We Were Innovators, but We Gave up: The Muted Digital Transition of Local Newspapers

Lenka Waschková Císařová

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

We Were Innovators, but We Gave up: The Muted Digital Transition of Local Newspapers

Lenka Waschková Císařová

Department of Media Studies and Journalism, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

ABSTRACT

An important part of journalism is the capacity for continuous development and learning. Today, this mainly concerns technological innovation, and, for newspapers, it means the digital transition. This article explores how local media journalists perceive innovation in their newsrooms and, more specifically, how they handle the challenges of digital transition. The main angle is focused on individuals' responses to innovation with a qualitative approach that uses in-depth interviews with local journalists in the Czech Republic. The findings, which are based on the typology of individual responses to the existential insecurity of technological innovation, resulted in similar findings as those of other scholars in terms of the characteristics of the types. Nevertheless, most of the responses from journalists at the Czech local newspapers ended in a rejection of the digital transition and nostalgic reminiscence for the old times.

Introduction

Change and innovation, though inseparable from the development of journalism, create new conditions that force actors to react, either through acceptance or rejection, and their reactions influence subsequent change. This process has been ongoing for more than a decade, as John Pavlik (2013, 181) explains: Journalism was and still is "in the midst of tumultuous change, driven at least in part by technological and economic uncertainty on a global scale."

Innovation can be understood as Paulussen (2016, 194) describes it: "an organizational process characterized by different dynamics, mechanisms and negotiations" that "regards change as a process of continuous negotiations regarding strategy and newsroom culture on different levels and between different actors of the media organization."

Digital transition is one of the biggest challenges in terms of innovation for legacy media. The restructuring of organizations and adaptation by journalists is part of a substantial list that includes: developing digital and multi-platform strategies; multimedia production; blogging; user-generated content; data journalism; social media; and mobile news publishing (Paulussen 2016).

Much attention has been given to innovation in research. The obvious reason is the accelerated pace of technological, cultural, and economic developments — the "constant state of flux" in newsrooms (Hendrickx and Picone 2020, 2026). At the same time, there are gaps to fill, like: the lack of a consistent theoretical framework in studies about innovation in journalism (Paulussen 2016); the under-researched "way in which technology can play an active role in shaping innovations" (Hendrickx and Picone 2020, 2027); the missing insight into innovation at the smallest newspapers (Ali et al. 2018b; Morlandstø 2017); and the lack of concentrated research focus on how individual agents, particularly journalists, process the innovation, particularly digital transition (García-Avilés et al. 2018; Ryfe 2009). Moreover, some authors (Heckman and Wihbey 2019, 326) emphasize that there is a lack of research in this area and that there is a "need for a deeper understanding of the barriers between a typical local newspaper and meaningful technological innovation." Therefore, the article focuses on individuals' points of view for how the digital transition has changed local newspapers in the Czech Republic.

This article seeks to explore how local-media journalists perceive innovation in their newsrooms and, specifically, the challenges of digital transition. The main angle is focused on the individual responses to both. This approach is supported by the qualitative research character of the study. In particular, the text focuses on two questions: 1) What are the individual responses to the existential insecurity related to the innovation? 2) How do individual agents, local journalists, perceive the digital transition of the Czech local newspapers? This will help to fill some of the gaps in the understanding about innovation in the media and, therefore, add to the scholarship on the digital transition of local media. The article shows the variations of responses to innovation and the different ways in which agents appropriate technological transition.

The structure begins by placing the research within a framework of previous research about innovation, digital transition, and local newspapers, with a specific focus on local newspapers in the Czech Republic. This is followed by a description of the method used and the findings based on the typology of the journalists' individual responses to the existential insecurity related to the innovation.

Digital Transition as Part of the Innovation Process

Innovation is challenging for both media organisations — because it changes the long-standing organisational structure that supports journalistic work — and individuals — because it changes journalists' practices, cultures, and identities (Hendrickx and Picone 2020). Therefore, Steensen (2009, 823) proposes to research innovation based on both structuralist and individualist perspectives, which considers the "individual as a driving force for innovative initiatives and processes of innovation" (cf. Belair-Gagnon and Steinke 2020). Morlandstø (2017, 17) says that "innovation can occur in media products, such as media platforms or genres; in media processes, such as ways of producing and delivering media products; in media positions, such as audiences and markets; and in media paradigms, such as businesses or revenue models."

Paulussen (2016, 195) suggests "to look inside the newsroom to see how innovation is not just a matter of vision and strategy but also of culture, structure and agency,"

which helps to recognize the agents and explain the different nature of the innovation processes in newsrooms. He is convinced that "change processes are thus ultimately shaped by the way in which structural factors are translated into (and renegotiated through) the daily practices of different actors trying to adapt to their changing material environment" (Paulussen 2016, 200).

Similarly, some authors (Peters and Carlson 2019, 640) propose the shift to "an 'experiential' model that works from the ground up to track how various actors interact to make, share, consume, and critique news"; and to shed light on the role of "agents of change" (García-Avilés et al. 2018, 4). There are various agents in the newsroom who are involved, including journalists, managers, and technical support staff. Therefore, the main focus for this article is individuals' responses to innovation, specifically the digital transition of the local newspapers for which they work.

Considering digital transition, the main avenues that are worth describing are technological innovation viewed through the lens of economic forces (Edge 2019). Some authors see digital transition as a "disruption"; an "adapt or die" situation; or "great experimentation" (Ryfe 2009, 197) and as Heckman and Wihbey (2019, 318) add, understanding digital transition as disruption is still relevant today.

Ali et al. (2018b, 887) see the digital transition as both transformative and disruptive for legacy media, because it changed "every facet of the newspaper industry, including revenue models, production processes, distribution, copy editing, and wider journalistic norms." Franklin (2013; Eldridge and Franklin 2016, 1) repeatedly points out that digital brought "fundamental changes in the ways that journalism is produced, engaged with, and critically understood," and he stresses the technological and economic impact on the journalistic practice. Paulussen (2016, 193) considers it useful to follow Joseph Schumpeter's concept of *creative destruction*: "newsrooms are continuously being reshaped – destroyed and recomposed – to adapt to the permanently changing digital news ecosystem" because "it considers newsroom innovation neither as a strategy, nor as an end goal, but as a process" (cf. Belair-Gagnon and Steinke 2020).

