

CYBERNETIC ANSWER TO WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN AND HOW:
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ONLINE AND PRINT NEWSPAPERS IN
SERBIA, GREAT BRITAIN, AND THE UNITED STATES

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Jelena Petrovic

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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis/dissertation for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Art with a major in Communication.

Patricia L. Dooley, Committee Chair

Leslie Anderson, Committee Member

Glyn Rimmington, Committee Member

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ABSTRACT

The number of online newspapers has increased more than 50% since 2003. Meanwhile, print newspapers' circulation has declined in North America and most of Europe. Since their first appearance in the early 1990s, online newspapers have attracted the attention of both newspaper professionals and researchers because of their potential impact on the news, business models, and readers. This thesis studies how far online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain and the United States have progressed in their development of a news genre distinct from their print parents. Built on the premises of genre theory, the thesis tests the applicability of Shepherd and Waters' (1998) classification of news cybergenres. Its methods include quantitative content analysis of 223 online newspaper front pages and a survey of online news personnel.

The results suggest that online newspapers in these three countries share many characteristics with print newspapers, especially in terms of their content and form. The biggest difference between the three sample groups is their use of various functionality elements that promote readers' active involvement in the news communication process. Overall, online newspapers adoption of many of the Web's unique tools is affecting traditional journalistic practices. While they maintain their agenda-setting function, there are signs that newspapers' gatekeeping role is changing into gate opening. Striking differences between overall cultures and newspaper traditions in these three countries provide an additional interpretation of the results, which surpasses technological deterministic explanations.

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CHAPTER 1

ONLINE NEWSPAPERS: INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OR RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Currently, more than 532 million people buy newspapers every day, but this number is declining (World Association of Newspapers [WAN], 2008). According to *Editor & Publisher*, in 2007 there were 1,437 daily newspapers in the United States, compared to 1,548 in 1995, and 1,626 in 1990. Circulation in 2008 was down in Europe and North America by 1.87% and 2.14%, respectively. In contrast, the number of online newspapers increased more than 50% since 2003 (WAN, 2008). Since 2000, the number of the Internet users¹ worldwide increased by 305%, and today it is approaching 1.5 billion (Internet World Statistics).

These numbers exemplify changes in the newspaper business and profession. Comparison of these trends indicates a possible correlation and mutual reshaping. Indeed, since the first signs of the Internet, scholars, as well as journalists, have questioned whether this new technology would affect print newspapers, and if so, how.

In the 1970s and 1980s, as Boczkowski (2004) notes, the publishers of print newspapers did not show much interest in using the capabilities provided by technological advancements. Instead, they nurtured a “culture of innovation marked by a combination of reactive, defensive, and pragmatic traits” (p.48). In their experiments with teletext, audiotext, fax and, most notably, videotext (Viewtron in U.S., Viditel in Netherlands, Teletel in France, Videotel in Italy, Prestel in Great Britain), they did little more than reproduce the contents of printed news in a different format (Boczkowski, 2004; Carlson, 2007). But, in

¹ Internet World Stats defines an Internet User as “anyone currently in capacity to use the Internet.”

the early 1990s, print newspaper publishers settled on the Web: In 1993, The *Chicago Tribune* published an online version of its same-day editorial on AOL and the *San Jose Mercury News* used AOL to publish almost all its content. On January 19, 1994, the *Palo Alto Weekly* in California became the first regularly published complete online newspaper (Carlson, 2007, Garrison, 2005). During the next decade, online newspaper publishing expanded rapidly. By 2004, more than 4,000 online newspapers were being published in the U.S. (Li, 2006).

Such growth has precipitated academic interest in online papers and their relationship with traditional newspapers. Early online papers were not much different from their print editions. Often, they were seen more as a supplement than a product by itself. In a survey of publishers and online editors of 67 U.S. dailies, Peng (1999) found that a majority of the respondents used online editions as a strengthening block for their print platforms. Over the years, however, their publishers have moved them into a transitional phase. According to Garrison, by 2005, four forms of online newspapers had emerged: 24/7 continuous news sites, community bulletin board sites, supplementary news sites, and exclusive news site models (2005, p. 15-17). In addition, online newspapers serve a wider variety of markets than print newspapers: national/international, regional, local-community or specialized/niche (Chyi & Sylvie, 2000).

Recently, economic conditions have hastened the transformation of newspapers. In October 2007, the *Christian Science Monitor* announced it would cease its print publication and shift exclusively to an online platform. Judy Wolff, chairman of the board of trustees of The Christian Science Publishing Society, explained: "We plan to take advantage of the Internet in order to deliver the *Monitor's* journalism more quickly, to improve the *Monitor's*

timeliness and relevance, and to increase revenue and reduce costs. We can do this by changing the way the *Monitor* reaches its readers" (Cook, 2008, para. 4). Preceding this event, a few smaller dailies, including *The Capital Times* in Madison and *The Daily Telegram* in Superior (both in Wisconsin), also discontinued their print editions.

This raises the question about whether online newspapers can and should replace print versions. According to a 2007 WAN report, 81% of U.S. online newspaper users also read their paper's print edition. Case studies of newspaper markets in Austin, Texas, and Hong Kong confirm this overlap of print and online newspaper readerships (Chyi & Lasorsa, 2006; Chyi, 2005). Lin and Salwen (2006) concluded that for the three news utility models – entertainment, interpersonal communication, and information skimming – online and print newspapers exhibit a "strong complementary relationship" (pg. 222). In his comparative analysis of the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Portland Oregonian*, Barnhurst (2002) concludes that "newspapers did not reinvent themselves online – the relationship with readers implied by the forms is similar in print and online" (p. 483).

Research for this thesis studied the current state of development of online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain, and the United States. Informed by genre theory, it uses quantitative content analysis to examine the front pages of online editions published in these three countries to answer the following questions: 1) What are the content, form and functionality of the online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain and the United States? And, 2) Currently what are the stages of cybergenre development of online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain, and the United States? In addition, a survey of the managing

editors/publishers/editors-in-chief supplements the data collected in the examination of the three online newspapers' content, form, and functionality.

The following sections review the research literature on online newspapers and explain genre theory and its use in this thesis.

1.2 Review of research on online newspapers

As online newspapers have grown in importance, scholars have studied their market orientations, target audiences, economic models, contents, and interactivity. Underlying such research is the assumption that the differences between these two news genres are becoming more prominent. Greer & Mensing (2006), for example, claim, "...online newspapers are becoming stand-alone news products rather than supplements or mere advertising vehicles for their print parents..." (p.28).

1.2.1 Market orientations, economic models, and target audiences

In their structural analysis of the online newspaper market, Chyi and Sylvie (1998) conclude that unlike print newspapers, online newspapers operate on four submarkets: local information markets, long-distance information markets, local advertising markets, and long-distance advertising markets. The business models used by print publishers – subscription fees and advertising revenue – do not appear to be sufficient for the survival of online editions. Additionally, online newspapers, unlike their print parents, do not yet have one dominant economic model. Krueger, van der Beek and Swatman (2004) suggested that publishers should adopt economic models that are best for their publications, ranging from branding, niche marketing, technology push, and emphasis on comparative advantages, to hybrid business models.

As a result of the Internet's global nature, audiences are now more connected through language or topics of interest and less through their geographical locations (Boczkowski, 1999, p. 107-108). An example is TimesOnline.co.uk, a site where the majority of readership comes from outside the United Kingdom (Thurman, 2007). Such a shift affects practices of print newspapers in the areas of editorial politics and staff training. In addition, online papers' function as an important venue for local public affairs and politics is diminished (Boczkowski, 1999).

1.1.2 Content of online newspapers and the agenda-setting role

Whereas early online newspapers included little original material, recent research shows an increased presence of content exclusively created for them (Salwen, 2005). Pavlik (2000) reported that editors at 20% of the U.S. online newspapers in his sample included content that did not appear in their print versions. Online newspapers' community bulletin boards and material available through hyperlinks also increases the amount of content available to readers (Garrison, 2005). On the other hand, Chyi and Sylvie (1998) stated that online newspapers will survive only if they clearly differentiate their product from others. Among their strategies is the addition of more multimedia content, which Deuze (1999) identifies as convergence (p. 377). Greer and Mensing (2006) conducted a longitudinal study of 81 US daily newspapers published from 1997 to 2003. Their findings indicate that online newspapers were increasingly using multimedia content: In 1997, 14.55% used audio and visual elements with their stories, whereas by 2003 that number increased to 43.8%.

Online newspapers can be updated 24 hours a day, which, in turn, can produce additional content differences. Ihlstrom and Akesson (2004), who called this practice *news*

streaming, identified it as one of the dominant features distinguishing online and print platforms. The consistent updating of online editions, usually present in the forms of breaking news and a timestamp, significantly affects readership, gatekeeping, and the agenda-setting role of traditional newspapers. In their analysis of top stories in the print and online editions of *U.S. Today*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times*, Mensing and Greer (2006) found significant differences in news choices and coverage. Online editions featured more breaking, international, crime and accident stories, while front pages of print editions included more analytical stories and coverage of the government, politics, health, technology, education, and sports. The authors imply that one reason for such changes, besides the different updating cycles of the two platforms, is that editors are influenced by readers' preferences, which they have easy access to (pp. 298-300). This suggests the agenda-setting role might be moving from the hands of the journalists to those of the readers.

Fico et al. (1987) likewise noted a change in online papers' agenda-setting role, but offered a different explanation. They said the editors of online editions establish news salience through the ordering of stories in each section by using indexes. Although their study had numerous limitations (sample consisted only of college students, one-time exposure), it still provided interesting findings. Indexed layouts, often a part of online newspapers, may promote readership fragmentation as readers can go straight to the topics of their interest rather than follow directions set by editors.

1.1.3 Interactivity and the transformation of readers from passive recipients of news to active participants in the news process

As Boczkowski (n.d.) says, interactivity “...has been the single most examined issue of post-Web online newspapers...” (pg. 276). In fact, scholars agree that interactivity is one of the features of online newspapers that clearly distinguishes them from print newspapers. But researchers have approached the concept of interactivity from different angles. In his study of the types of Web journalism, Deuze (2003) points out several issues arising from different definitions of interactivity. Zeng and Li (2006) identified interpersonal (e-mail and discussion boards) and content interactivity (hypertext and personalization) as important differences between print and online newspapers. And Massey and Levy (2000) identified five dimensions of interactivity within online newspapers: complexity of choice, responsiveness, facilitation, ease of adding information to the system, and immediacy.

It is important to note that these authors do not necessarily claim that because of interactivity we should consider online newspapers distinct from their print parents. Some, however, argued that this unique feature of online newspapers encouraged the idea that online papers are a new mass medium. After all, two-way communication and news customization is possible only with development of the Internet. In his ethnographic analysis of the New Jersey Online Community Connection newsroom, Boczkowski (2004) uses the term “gate opening” as a result of interactivity. He says that readers create their own personal space on New Jersey Online, thus expanding their role from being passive consumers to active participants and news creators. Peng (1999) agrees, while focusing on

hyperlinks, which are present only on the World Wide Web and enable non-linear reading of documents.

