



Where Broadcast and Digital Cultures Collide: A Case Study of Public Service Media in Ukraine

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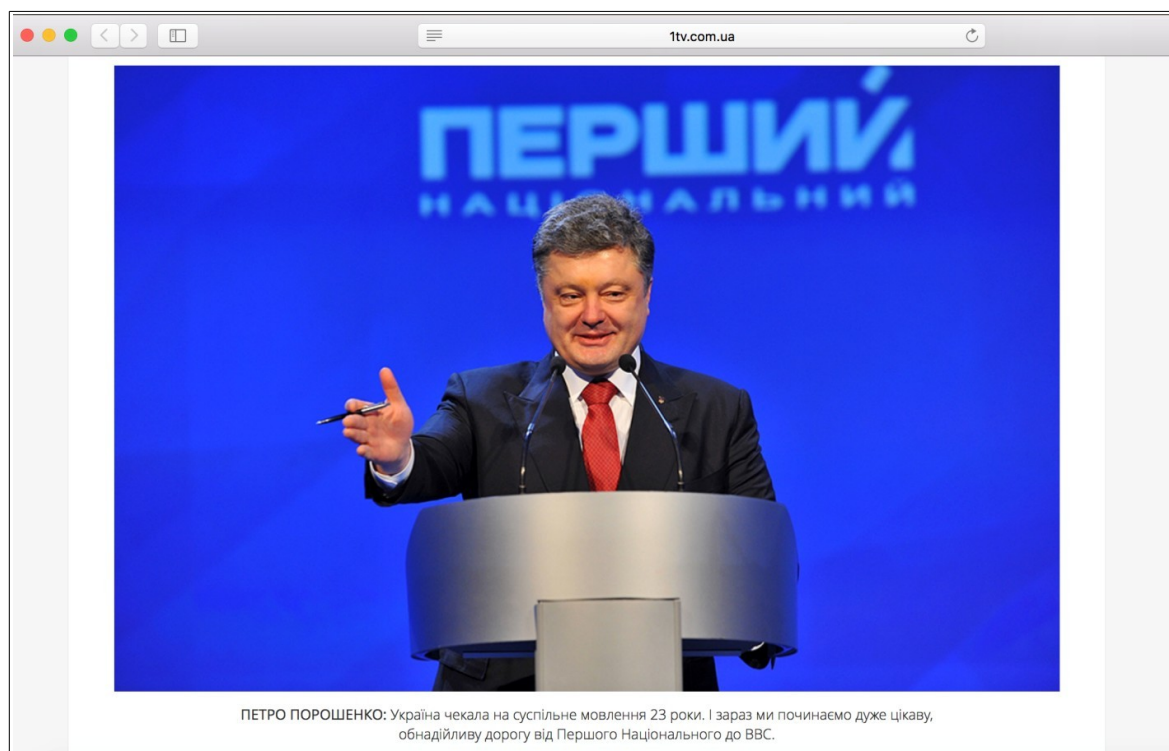
Abstract: This case study-based analysis investigates the transformation of public service broadcasting into public service media in the digital age through the example of the emerging public service media landscape of Ukraine. This article suggests to clarify the terms ‘public service broadcasting online’ and ‘public service media’ and argues that public service media provide heterogeneous public service content specifically adjusted for each medium (television, the internet, mobile phones) and cultivate egalitarian relationships with the public applying the mixed model of communication. By contrast, public service broadcasters online re-translate the televisual content on the multimedia platforms, sustaining the hierarchical one-to-many model of communications. The concept of the two co-existing types of public service content providers has been explicitly illustrated by examples of the grassroots crowd-funded and crowd-sourced Ukrainian digital media Hromadske and the official, government-funded public service broadcaster UA:Pershyi. With European public service broadcasters currently struggling to reinvent their identity in the digital age, the case of Ukraine can help us see clearly how public service media are navigating the collision between broadcast and digital cultures.

Keywords: Public service broadcasting, public service media, Hromadske, UA:Pershyi, public interest, public engagement, participatory audiences.

In 2015 a brand new public service broadcaster in Ukraine—UA: Pershyi—reported its own launch in this way: ‘From today forward, Ukraine has its own public broadcaster... In the public eye, the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, has signed the law on public broadcasting’ (‘UA: Suspilne’ 2015). Poroshenko was quoted in the report saying: ‘Ukraine has been waiting for it for twenty-three years. Now we are starting our very exciting and en-

courcouraging way from Pershyi Natsionalnyi to the BBC'.¹ As he spoke, he gestured physically toward this very promising avenue (Image 1).

Image 1. President Poroshenko launches UA:Pershyi



Source: UA:Pershyi, 'UA: Suspilne movlennia' (2015)