There are "hindrances" that traditional media face during the digital transition (Paulussen 2016, 192) that can slow the whole process. The innovative potential is always limited by economic viability (Picard 2016). Nevertheless, according to Pavlik (2013), the key to economic viability is innovation, not the other way around.

For Pavlik (2013), "a viable economic model for media in the digital age will necessarily rely on a multi-dimensional revenue model. This revenue model will likely include a heavy reliance on paid content as well as online and mobile advertising" (Pavlik 2013, 190). Robert Picard (2016) adds that sustainable funding includes: the reduction of reliance on advertising revenues; the development of better understanding of consumers and their willingness to pay for journalism; and multiple ways of engagement with financing (e.g. non-for-profit model).

The economic pressures are, at the same time, "keenly felt in newsrooms" (Ryfe 2009, 198). As Paulussen (2011, 59–60) points out, the "'new' internet economy" is guided by "'old' economic motives of cost efficiency, productivity and profit consolidation," yet the newsroom needs to invest in technological infrastructure, recruitment, training, workflow, and time management to be able to handle digital transition (Paulussen 2016).

Digital innovation brings the need to transform established newspaper business models (Nielsen and Levy 2010). Considering economic sustainability, newspapers still gain the biggest share of revenue from their traditional business model (Cestino and Matthews 2016). Paulussen understands this, because

> as long as the old business model is still profitable while the new is unstable at best, most managers will opt for caution and implement defensive rather than proactive strategies. Hence, technological innovations in newsrooms are rarely planned or anticipated and seem to arise more out of fear rather than excitement (Cestino and Matthews 2016, 194)

Nevertheless, Edge (2019, 21, 35) points out that newspapers in the U.K. Finally found a sustainable business model for both print and online versions: newspapers "in addition to cutting back on staff and premises, they contracted their distribution areas, deliberately lowering their circulation by abandoning the marginal outlying areas that had once helped boost their readerships and thus ad rates" and online "finally arrived at a profitable model for online subscriptions."

Several authors often criticise slow-paced innovation and digital adoption (Stencel, Adair, and Kamalakanthan 2014; Robinson 2011; Steensen 2009) and the "haphazard way" in which legacy media deal with innovation (Hendrickx and Picone 2020, 2025). On the other hand, Paulussen (2016, 193) stresses the importance of the long-term perspective: "while news organizations seem to adapt slowly on the short term, their incremental evolution over several years is significant and fundamental."

Boczkowski (2004, 4) supports the idea that "innovations (unfold) in a more gradual and ongoing fashion and (are) shaped by various combinations of initial conditions and local contingencies." The slow-paced digital transition is logical from the broader point of view of change regarding journalistic practices and cultures, and from the point of view of the individual actors (Belair-Gagnon and Steinke 2020): "cultural changes happen slowly and are rarely radical or revolutionary, at least in the short term" (Paulussen 2011, 62), while "the culture of professionalism in the newsroom is remarkably resilient and resistant to change" (Ryfe 2009, 19).

Specifics of the Digital Transition of Local Newspapers

There are several specifics that authors mention in terms of how local newspapers respond to digital transition. Jerónimo, Correia, and Gradim (2022, 815) point out that "online remains a permanent challenge for journalists and it is rather a story of resistance than adaptation." Heckman and Wihbey (2019, 318) state that the struggle to adapt to digital disruption was true for local media "in the early days of web publishing" and "remains true today."

Ali et al. (2018b, 886, 887) name the "tactical missteps" that lead to the slow-paced or otherwise problematized digital transition of the local media and stress that the reasons are diverse, reporting "considerable variety of experience" among small-market newspapers in the United States. Heckman and Wihbey (2019, 326) conclude that "history is repeating itself": "Adoption of new publishing technology is uneven, and vital community news organizations are missing out on opportunities to connect with

their audiences and generate revenue. These findings could be symptoms of the stagnant newsroom cultures previously documented."

At the same time, Ali et al. (2018b, 887, 904) warn against the prejudices "of digital backwardness and analog quaintness we often associated with small towns and smaller publications" and highlight that "the critique that newspapers are slow to adopt digital technologies is correct when it comes to small market newspapers, but it is incomplete" and that the narrative that digital transition is a zero-sum game is not right:

> A deep dive into the digital life of small market newspapers unveils a complex dynamic of ownership types, audiences, resources, eagerness, and experimentation. Closer investigation reveals a rich tapestry of innovative techniques, frustratingly slow websites, and passionate journalists and editors who have been overlooked in conversations about the newspaper industry that tend to focus either on the large metros or the digital startups. (Ali et al. 2018b, 887)

As Fowler (2011, 32) adds: "the simple view is that the Internet has been the sole cause of the industry's ills. But it is a much more complex problem than that. Regional and local newspapers have faced a perfect storm of factors that have been developing over decades to bring them to their knees." The biggest constraints can be summed up as "budget, time and people" (Stencel, Adair, and Kamalakanthan 2014, 2), so they can be laid out as follows:

1. Economic – "Giving away online content for free and the relatively late implementation of online strategies," slowness as "an obstacle to profitability," and "fewer resources to invest in new digital strategies than their national and international counterparts" (Jerónimo, Correia, and Gradim 2022, 815); and reliance on advertising funding (Picard 2016). Jenkins and Nielsen (2018, 2) stress that most of the local news organisations they cover in the research "still generate 80–90% of their revenues – and sometimes more – from legacy print operations that are in clear structural decline."

2. Organizational – "Business structures are not always professional, newsrooms have a traditional production culture (newspaper first) and with fewer journalists. This can justify some resistance to extra work" (Jerónimo, Correia, and Gradim 2022, 815; cf. Thurman et al. 2018); fear of "cannibalism" between print and online editions: "making sure our readers don't switch to solely reading our online content and continue picking up our print product each week" (Ali et al. 2018b, 905); and willingness to innovate only when they are forced by competition (Paulussen 2016). Erzikova and Lowrey (2017, 934) interconnect "stunted innovation in digital journalism at these regional papers" with the low capitals of the researched Russian media. Thurman and Myllylahti (2009, 704) show that the print legacy is strong in the Finnish media: "the small but growing number of loss-making titles may soon be forced to abandon their print editions, although they will not recover profitability solely by going online-only." Similarly Thurman et al. 2018 depict "print's continued delivery of high proportions of newspaper revenue." Cestino and Matthews (2016, 22–23) provided evidence for the case of the English provincial press caught in the innovator's dilemma: "so far (we) have failed to develop clear alternative opportunities to create sustainable growth and significantly reshape their organisations. This is mostly interpreted in the literature as the result of a locked-in, obsolete dominant BM (business model) in the industry."