1.1.4 Online newspapers as a digital genre

Genre theory has been used extensively in the study of online newspapers (Ihlstrom & Akesson, 2004; Ihlstrom & Lundberg, 2003; Lundberg, 2001; Eriksen & Ihlstrom, 2000; Ihlstrom & Henfridsson, 2005). Genre is defined as a typified act of communication, such as a letter, a novel, a printed news story, or even an entire printed newspaper. The digital news genre started emerging when newspapers were put online. Scholars who use genre theory to analyze online newspapers are typically interested in three dimensions – *content*, *form*, and *functionality*. These scholars often apply Shepherd and Watters' (1999) cybergenre taxonomy, focus on interactivity as a part of functionality, and understand functionality as the main point of distinction between the traditional printed news genre and the cybergenre. Therefore, these scholars predominantly analyze layout design and interactive features of online newspapers (Ihlstrom & Akesson, 2004; Ihlstrom & Lundberg, 2003; Lundberg, 2001; Ihlstrom and Henfridsson, 2005).

Interestingly, supporters of this approach reject a technologically deterministic explanation, which would assume that one genre is simply replaced by a newer one. Instead, they usually agree that a new genre is emerging as a result of a combination of technological, social, economic, and political forces. The next section provides a fuller explanation of genre theory. In doing so, it reports on additional research that it has influenced.

1.3 Theoretical framework: Genre Theory and News Cyberggenre

Over the past two decades, scholars have learned that, as online newspapers have emerged, they have not assumed stable formats, relationships with their print counterparts, or markets (Garrison, 2005; Boczkowski, 2004; Van der Wurff & Lauf, 2005). To study such development, scholars have used various theoretical frameworks, such as *agenda-setting theory* (Li, 2006), uses and *gratification theory* (Lin & Salwen, 2006; Lin, Salwen & Abdulla, 2005) and *computer-mediated communication theory* (Boczkowski, 1999). None of these studies, however, centers on online newspapers as an entity that is a product of the complex environment it exists within. Genre theory, which has been used extensively by scholars to study the development of online newspapers, provides an avenue for such analysis.

Genre theory is most commonly used in the field of literary studies, but it has also found its way into communication research. For example, Yates and Orlikowski (1992, 1997) used this approach to explain the evolution of the memo genre as a form of a communicative action in organizations and to identify three genre systems: *meeting documentation*, *collaborative repository*, and *collaborative authoring*. In their analysis of the digital broadsheet, Shepherd and Watters (1997) concluded that this form is the most appropriate genre for e-news, as it supports ludenic reading habits such as skimming and browsing. Toms and Campbell (1999) argued that digital documents constitute a genre.

Genre theory has roots in the rhetorical tradition and can be traced to Aristotle's distinction between deliberative, forensic, and epideictic types of speech. Genre definitions and taxonomies, however, vary among scholars and are sometime the subject of debates (Miller, 1984; Chandler, 1977). Miller (1984) concludes that rhetorical theory "...has not

provided firm guidance on what constitutes genre...” (p. 151). Indeed, in identifying what constitutes a genre, scholars use one or several defining characteristics, such as form, purpose, substance, motive, similarities and differences, readers’ expectations, and relationships between audiences and producers (Chandler, 1997; Shepherd and Watters, 1997). A full discussion of this topic goes beyond this thesis, but a review of several definitions reveals important genre characteristics that will have direct effects on the conclusions of this study.

Miller (1984) proposes that a genre should be defined not in terms of its form and purpose, but in relation to the social action that creates it. Eriksen and Ihlstrom (2000) use genre as “...an abstraction over a class of recurrent communicative events...” to emphasize dynamism of the Web news genre and its dependency on situation and community. Lundberg (2001) focuses predominantly on content and structure. Yates and Orlikowski (1992) define the genre of organizational communication as a “...typified communicative action invoked in response to a recurrent situation...The resulting genre is characterized by similar substance and form,...” where form means ...“observable physical and linguistic features of communication...” and substance refers to “...the social motives, themes and topics being expressed in communication...” (p.301). The authors traced the institutionalization of a *memo genre* through four periods, noting that the memo genre changed over time. During the last period (1970s-1990s), this genre was affected by emergence of electronic mail, resulting in a new genre that exists parallel to the traditional memo genre. Yates and Orlikowski’s definition of genre is the most appropriate for analyzing news genres, since it encapsulates four important general characteristics:

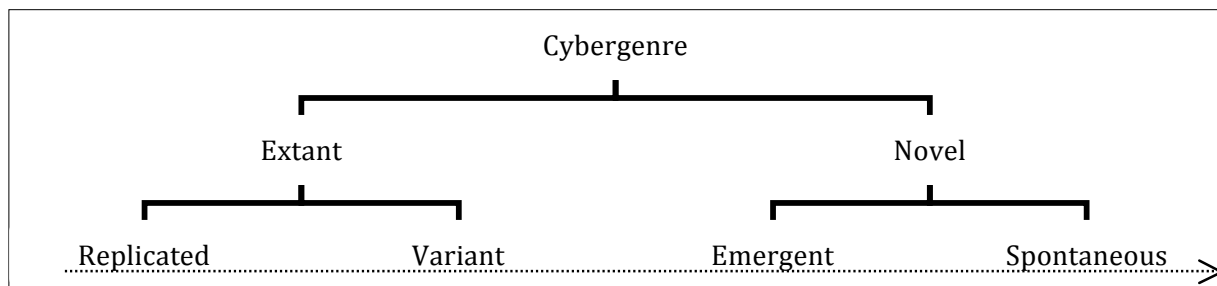
1. Genre is recognizable and distinguishable from other forms: Academic papers, TV sitcoms, letters and memos, for example, are all quickly identified as such because of their specific form and purpose (Crowston and Williams, 1997). Toms and Campbell (1999) note that readers can tell separate kinds of digital documents based on their form without even examining the content. Each genre is also bound by a set of rules whose enactment establishes genre boundaries. Consistency of these rules is what helps audiences identify particular genres.
2. Genres overlap and communicative acts can belong to multiple genres (Chandler, 1977).
3. Genres change over time and are restructured through human activity: Genre can be understood as a social structure that is created, maintained, and changed through social action (Yates and Orlikowski, 1992; Littlejohn and Foss, 2005). Consequently, genre form and function are not static, but they change based on cultural, social, economic, and technological contexts (Chandler, 1977).
4. Genres provide means for the classification of texts: According to Chandler "... genre frames the reader's interpretation of a text...even if the theorists were to abandon the concept [genre], in everyday life people would continue to categorize texts..." (1997, para. 8).

Building on the definition that was provided by Yates and Orlikowski (1992), genre analysis therefore, is understood as a study of the ways texts (communicative acts) become genres and are thus classified in recurrent situations (cultural, social, economic, technological and historical context) based on their form and substance.

Following these premises, Shepherd and Watters (1998) proposed a cybergenre evolutionary model. They argue that, as traditional news genres such as newspapers or magazines, move to the Internet, a new class of news genre, which the authors name *cybergenre*, is emerging. Cybergenres are developing new features that clearly distinguish them from existing news genres. As they diverge from more traditional news genres, cybergenres develop three dimensions: *content*, *form* and *functionality*. Combining these three dimensions, the authors propose cybergenre taxonomy for use in analyses of online newspapers: *extant* (old genre transferred to the new medium) and *novel* (genres developed in the new medium). In addition, the authors divide extant subgenres into *replicated* (copying the content and format of the parent genre) and *variant* (increased utilization of the capabilities offered with the new medium) news cybergenre, and the novel subgenre into two categories: *emergent* (fully explores functionality of the new medium) and *spontaneous* (genre not present in any other media) cybergenres.

FIGURE 1

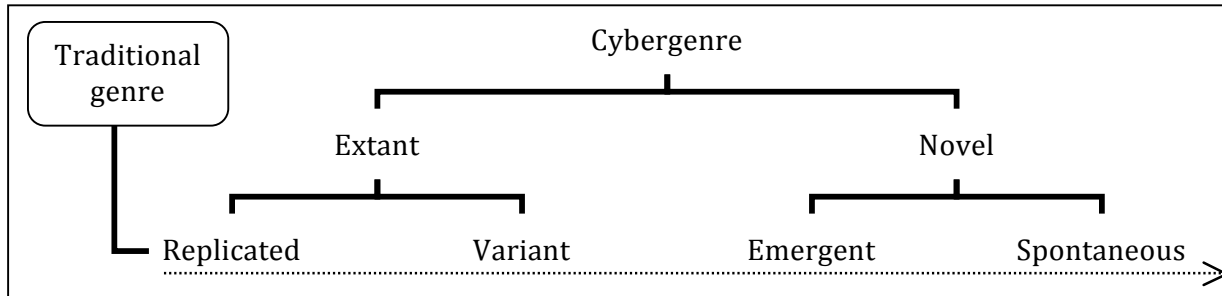
SHEPHERD AND WATTERS (1998) CYBERGENRE EVOLUTIONARY MODEL



The authors did not establish a connection between traditional news genres and cybergenres, except by noting that cybergenres evolved from the old genres once the particular communicative situation (invention of the online medium) emerged. However, their description of the replicated cybergenre - "...relatively faithful reproductions of the

genres as they appeared in their source media...” - implies that this evolutionary stage is the moment when the transformation began (para. 10). Following this notion, we can expand their model by adding the connection with traditional genres.

FIGURE 2
EXPANDED CYBERGENRE EVOLUTIONARY MODEL



Chandler (1977) discusses the use of a term *evolution* in genre classifications and states the term is inappropriate because the analogy with biological progression may imply that online newspapers are a more perfect form than their predecessors. Shepherd and Watters (1998), however, do not consider this point. Instead, they use the term to simply describe such transformation as a process in which the cybergenre progressively separates from the traditional genres. Shepherd and Watters (1998) did not provide a detailed set of characteristics for their cybergenre categories. Instead, the authors use the word “fuzzy” when referring to the boundaries between subgenres [para. 4]. Based on their brief descriptions of each subgenre, it is clear that the authors see a news genre’s level of functionality as the steering wheel of the evolutionary process.

The somewhat abstract Shepherd and Watters model has resulted in widely different research applications in the field of online newspaper research. Since most cybergenre researchers have investigated just one aspect of the model, these studies

represent the pieces of a puzzle rather than a comprehensive explanation of the online newspaper phenomenon. Their major contribution is in analyzing the means of communicating genre through Web page design.

According to numerous authors, cybergenres embody sets of elements that are not found in print genres. Applying the cybergenre taxonomy, Ihlstrom and Akesson (2004) analyzed the front pages of 85 Swedish online newspapers by focusing on their Web-enabled elements of content, form, functionality. Although they concluded that none of 85 analyzed online newspapers is a novel cybergenre, they identified a number of unique online newspaper genre characteristics. Broken down by content, form, and functionality, they include:

- a) Content elements: search/video/sound items, Web TV and radio, news stream and archive, poll, forums/debates, membership
- b) Form elements: bar, tab, drop-down menu, link, icon, text box, radio button, banner, timestamp, button, e-mail link, link list
- c) Functionality elements: interaction, real time interaction, personalization, searching, showing videos, playing sound, downloading, e-mailing, broadcasting, login functionality.

Ihlstrom and Akesson (2004) expanded Shepherd and Watters' model by creating an additional cybergenre category that serves as a bridge between variant and emergent cybergenres. This third evolutionary stage is named *progressed*. It represents the online newspaper that has the highest level of interactivity and progressed content. Finally, the authors concluded that because online newspapers are still replicating their print counterparts, they don't have the potential to become novel subgenre.

