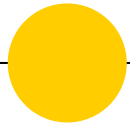


# Reinventing the wheel?

How local newsrooms try (or not) to rethink their relationships with their audiences

Nathalie Pignard-Cheynel, Olivier Standaert, Brigitte Sebbah, Laura Amigo

Future of Journalism conference 2021



# Journalists/media and their audiences

- The link to audiences has become a central element of contemporary media development
- As a response to the various crisis that media are going through (crisis of trust, of distribution, and disinterest) and to the new requirements/expectations (place in the digital news ecosystem; participatory culture, etc.)
- This link to audiences is manifested by:
  - Journalistic practices integrating participation (participatory journalism) (Paulussen et al., 2007; Singer et al., 2011)
  - Editorial models that promote engagement (engaged journalism) (Schmidt et al., 2020; Ferrucci, 2020; Wenzel, 2018; Green-Barber Lindsay, 2018)
  - Knowledge of audiences via metrics and, more globally, an "audience turn" consisting in taking into account the demands / interests of audiences and measuring them (Costera Meijer, 2020; Costera Meijer & Kormelink, 2021)
  - New positions dedicated to the link to audiences (community manager, engagement manager, etc.) in news organizations and newsrooms (Ferrer-Conill & Tandoc, 2018; Pignard-Cheynel & Amigo, 2019)

# Our perspective

- Necessity to articulate several levels of analysis to be able to comprehensively and deeply understand a possible shift towards audiences :
  - Actions ("initiatives") implemented
  - Journalistic practices, specifically integrating audiences
  - Editorial strategies and accompanying discourses (in particular on the role of media)
  - Organizational and structural level
- Focus on local media in French-speaking Europe
  - Proximity (to audiences) is part of the DNA of local media (Hess & Waller, 2017)
  - Deep transformation of local media (evolution of historical players, digital transition, concentration of the sector, arrival of new players, spectre of information deserts, need to rejuvenate audiences, etc.) (Gulyas & Baines, 2020; Franklin, 2006; Ali & Radcliff, 2017; Nielsen, 2015; Jenkins & Nielsen, 2020)

# The LINC project

- How local media in French-speaking Europe (re)think their relationship with their audiences ?
  - What are the initiatives and actions of local media and journalists towards audiences?
  - What is the involvement of audiences in the editorial process?
  - What is the integration of these actions and practices within the media, (organization, strategic aim and practices) ?
- 2 complementary methodological approaches :
  - Creation of a database of local media's initiatives towards their audiences
  - 11 case studies of local media conducted in FR, BE and CH (45 interviews with various profiles within the media)

LINC project (12/2018 - 01/2021) : Nathalie Pignard-Cheynel (project leader), Laura Amigo and David Gerber (Univ. Neuchâtel); Loïc Ballarini (Univ. Lorraine); Franck Bousquet and Brigitte Sebbah (Univ. Toulouse); Benoît Grevisse, Olivier Standaert and Lara Van Dievoet (Univ. Louvain). Funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

# Inventory of media's initiatives towards audiences

Inventory via a participatory form

Public database, freely available at <https://www.unine.ch/ajm/linc>

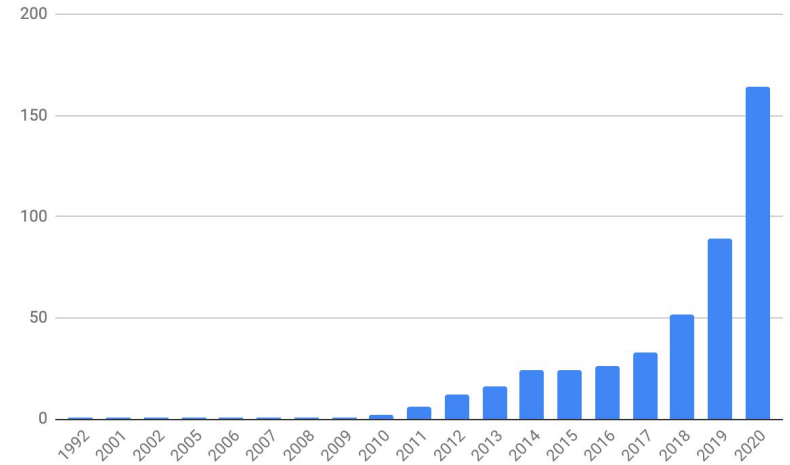
Limits of the database: what is visible, what is communicated and definable as an "initiative"; no claim to exhaustiveness