3. Individual – "Journalists with difficulties in accessing information sources and worn down by low salaries" (Jerónimo, Correia, and Gradim 2022, 813–814) and the overall passivity of local journalists (O'Neill and O'Connor 2008; García-Avilés et al. 2018). Hatcher and Haavik (2014, 158) were surprised that Norwegian community journalists do not care about digital innovation: "several of the newspapers have no internet presence aside from a page that gives out the contact information for the newspaper"; most of the interviewed community journalists do not feel any competition from the internet.

Nevertheless, there are also stories of gradual success. Ali et al. (2018b, 19–20) distinguish "four interconnected ways small market newspapers engage with digital technology: as experimenters, users, learners, and reluctants." García-Avilés et al. were able to identify five types of players in newsroom innovation processes in the Spanish media:

> drivers of change, who lead the implemented initiatives; early adopters, who quickly incorporate innovations into their work; laggards, who take time to accept innovations, but end up incorporating them into their daily practices; the outsiders, who stay at the margins of innovations and do not wish to get involved; and finally, the "resisters," those professionals who, for various reasons, oppose the implementation of innovative processes and practices (2018, 7).

Jenkins and Nielsen (2018, 1) identify three strategies for producing and monetising local news in the digital age, which includes the search for national scale, regional breadth, and local depth: "These strategies influence not only how local newsrooms make decisions about editorial content but also how they differentiate their online and print products, discuss their audiences, cultivate social media tactics, focus their business models, and develop plans for the future." Morlandstø (2017, 25, 28) uses the Norwegian local newspapers' successful digital transition to show that "all of the local innovation projects are dependent on some sort of alliance to succeed"; moreover, her analysis "suggests that local newspapers have an additional set of values to account for, values relating more to the specific needs of the community in which they operate."

Czech Local Newspapers

The Czech media system is described as post-socialist and post-transitive (Stetka 2010); nevertheless, authors who adapted the Hallin and Mancini (2011) framework for the specific features of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), incorporated the Czech media system into the *Central Media Systems* category, which shared relatively strong public service media and the lowest levels of foreign ownership (Castro Herrero et al. 2017). Dobek-Ostrowska (2015) offered a different classification, placing the Czech Republic in the *Hybrid Liberal Model*, which is characterized by the important role of foreign media companies in the past, strong commercialization, and weak politicization. The traditional newspapers and their online offshoots are the biggest employers for journalists (Urbániková and Volek 2018).

In the Czech Republic, local information is carried mostly by traditional media and the local-media market consists almost exclusively of local newspapers, with approximately a handful of online pure players. All publishers are private companies focused

on generating profit. The local newspaper field has changed a lot in the past years: in 2009 there were 59 local newspapers; in 2014 there were 44; and in 2019 there were 30, a reduction of 50% in a decade (Lokálník/Localmedia). Moreover, there is one publishing chain, VLM, that includes 70 dailies that cover almost every district. It is not included in the research because its structure is centralised, and its content delocalised (Waschková Císařová 2017). A similar development of local chains towards centralization and delocalisation is depicted by Matthews (2015, 245) and her case of British local newspapers, where the local press "is 'local' in name only."

Czech *local newspapers* fit the Ali et al. (2018a) definition for *small-market newspapers*: they are mostly weeklies distributed within the boundaries of a district; their number of sold copies per issue is, in most cases, from 1,500 to 6,000; they were never part of the official national *Publishers' Union*; and their audience numbers were never audited, so there is no publicly available data. Even so, local newspapers still wield power within the print media market: the total printed copies of these titles in 2019 was estimated at 190,000 per week.

Nevertheless, not only is there a decline in the overall number, but the gradual reduction of the size of these newspapers has been apparent over the past decade and their features have become flat: the variety of content has disappeared; the individual titles have retreated to the most profitable areas of the districts; and the publication schedule has changed to weekly. Yet, most of them (20 out of 30) lasted for almost 30 years (Waschková Císařová 2013; Lokálník/Localmedia).

The current situation for local newspapers in the Czech Republic has been criticised by the *European Federation of Journalists* (2019: 2): "Local media are in a very difficult position, leaving a big part of the citizens without real independent impartial information on local interests, which has a negative impact on participation in local debates and democracy." Even if there are no news deserts in the Czech Republic (Jenkins and Nielsen 2018), because publishing chains own local dailies in almost every district, the centralisation and delocalisation of function and content mean that people living on the periphery fail to receive relevant local information (Waschková Císařová 2017).

This development, along with the long drop in circulation highlighted by the 2008 financial crisis, has had many results: problems of economic viability; journalistic job losses; unfulfilled expectations in digital transition (mainly online ad revenues; Usher 2010); and online performance, which was originally considered to be a salvation, but later taken as a burden and threat for print production, and put local newspapers in the Czech Republic into a vicious cycle. Newspapers are unable to innovate and jump into the digital transition when they are not able (and willing) to invest money and action (Waschková Císařová 2013). Therefore, these news organizations and their journalists become "survivors" among their "dying" peers.

Individual Responses to Digital Transition

While focusing on individuals' interpretations of their work and their opinions about the changing practices, it is no wonder that the responses to innovation, particularly digital transition, are both pragmatic and emotional (Waschková Císařová 2021).

Some authors do not explicitly mention emotion as one of the driving forces for individual responses to change (Boczkowski 2004; Paulussen 2011); nevertheless, they mention that newsroom culture consists of unwritten rules, tacit norms, and shared professional values: "These rules, norms and values are embedded in the habits, hearts and minds of journalists" (Paulussen 2011, 62). Therefore, any change can seem to be an identity crisis: "They complained that they felt less and less like 'real' reporters" (Ryfe 2009, 198–199).

The individual emotional responses to innovation entail "enthusiasm and commitment" (Paulussen 2011, 63). They often report a "feeling" and a "sense" that the new managerial direction is wrong, and responses included a range of emotions: "feel at sea" and "frustration" (Ryfe 2009, 198–199, 212); "enthusiasm" and "eagerness" (Ali et al. 2018b, 887–888); "fear" (Paulussen 2016, 195); and "anger and frustration" (Usher 2010, 919). Moreover, Usher (2010, 913) shows how "journalists often lack the vocabulary to talk about the implications of news media for their work, and to understand how new media is radically transforming journalism."