The evolution of cybergenres has also been explored using longitudinal analyses. In one such study, Ihlstrom and Henfridsson (2005) examined three Scandinavian online newspapers published from 1996 to 2002. The authors propose that the old and new news genres are mutually reshaping each other. They concluded that the three examined Scandinavian online newspapers were showing signs of new interdependency, where print newspapers were depending on their online counterparts for the creation of the content. Also, their analysis showed that the papers' cybergenre characteristics were becoming more repetitive over time, thus creating clearer patterns. In 2002, Ihlstrom and Henfridsson found consistency not only in the design and layout of online editions, but also in their offerings of a channel for continuous updates, value-added services for readers, and revenue-generating services (2005, table IV).

Defining online newspapers as a distinct news cybergenre, however, does not imply that they have a competitive relationship with print newspapers. On the contrary, publishers, scholars and readers tend to view this relationship as complementary (Chyi and Sylvie, 2000; Chyi, 2005; Lin & Salwen, 2006; Cao & Li, 2005). Peng (1999) found that using online newspapers to promote a print edition is one of the top three reasons why U.S. publishers and editors publish their papers online. An example is the success of the online edition of the *Wall Street Journal* (also one of the rare online newspapers that has a subscription fee) that has assumed the high reputation of its print parent (Martin, 1998).

Lin et al (2005) note three possible scenarios for the future of print and online newspapers: media displacement (demise of an old medium), media complementarity, and media supplementation. The authors state that media supplementation is the most likely possibility, since "...online media provide supplemental content to the users to make their

offline news media use experience more complete...” (p. 241). Finally, Cao and Li (2006) did not find a strong negative correlation between the growth of online newspaper readership and decrease of the print newspaper circulation. More importantly, their study questioned the theory of relative constancy, which asserts that the time consumers spend with a mass medium is constant through time until a new medium emerges and affects the time available for their predecessors.

While the research that was presented suggests that understanding the differences between print and online newspapers is crucial, relatively few studies have compared online newspapers development in different countries. In a comparative analysis of the online and print newspapers in 16 European countries, Van der Wurff and Lauf (2005) found that even though online newspapers across Europe share number of characteristics, it was not possible to identify one prevalent model. More comparative studies of this nature are needed if we are to understand the complex sets of contextual factors that affect the development of online newspapers.

In an application of genre theory, this thesis uses cybergenre taxonomy (Shepherd & Waters, 1998; Ihlstrom & Akesson 2004) to study online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain and the United States. The thesis research questions are as follows:

RQ1: What are trends in the content, form and functionality of the online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain and the United States?

RQ2: Currently, what are the stages of cybergenre development of online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain, and the United States?

Many scholars have acknowledged but not explained the origins and nature of differences between online and print newspapers. This research will contribute to the

existing academic literature in the area of online newspaper publishing and add to the more general field of studies on technology's impact on media. Instead of conducting a longitudinal analysis of one country's online newspapers, similar to Ihlstrom's (2005) study of three Scandinavian online newspapers, this thesis follows that of Van der Wurff and Lauf (2005), who study online newspapers published in countries with different socio-economic conditions, technological development, cultural values and newspaper histories. The following chapter will review press histories in Serbia, Great Britain and the United States.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: NEWSPAPER TRADITIONS IN SERBIA, GB AND U.S.

The goal of this chapter is to acknowledge the different contexts in which newspapers in Serbia, GB and the U.S. developed. My assumption is that these different contexts help explain differences in the development of online newspapers in the three countries. Even though the groups of factors vary from country to country, the analysis in each case study begins with assessment of the relationship between government and the press because, as Gaunt (1990) states, "...to the very large degree, the history of the press in any country reflects the extent to which printers and journalists have succeeded in defeating or evading the authoritarian attempts to control the dissemination of information or opinion..." (p. 22).

2.1 The Serbian Press

The available literature indicates that the Serbian press has always been heavily affected by that country's turbulent political history. Serbian daily newspapers have normally adopted a particular brand of political propaganda (enforced from outside or voluntarily chosen), which helps explain why the Serbian press never established itself as an objective watchdog of society, similar to the U.S. press. Such lack of independence is certainly one of the most significant characteristics of the Serbian newspapers. Niksic (1992) summarizes this by stating that besides fighting for freedom of information, the Serbian press has consistently protected its dual identity: professional and political (p.190).

2.1.1 Early period and political influences

Unlike many other European countries, where newspapers first appeared in the mid-17th century, none was published in Serbia until the end of the 18th century. The earliest Serbian papers - *Serbskija novini* and *Slaveno-serbskija vjedomosti* – were published twice a week (Krestic, 1992). Historians, however, usually name 1813 as the year when Dimitrije Davidovic and Dimitrije Fruscic published the first Serbian newspaper – *Novine serbske*, in Vienna, Austria (Skerlic, 1992; Petric, 1992). In 1834, *Novine serbske* became the first newspaper published in Serbia, when its publisher and editor Davidovic moved the publication to Kragujevac (Bjelica and Nedeljkovic, 1988). Until 1912 and World War I, Serbia was under the rule of Austria and Turkey. Consequently, a majority of the Serbian newspapers in the 19th century focused on education and culturally enlightenment of the Serbian public and strengthening national identity (Petric, 1992).

Throughout most of its history, the Serbian press was either influenced or controlled by the government, which became a prevalent characteristic of the newspapers' early history. In the 19th century, most publications were printed in the national printing house, or censored because they openly critiqued the ruling regime (Petric, 1992; Skerlic, 1992). During the first 50 years of the 20th century, which were marked by two Balkan wars (1912-1913) and the World Wars I (1914-1918) and II (1939-1945), many Serbian newspapers were discontinued, published illegally or outside the country, or controlled by occupation forces (Mitrovic, 1992; Bjelica and Nedeljkovic, 1988; Matic, 1992; Petric, 1992). Between the two World Wars (1918-1941), the Serbian press reflected the instability of the country's political situation, as it became a mouthpiece for partisan propaganda (Bjelica and Nedeljkovic, 1988).

The victory over fascist Germany in 1945 did not bring freedom for Serbian newspapers. But later, in 1956, government decree proclaimed journalists' independence from government control (Merrill, Bryan & Alisky, 1970). However, political control was continued indirectly, since a majority of Serbian editors and journalists were members of the ruling Communist Party (Lukac 1992). Lukac (1992) notes that journalists were mainly called party soldiers and social-political workers.

Scholars agree that not until after 2001, with the overturn of the country's socialistic regime, was the Serbian press granted freedom from the influence of the government and ruling political parties such as the League of Communists and later the Social Alliance of Working People (Merrill, Bryan & Alisky, 1970; Veljanovski, 2005; Radojkovic, 1994). Earlier, the growth of independent and objective newspapers was virtually impossible, especially since the government used the courts to prosecute any journalist or publication that supported opposition forces (Veljanovski, 2005). In addition to governmental control, the newspapers, as well as other mass media in Serbia, were affected by two civil wars (1991-1995 and 1996-1999), and the political and economic isolation of the country imposed by the United Nations and other countries. During such periods, the press was used for war propaganda and the strengthening of nationalistic ideals (Radojkovic, 1994).

2.1.2 Relationship with readers

Despite the lack of freedom of the press, Serbian newspapers still attracted many readers. At the end of the 19th century, many publications moved away from political topics as they covered popular topics for the mass audience. Some owners also decided to start afternoon editions in addition to their morning ones (Skerlic, 1992). In 1903, Vladislav Ribnikar published the first issue of *Politika* (Policy), which remains today one of the

highest-circulated newspapers in Serbia (Petric, 1992; Lukac, 1992). Lukac (1992) notes that, during the second half of the 20th century, Serbian newspapers gained great popularity and increased in circulation.

Although greatly influenced and controlled by the ruling regime, Serbian newspapers still managed to present dissenting views. These publications gained great popularity among the Serbian citizens who did not approve of the government and its actions. Notably, just before and during the World War II, anti-fascistic groups such as the Chetnik movement and partizani (later transformed into Communist Party of Yugoslavia or KPJ) illegally published magazines and newspapers in which they openly called on the public to fight against fascist forces, even though these two groups were against each other (Vesovic, 1992; Matic, 1992). During the 1990s, Serbian media split into pro-regime and oppositional groups (Radojkovic, n.d.). As Niksic (1992) notes, Serbian newspapers, although partisan in nature, still managed to present diversity of views. The most recent example of an influential independent press was in the period before October 2000 and during the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic's socialist regime.

2.1.3 Current developments: aim for press independence and professional status

Unexpectedly, during the times of the communist and socialistic regimes, the Serbian press was able to win a few limited but important battles for freedom from governmental control. During the time of the KPJ rule, editors and reporters exercised freedom as long as the government did not feel threatened (Niksic, 1992). In the early years of the Milosevic regime, and immediately following a mass student protest (March 9, 1991), the Parliament voted for the Public Information Act, which declared that the media whose funds originated in public sources could not be partisan (Veljanovski, 2005). Even

though this law was never followed, it still signifies a movement toward free, democratic media.

Numerous professional journalist organizations played an important part in this movement and established codes of profession. In 1882, almost 50 years after the first newspaper was published in Serbia, journalists formed the Newspaper Society of Serbia (Rajnvajn, 1992). This organization has had a turbulent history, but it has worked to remain viable through difficult financial times. Its main contribution was to publish *Hronika Srpskog novinskog udruzenja* (Chronicle of Serbian Newspaper Society), which symbolized the professional status of Serbian journalists. The society also organized conventions in which Serbian journalists and those from surrounding countries gathered to discuss the profession's status. More recently, during the 1990s, Serbian journalists formed professional organizations such as the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia—*Nezavisno udruzenje novinara Srbije* (NUNS) and Serbia's Association of Independent Media (*Asocijacija nezavisnih elektronskih medija* or ANEM), which today are advocates for journalists' professionalization and independence from governmental control (Veljanovski, 2005).

After democratic parties took over the government in 2000, the Serbian press began a process of privatization (Veljanovski, 2005). This process seems to be very slow, as is indicated in reports published on the NUNS Web site, <http://www.nuns.org.yu/> (NUNS Dosije, 2000-2009).

2.1.4 Internet Usage

Statistics for Internet penetration in Serbia indicate that it lags behind many developed countries. According to Bacevic (n.d) and Stojkovic (n.d), Yugoslavia² had its first Internet connection in 1996. Internet World Statistic reports that, as of September 2006, 13.9% (or 1.4 million) of the Serbian population were using the Internet. This was an increase of 275% since 1998. In 2008, however, according to the same source, this number increased less than 1%, whereas the Serbian Republic Statistical Office reported a 6.2% rise in Internet users during the same period. The latter agency reports that a majority of Serbian households (51.1%) use modem connections, 24.4% DSL (ADSL), 23.3% cable, and 15.5% WAP and GPRS (broadband connection).

2.2 The Anglo-American Press

United States and Great Britain newspapers have played significant roles in the social, economic and political lives of their countries, and for centuries have been seen as the Fourth Estate (Gaunt, 1990). They acquired this status early in their histories and have maintained them to the present. Researchers have noted that the newspaper histories of the United States and Great Britain share several traits. Both countries have newspaper histories dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries (Frank, 1961; Harris, 1996; Emery & Emery, 1996). Chalaby (1996) compares the newspapers in these two countries and France from the 1830s to the 1920s. He concludes that journalism is an Anglo-American invention. Chalaby finds that factors such as culture, politics, economies and linguistics promoted the development of journalism as a distinctive profession in the United States and England.