	Nom de l'initiative	Média	Nature...	Localité/Ré...	Pays	Descriptif synthétique	Démarrage an...	Liens
	Radio"					radio, de l'information		<a href="https://www.unine.ch/ajm/linc">3320910105001985?s=20</a>
242	Rencontre "Face aux usagers"	La Montagne	Presse	Auvergne	France	Organisation d'un échange entre les usagers de la ligne Clermont-Paris et le patron de la SNCF et le secrétaire ...	2019 (septembre)	<a href="https://www.lamontagne.fr/clermont-ferrand-63000/actualites/face-aux-usagers">https://www.lamontagne.fr/clermont-ferrand-63000/actualites/face-aux-usagers</a>
243	Abonné(e)s expert(e)s	Nice Matin	Presse	Nice et Var	France	Panel ouvert aux abonnés experts dans un domaine, afin d'être consultés pour éclairer des dossiers, décrypter de...	2019 (septembre)	<a href="https://www.nicematin.com/faits-d-actualites/societe/devenez-nos-abonnees-avec-nous">https://www.nicematin.com/faits-d-actualites/societe/devenez-nos-abonnees-avec-nous</a>
244	Super fans	Ma Télé	Télévisi...		Belgi...	Création d'un groupe Facebook de superfans afin de créer une relation privilégiée avec des internautes hyper ...	2019	<a href="https://lelabmatele.wordpress.com/2019/09/07/12-que-faire-avec-ses-superfans/">https://lelabmatele.wordpress.com/2019/09/07/12-que-faire-avec-ses-superfans/</a>
245	Nouveaux outils éditoriaux	Mediacités	Numéri...	Lille, Lyon, Nantes, ...	France	Appel aux dons afin de financer de nouveaux outils éditoriaux.	2019	<a href="https://www.okpal.com/mediacites/">https://www.okpal.com/mediacites/</a>
246	Génie suisse sur la route	RTS	Radio	Suisse romande	Suisse	Le bus de la rédaction de la radio RTS fait étape dans 7 villes romandes à la rencontre de la population afin ...	2019 (août-septembre)	<a href="https://www.rts.ch/info/dossiers/2019/08/20-les-bus-de-la-redaction-de-la-radio-rt-s-ont-fait-etape-dans-7-villes-romandes-a-la-rencontre-de-la-population-afin-de-leur-faire-connaître">https://www.rts.ch/info/dossiers/2019/08/20-les-bus-de-la-redaction-de-la-radio-rt-s-ont-fait-etape-dans-7-villes-romandes-a-la-rencontre-de-la-population-afin-de-leur-faire-connaître</a>
247	Portes ouvertes	Nord Littoral	Presse	Calais	France	Après quelques mois de travaux, le journal invite les lecteurs à découvrir le nouvel agencement de ces locaux.	2019 (octobre)	<a href="https://pbs.twimg.com/media/EIRhYAE1T1y.jpg">https://pbs.twimg.com/media/EIRhYAE1T1y.jpg</a>
248	Médias et Citoyens	Groupe Ebra, La Voix du Nord, Ouest-...	Presse	Plusieurs régions	France	Plateforme participative en ligne afin de recueillir des contributions sur plusieurs thèmes portant sur la ...	2019 (octobre-décembre)	<a href="https://www.francetvinfo.fr/participatif/medias-et-citoyens/comment-les-medias-peuvent-ils-faire-connaitre-leur-voix">https://www.francetvinfo.fr/participatif/medias-et-citoyens/comment-les-medias-peuvent-ils-faire-connaitre-leur-voix</a>
249	Charte de bonnes pratiques	Groupe Centre France (not. L'Ech...	Presse	Centre	France	Charte de bonnes pratiques faisant partie d'une volonté de transparence sur la couverture des élections municipales...	2019	<a href="https://www.lamontagne.fr/paris-75000/actualites/les-huit-nouveaux-membres-du-comite-de-bonne-pratique">https://www.lamontagne.fr/paris-75000/actualites/les-huit-nouveaux-membres-du-comite-de-bonne-pratique</a>
250	La liberté vous ouvre sa ruche	La Liberté	Presse	Fribourg	Suisse	Possibilité d'organiser une visite de la rédaction en réservant une date via un formulaire en ligne.	2019	<a href="https://www.laliberte.ch/site/landing_page_redaction/index.php">https://www.laliberte.ch/site/landing_page_redaction/index.php</a>
550 records								

# Statistics on the initiatives database

- 550 initiatives listed, representing 142 media, and including 100 "Covid" related initiatives
- The 3 countries and the different types of media are represented
- 456 initiatives are dated; most took place between 2018 and 2020

<i>Media type</i>	Belgium	France	Switzerland	Total
Digital only	0	46	7	53
Newspaper	23	183	125	331
Radio	9	11	44	64
Television	54	27	21	102
Total	86	267	197	550