Nevertheless, there is one emotional response to innovation that is repeatedly emphasized: *nostalgia*. This is used to explain the reasons for the slowness and rejection of innovation in traditional media, and it is particularly connected to the economically viable times of the media past. According to Usher (2010, 924), nostalgia can be used "as an umbrella term for the panoply of feelings that these journalists have about the print industry's shrivelling away." Katharina Niemeyer (2014, 1) points out that nostalgia "is the name we commonly give to a bittersweet longing for former times and spaces. This private or public return to the past, and sometimes to an interlinking imagination of the future, is, of course, not new. There has always been a fascination for the, as we often call them, 'good old times'."

Usher (2010, 914) follows Jameson's (1993) assumption that "nostalgia is a relationship with a past that never existed, a yearning for a collective memory that we believe we had and can no longer obtain." Therefore, she depicts journalists as "wedded to an idea of journalism that no longer – and may have never – existed and blame their problems on Wall Street rather than self-reflexively examining the role of their own occupational values and practices in a changing media environment" (Usher 2010, 911). Nevertheless, she understands, that researchers cannot "simply dismiss this yearning as inauthentic and therefore unimportant. Instead, as nostalgia creates and unites individual and collective memories about what once was – and creates the potential for what could be in a better future – it is both backwards oriented and forward directed" (Usher 2010, 914).

The digital transition — with its need to innovate business models, to develop digital strategies, and to change journalistic practices — can be understood as a situation of *job insecurity* felt by individual actors, specifically the journalists. Therefore, it would be fitting to focus on the *existential insecurity,* which can be a broader emotional response and more proper for the small local-newspaper newsrooms that are often based on only one journalist. Authors depict various responses to this situation, "from hopeful newsworkers who promote newsroom innovation to cynical newsworkers who challenge efforts to change news practices" (Ekdale et al. 2015, 383) and understand nostalgia as one of the possible responses to the job insecurity (Usher 2010; Spaulding 2016; Nielsen and Levy 2010).

Journalists could be understood as survivors of the downsizing, where not adapting to change and not following innovation often means the end of the newspaper. Therefore, we can understand these responses to the slow death of the local newspapers. At the same time, this approach enhances both the rational and emotional nature of these responses.

Ekdale et al. (2015, 385–386) propose to follow the survivor-response typology developed by Mishra and Spreitzer (1998) because it covers the seemingly contradictory responses to the change. They posit that "survivor archetypes capture the emotions, cognitions, and behaviors that survivors use to cope with the stress of downsizing" (Mishra and Spreitzer 1998, 570). These archetypes are constituted along two spectrums: constructive – destructive; and active – passive. There are four categories: *active advocates; faithful followers; carping critics;* and *walking wounded* (Mishra and Spreitzer 1998). Ekdale et al. describe these categories as:

> Hopeful workers (constructive, active): those who perceive great job security and eagerly assist their company in achieving future goals. Obliging workers (constructive, passive): those who also feel secure in their employment but are more likely to accommodate than propose change. Fearful workers (destructive, passive): those who perceive job insecurity and feel helpless in the face of organizational change. Cynical workers (destructive, active): those who anticipate losing their jobs but would rather challenge or impede their company's efforts than abide by company demands (2015, 385-386).

Following previous paragraphs, this article focuses on individuals' responses to innovation, specifically on the digital transition of the local newspapers they work for. The focus is particularly reflected in these questions: 1) What are the individual responses to the existential insecurity related to the innovation? 2) How do individual agents, local journalists, perceive the digital transition of the Czech local newspapers?

Method

To answer the questions, the approach was based on the qualitative method, with in-depth interviews (Brennen 2013) that focused broadly on the changing practices of local journalists and the changing functions of local newspapers. In-depth interviews with 33 workers in local newspapers were conducted from November 2019 to February 2020 (cf. Anderson 2013). As follows from the survey, in 2019 there were 88 local newspaper workers in the Czech Republic who were considered to be journalists (cf. Lokálník/Local media 2023).

Among interviewees there were local newspaper workers at several levels of the hierarchy: owners, managers, journalist-entrepreneurs (to ensure anonymity, these were coded as "managers"); editors, editors-in-chief (coded as "editors"); and reporters and freelancers (coded as "reporters"). The group of interviewees consisted of 22 men and 11 women. They were mostly older (median age 55) and experienced (median 26 years of work as a journalist), but there was also a younger group. Fourteen of the interviewees were university-educated, but none had received an education in the field of journalism. For more see the list of interviewees in the Appendix.

The research was conducted according to the rules of the Masaryk University Research Ethics Committee. All communicative partners signed an informed consent

form, and their data were strictly anonymized. The interviewees appear in the text under pseudonyms.

The face-to-face interviews in the Czech language, which ranged from 40 min to 3 h, 30 min, were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and translated.

The data were analysed with two cycles of coding. The primary-cycle of coding focused on structural, descriptive, and thematical matters. This was followed by a sec-ondary cycle of focused coding (Saldaña 2009). The overall objective of the interviews was to (1) gain insight into the functioning of local media as media organisations within a specific media subsystem; and (2) to map the transformation of journalistic practices, journalistic culture, journalistic autonomy, and the working conditions of local journalists. The topic of innovation was not conceptually pre-determined. It emerged during the primary-cycle of coding as part of both topics of specifics and the transformations of the work of local journalists. At the same time, the interviews do not focus on the levels of innovation among the interviewees, but rather their beliefs and related stories.

This research is part of wider and longitudinal research attention on local media in the Czech Republic. The project started in 2001 and it administered surveys in every local Czech newspaper newsroom in 2009, 2014, and 2019 with participant observa-tion in 2019 and 2020 (Lokálník/Local media 2023).

Findings

Following Mishra and Spreitzer (1998), Ekdale et al. (2015) and their contributions to survivor-response typology, different types of journalists' responses to the digital tran-sition of local newspapers in the Czech Republic can be identified. The types of responses based on research findings follow two spectrums: active – passive, and con-structive – destructive (Mishra and Spreitzer 1998; Ekdale et al. 2015).