² After the civil war in 1995, the country kept its name Yugoslavia until 2002 when it was changed to Serbia and Montenegro. Since 2006 and Montenegro's declaration of independence, the official name is Republic of Serbia.

Circulation and advertising revenues for the British and U.S. press, although in decline for the past few decades, are among the highest in the world: In a 2005's list of the world's top 100 largest newspapers, *The Sun* was in 11th place, with a circulation of 2.4 million, while *The Times* (London) was two spots down with a circulation of 2.3 million (WAN, 2005, 2007). In both countries, newspapers are predominantly owned by conglomerates (Dunett, 1988; Curran & Seaton, 1997; WAN). According to Internet World Stats, both of these countries have relatively high Internet penetration: As of June 2008, 72.5% of the population in the United States and 68.6% in Great Britain are Internet users. Some of the biggest online newspapers, such as the *Guardian* and the *Wall Street Journal*, attract not only domestic but significant international readerships (Thurman, 2007).

Despite such similarities, the two country's presses differ. In the U.S., a journalist is seen as "a watchdog, historian and defender of the truth," while a journalist in GB is "a careful reporter of the facts, an imaginative storyteller and, sometime, a dedicated champion of political causes" (Gaunt, 1990, p. 29). Newspapers in Great Britain and the United States have several additional characteristics that set them apart, and thus are discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.3 Press³ in Great Britain

2.3.1 Tradition and freedom of the press

The first newspaper periodical in England, *Corante*, was printed in 1621, while the first daily newspaper, the *Daily Courant*, started in 1702 (Harris, 1996; Merrill, 1970). Increased need for news during the mid-17th century, caused by the ongoing civil wars and political strife, established a healthy ground for rapid development of the British press

³ Merrill (1970) notes that term *press* in Britain mainly means newspapers, both dailies and weeklies.

(Harris, 1996). London became the center of publishing (Fleet Street is the symbol of the British newspapers), as numerous titles emerged in forms of dirunals, mercuries, corantos and gazettes. Most of them were short-lived and irregularly published, predominantly because of firm governmental censorship, high taxes and strict libel laws (Merill, 1970). Despite occasional periods of press freedom, the British government maintained control up to 1853-61, when one of the last legal restraints, press taxation, or “taxes on knowledge,” was abolished (Curran, 1997). Curran also notes that the emergence and flourishing of a radical press, which resisted official censorship, played a significant role in the liberation of the British press (1997, pp. 10-20). Today, despite an absence of formal controls, the government has other means of controlling the flow of information, most notably the Official Secrets Act and Defense Advisory (DA) system (Gaunt, 1990). Finally, Merill (1970) correctly points out that independence from governmental and party control does not mean freedom from political bias.

2.3.2 Classification of newspapers

A widely referenced trait of the British press is its variety of publications and their classifications. Researchers most often emphasize separation between quality (e.g., the *Times*, *Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph*) and popular newspapers (e.g., the *Sun* and *Daily Mirror*) (Curran, 1997; Merill, 1970; Sparks, 2003; Dunnett, 1988; Van der Wurff & Lauf, 2005). As Merill (1970) notes, this classification carries significant consequences: quality newspapers (broadsheet format) target middle to upper class readers, while the popular press (tabloid format) has remarkably high circulations (*The Sun* is the most circulated newspaper in UK) and focuses on mass appeal (pp. 63-64). The popular press sensationalism was a trademark of the British press long before the popularity of tabloids in the 1930s. Its

proclivity toward reporting “the morbid, the outrageous and the bizarre,” together with its political factionalism and impartial reporting of the facts, made it a characteristic of the British press in the 18th century (Gaunt, 1990, pp. 25-26). Differences between popular and quality newspapers, especially in regard to their contents, are reflected in the success of the publications’ online platforms, with “quality” newspaper attracting larger online readership (Sparks, 2002; Van der Wurff & Lauf, 2005).

Besides the division of the British press into popular and quality presses, researchers often divide British newspapers into three groups: national dailies, local dailies published in London and regional newspapers (Merill, 1970). The London press is also known as the Fleet Street press and is a symbol of Great Britain’s newspaper publishing. Dunnett (1988) states that the Fleet Street newspapers dominate “the British press both economically and in terms of influence” (p. 136).

2.3.3 Partisanship

The content of many British newspapers is partisan in nature. Indeed, their publishers “see nothing wrong with this state of affairs provided that political affiliations are overt” (Gaunt, 1990, p. 23). From their early days, the first corantos, gazettes, dirunals and mercuries went back and forth in their support of either parliament or the king, depending on who controlled the country (Frank, 1961). The opposition’s newspapers usually operated illegally and in constant fear for survival (Frank, 1961). Later, in the 19th century, newspapers began supporting particular parties and political ideologies, even though they became less dependent on partisan subsidies and relied more on the advertising revenues (Curran, 1997). Finally, with the rise of press barons, such as Beaverbrook and Rothermere, many British newspapers’ party loyalty weakened. Instead,

they began to reflect the interests and political ambitions of their owners, who were not usually tied only to one party (Curran, 1997). Scholars note that ideological orientation is still present in the British press. Van der Wurff and Lauf (2005), for example, identify *The Daily Telegraph* as the “right-wing newspaper” and the *Guardian* as a “left-of-centre quality paper” (pp. 263-265).

2.4 Press in the United States

2.4.1 Tradition: political influence and activity

Even in its early history, the American press showed signs of emerging as a Fourth Estate. In 1690, the first colonial newspaper, *Publick Occurrences, Both Foreign and Domestick*, set the stage, despite the fact that the publication was banned after the first issue (Williams, 2002; Kilmer, 2002; Emery & Emery, 1996). The first regularly published newspaper, the *Boston News-Letter*, was started in 1704. New titles were slowly added, and for a time, few of them openly criticized the British Crown (Risley, 2002). Eventually, however, propaganda increased, leading to the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783). From then on, the press embraced its power to influence and direct public opinion and used it on numerous occasions. Several examples include: supporting/opposing anti-slavery movements, representing dominant political parties during the partisan press period, the launching of an international war (the Spanish-American War and Hearst/Pulitzer’s Yellow Press rivalry), exposure of big business and other major institutions’ wrongdoings (“muckrakers”), the unification of the nation during World War I and II, and acting as a government watchdogs (Watergate and the Vietnam War) (Risley, 2002; Kilmer, 2002, Schudson, 1978; Emery & Emery, 1996).

The U.S. press is considered by some to be one of the freest in the world (Dunnett, 1988). It has been protected from federal government control since the First Amendment was ratified in 1791. This sets it apart from the presses of many countries, especially from countries where the government is free to censor without question (Gaunt, 1992 and 1990).

2.4.2 Professionalism

The United States is not the only country with a strong system of newspaper professional societies and codes of conduct, which serve to establish journalists' professional status. Nevertheless, American journalism's creation of professional codes and an emphasis on their application have marked the country's press and its history. Some of the most influential professional organizations and publications were created in the late 19th and early 20th century. *The Journalist*, the predecessor of *Editor & Publisher*, was started in 1884. The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) was established in 1909, and the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) was founded in 1922 (Keeler, Brown & Tarpley, 2002). Such professionalization was reinforced by the development of journalistic schools, including those at the University of Missouri, in 1908, and the Columbia University School of Journalism, in 1912. According to Gaunt (1992), this long tradition of journalism's academic training in the United States is in contrast with Great Britain, where, in the early 1990s, journalism was still not recognized as a university discipline.

2.4.3 Standards

Among the field's development of a number of journalistic standards, over the 19th and early 20th centuries, objectivity emerged as one of the cornerstones of American journalism (Schudson, 1978; Rosen, 1993). Mindich (1998) states, "if American journalism

were a religion, as it has been called from time to time, its supreme deity would be 'objectivity'" (p. 1). The U.S. press's, somewhat strict application of objectivity is one of the characteristics that separate it from press of Great Britain and Serbia (Brits vs. Yanks, 2004; Merrill, 1970).

2.4.4 Adaptation to new technologies

Compared to European newspapers, U.S. publishers were among the first to use computer technologies (Gaunt, 1990, p. 68). Not only has this included their computerization of newsrooms, but experimentation with videotext, teletext, audiotext, and fax (Boczowski, 2004). As the Internet became more popular in the 1990s, the newspapers publishers followed. The first newspaper to go online was the *Chicago Tribune* in 1992, followed by the *San Jose Mercury* in 1993 (Boczowski, 2004; Garrison, 2005). Most recently, the *Christian Science Monitor* announced that it would stop publishing its print edition and shift almost exclusively online in April 2009, becoming the first national daily to do so (Fine, 2008; Cook, 2008).

The rate of Internet penetration is but one factor to consider in research that explores the cybergenre development of online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain and the United States. Indeed, it is also crucial to consider the following: the different historical relationships these three presses have had with their governments, each country's public regard for newspaper journalism, and each press's level of professionalization and historical acceptance of new technologies. While the primary purpose of this thesis is to measure the cybergenre development of Serbian, British and America online newspapers, an exploration of these complex dynamics will help explain any differences between them.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Two research questions are posed in this thesis:

1. What are the contents, forms and functionalities of online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain, and the United States? And,
2. What are the current stages of cybergenre development of online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain, and the United States?

The following sections explain the study's research design and method.

Eriksen and Ihlstrom (2000), Ihlstrom and Lundberg (2003), and Ihlstrom and Akesson (2004) analyzed a small number of online newspapers using interviews and observation. Such methods, which categorize online newspapers in categories based on the presence of cybergenre elements, suggest that content analysis and online surveys are appropriate research methods for analysis of a larger number of publications. Following these authors, quantitative content analysis of the front pages of the online newspapers published in Serbia, Great Britain, and the United States, and an online survey of the managing editors/publishers/editors-in-chief of online newspapers in these countries, were selected for this thesis.

3.1 Sample

An overall sample of 233 online versions of the daily newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain, and the United States was studied in the research. *Editor & Publisher Yearbook* considered an authoritative source of information about newspaper industry, was used as a main source for the list of daily newspapers in the United States and Great Britain.

The 2007 Yearbook reported that 1,437 newspapers were published in the United States. Of this group, the top 100 circulated newspapers were selected for the research. The assumption was that these publications are the leaders in newspaper business in the U.S. and that they would serve as bellwethers for current trends in online publishing. The sample was eventually reduced to 98 titles, since *La Opinion* is an online newspaper published in on Spanish, and *am New York* does not have a Web site with an online newspaper.

In Great Britain, 114 online English-language newspapers were published in 2007 (Yearbook, 2007). After eliminating duplicated Web sites (two editions sharing the same site: e.g., *Mail Online* was a site for both *The Mail on Sunday* and the *Daily Mail*), the final sample included 108 online newspapers.

To select newspapers published in Serbia in 2007, the Internet was searched for a more comprehensive list than the one offered in *Editor & Publisher 2007 Yearbook*. After comparing the titles listed on *krstarica.com*, a popular search engine for information about Serbia, Serbian yellow pages and other media Web sites, the sample totaled 17 titles⁴.

