example is the online edition of "Gazeta Wyborcza": gazeta.pl or the first polish e- zine of this type “Komputer "(now PC Word Komputer).

E -zines ADVERTISING

Another type of electronic press are animated "newspapers", often of a commercial nature , with interesting graphics, like at first glance, traditional publishing, but they offer much more.

ISSN 1314-8028, Published at: http://www.scientific-publications.net



Fig.1 Lidl commercial e-zin



Fig. 2 Lidl commercial e-zin enlarged

ISSN 1314-8028, Published at: http://www.scientific-publications.net

Similarly to “paper” versions the user can independently turn the pages, however the range of options for viewing a product is much broader than in the case of the "paper" ones. Reader is free to enlarge a selected product , see it up close, which makes purchasing decision easier.

Publisher gives the reader a number of tools with which the receiver may alone configure the way of browsing and reading. The development of such electronic press is very dynamic . Some companies in Poland, such as the chain of household appliances "Saturn" deliberately abandoned the "paper version of their papers , the printed ones are available only in supermarkets.



Fig. 3 Saturn commercial e-zin

Of its decision , the "Saturn" brand owner informed, of course, in the internet : " Bye bye , paper ... Interactive newsletter on www.saturn.pl " . This is a very interesting marketing exercise really. It is known that in the era of ubiquitous computing life, and smartphones , it is much easier and faster to search any information via the Internet. It is interesting, however, that the company has not changed, not graphically revamped its e -zine - it remains in the traditional "paper" stock. Without a doubt, this aimed for consumers to access and navigate in easier way. Traditional, intuitive system is convenient, transparent and saves a lot of time during navigation.

An interesting form of online magazine in this field of e- zines, has been presented by IKEA recently. The Swedish company moved to the Internet direct version of its products “paper catalog”, and additionally has equipped it in the on-line version with useful features:

ISSN 1314-8028, Published at: http://www.scientific-publications.net

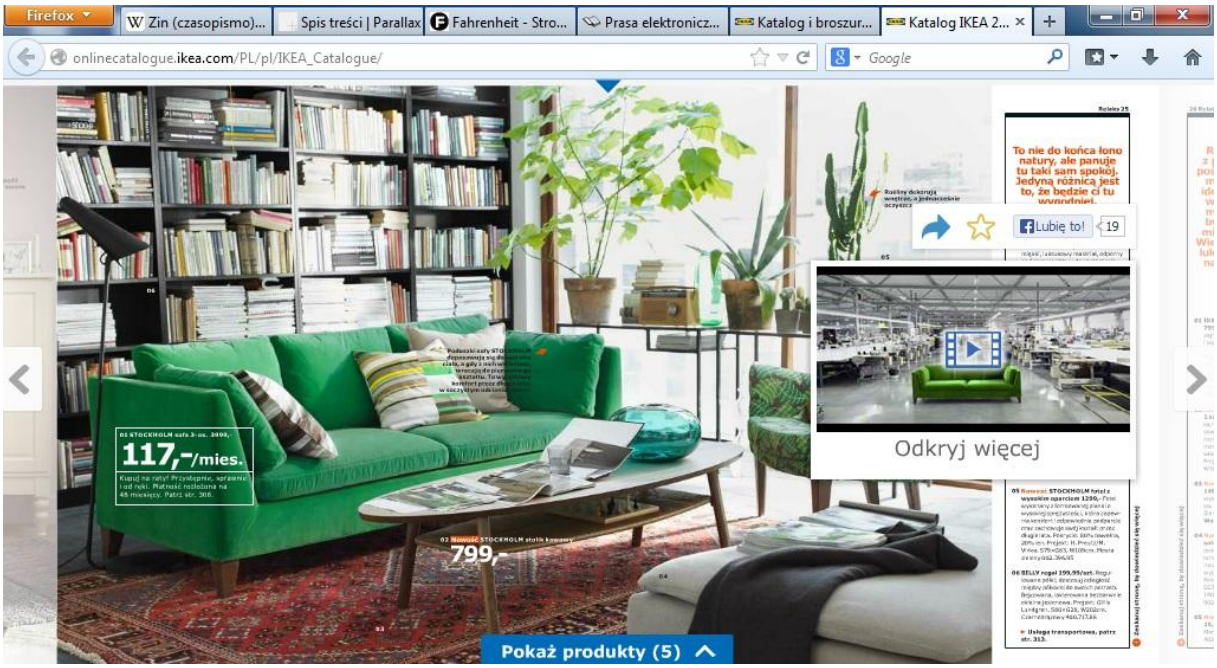


Fig. 4 IKEA commercial e-zin

The IKEA e-mag is seen not only as a catalog, but also as a guide. So in addition to photos and descriptions of the products it includes additional tips written for interior decoration, instructional videos, and advertising guides . So we are dealing with a new quality of e- zines . Thanks to convergence of television, newspapers and the Internet an innovative e- zine was developed, which is an interesting object of analysis , but also useful guide and source of knowledge about the products for customers. The layout is still reminiscent of the " paper " catalog Ikea , which over the years we got used to by this furniture manufacturer - this time thanks to the growth of the Internet and computer technology IKEA has created an unprecedented type of e - zine.

Thematic E -zines

Another form of online magazines, yet nowadays the most popular, is the one based on the HTML code and its mutations. Often graphically in form it resembles an ordinary vortal except that the chapters and topics are published for example in bi-weekly, monthly, or quarterly frequency. As the consequence it might make it more attractive in terms of art, but unfortunately rarely this becomes truth. Reducing frequent text updates often favors the development of graphical aspect of e -zine - the authors of the journal are working not only on journalism, but also on an interesting visual design that can be changed with each new number, and it is undoubtedly a major attraction for readers, stimulate their interest in a webpage and encourage to re- visit. Sometimes , due to financial constraints graphic e-zines use website templates such as php script which is easy to manage, however affects attractiveness of graphics . It is one of the largest design mistakes committed in making key decisions about the shape of the letter . Often the " publisher " just entering the world of the Internet are not aware enough of the things that at the beginning doom new e – zine project at the imminent beginning of its prompt failure. Internet market is very sensitive and reluctant to forgive such errors . Publisher must appear professional . Here, the form must be as important as the content. " Internet magazines, as well as vertical portals, usually have a specific thematic profile and the target environmental audience, which is often narrow. From the point of view of Internet journalism popularity, apart of course from the often very high-level publications, they are rather a popularity dead-end. In order to exist for a wider audience and increase revenues from

ISSN 1314-8028, Published at: http://www.scientific-publications.net

their activities , internet magazines evolve towards vertical portals arranging and reorganizing page layout, building databases and reference books, as well as increasing the frequency of publication, like the magazine ha!art and Polish Culture Portal O.pl " . This team must be accompanied by an e- zine "Fahrenheit" (www.fahrenheit.pl):



Fig. 5 Fahrenheit online

The current e- zine focuses on a broad culture aspects. There are information about new books, reviews, broadly defined journalism. But what is the distinguishing feature of this e- zine is a possibility of cooperation with the editorial. This works on the principle of communicating model from one to all and from all of all. In the tab "About Us" as the first and the most important there is a link to the subpage "How do I upload a text". Thus, both the sender and the recipient care and work together on the attractiveness of e- zin and ensure that its validity is not weakened. The authors of "Fahrenheit" recognized, that far more important from graphics and all the technological embellishments is the interaction, engaging the recipient to act - what is the success guarantee to remain in an uncertain market. Unfortunately, once again words of McLuhan will be prophetic: “the form is a message”. Thinking that the content on the internet will defend itself is short-sighted and destructive. It is in fact primarily pictorial/visual medium.

Often, e-zines appear in the form of a "book", which starts with cover and table of contents, of course, composed of hyperlinks. In the case of e- zines much more popular and often used as a hypertext exploration, appearing in the form of links . An example of this magazine is the " Parallax " - the online magazine dedicated to computer games:

ISSN 1314-8028, Published at: http://www.scientific-publications.net



Fig. 6 Parallax online

Shortly after the presentation of typical e -zine cover, table of content using hyperlinks list appears:

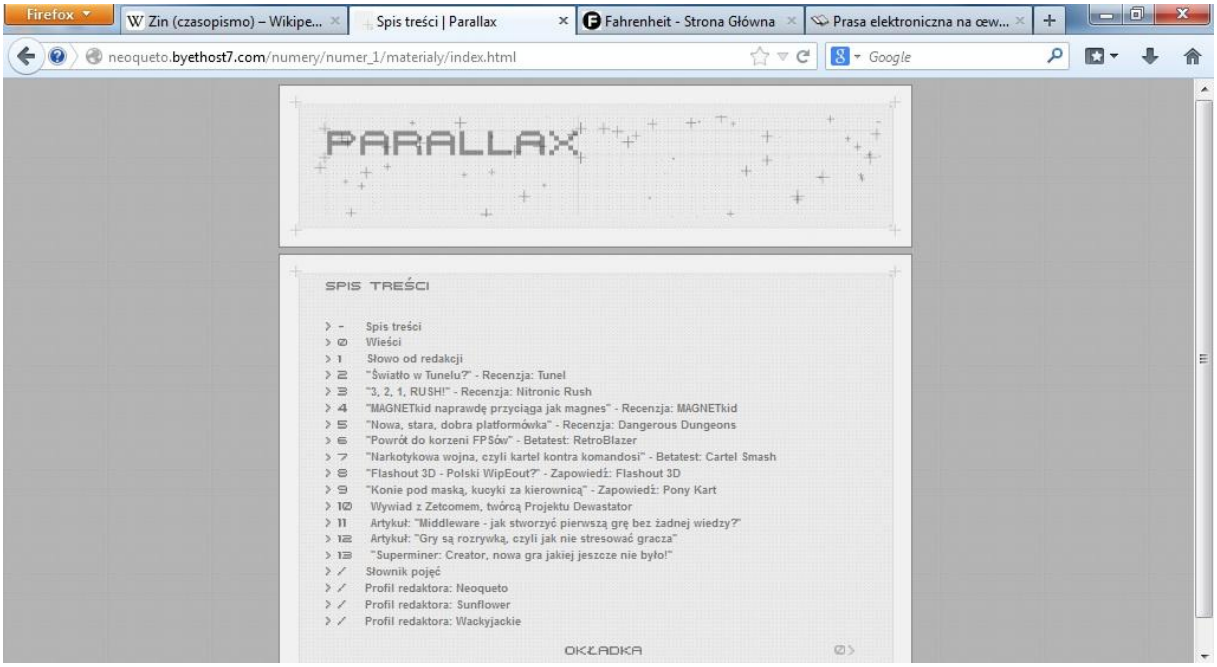


Fig. 7 Parallax online table of content

In terms of the construction this mag can be considered as a child of Internet - navigation, powerful script, interesting graphics situate this publicity high among e- zines. However, the "traditional" design is what puts the "Parallax" among original and a little common e- zines.

CONCLUSION

Hyper texting, multimedia, interactivity and unlimited reach of the Internet, makes e-zins the most common means of communication. The versatility of this medium promotes the development of new information technologies, as well as the development of new genres and media in journalism on the Internet. Thanks to this McLuhan's global village is growing rapidly. Reality of Internet "today" is not synonymous with "yesterday " and it is certain that there will not be synonymous with "tomorrow". Time, space settle new definition of the "new media" - creates a new electronic reality, and so far all well-known phenomenon of media change through media convergence. This outcomes with new meaning and creation of a new virtual reality in which law and order is built from beginning. Definitely thanks to the development of information technology, including the Internet, the way of communication has changed, and what we think is a base - interpersonal communication, slowly descends from the pedestal. In times of social networks in a globalized world time plays biggest role, and the same information must reach audience faster, more efficiently and in a more interesting way. Hence the rapid development of new, attractive internet forms not species themselves but also new forms of journalism. E -zines are a modern journalism, using audiovisual media, aimed at both individuals and communities. The basic model of communication has changed. The Internet is not only the sender but also the recipient. As a polyphonic medium, modified, processed, and co-sponsored by all members of the act of communication becomes a field for interaction, development and creation of a community:

Present invented the term "information society". Everyone is the reader. Thanks to this effect there is another model of communication "from many to many" occurring equally [Mrozińska A.].

Online magazines often use consumers creativity, editors willingly encourage readers to submit their articles or graphics. Interactivity, which is the e- magicians in the service of journalism, is not only an interesting marketing ploy, it is characteristic for this mass media type, distinguishing electronic press. We are talking about the medium in which the text is still in a dominant position, but without the original graphics and most importantly "exit" to the readers it would not be celebrating successes. There's no denying that the new e-zin medium does not have impressive place in the Internet market so far. But in the internet environment where informative journalism plays key role, appearance and development of new periodicals is always enjoyable. To gain a new customer this model uses communication involving the exchange of information between the sender and the receiver - the interaction , and that makes these publications becoming more attractive in the eyes of the readers.

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