For the interviewees, innovations are, broadly speaking, mostly associated with the digital transition of newspapers. While they consider online news to be a standard part of journalistic changes, even if they do not produce online news regularly (reporter Marta, editor Ota, editor Cyril), they have a more distant, but all the more exacerbated, relationship to social media (specifically, mostly Facebook) – some refuse to use them altogether (reporter Robert) or misuse them to generate advertising rev-enue (manager Anna).

Seeing innovation through the lens of economics or changing journalistic practices is already more secondary in the interviews – it serves to explain why innovation is seen as a "problem" among local newspaper journalists (e.g. manager Ema). Only spor-adically, definitions interconnected with the importance of experimentation, lifelong learning and training, and trial and error (manager Josef) were heard from the com-municative partners (cf. García-Avilés et al. 2018).

Young interviewees do not have such a say in newsrooms run by older colleagues, so they often adapt their views on innovations – as reporter Ben says: "You can't find local information on the Internet anyway. You have to buy a local newspaper for it." Nevertheless, they are gradually trying to push through innovation, so far without clearer goals or relevant arguments. Reporter Ben says: "We use the Web, too, I'm

trying to kick-start it a bit, revitalise it, because it's been stagnant and I'm also trying to make it profitable, but it's negligible so far." Editor Martin adds: "My more experienced colleague thinks we are fed by print. But I don't think it's functional to write on a website for people to read the rest of the article in print. I don't address that because I don't have any relevant analysis."

The communicative partners don't often identify themselves as *active advocates*, which is to say hopeful journalists who actively promote innovation, take initiative, strive to solve problems, and stay optimistic in the face of the digital transition of their work (Mishra and Spreitzer 1998). It is important to point out that these journalists are mostly from economically stable newsrooms (Paulussen 2016) and that they understand their newspaper's online presence to be an integral part of its economic success (Ali et al. 2018b).

> For a long time, we stuck with the newspapers, but as the older readers die off and young people don't tend to read so much, we noticed that we had a decline, compared to 10 or 15 years ago. Nevertheless, we counted up and we're very happy that we've got a bigger number online than we lost in print, but they're a different group. (editor Marie)

> In the future I would like to have an organisation that is more automated and makes greater use of information technology, shared documents, cloud stuff. It can save time, and time is money. It saves people's time when everyone learns how to use it. All my mistakes were later lessons learned in everything I started to create. (…) We're getting more and more advertising online. (…) But I'm against charging for online news because no one will read it. I'm adamant when someone tries to convince me, they will need to produce convincing numbers from analytics! (manager Josef)

A journalist from a local newspaper that has been losing money for a long time connects the economic viability of digital transition to the ability to appreciate all types of journalistic work, including online news (Pavlik 2013). This interviewee, editor Dan, who is a long-time technology enthusiast, is the only one of the communicative partners who is able to make money from an online edition through a paywall (Jenkins and Nielsen 2018), says: "We have had websites and custom software since 2004. There have been pressures: why don't you give the news for free? But I've always explained: it can't be free. I wouldn't appreciate my own work if I gave it away for free when I've worked hard on it."

At the same time, editor Dan represents active advocates, who have a willingness and capacity for further personal development and learning. They stress the importance of continuous learning and being active (O'Neill and O'Connor 2008). As manager Josef puts it: "We keep learning by trial and error. The mistakes move us forward." And it is not about the uncritical and immediate acceptance of new trends (Boczkowski 2004), but rather the gradual development based on discussions in the newsroom and the relevant data:

> We absorbed the new trends slowly. We created our online presence by chance because we expected that online news would be competition for the print titles. No one understood it here, and of course a discussion began about competition between newspapers and the web (…) and it still continues: we understand them as two separate entities. They are two separate newsrooms, two separate media and they must take care of themselves, but they must follow at least the basic rules of decency. (manager Josef)

The communicative partners, who would still consider themselves to be digital transition optimists, have distinctly passive attitudes towards innovation. They can be classified

as *faithful followers*: they are obliging, calm, committed, and loyal; they follow orders; they behave routinely; and they are more likely to accommodate than to propose change (Mishra and Spreitzer 1998). In their responses towards innovation, there is a notable disparity between what they think about the innovation, how active they are, and how much they want to learn and move forward (Hendrickx and Picone 2020). These interviewees stress that they have a clear strategy for online news production, but, at the same time, they admit that journalists themselves are no longer involved.

> We're trying to put actual stuff online and develop it further for print – we put a teaser online and a closer read in the newspaper. (…) (Journalists) are not actually physically involved in it. We do the newspaper and what we want to put online we just send to a colleague. (reporter Emil)

> We have a graphics department linked to the newsroom. We have two relatively junior colleagues, graphic designers. They understand it and they put the stuff online. (manager Anna)

> We have a website, but I don't know how up to date it is. I don't even have time to go there. My husband manages it. If I send him something that I'm interested in, what seems like it should be there, he'll put it up. (…) Nevertheless, online is definitely needed, because nowadays everything is moving online. (editor Dana)

The passivity of these interviewees is also revealed by their perception of online innovation as an easy route to money without any effort of their own (O'Neill and O'Connor 2008). For example, they understand Facebook to be a ready-made solution for advertising online (editor Ivo, manager Anna). As editor Ivo sums up: "We put ads on Facebook and it's a very good strategy. We've been doing it for maybe a year now and we also get positive feedback from our advertisers that people are responding to ads both in the newspaper and on Facebook."

These interviewees also show their feelings towards innovation when they highlight their past successes in innovation. Nostalgia recalls the early days and its proactive innovative approach, but they are no longer able to actively support it (Usher 2010). For example, editor Ivo considers their local news online page as a strong "business brand," and he is proud that he developed it "in the very beginning"; nevertheless, he's not that interested in it anymore, and it's run by a single person in the newsroom.

The other communicative partners generally do not have a constructive relationship with digital transition. Some of them never saw the potential in local newspaper innovation. Some gradually resigned themselves to it, primarily due to the otherwise impossibility of achieving economic viability and operational stability. As editor Jan sumps up: "We tried everything regarding the digital transition, but the advertising wasn't catching on, so we gave up." The *carping critics* are cynical journalists who challenge or impede innovation rather than abide by its demands. They are still active, but they either turn their activity in a different direction (e.g. publishing books or postcards, organizing competitions) or they react with emotions, such as anger, disgust, cynicism, or criticism (e.g. reporter Tom, cf. Mishra and Spreitzer 1998). The effort to learn and develop innovation is evidently lower among these interviewees. Or, possibly, *carping critics* tried but gave up. The main reason is that they could not find a sustainable financial, business, and production model for both newspapers and online news (Nielsen and Levy 2010).