## Diversity of types of initiatives

1. Call for contribution (punctual or thematic)	194	35,3%
2. Permanent feature for sending content	28	5,1%
3. Publication of content sent by audiences	32	5,8%
4. Co-production of content between journalists and audiences	14	2,5%
5. Journalistic training for audiences	8	1,5%
6. Journalistic production "on the road"	20	3,6%
7. Vote on stories	8	1,5%
8. Editorial contest	23	4,2%
9. Making-of content / Behind the scenes of the news factory	10	1,8%
10. Open editorial meeting	12	2,2%
11. News outlet guided tour	14	2,5%
12. Meeting between journalists and audiences	27	4,9%
13. Debate or thematic conference	23	4,2%
14. Readers' panel	16	2,9%
15. Creation & management of an online community	37	6,7%
16. Solidarity action	5	0,9%
17. Crowdfunding campaign	29	5,3%
18. Festive event	12	2,2%
19. Subscribers' club (marketing)	11	2,0%
20. Marketing action	12	2,2%
Other	15	2,7%

We inductively created a categorization of 20 main types of initiatives

This allowed to see the diversity of initiatives but also to study the quantitative distribution between the types of initiatives

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The vast majority of initiatives are in the realm of "classic" participatory journalism with a framework for audiences' contributions

But also initiatives involving collaboration between journalists and audiences

**La Marseillaise** @lamarsweb

La Une de La Marseillaise du vendredi 9 novembre.  
Retrouvez votre quotidien en kiosques ou en ligne : [bit.ly/2JUTJSr](https://bit.ly/2JUTJSr)  
Pour participer à l'enquête citoyenne sur l'habitat indigne à Marseille : [bit.ly/2OviNRd](https://bit.ly/2OviNRd)

BOUCHES-DU-RHÔNE ET VAR

**La Marseillaise**

APRÈS LE DRAME DE LA RUE D'AUBAGNE  
**#BalanceTonTaudis**  
**Le peuple du mal-logement témoigne**

Centes de placards, manifestations, pétitions... Les victimes de l'habitat indigne de Marseille s'organisent à travers leurs journalistes. MCL et l'association Prises d'urgence pour être hébergés ont lancé #314

**Infrarouge** @RTSinfrarouge

**La @RTS chamboule ses programmes.** Dès lundi à 19h, notre équipe vous propose une toute nouvelle émission quotidienne: Antivirus. Toutes les infos dans cette vidéo. Et envoyez-nous vos images à [antivirus-rts@rts.ch](https://antivirus-rts@rts.ch). [@rtsinfo](https://@rtsinfo) [#RTSantivirus](https://#RTSantivirus) [#RESTEZCHEZVOUS](https://#RESTEZCHEZVOUS) [#covid19](https://#covid19)

5377 vues

12:41 · 21/03/2020 · Twitter Media Studio

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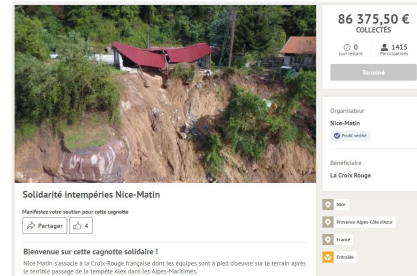


Other initiatives are part of a process of openness (even transparency), pedagogical approach and interaction between media (mainly via journalists) and audiences



# Diversity of types of initiatives

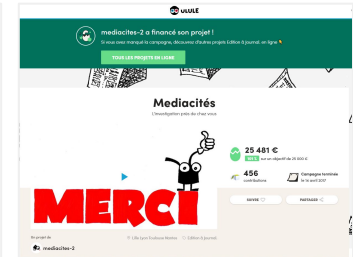
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} Thanks to digital devices, local media create and manage (local) online communities, sometimes in a perspective of solidarity (especially during the Covid)