3.2 Content analysis

This stage of the research process involved design of the codebook, training of coders, and assessment of their reliability. As mentioned earlier, most of the genre studies of online newspapers have focused on their design elements, such as navigation tools and page layout (Ihlstrom & Akesson, 2004; Ihlstrom & Lundberg, 2003; Lundberg, 2001; Eriksen & Ihlstrom, 2000). Their codebooks, although providing helpful guidance, are not

⁴ Originally search retrieved 20 newspapers, but two were excluded from the final sample because they were written on Hungarian. The third excluded title, *Narodne Novine*, did not have online edition. Its publishers used online medium only to publish PDF versions of the print edition.

appropriate for the subject of this study. The codebook was therefore adapted using Van der Wurff and Lauf's (2005) comparative analysis of online newspapers in 16 European countries. In doing so, the codebook was shortened, using only those elements that deal specifically with form, content, and functionality (see Appendix 1 for the full codebook).

3.2.1 Coding Process

Following Van der Wurff and Lauf (2005, p. 292), this thesis used the front pages of online newspapers as its unit of analysis. More specifically, the front page of an online newspaper is where the most important news is presented, along with hyperlinks or references (including tables of content) to other news.

Coders were instructed to follow all links to additional pages and search for elements there as well. However, they were told to follow the links no more than two levels down from the initial page. The codebook includes three sections: a) groups of elements examining various features of form (foreign language options, geographical editions, content and technical personalization), b) group of elements examining various features of functionality (interactivity expressed through presence of forums/chat rooms, polls, hyperlinks, search engines, archives, news alerts, staff contact information), and c) an analysis of top five news stories in terms of their content (presence of timestamps and use of multimedia features).

Considering that the research was concerned about elements that are consistently part of online newspapers, and not dependent on the time of the day or day of the week, no particular time was set for the coding. Instead, the coding occurred on various dates during February and March 2009.

Two coders were selected, and each was assigned a newspaper sample from one country. The researcher, who is from Serbia, coded all Serbian newspapers, since the language barrier prevented the other coders from accomplishing this task. Early in the process, the researcher learned that the coders were finding that some of the categories (e.g., kind and number of news updates readers can get, type of contact information and user initiated debates) were unclear. Also, it became clear that coding, which required repetitive scrolling of the screen, quickly causes mental and physical fatigue that the coders were not always aware of it. Because of this, the researcher consistently checked with the coders to discuss any problems they might be having.⁵ The coder who was coding the U.S. sample continuously had problems completing the category concerning technical personalization of the Web page, and the final data was the result of the collaboration between the researcher and the coder. Therefore, this category was excluded from the assessment of the intercoder reliability. At no other point, however, did the researcher correct or influence any of the coders' decisions, or otherwise violate the independence of the coding process. The intercoder reliability was established with Holsti's formula on a subsample of 17 newspapers and it was .70.⁶

3.2.2 Cybergene categories and stages

The last step in the research design was the establishment of three categories that together represent a newspaper's stage of cybergene development: content, form, and

⁵ Fico, Lacy and Riffe (2005) note that multiple coding can contaminate previous decisions and affect a study's overall reliability. For the purposes of this study, the constant checking was necessary because the elements the coders were searching for are not uniformly applied in every Web site. Also, the codebook categories did not define and predict some of those situations, and they were not uncovered during the coders' training and pretesting. Ignoring these situations and coding them into wrong categories would significantly deprive the study of valid results.

⁶ This percentage is lower than what is usually considered acceptable (Riffe, Lacy and Fico, 2005). The lower level is a result of disagreements in a few categories in particular, and these categories are listed in the section of this thesis that discusses study's implications and limitations.

functionality (Shepherd and Watters, 1998). The elements that define each category were selected based on the assumption that their presence and degree of utilization clearly differentiate the content and forms of online and print newspapers, including the ways their readers can use them.

1. **The content category** includes the elements that give online news stories more depth (i.e., they provide users with information, context, and perspective beyond what is available in a printed newspaper).
 - Multimedia: utilization of audio or visual (AV) elements, such as photos, graphics, infographics, videos, and sound
 - news stream (timestamp/time of last update of the story or the whole Web site)
2. **The form category** includes the elements that enable readers to essentially create their own editions of a news site by changing/personalizing it.
 - Content options: coverage of particular areas (local, regional, community, national) and/or content presented in more than one language.
 - Visual and content personalization: ability to change the layout's technical aspects (font size and type, colors, and position of stories) and content organization (users choose the order in which stories are displayed, as well, as the story topics)
3. **The functionality category** includes elements that promote the notion of a user as an active participant in the news chain:
 - Information and experience seeking: using search engines, archives, and hyperlinks, and choosing to receive news in a different format such as mobile phones, e-mail, podcasts, RSS feeds, and by using Web 2.0 (online newspapers are part of social networks and micro-blogging sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter).
 - Contributing to the online newspapers' content: debates/forums/chat room (user and provider initiated) and polls/surveys
 - Ease of contacting main offices or individual staff members of online newspapers.

Coding for each of these dimensions and cybergenre categories was done using the values included in Table 1. The presence or absence of an element is described with values 0 (absence) and 1 (presence). The degree of utilization of an element is described with values 0 (minimal utilization), $\frac{1}{2}$ (medium utilization), and 1 (significant utilization). The scores were added up for each section (content, form, functionality), and the values are

used to describe each country's overall stages of cybergenre development (Table 1). Based on the scores for content, form and functionality, respectively, cybergenre stages are described as follows:

- **Replicated cybergenre** (0, 0, 0): These online newspapers are very similar to their print parents. Their news stories have similar depth of information when compared to stories published in print newspapers. Users can't change papers' form, and are not considered active participants in the communication process because tools promoting interactivity are nonexistent.
- **Variante cybergenre** (2,0,5): These online newspapers share many characteristics with their print parents, but they also use new features. Their news stories are accompanied with a timestamp, and visual elements, which are used more often than in stories published in print newspapers. Users cannot change the papers' form. They provide contact information for staff, and their output and information seeking is enabled with limited functionality tools.
- **Emergent cybergenre** (3.5, 2.5, 8): These online newspapers do not resemble their print parents, and progressively use new features. News stories are accompanied with timestamps, and they use some audio elements and visual elements. Users can change the form by personalizing language, geographical locations, and visual elements such as type size and font, among other things. Users can contact each member of the newsroom staff. They are active seekers and providers of information as the outlet provides numerous functionality tolls.
- **Spontaneous cybergenre** (5, 4, 9): These online newspapers are clearly distinct from their print parents. News stories are always accompanied with timestamps, and more visual and audio elements than emergent online papers. Users can change the newspaper's form by personalizing its language, geographical location, visual appearance, and the order and kind of the stories that are displayed. Users can contact each member of newsroom staffs, and they are active seekers and providers of information, as the outlet provides many functionality tolls. A crucial difference between this genre and those in the emergent category is that they offer Web 2.0 connections, more foreign language options, and always provide multimedia content.

TABLE 1

ELEMENTS OF CONTENT, FORM AND FUNCTIONALITY IN ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

	Replicated	Variant	Emergent	Spontaneous
<i>Content</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>5</i>
Audio/visual	None or a little	Often	Often	Always
Visual only	None or a little	Often	Often	Always
Video/sound only	No	No	Some	Often
Timestamp story	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Timestamp Web site	No	No	Yes	Yes
<i>Form</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>4</i>
Number of geographical regions	2	2	3 or more	3 or more
Foreign language option	No	No	1	2 or more
Technical personalization	No	No	Yes	Yes
Content personalization	No	No	No	Yes
<i>Functionality</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>
Contact information	Newspaper	Offices	Persons	Persons
News updates	0	1-2	3 or more	3 or more
Web 2.0 updates	No	No	No	Yes
Debate - provider initiated	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Debate - user initiated	No	No	Yes	Yes
Polls	No	No	Yes	Yes
Search engine	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hyperlinks	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Archive	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Each cybergenre category is determined with a discrete score for content, form, and functionality. The gaps between those values indicate that a newspaper is in a transitional

phase of cybergenre development and that it exhibits characteristics of two cybergenres. For example, if a newspaper has a score 3 for content then it has elements of both variant and emergent cybergenres.

3.3 Survey

A survey of the managing editors/publishers/editors-in-chief of selected Serbian, Great Britain, and U.S. online newspapers was conducted to supplement the results of the content analysis. The following paragraphs briefly describe how this part of the research was conducted.

More than 500 managing editors/publishers/editors-in-chief of online newspapers in the three countries (including the titles selected for the content analysis) were invited to participate in the survey, which was published through surveymonkey.com. The survey was open for approximately a month (February 2009). Thirty participants answered the invitation (4 from Serbia, and 26 combined from GB and U.S.), and 19 completed the entire survey (2 from Serbia, 17 combined from GB and U.S.). Despite several reminders to participate in the survey, the response rate was low.

The survey, which was designed to show current trends in online newspaper publishing, consisted of three parts: general information about each respondent's print and online newspapers; current relationship between respondents' online and print newspapers; and the nature of the respondents' online newspaper content. These sections somewhat reflect what Pavlik (2000) identifies as four ways that technology has changed journalism. (See Appendix 2 for the full survey.)

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Content analysis of the front pages of 223 online newspapers in Serbia, GB, and the U.S. revealed differences in their contents, forms, and functionality. The following three sections summarize research results in these three cybergenre categories.

4.1 Content that enriches news context

Newspapers in all three countries use the capabilities of the Web (news streaming and multimedia) to provide more content for their news stories than it is available in their print counterparts. However, differences were found in the kinds of context-enriching content elements used in the three countries' online newspapers. After examining each online newspaper's top five news stories, several patterns emerged (Table 2).

TABLE 2

ONLINE PUBLISHING TRENDS CONCERNING CONTENT ELEMENTS ^a

	Serbia	Great Britain	United States
<i>News streaming</i>			
Time stamps on front pages (%)	17.65	10.19	31.63
Time stamps with news stories (%)	35.29	54.63 ^b	72.45
Time stamps – front pages or news story (%)	47.06	57.40	83.67
<i>Presence of any amount of multimedia content</i>			
Always – 5 stories (%)	70.58	46.23 ^c	36.73
Often – 3 to 4 stories (%)	23.53	35.18	21.43
<i>Presence of only visual elements</i>			
Always – 5 stories (%)	70.58	43.39 ^c	36.73
Often – 3 to 4 stories (%)	23.52	36.79 ^c	18.37

TABLE 2 (continued)

	Serbia	Great Britain	United States
<i>Presence of only video/audio elements</i>			
Often – 3 to 5 stories (%)	0	1.89 ^c	1.02
Sometimes – 1 to 2 stories (%)	0	16.89 ^c	12.24

^a Unless otherwise stated the sample sizes for newspapers from Serbia, GB, and U.S. are respectively $N_1=17$, $N_2=108$, and $N_3=98$.

^b $N_2=107$

^c $N_2=106$

4.1.1 News streaming

A common practice in the field of online journalism is news streaming, i.e., the updating of online newspapers at any point in time. A measure of any newspaper's timeliness and ability to enrich its stories' context is how frequently its editor inserts time stamps on its front page and/or individual stories. This research suggests that producers of U.S. online newspapers may be more concerned about timeliness than their counterparts in Great Britain and Serbia. Of the 98 U.S. online newspapers studied, 82 (83.67%) included time stamps on either their front pages or individual stories. In contrast, 62 of the 108 (57.40%) British and 8 (46.06%) of the 17 Serbian online newspapers carried time stamps on both their front pages and individual stories.