> We have web pages and Facebook, but we're somewhat limiting the web pages, because we haven't found a way to charge for the news. People don't want to pay for the content, no matter what you devise. We prefer to stick to the printed version as long as we can and we're not looking for a route to the reader on the internet. (editor Ota)

> We have a website and Facebook. (…) But I believe that what feeds us is the print. (…) I change the online title page only once, twice a week and our original topics are not online at all. (reporter Marta)

> We have a web page, but it's a poor one. We keep it deliberately trimmed. (reporter Tom)

> We built a website, which was not a happy idea because, of course, it takes readers away from the print medium. The original idea was different, but we found that it affected the printed newspaper, so we downgraded it. We basically keep it alive because of the contacts and if, let's say, the printed paper doesn't survive and there is still a desire to do something, we would revive it. (editor Karel)

> Ten years ago, we developed the web. We didn't leave it, but we don't develop anything new on it. The website is running, we have some traffic there, two and a half thousand visitors a week, but it's just… Now it's waiting for us to turn it into a form that's more accessible on mobile phones. We're still unable to make money other than through the sale of the printed newspaper. (editor Ota)

Some of these communicative partners feel guilty that they have stopped being constructive. They make excuses and find reasons that the innovation has not worked, which can also be understood as the manifestation of their cynicism. They talk either vaguely about their activities or about what "could be."

> We're going to have to [invest in online]. We're going to somehow connect it and put videos out there. We're working on it in an operational mode, testing it out, and, when it's tested, we've got the kinks worked out. We're planning on it being a new medium. (reporter Tom)

> I cancelled the online news, which annoys the publisher, but I don't even have time to do it. I could make the website great, but I would need one person to do it fulltime and then it would work in terms of content. But in terms of finances, it wouldn't bring anything anyway, because even if the website was great, nobody would advertise on it anyway. (reporter Robert)

As their emotional frustration deepened, these interviewees referred to their print and web editions as "enemies" or "cannibals" (e.g. reporter Robert, cf. Ali et al. 2018b) and clung nostalgically to the print newspapers (Spaulding 2016). At the same time, most of them have no data to confirm this suspicion. For example, editor Barbora considers online to be a contradiction: "If you develop online, then you stop selling newspaper"; reporter Radim "thinks" that online news "would bury the newspaper sooner"; and reporter Milan admits that he "has always been a bit of a pansy (about) online news, mainly to keep print alive." Others use this suspicion as a reason for passivity, as reporter Robert says: "I basically don't give a damn about Facebook or the Web, because I don't have time for it, and it seems to me that it cannibalizes the content of the newspaper."

In line with Mishra and Spreitzer (1998) categories, destructive and passive journalists – the *walking wounded* – feel helpless in the face of innovation. Their responses include worry, fear, anxiety, withdrawal, and procrastination. They "feel at sea" (Ryfe 2009). The interviewees admit that they don't understand and/or do not like online

journalism at all, so they see no point in actively and constructively responding to the digital transition. As reporter Alena sees it: "I don't give online much of a chance."

> I admit that I don't like online news. We do it because we must, and it's obvious. I'm not a fan of it, so we put what we have to put in there. I feel like it's throwing money away, but everybody has it, so we have it, too. It's the newspaper that makes the money, so we must take care of it. (manager Ema)

> We try to put things in there, but the printed newspaper feeds us. My colleague is in charge and when a press release arrives, she just throws it on the website to make it look as if it contains something. (editor Pavel)

One truth prevails in all of the interviewee stories: economic problems arise (Jenkins and Nielsen 2018) and increase where passivity prevails, and that makes the innovation responses a vicious cycle (Jerónimo, Correia, and Gradim 2022). As manager Mirek sees it: "I don't have time for online news development. I have to make a living and pay debts."

Some of the local newspapers with walking wounded journalists had serious financial problems and later stopped being published. But, even if the newspaper ended and planned to continue as an online news page, most of the journalists were so tired and disappointed that, although they often talked about continuing online, they just resigned. Now they preserve their nostalgia despite the fact that their newspaper did not survive (Jenkins and Nielsen 2018; Usher 2010).

> The web platform cost half a million, everything remained there, and it works perfectly. But we haven't used it yet. (manager Petr)

> We were considering continuing online. [The boss] said he would prepare it … that was two months ago. (reporter Alena)

The same journalists who muted the digital transition of their local newspapers, nostalgically boast about how trendy they were in the past and they present themselves as innovators and pioneers back in the "mythical golden ages" (Nielsen and Levy 2010) or "the good old times" (Niemeyer 2014). They often refer to the early 1990s. Editor Artur, for example, considers himself "the first in the small newspapers to send newspapers by wire." Or they go back to the very roots of traditional local journalism to revive their importance from the good old days. As manager Ema says: "I think the print will hold up. When I see news on the Internet, it's all virtual, it's all gone. If I want to read something the next day, it's not there anymore, whereas I can go back to the newspaper. (…) I think the newspaper is a chronicle, the way it used to be" (cf. Ali et al. 2018a).

Conclusions

This article seeks to explore how local journalists perceive innovation in their newsrooms and, specifically, the challenges of digital transition. Interviewees' responses to the existential insecurity related to the innovations match the typology offered by Mishra and Spreitzer (1998) and Ekdale et al. (2015). The analysis was able to identify the rational and emotional reactions of journalists to digital transition, particularly their tendency towards nostalgia (Usher 2010; Spaulding 2016; Niemeyer 2014). An interesting finding concerned how individual agents, local journalists, perceived the digital transition of the

Czech local newspapers: the interviewees are the least active advocates, and, over time, some have shifted on the spectrum towards passive and destructive attitudes. Thus, the main problem for local media from an individual point of view, is not a slow digital transition (Ali et al. 2018b; García-Avilés et al. 2018), but rather the muted digital transition based on reasons relevant to the communicative partners.

Understanding these reasons is an important step towards analysing innovation in the media, in general, and in local newspapers, in particular. They seem to be based on the journalists' resignation rather than on some kind of "tactical missteps" (Ali et al. 2018b), and they are, for the journalists, serious enough that they are unwilling to adapt, even though "the alternative is 'death'" (Ryfe 2009, 199).