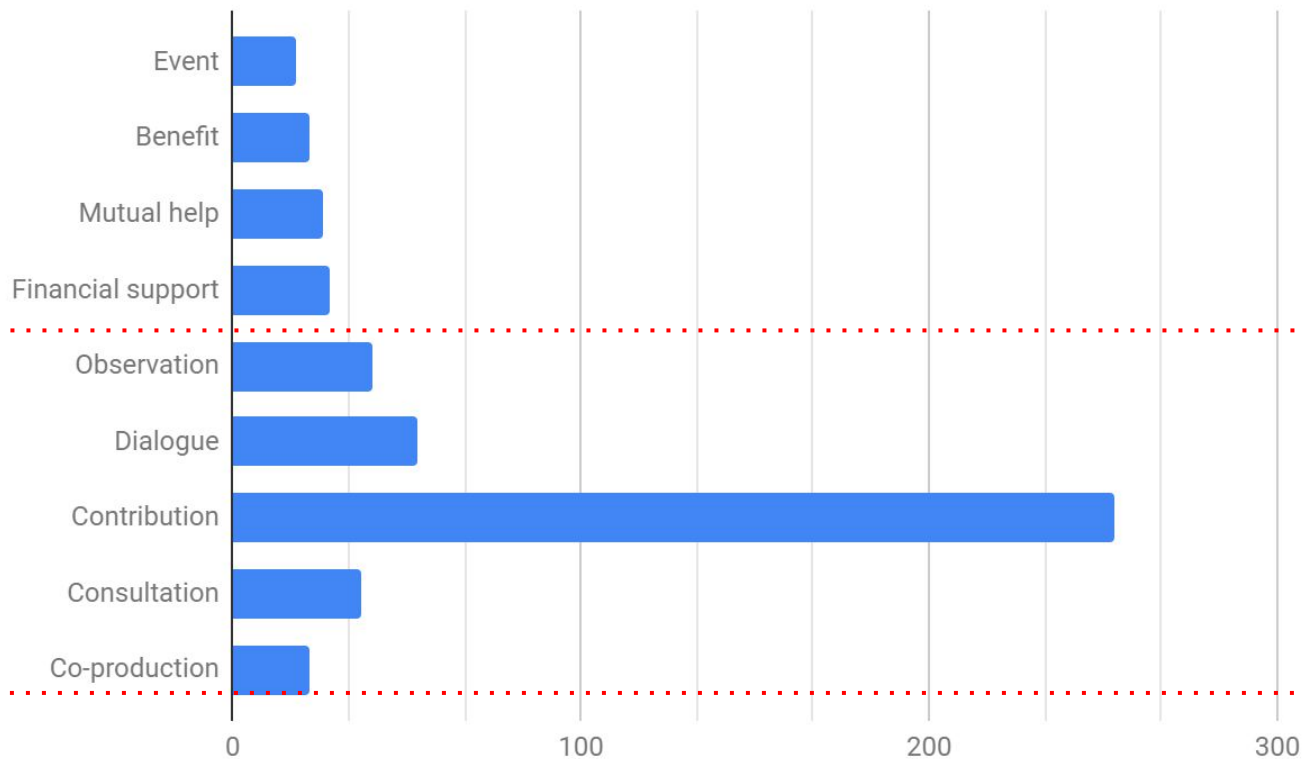
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The inventory also reveals funding or marketing initiatives aimed at building loyalty among "client" audiences

# Involvement of audiences in initiatives



Lowest level  
of involvement



Highest level  
of involvement

Involvement in the  
editorial process.  
73.5% of total of  
initiatives

## From initiatives to case studies

- Database of media's initiatives toward audiences completed with in-depth studies. Need for a deeper analysis of how and why local media launch such initiatives.
  - 11 media case studies in the three countries : Léman Bleu, Tribune de Genève, Nouvelliste (Switzerland), Ma Télé, SudPresse, L'Avenir (Belgium), La Marseillaise, Mediacités, Rue89 Strasbourg, Centre France, Voix du Nord (France)
  - 45 semi-structured interviews (journalists, media management, editors-in-chief, marketing-oriented profiles)
  - Topics: internal organisation & resources; discourse on roles & practices; editorial-managerial strategies

	Public “on the fringe” Media not involved	Public considered Media implicated	Public integrated Media engaged
Regularity and level of integration of initiatives	« One shot » attempts, depending on opportunities and most often bottom-up (carried out by one individual or a small group)	Regular initiatives, in many cases with the support/coordination/supervision of (a part of) the management	Initiatives with a mid/long-term view, integrated in both the editorial and commercial structure; feedbacks & evolutions of the concept
Type of initiatives and relation to the public	The “participation” remains under control and is poorly integrated - Openness and pedagogical efforts but the public is confined to an observer role	Construction/animation of local communities Co-production of content, sometimes with audience training	Engagement of the media in the local area; Involvement of the public in the editorial process (choice of topics, substantive contributions, etc.)
Connections with the editorial line/project	No strategic/global reflection; Few consistency between the discourses/interviewees Fear to see the identity of the media diluted	Implementation of strategies limited to the initiatives and poorly integrated into the editorial production process	The link to the public (and initiatives) is central to the editorial project; Part of a reflection on the role of the media and its place in the territory
Resources	Resources not allocated to empower the links to the public; Poor monitoring of the initiatives (feedback, lessons learned, etc.); Few tools mobilised for improving the knowledge of the public	Limited resources, sometimes leading to handiwork and resourcefulness; Different degrees of follow-up of initiatives	Creation of functions/positions dedicated to strengthen the link to the public; Setting up CSR systems; Monitoring of initiative cycles over time
Type of news media outlets	Traditional and legacy media outlets without any clear vision/application of a digital business and/or editorial model.	“Small” media (“pure player” or hyperlocal broadcasting stations) with a very strong local anchorage but limited human and material resources.	Traditional and legacy media redefining their project/positioning or emerging pure players.

# Thank you !

More information on  
<https://www.unine.ch/ajm/linc>

@MediasLocaux