4.1.2 Multimedia Content

Serbian online newspapers studied in the research more frequently included multimedia content in their top five news stories than British and U.S. newspapers. Specifically, 70.58% of the Serbian newspapers included multimedia elements in its top five news stories, compared to 46.23% of the GB sites and 36.73% of the U.S. newspapers. That said, it is striking that the Serbian newspapers did not use audio (video or sound) in

any story, whereas both GB and U.S. online newspapers did. More specifically, 18.78% of newspapers in GB and 13.27% in the U.S., supplemented at least one story of top five examined with sound or a video⁷.

4.2 Form

TABLE 3
ONLINE PUBLISHING TRENDS CONCERNING FORM ELEMENTS ^a

	Serbia	Great Britain	United States
<i>Content options</i>			
News covering more than two geographical regions (%)	29.41	25.00	36.73
Content offered in more than one language (% , n)	23.53 (4)	0.93 (1)	3.06 (3)
<i>Personalization</i>			
Content (% , n)	5.88 (1)	1.85 (2)	5.10 (5)
Technical (%)	41.18	53.70	35.71

^a Unless otherwise stated the sample sizes for newspapers from Serbia, GB, and U.S. are respectively N₁=17, N₂=108, and N₃=98.

Only eight of 223 online newspapers provide their content in a foreign language: four in Serbia, three in GB and one in the U.S. Thus, it appears that Serbian online newspapers are more multi-lingual than their British and American counterparts: 23.53% of the Serbian sites offered foreign-language editions, compared to 0.93% in Great Britain and 3.06% in the U.S.

Only a few online newspapers feature content personalization options that allow readers to change the order of news stories. In extreme cases, they can create personalized pages in which stories are filtered based on the readers' special interests. Scholars suggest

⁷ This percentages resulted from addition of the percentages in the categories *Often* and *Sometimes* from Table 4

that such an option takes away from journalism’s agenda-setting role. Among the 223 online newspapers examined in the three countries, content personalization was offered in 8 editions (5 in U.S., 2 in GB, and 1 in Serbia). Technical personalization, which allows users to change font size, and type, colors, and the order in which news stories are displayed, was more prevalent among the sites studied. In the GB, 53.70% of the 108 outlets offered this feature, compared to 41.18% in Serbia, and 35.71% in the U.S.

4.3 Functionality

Differences in the functionality of the three country’s online newspapers were identified in the research (Table 4). A newspaper’s functionality depends on how interactive it is, i.e., how often and effectively it allows reader to connect to information and/or people both inside and outside its immediate environment. Compared to Web papers, printed newspapers are limited in functionality, since they do not allow readers to connect through hypertext, Web searching or other means, to information and people beyond the newspapers staff.

TABLE 4

ONLINE PUBLISHING TRENDS CONCERNING FUNCTIONALITY ELEMENTS ^a

	Serbia	Great Britain	United States
<i>Contact information</i>			
Newspaper (%)	47.06	8.34	24.49
Offices (%)	52.94	72.22	46.94
Individual staff (%)	0	19.44	28.57
<i>News updates(kinds)</i>			
Mobile alerts (%)	0	29.24 ^b	95.92
RSS feeds (%)	64.71	83.33	97.96

TABLE 4 (continued)

	Serbia	Great Britain	United States
<i>News updates (number)</i>			
1 or 2 (%)	64.71	73.15	31.63
More than 2 (%)	0	13.89	68.37
Web 2.0 (%)	0	30.56	33.67
<i>Forums/chat rooms</i>			
Provider initiates topics (%)	23.53 ^c	76.85	100.00 ^c
User initiates topics (%)	17.65	46.30	55.10
Polls (%)	47.06	50.93	45.92
Search engines (%)	88.23	97.22	98.98
Hyperlinks (%)	88.23	100.00	100.00
Archives (%)	82.35	70.37	78.57

^a Unless otherwise stated the sample sizes for newspapers from Serbia, GB, and U.S. are respectively N₁=17, N₂=108, and N₃=98.

^b N₂=106

^c N₃=97

Overall, analysis of the research's functionality elements indicates that U.S. newspapers scored higher than Serbian and British newspapers in several categories. More specifically, this relates to three functionality categories: ease of contacting newspaper staff, availability of RSS feeds and other news update services, and the presence of forums/chat rooms where either providers or users can set the topic.

The most common elements used by online newspaper publishers to promote interactivity, and thus functionality, are hyperlinks and site search tools. More specifically, hyperlinks were found in all of the GB and U.S. newspapers, and nearly all of the Serbian sites studied. Only two Serbian newspapers did not provide hyperlinks, the same ones that

did not provide search tools. One U.S. and two GB newspapers did not offer search tools to users.

All the three country's homepages provided newsroom contact information, although there were differences in the types provided. All Serbian newspapers provide either contact information for various offices, department heads (editors or publishers) or the newsroom, but readers cannot directly contact every reporter or administrator. In the U.S., 28.57% of the newspapers provided a list of all newsroom staff and their contact information, while almost twice as many (46.94%) offered only e-mail addresses, or phone numbers of those in charge of various offices. The British newspapers predominantly offered contact information for various departments (72.22%), while 19.44% provided lists of staff members and their e-mail and/or phone numbers.

The three countries' newspapers were also examined to learn what kinds of news update formats they offer, including mobile alerts, RSS feeds, e-newsletters, podcasts, or any others identified by the coders. Serbian newspapers never offered more than two kinds of updates, and 35.29% did not provide any kind of news alerts for readers. In U.S., 68.37% of the newspapers offered three or more types of news alerts, while in GB, 73.15% of the newspapers provided either one or two types of news updates. Of the 98 U.S. newspapers studied, 94 provided readers with an option to receive news updates on their cell phones. In contrast, none of the Serbian sites studied offered this option, while 31 out of 106 British newspapers (29.24%) offered cell-phone updates. RSS feeds were offered by 64.71% of the Serbian newspapers, 83.33% of the British newspapers, and 97.96% of the U.S. newspapers.

Inviting readers to follow their favorite reporters and/or receive news updates on Web 2.0's social networking and micro-blogging sites like Twitter, Facebook or MySpace was not found to be a common practice in any of the countries studied, especially Serbia, where this was not offered in any of the examined outlets. U.S. online newspapers offered Web 2.0 updates most frequently (33.67%), followed by online newspapers in GB (30.56%).

Chat rooms and forums, functionality elements that enable readers to connect with other users to discuss the news of the day or other relevant issues, were present in the three countries' online newspapers. All of the U.S. newspapers (N=97) offered forums/chat rooms in which editors or reporters determine the topics. In contrast, 83 of GB's 108 online papers (76.85%), and 4 of the 17 Serbian sites (23.53%), provided this kind of interaction between users. More than half (55.10%) of the U.S. online newspapers offered its readers the option of establishing the topics discussed in its forums and chat rooms.

The three countries' newspapers were also analyzed to investigate the degree of utilization of archives and readers' polls. Archives of older news, which promote reader's active information seeking, are available in most of the newspapers. Fourteen of the 17 (82.35%) Serbian newspapers provided archives, compared to 78.57% of the U.S., and 70.37% of GB sites. On the other hand, half of the GB (50.93%), 47.06% of the Serbian, and 45.92% of the U.S. newspapers offered polls, either as supplements to news stories or as regular features of their Web sites.

Finally, the coding of the 223 online newspapers involved assessing whether they offer access to their print editions (PDF replica or e-newspapers). Coders found that

31.77% of the GB online newspapers, 41.18% of the Serbian papers, and 71.43% of the U.S. papers offered replicas of their print versions to their users.

4.4 Stages of cybergenre development

The thesis’s second research question concerns the current stages of cybergenre development that online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain and the United States. As defined in the thesis’s method section, online papers’ four stages of cybergenre development include replicated, variant, emergent, and spontaneous. Table 5 summarizes the findings.

TABLE 5

CYBERGENRE CATEGORIES OF ONLINE NEWSPAPERS IN THREE ANALYZED COUNTRIES

	Serbia	Great Britain	United States
<i>Content</i>			
Score	2.15	1.99	2.05
Category	Variant	variant	Variant
<i>Form</i>			
Score	0.91	0.81	0.80
Category	replicated/variant	replicated/variant	replicated/variant
<i>Functionality</i>			
Score	4.06	5.48	6.15
Category	replicated ->variant	variant	variant ->emergent

As the results show, online newspapers in these three countries are strikingly different only in the functionality category. For better understanding of this assessment, the following section discusses the scores of each country in each of the three areas.

4.4.1 Functionality

If only functionality is considered, U.S. newspapers are more advanced than Serbian and British in their cybergenre development. In this category, U.S. newspapers have passed the variant stage and have acquired some elements of the emergent cybergenre. There are four characteristics that separate variant and emergent cybergenres in the functionality category: variant provide contact information for department heads, but not for all newsroom staff; they do not have user-initiated forums/chat rooms, or polls; and they offer readers only one or two formats for news updates. A majority of U.S. online papers, as reported earlier, offer forums/chat rooms where users set the topics and more than three formats for news alerts (predominantly RSS feeds and mobile alerts). However, most do not give contact information for all newsroom staff and post readers' polls, meaning that as a group they have not become fully developed emergent cybergenre.

Serbian newspapers do not emphasize functionality elements as often as U.S. newspapers. Overall, Serbian online newspapers have all the characteristics of a variant cybergenre in the functionality category except for the forums/chat rooms where providers sets the topic.

Similarly, British newspapers are also in the variant stage of cybergenre development when only functionality is measured. They provide hypertext, news archives, search tools, and forums/chat rooms where the provider initiates topics, polls, and up to two news updating services. In addition, users have relatively easy access to newsroom staff because newspapers offer contact information of various offices and their representatives.

4.4.2 Form

In the form category, none of the three countries' scores is higher than 1.0. As such low scores suggest, online newspapers in these three countries do not emphasize the elements of form that are enabled by the new medium. Not only do few allow readers to personalize their site's technical features, but just a few online newspapers in these three countries offer foreign language editions, news for particular areas (local, regional and national), or content personalization.

4.4.3 Content

In the content category, it is evident that online newspapers in Serbia, GB, and the U.S. are in the same stage: variant. This generalization, however, undermines important differences. A closer look reveals that while most Serbian newspapers provide visual elements with their top five news stories, few use timestamps or audio elements. Serbian online papers' content score (2.15) is a result of their consistent use of photos and other visual elements. Consequently, by missing features that are exclusively characteristic of the online medium, Serbian newspapers, in the content category, are similar to print newspapers.

The same can't be said for online newspapers in GB and the U.S., even though their scores are very similar to the Serbian sample. Instead, online dailies in these two countries use more audio elements and they often timestamp either the news story or the Web site. Despite the fact that they have a higher number of top five news stories that are not followed with any additional AV elements compared to Serbian sample, these online dailies are employing other features that became available after the online medium emerged.

4.5 Survey results

The online survey of managing editors, publishers, and editors-in-chief of online newspapers offers insight into relationships between the online and print editions of Serbian, British, and American newspapers. Although the survey's response rate was low (5.32%, N=564), its data is valuable for this thesis, and it also raises questions that could be taken up in future research. As mentioned earlier, 30 participants responded to the invitation to participate, and 19 completed the entire survey: 2 from Serbia and 17 from GB and the U.S.