These findings contribute primarily to the understanding of individual responses towards the existential insecurity of local-newspaper journalists, particularly in individualized newsrooms that are often inhabited by a single person who makes the decisions and is responsible for the whole medium (Paulussen 2011).

There are two potential avenues to further develop these findings: 1) One could go more in depth into the point of view of the individuals and, for example, compare the responses of various types of journalistic workers, or focus on the journalists' insufficient vocabulary to describe digital transition (Usher 2010). 2) From the structural point of view, it would be interesting to link the findings about individual responses more tightly to the conditions and development of particular newsroom/news organization. These would probably bring a clearer view that, behind the muted digital transition, there can be an absence of competition on the local level (Paulussen 2016) or a lack of cooperation, both inside and outside the newsroom (Ali et al. 2018b).

Disclosure Statement

Funding

ORCID

Lenka Waschková Císařová 🆔 http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3307-0801

References

Ali, Christopher, Damian Radcliffe, Thomas R. Schmidt, and Rosalind Donald. 2018a. "Searching for Sheboygans: On the Future of Small Market Newspapers." *Journalism* 21 (4): 453–471.
Ali, Christopher, Thomas R. Schmidt, Damian Radcliffe, and Rosalind Donald. 2018b. "The Digital Life of Small Market Newspapers. Result from a Multi-Method Study." *Digital Journalism* 7 (7): 886–909.

Anderson, Christopher William. 2013. "Rebuilding the News." *Metropolitan Journalism in the Digital Age.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Belair-Gagnon, Valerie, and Allison J. Steinke. 2020. "Capturing Digital News Innovation Research in Organizations, 1990–2018." *Journalism Studies* 21 (12): 1724–1743.

Boczkowski, Pablo J. 2004. *Digitizing the News: Innovation in Online Newspapers*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Brennen, Bonnie S. 2013. *Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies*. New York: Routledge.

Castro Herrero, L., E. Humprecht, S. Engesser, M. Brüggemann, and F. Büchel. 2017. "Rethinking Hallin and Mancini Beyond the West: An Analysis of Media Systems in Central and Eastern Europe." *International Journal of Communication* 11: 4797–4823.

Cestino, Joaquin, and Rachel Matthews. 2016. "A Perspective on Path Dependence Processes: The Role of Knowledge Integration in Business Model Persistence Dynamics in the Provincial Press in England." *Journal of Media Business Studies* 13 (1): 22–44.

Dobek-Ostrowska, Boguslawa. 2015. "25 Years after Communism: Four Models of Media and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe." In *Democracy and Media in Central and Eastern Europe 25 Years On*, edited by Boguslawa Dobek-Ostrowska, and Michal Glowacki. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

Edge, Marc. 2019. "Are UK Newspapers Really Dying? A Financial Analysis of Newspaper Publishing Companies." *Journal of Media Business Studies* 16 (1): 19–39.

Ekdale, Brian, Melissa Tully, Shawn Harmsen, and Jane B. Singer. 2015. "Newswork Within a Culture of Job Insecurity: Producing News Amidst Organizational and Industry Uncertainty." *Journalism Practice* 9 (3): 383–398.

Eldridge, Scott, and Bob Franklin. 2016. "Introduction: Defining Digital Journalism Studies." In *The Routledge Companion to Digital Journalism Studies*, edited by Bob Franklin, and Scott Eldridge. London: Routledge.

Erzikova, Elina, and Wilson Lowrey. 2017. "Russian Regional Media. Fragmented Community, Fragmented Online Practices." *Digital Journalism* 5 (7): 919–937.

European Federation of Journalists. 2019. Fact finding mission to the Czech Republic. https://europeanjournalists.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Czech-Republic-fact-finding-mission.pdf

Fowler, Neil. 2011. "Regional Press Challenges Promote Calls for New Ownership Forms and Legal Bases." In *Is There a Better Structure for News Providers?*, edited by David A. Levy and Robert G. Picard, 31–54. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Franklin, Bob. 2013. "Editorial." *Digital Journalism* 1 (1): 1–5.

García-Avilés, Jose Alberto, Miguel Carvajal-Prieto, Félix Arias-Robles, and Alicia De Lara-González. 2018. "Journalists' Views on Innovating in the Newsroom: Proposing a Model of the Diffusion of Innovations in Media Outlets." *The Journal of Media Innovations* 5 (1): 1–16.

Hallin, Daniel C., and Paolo Mancini. Eds. 2011. "Conclusion." In *Comparing Media Systems Beyond the Western World*, 278–304. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hatcher, John, and Emily Haavik. 2014. "We Write with Our Hearts." *Journalism Practice* 8 (2): 149–163.

Heckman, Meg, and John Wihbey. 2019. "The Local-Mobile Paradox. Missed Innovation Opportunities at Local Newspapers." *Newspaper Research Journal* 40 (3): 317–328.

Hendrickx, Jonathan, and Ike Picone. 2020. "Innovation Beyond the Buzzwords: The Rocky Road Towards a Digital First-Based Newsroom." *Journalism Studies* 21 (14): 2025–2041.

Jameson, Fredric. 1993. "Postmodernism and Consumer Society." In *Studying Culture: An Introductory Reader*, edited by Ann Gray, and Jim McGuigan, 206–217. New York: Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, Joy, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen. 2018. The Digital Transition of Local News. Reuters Institute for the study of journalism. http://www.digitalnewsreport.org/publications/2018/digital-transition-local-news/

Jerónimo, Pedro, Joao Carlos Correia, and Anabela Gradim. 2022. "Are We Close Enough? Digital Challenges to Local Journalists." *Journalism Practice* 16 (5): 813–827.

Lokálník/Local media. 2023. lokalnik.cz/localmedia.cz.

Matthews, Rachel. 2015. "The Provincial Press in England: An Overview." In *The Routledge Companion to British Media History*, edited by Martin Conboy, and John Steel, 239–249. Oxon: Routledge.

Mishra, Aneil K., and Gretchen M. Spreitzer. 1998. "Explaining How Survivors Respond to Downsizing: The Roles of Trust, Empowerment, Justice, and Work Redesign." *The Academy of Management Review* 23 (3): 567–588.