The data indicate a relatively strong non-competitive relationship between online and print newspapers. According to the results, it seems that print editions are still the main focus of the newsroom: 52.63% (n=10) of the participants said the content for the print edition is the first concern in the newsroom meetings. In the same manner, 47.37% (n=2) of the respondents reported that the company's primary focus is on its print editions, 10.53% (n=2) said it is on their online editions, and 42.11% (n=8) said their company's focus varies. When assessing their company's view of the relationship between their print and online editions, none of the participants said their company's online and print platforms compete with each other. A majority (68%, n=13) indicated that their relationship is cooperative, compared to five who said it is interdependent. Only one participant reported that online and print newsrooms have completely different staff, meaning that 84.21% stated that they are identical.

In response to questions about the contents of their online and print editions, 68.42% (13 of the 19 participants) said that more than two-thirds of their print content is published in their online version, 57.89% (n=11) said that more than two-thirds of their

stories appear in the same sections in both editions, 78.94% (n=15) said that less than one-third of the contents of online newspapers is exclusively created for them, and 84.21% (n=16) reported that less than a third of the print stories are shorter than the online stories covering the same event. In addition, 63.15% (n=12) stated that more than a third of their print stories are given different headlines when they are carried in the online editions, and 57.89% (n=11) said that a third of their stories are rewritten for the Web using different information, structure and/or styles.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This thesis analyzes online newspapers in Serbia, Great Britain, and the United States from the standpoint of genre theory; more precisely, the cybergenre evolutionary model proposed by Shepherd and Watters (1998). According to this model, the emergence of online newspapers is promoting the formation of a new news genre – a cybergenre. Shepherd and Watters (1998) argue that the new genre has unique features related to form, depth of content, and functionality. As online newspapers adopt the medium's features, they are transformed from replicated to variant, and from emergent to spontaneous, cybergenres. This study investigates the developmental stages of online newspapers in Serbia, GB, and the U.S. by separately analyzing online newspapers' content, form, and functionality. Combining data in the three categories is not appropriate, since this would obscure differences in the development of each country's cybergenre.

Comparison of the newspapers' scores in each category leads to a conclusion that the only area in which online newspapers in Serbia, GB, and the U.S. significantly differ from print newspapers is functionality. This does not come as a surprise, since Shepherd and Waters (1998) implied that functionality, possible only with the online medium, is the driving force of the cybergenre evolutionary process. In the content and form categories, online newspapers are maintaining the model of print newspapers, despite the fact that some of them utilize many functionality features to the point of reaching the status of the novel cybergenre (emergent and spontaneous). This is especially applicable to the newspapers in U.S. and GB, which, respectively, scored 6.15 and 5.48 in the functionality category, but 0.81 and 0.80 in the form and 2.05 and 1.99 in the content categories.

In contrast, Serbian newspapers are demonstrating little movement toward becoming a novel cybergenre, despite the fact that they scored higher in the content category (2.15) than the newspapers in GB (1.99) and the U.S. (2.05). This high content score is the result of Serbian online papers' frequent utilization of visual elements: 70.58% of the online newspapers provided visual elements with all their top five news stories. On the other hand, none of the Serbian online newspapers used video or sound to supplement any of their top five news stories. In contrast, 18.87% of GB newspapers and 13.26% of U.S. dailies provided video or sound with at least one story. In sum, while all three groups of online newspapers are classified as variant cybergenres in terms of content, these contrasting combinations of AV elements indicate that GB and U.S. online newspapers are moving more quickly to the next developmental stage than Serbian online papers.

In searching for the origins of these differences between GB and U.S. online newspapers on one side and Serbian on the other, an explanation comes to mind. As stated in the thesis's chapter on the three country's newspaper systems, compared to GB and the U.S., Internet penetration in Serbia is low: as of April 2008, 32.4% percent of its population is Internet users, compared to 70.9% of the population of GB, and 72.5% of the population of the U.S. (Internet World Statistic). In addition, the Serbian Republic Statistical Office reports that, in 2008, 15.5% of its households had broadband, and 23.3% had cable connections. Such connections are essential for the effective use of many online features, such as video downloading, because of their fast data transfer.

It is possible that this lower Internet penetration and a lack of fast Internet connections could explain Serbian online newspapers' slow transformation. But such a technologically deterministic position should be rejected as the sole explanation for such a

complex process of change (Boczkowski, 2004). A closer look at the newspaper traditions of these three countries is warranted. Unlike in GB and the U.S., Serbian journalists are still battling for independence and freedom of speech, although numerous organizations are lobbying for improvements in the profession and legal protection (Veljanovski, 2005). In Serbia, printed newspapers are still in the process of consolidation of ownership and are not yet recognized as authoritative sources of truthful information. Such conditions may discourage quick development of newspaper cybergenres in Serbia, or other countries with long histories of political control over journalism. Although beyond the scope of this study, this is a topic that should become the center of academic attention.

Scholars have offered additional reasons for rejecting technological determinism as a sole explanation of a country's stage of cybergenre development. In a study of American newspapers, Barnhurst concluded that "[printed] newspapers did not reinvent themselves online" (2002, p.483). In the period since Barnhurst's study, many new features, such as social networks and micro-blogging sites (Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter) have emerged. Still, as this study shows, online newspapers are not quickly incorporating these new online capabilities.

A print newspaper's circulation may also explain the rate of cybergenre development. Considering that the U.S. sample included only online newspapers whose print parents have high circulations (more than 100,000), an additional comparative analysis was completed in which GB sample was reduced to 23 titles that have circulations higher than 100,000. The new scores for the GB newspapers were 1.93, 0.43, and 5.4, respectively, in the content, form, and functionality categories. Except for the form category, these results were similar to those of the whole GB sample (N=108). Within the

content, form, and functionality categories, these 23 GB online newspapers compared to the larger GB sample more often included Web site timestamp (17.39%), offered forums/chat rooms where provider sets the topic (82.60%), mobile news alerts (56.52%), more than two formats of the news updates (21.74%), and provided visual elements with every top news story (63.64%). They also offered fewer tools for technical personalization (39.13%), and they were less likely to provide time stamps on news stories (27.27%), updates on Web 2.0's social networking and micro-blogging sites (21.73%), and audio elements with at least one news story (9.10%).

These findings suggest that the size of a print newspaper (circulation) may not be correlated to the developmental stage of its online platform. Considering that this was tested only on the sample from GB, generalization concerning other countries may not be valid. Still, it is important to note that the functionality and content scores of the British sample (N=108) and a subsample, which consisted of only 23 titles, were almost identical. The only difference was in the form category, where the larger British sample had a score of 0.81, compared to 0.43 for the reduced sample. Possibly the publishers of high-circulation newspapers are less interested in the development of their online forms than those whose circulation is lower. As already mentioned, these findings are not sufficient to support any assessment about the connection between the size of the print newspaper and complexity of the online version. They do, however, raise a question that should be taken up in future research.

As noted, the biggest differences between the cybergenre scores of newspapers analyzed in this research are present in the functionality category. This coincides with scholars' notion of functionality as the driving force in the cybergenre evolutionary

process. U.S. online papers had the highest score in this category (6.15) and Serbian the lowest (4.06). Two elements more prevalent in U.S. online papers may help explain this difference: reader's position as active participants in the news process and publishers' adoption of news streaming.

Scholars suggest that high functionality transforms readers from passive to active participants in the news process. Forums and chat rooms, which promote online interactivity, serve as an excellent example. As readers share information and debate with one another, they create readers' communities inside and around the newspaper. In other words, it is possible for readers to connect with each other without having journalists as mediators. Serbian online newspapers rarely provide forums/chat rooms (41.18%), meaning that they are still keeping their role as gatekeepers.

Transforming readers in this way affects the amount of control editors have over their news agenda. Instead of gatekeeping, Boczkowski (2004) calls this "gate opening." This relationship between newspapers and readers has an analogy in biology. Similar to symbiosis, this is a relationship beneficial, but not critical, for both parties' survival. That being said, one can conclude that Serbian newspapers are exercising gatekeeping instead of gate opening.

Newspaper publishers in GB are more open than Serbian publishers to inclusion of reader input: 76.85% of the British newspapers offer forums in which providers determine topics, and 46.30% offer forums in which topics can be chosen by readers. These online newspapers also offer polls, and occasionally list contact information for all newsroom staff (19.44%).

The research results suggest the country most open to the “gate-opening” approach is the United States: All U.S. newspapers provided forum/chat rooms where providers set the topics, while 55.10% allowed users to initiate topics, and 28.57% of the newspapers gave contact information of all employees. These percentages are higher than the percentages for British and Serbian online newspapers.

A second group of functionality elements that help explain U.S. online papers’ high functionality scores are news updates. The most important outcome of reaching readers via Web 2.0 and by offering several news update services is that instead of inviting the public to come to them, online newspapers are going where the public goes to more directly sell them products.

Also, content in the print newspapers is time-constrained, meaning that unlike other media, such as TV, print newspapers cannot provide breaking news for their readers. Despite such lack of news immediacy, print newspapers capitalize on providing in-depth reports. Online newspapers have an advantage because the Web enables them to combine in-depth analysis of the print newspapers with the news immediacy of television. Such immediacy is achieved with various kinds of news updates that are offered to the readers.

Results show that the most common format of the news updates in all analyzed newspapers is RSS feeds and, in the case of U.S. newspapers, mobile alerts. A majority of online newspapers recognize that readers access the Internet in different ways. Consequently, some newspapers provide multiple news update formats. Serbian online newspapers offer news updates 64.71% of the time, compared to nearly all British and American online papers.

Web 2.0 news updates in the form of social networking and micro-blogging sites are growing in popularity across the world. By establishing a presence in the Web 2.0 sphere, where people do not typically look for news, online newspapers theoretically are building more intimate and enduring relationship with their readerships. While the research shows that few online newspapers have yet adopted those tools, it is likely that more will do so in the future.

Another online newspaper functionality tool allows users to acquire an almost unlimited amount of information about subject they are interested in. Such tools include hyperlinks, archives, and search engines. As summarized in Table 6, it is evident that many online newspapers in all three countries use them.

Considering the fact that the U.S. and GB have similar newspaper traditions and levels of Internet penetration, one would think they would be closer in their levels of functionality. A reason for this difference could be that U.S. print newspapers have historically tended to quickly adopt new technologies and other innovations. As discussed in chapter two, U.S. newspapers were among the first in the world to use the telegraph and interviewing techniques to report news (Emery & Emery, 1996; Schudson, 1995). And more recently, U.S. newspapers have become one of the leaders in experimenting with the Internet and other emerging technologies (Gaunt, 1999; Boczkowski, 2004).

The last two Web tools important for understanding the cybergenre development of online newspapers are timestamps and content personalization. According to Ihlstrom and Akesson (2004), news stream, usually present in the form of a timestamp, is one of the major characteristics separating print and online newspapers. It is also one of the tools that place Web content within particular time contexts. The results show that news stream is

still not an essential part of online newspapers in GB and Serbia (Table 4), which could mean that these online papers do not have 24/7 updating cycles. Online newspapers also almost never allow their readers to personalize content (filter stories based on individual interests and change page layouts). The lack of this feature may mean that online newspaper publishers do not want to abandon their traditional agenda-setting role.