Morlandstø, Lisbeth. 2017. "Innovation and Value Creation in Local Media." *The Journal of Media Innovations* 5 (1): 17–30.

Nielsen, Rasmus Kleis, and David A. Levy. 2010. "Which Way for the Business of Journalism?." In *The Changing Business of Journalism and Its Implications for Democracy*, edited by David A. Levy, and Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, 135–147. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Niemeyer, Katharina. 2014. "Introduction: Media and Nostalgia." In *Media and Nostalgia*, edited by Katharina Niemeyer, 1–23. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

O'Neill, Deirdre, and Catherine O'Connor. 2008. "The Passive Journalist: How Sources Dominate Local News." *Journalism Practice* 2 (3): 487–500.

Paulussen, Steve. 2011. "Inside the Newsroom: Journalists' Motivations and Organizational Structures." In *Participatory Journalism: Guarding Open Gates at Online Newspapers*, edited by Jane B. Singer, Alfred Hermida, David Domingo, Ari Heinonen, Steve Paulussen, Thorsten Quandt, Zvi Reich, and Marina Vujnovic, 57–75. Chichester: Blackwell Publishing.

Paulussen, Steve. 2016. "Innovation in the Newsroom." In *The SAGE Handbook of Digital Journalism*, edited by Tamara Witschge, C.W. Anderson, David Domingo, and Alfred Hermida, 192–206. London: Sage.

Pavlik, John V. 2013. "Innovation and the Future of Journalism." *Digital Journalism* 1 (2): 181–193.

Peters, Chris, and Matt Carlson. 2019. "Conceptualizing Change in Journalism Studies: Why Change at All?" *Journalism* 20 (5): 637–641.

Picard, Robert G. 2016. "Funding Digital Journalism. The Challenges of Consumers and the Economic Value of News." In *The Routledge Companion to Digital Journalism Studies*, edited by Bob Franklin, and Scott Eldridge. London: Routledge.

Robinson, Sue. 2011. "Convergence Crisis: News Work and News Space in the Digitally Transforming Newsroom." *Journal of Communication* 61 (6): 1122–1141.

Ryfe, David M. 2009. "Broader and Deeper: A Study of Newsroom Culture in a Time of Change." *Journalism* 10 (2): 197–216.

Saldaña, Johnny. 2009. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Spaulding, Stacy. 2016. "The Poetics of Goodbye: Change and Nostalgia in Goodbye Narratives Penned by ex-*Baltimore Sun* Employees." *Journalism* 17 (2): 208–226.

Steensen, Steen. 2009. "What's Stopping Them? Towards a Grounded Theory of Innovation in Online Journalism." *Journalism Studies* 10 (6): 821–836.

Stencel, Mark, Bill Adair, and Prashanth Kamalakanthan. 2014. The Goat Must be Fed. Duke Reporters Lab. http://www.goatmustbefed.com

Stetka, Vaclav. 2010. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place? Market Concentration, Local Ownership and Media Autonomy in the Czech Republic." *International Journal of Communication* 4: 865–885.

Thurman, Neil, and Merja Myllylahti. 2009. "Taking the Paper Out of News." *Journalism Studies* 10 (5): 691–708.

Thurman, Neil, Robert G. Picard, Myllylahti Merja, and A. H. Krumsvik. 2018. "On Digital Distribution's Failure to Solve Newspapers' Existential Crisis: Symptoms, Causes, Consequences and Remedies." In *Routledge Handbook of Developments in Digital Journalism Studies*, edited by Scott Eldridge, and Bob Franklin. London: Routledge.

Urbániková, Marína, and Jaromír Volek. 2018. "The Professional Identity of Czech Journalists in an International Perspective." *International Communication Gazette* 80 (5): 452–475.

Usher, Nikki. 2010. "Goodbye to the News: How Out-of-Work Journalists Assess Enduring News Values and the New Media Landscape." *New Media & Society* 12 (6): 911–928.

Waschková Císařová, Lenka. 2013. *Český Lokální a Regionální Tisk Mezi Lety 1989 a 2009 [Czech Local and Regional Press between 1989 and 2009]*. Brno: Munipress.

Waschková Císařová, Lenka. 2017. "Should We Consider Local Newspaper Chains Local Media? Development of the Local Press Chain in the Czech Republic." *Mediální Studia* 11 (2): 112–128.
Waschková Císařová, Lenka. 2021. "The Aftertaste You Cannot Erase. Career Histories, Emotions and Emotional Management in Local Newsrooms." *Journalism Studies* 22 (12): 1665–1681.

Appendix

Nickname	Function	Gender	Age	Years of experience	Education
Marie	Editor	Female	50–65	30+	University
Josef	Manager	Male	50–65	10–15	University
Ema	Manager	Female	50–65	30+	High school
Pavel	Editor	Male	50–65	25–30	University
Jan	Editor	Male	50–65	25–30	University
Anna	Manager	Female	50–65	20–25	High school
Petr	Manager	Male	50–65	5–10	University
Tom	Reporter	Male	50–65	25–30	High school
Robert	Reporter	Male	50–65	25–30	High school
Radim	Reporter	Male	40–50	20–25	High school
Milan	Reporter	Male	40–50	25–30	High school
Artur	Editor	Male	50–65	25–30	University
Cyril	Editor	Male	50–65	30+	University
Ben	Reporter	Male	20–30	1–5	University
Eva	Reporter	Female	50–65	20–25	High school
Dan	Editor	Male	50–65	25–30	University
David	Reporter	Male	30–40	10–15	High school
Filip	Editor	Male	30–40	10–15	University
Jana	Reporter	Female	30–40	15–20	High school
Emil	Reporter	Male	50–65	30+	High school
Ivo	Editor	Male	40–50	30+	High school
Monika	Reporter	Female	20–30	1–5	University
Ota	Editor	Male	50–65	30+	High school
Lucie	Editor	Female	50–65	25–30	High school
Karel	Editor	Male	50–65	25–30	High school
Dana	Editor	Female	50–65	25–30	High school
Max	Editor	Male	50–65	25–30	High school
Mirek	Manager	Male	50–65	5–10	High school
Leo	Reporter	Male	20–30	5–10	University
Marta	Reporter	Female	50–65	25–30	University
Martin	Editor	Male	20–30	1–5	University
Alena	Reporter	Female	65+	20–25	High school
Barbora	Editor	Female	65+	25–30	High school