Researchers in the past have found that online newspapers are usually thought of as an extension of their print versions rather than independent products (Chyi & Sylvie, 2000; Lin & Salwen, 2006; Cao & Li, 2006). This is somewhat confirmed by the results in the thesis's online survey: Most (84.21%) respondents said their online and print newsroom staffs are identical, more than half (68.00%) said the relationships between the two platforms are cooperative, and no participants defined this relationship as competition.

The content analysis of online newspapers supports the idea that online and print newspapers in many ways are more different than they are alike. The fact that some online newspapers offer digital replicas of their print newspapers (31.77% in GB, 41.18% in Serbia, and 71.43% in the U.S.) indicates their publishers believe that print and online newspapers provide different reading experiences.

This research has limitations that could be overcome in future research. It is limited to only three countries, and it is not longitudinal. But the thesis's most serious limitation is intercoder reliability. According to Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005), a high rate of intercoder reliability is an important component of content analysis. This study's intercoder reliability is calculated based on 17 overlapping samples using Holsti's formula. The calculated percentage of coders' agreement was .70, which is lower than .80, which scholars consider the minimum rate for intercoder reliability. The .70 rate resulted from a high percentage of

disagreements in coders' measurement of two categories: readers' polls and contact information. Online newspapers provide two kinds of readers' polls: 1) polls that are regular features of online newspapers' front pages, and 2) polls that are part of a news story. The latter is not available every day, as they accompany particular news stories; therefore, coders counted samples in different time frames, which resulted in a higher-than-acceptable percentage of disagreements. A second problem occurred as coders looked at the papers' contact information. The way designers of online papers presented contact information of the newsroom staff made coding difficult, leading to lack of agreement between coders in a number of cases. Additionally, overall intercoder reliability is lower due to coders' fatigue, which resulted from repetitive scrolling through Web pages, and extended exposure to the glare of the computer screen. Coders were not always aware of this situation, which resulted in coding mistakes. These coding limitations should be taken into consideration in future research. The development of more precise coding rules would reduce such errors. Also, coders should either code smaller samples, or researchers should limit the number of samples coders can analyze in a given timeframe.

In sum, this research, which involves cybergenre classification and analysis of the online newspapers in Serbia, GB, and the U.S., leads to the general conclusion that, while they share many elements with their print parents, they are not advancing in their use of the Web's special features as quickly as they might. That these online papers do not fully use the capabilities of the online medium even when they clearly could suggests that the availability of technological advancements is not the only factor directing the cybergenre evolutionary process. Today's economic recession, however, is showing signs of being a particularly potent precipitator of change in the cybergenre field. In a 1998 study, Chyi and

Sylvie stated that online newspapers should differentiate themselves from their print versions in order to survive. With today's demise of many print newspapers, the cybergenre field has become stronger than ever. Nevertheless, it will remain difficult to predict how cybergenre development will proceed in the foreseeable future.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

CODEBOOK

ID1: Coder ID

ID2: Name of the newspaper (online name)

A1: Date (MM/DD/YY) of analyzed newspaper (date you are analyzing it)

A2: Time (HH:MM) of analyzed newspaper

A3: Does the front page provide information on when it has been last updated? If so code the time (HH:MM). If not available code 99:99. This would usually be (but is not the only place) with the breaking news, if they are present on the page.

Front page is defined as the first page of that newspaper that carries the news of the day.

B1: Does the front page inform you that an exact replica of the printed newspaper (i.e. in PDF format, or E-paper) can be downloaded or printed?

1. yes, for free
2. Yes for a fee
3. No

Go back to the front page

C1: Note the number of languages in which the outlet can be read (according to the information provided on the front page, including the languages of the article published on the front page). A language will be counted, even if only one article is written in that language. In your count include the main language of the outlet as one language. Hence you will always code 1 or higher.

C2: If the news outlet is available in other languages than the main national one, please note down in what additional language. Otherwise, code '99'.

C3: Note the number of geographical editions of the outlet that are available (according to information provided on the front page). Don't code international editions. Geographical editions include regional and city editions, but exclude international or foreign editions.

C4: Is it possible to personalize the front page in terms of news content (that is, by requesting a specific selection of news items [in terms of type, geography or topic])? This is similar, but not limited to the Google News option to personalize the page.

1. No
2. Yes

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

C5: Is it possible to personalize the front page on technical aspects that may influence the way in which pages are displayed? This includes, but is not limited to font sizes, color, and so on.

1. Yes
2. No

C6: Is there a tool to search the online outlet and/or the Website of the news provider?

1. Yes
2. No

C7: Is there an archive with older news?

1. Yes
2. No

If answer is 2 then skip to D. If answer 1 then access the archive.

C8: How far does the archive go back in time?
(MM/DD/YY), or MM/99/YY, or 99/99/YY)

C9: How accessible is the archive in terms of cost?

1. Free access for everyone
2. Must register to access archive, but no fee required
3. Must register, no fee required, but registration restricted to newspaper subscribers
4. Must subscribe (pay a fee) for regular access
5. Must pay per retrieved article
6. Must pay per search/time (hours, minutes)

C10: What does the archive provide?

1. Articles
2. Complete replica of newspaper
3. Articles and complete front pages and/or replica

Please assess if the following elements are mentioned on the front page. It does not matter whether the element is displayed on the front page or referred to (linked to). If necessary follow the link until you get to the destination, but after analysis return to the front page. For D1 if two or more conditions apply code the higher number.

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

D1: An address (be it an e-mail address, telephone or fax number, or ordinary mail address) is mentioned or referred to on the front page for

1. The newspaper (there is only one e-mail address, perhaps in combination with one phone or fax number, and/or one postal address provided for the news outlet).
2. Several offices (e-mail address, perhaps in combination with phone or fax numbers, and/or one postal addresses are provided for different offices or people representing these offices [e.g PR manager, city editor, sports editor]). If more names per office are mentioned code 3.
3. Journalists ((e-mail address, perhaps in combination with phone or fax numbers, and/or one postal addresses are provided for different journalists and other people – when only one name per office is mentioned code 2).
4. No address at all is mentioned

D2-D9 Are any of the following elements displayed or referred to on the front page of the news outlet?

1. *Yes*
2. *No*

D2: Debate rooms, discussion boards or blogs (in which contributors can communicate asynchronously in relation to one or more specific topics), provider initiated (provider sets the topic).

D3: Debate rooms or discussion boards (in which contributors can communicate asynchronously in relation to one or more specific topics), user initiated (users set the topic).

D4: Poll/user survey

D5: The user can get updates on his/her cell phone

D6: The user can sign up for RSS feed

D7: The user can get updates on any of the social networks or micro-blogging sites (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter...)

D8: The user can sign up for updates by using any other tool not previously mentioned. In the provided space on the coding sheet please indicates what other tools are offered.

D9: Hyperlinks

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

Definition: News items include at least a headline, or graphical element (photo, figure). News items don't include breaking news, service information or entertainment.

Restrictions: We only code for the five most important news items. To determine what news items are the most important, we apply up to five rules consecutively. If rule one is not sufficient to determine five news items, we apply rule two, etc.

1. The most important news items are news items that also contain part of the story (i.e. item such as teaser, brief, caption story, news article)
2. The most important news items are those items that occupy the largest space on the front page.
3. The most important news items are those items that have AV (audio visual) illustrations or larger headlines
4. The most important news items are those items that are positioned higher on the page.
5. The most important news items are those items that are positioned more to the left side of the page.

Do the following analysis **for each news item** (go to the second page if necessary):

E1: date stamp of the news item (MM/DD/YY; 99/99/99 if not available).

E2: Timestamp of the news item (HH:MM; 99:99 if not available).

E3: Is the item accompanied with audiovisual illustrations on the front page?

1. Yes
2. No

If answer is 2 then skip to E5.

E4: What kind of AV is present on the front page (mark all that applies)?

1. Photo
2. Info-graphic (graph, table, map, sketch)
3. non-informative, entertaining graphics (cartoon)
4. moving images (video, news film)
5. moving animations (moving drawings)
6. sounds

E5: What kind of AV is present on the second (continuing) page (mark all that applies)?

1. Photo
2. Info-graphic (graph, table, map, sketch)
3. non-informative, entertaining graphics (cartoon)
4. moving images (video, news film)
5. moving animations (moving drawings)
6. sounds

APPENDIX 2

SURVEY

General Information about Online and Print Newspapers

1. Please write the year your company launched its online edition _____

2. What is the average daily traffic of the online edition?
please indicate the type of measure you are using: e.g., page views, unique users, etc

3. In terms of your audience, how would you classify the online edition?
 - a. International daily
 - b. National daily
 - c. Regional daily
 - d. Local daily
 - e. Niche/specialized

4. What is your job title (please write in the provided space)?

5. What is your main function?
 - a. I am in charge of the print edition
 - b. I am in charge of the online edition
 - c. I am in charge of both print and online editions
 - d. None of these

6. What are the job titles of those who are in charge of :
 - a. Online edition _____
 - b. Print edition _____

Content Difference between Online and Print Editions:

1. Imagine an average news day and compare the content of the online and print editions. Base all your answers thinking about the online and print content available immediately after the newspaper edition is sent to press. Chose the appropriate number for each question.
1. none 2. less than 1/3 3. between 1/3 and 2/3 4. more than 2/3 5. all

APPENDIX 2 (continued)

How many articles

- a. from print edition appear also in the online version? _____
- b. from online edition also appear in the print version? _____
- c. from print edition appear in the same section in online version (e.g., sport, travel, world...)? _____
- d. that cover the same news events have different headlines in online and print editions? _____
- e. that cover the same news events have different content (the body copy and additional elements, excluding photos) in the print and online editions: different information, structure, writing style? _____
- f. that cover the same news events are longer in online than print edition? _____
- g. that have more photos in online compared to print edition? _____
- h. are created exclusively for online edition (original content)? _____
- i. Additional comments (optional) _____

Relationship between Online and Print Platforms

- 1. What is approximate size of the print newsroom staff (including reporters, designers, copy desk, and editors)? _____
- 2. What is approximate size of your online newsroom staff (including reporters, web designers and developers, copy desk and editors)? _____
- 3. How many reporters work for both newsrooms?
 - a. All
 - b. Majority
 - c. Some
 - d. None, it is completely different staff
- 4. What are the job titles of those staff members who work only for online newsroom?
please write all of them, even if the job title is reporter

APPENDIX 2 (continued)

5. What do you think are your company's future goals?
 - a. Moving exclusively to online publishing and discontinuing print edition
 - b. Moving toward online publishing and reducing the print edition (circulation, format, daily to weekly)
 - c. Moving toward online publishing, but not changing print edition (circulation, format)
 - d. Moving toward online publishing and expanding print edition
 - e. Moving toward print publishing, not changing online edition
 - f. Not sure
 - g. Other (please specify) _____

In order to keep your answers confidential and private we ask you to please answer these three general information questions to help us place your newspaper in the appropriate category.

1. What is the location of your newspaper?
 - a. Great Britain
 - b. United States
 - c. Serbia

2. What is the average daily circulation of your print edition? _____

3. How would you classify your print newspaper?
 - a. International daily/weekly
 - b. National daily/weekly
 - c. Regional daily/weekly
 - d. Local daily/weekly
 - e. Niche/specialized daily/weekly

4. Who owns your company (e.g. private individual or group, state...)?