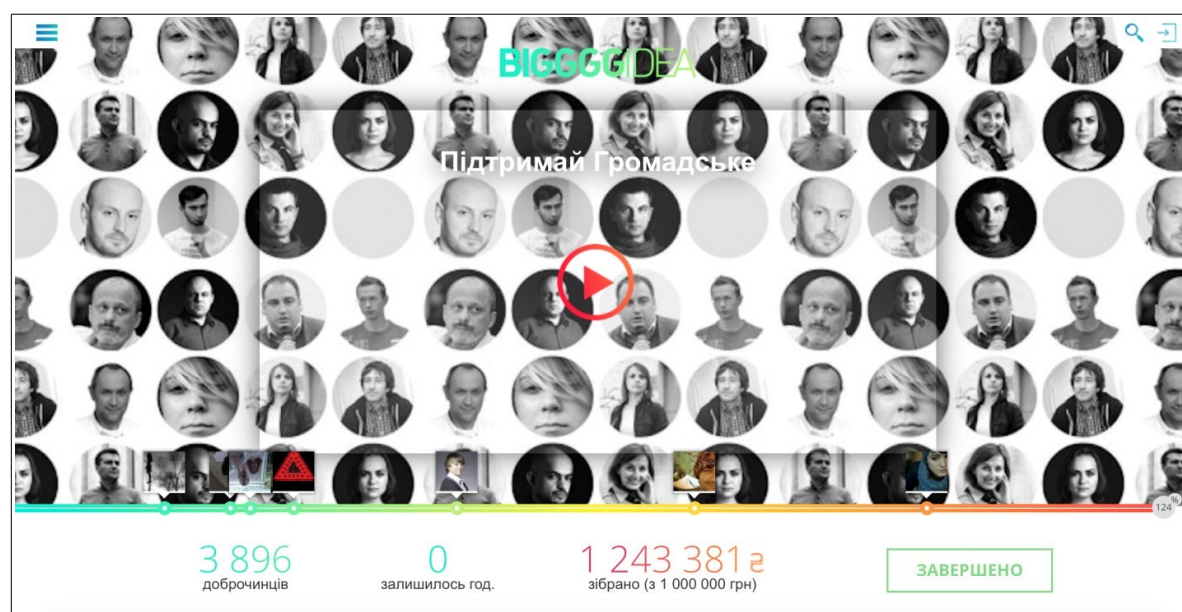
This is the official story of the emergence of public service media in Ukraine, but it is not the only story. In reality, Ukrainian society has not been 'waiting for twenty-three years' for a wise ruler to set up television media devoted to the public interest; two years before Poroshenko's remarks, Ukrainian growing civil society helped spearhead and support its own grassroots public service provider, Hromadske Telebachennia (literally, 'public television', from the noun *hromada*, 'community'). Hromadske started when dozens of journalism-enthusiasts began crowdfunding on the platform Biggggidea.com (Image 2). Aimed at the creation of the 'free information space for the development of Ukrainian society', the initiative won widespread support from the public and raised over one million Ukrainian hryvnias (approximately 80,000 GBP at the time) in only a few months. Hromadske used the momentum created by Ukraine's Maidan revolution, and, in the beginning, served as a platform for citizen journalists to upload videos from the streets swarmed by protesters. However, while many other countries witnessed the rise of citizen journalism during the nation-wide protests²,

¹ Pershyi Natsionalnyi is the name of the earlier incarnation of Ukraine's state-owned broadcaster.

² For other examples of the rise of citizen journalism in the region in 2013, please, see the works of Andrew Chapman and Henrike Schmidt in *Digital Icons* № 11 and № 13 respectively. Henrike Schmidt (2015) explores aesthetics and political value of drone photography during the Bulgarian #resign movement, and argues that it evolved from mere means of alternative informational footage to an instrument of shaping self-perception of the protesting crowd. Andrew Chapman (2014) scrutinizes Russian citizen filmmaking projects by Kostomarov,

Ukraine grants us a unique example of a ‘citizen media’, which managed to sustain itself after the revolution, institutionalize practices of citizen journalism, and transform itself into a successful public service media outlet. Moreover, by May 2016, Hromadske was large enough to attain a license for global satellite broadcasting.

Image 2. First public self-presentation of Hromadske on the crowdfunding platform



Source: Biggggidea.com ('Pidtrymai Hromadske')

Today, after decades of dichotomy of state-controlled and commercial television on Ukraine's media market³, the Ukrainian mediascape recently exploded with public service content from two media outlets with two very distinct voices. Indeed, even the first visual self-representations of UA:Pershyi and Hromadske (Image 1, 2) gesture to divergent values in relation to the public they seek to serve: elitist vs egalitarian, 'top-to-bottom' vs grassroots. This article explores these values in more depth and analyses the ways in which contemporary Ukraine is active in adopting and, to some degree, transforming the concept of public service media.

The investigation of the new media practices of Ukraine's public service media outlets is especially timely since eastern European public service broadcasters are currently struggling to meet the challenges of the new media era. As Dr. Gregory Lowe noted in his research prepared for European Broadcasting Union Media Intelligence Service, 'in the media ecology of networked communications, the value of public service sector is pointedly questioned, strenuously challenged and increasingly uncertain' (Lowe 2016: 6). This assessment resonates

Rastorguev and Pivovarov, looking at the film *The Term* and its offshoots - the collection of citizen journalists' videos *Realnost*, and crowd-funding application *Newsreal: Citizen Journalist* - as citizen journalism projects helping to vocalize alternative voices in Russia.

³ For the detailed account of the state of Ukraine's media landscape in pre-Maidan Ukraine and the political situation in which Hromadske emerged, please consult Joanna Szostek's article 'The Media Battles of Ukraine's EuroMaidan' (2014) in *Digital Icons*, 11: 1-19.

with observations of participants of the conference ‘Public Service Media and Democracy’ (10-11 November 2016, Prague) co-organized by the Council of Europe and the European Broadcasting Union. During this conference, the policy makers and managers of public service broadcasters from all over the eastern Europe stressed on multiple occasions that the public service broadcasting in the region is in crisis. This crisis has been repeatedly connected to the lack of state financing, political interference, intensified competition for public attention with an explosion of the internet, and passivity of the modern audience, which was accused of lacking interest in public service content.

Yet, the case study of Ukraine’s grassroots public service media Hromadske showcases the opposite. Hromadske was established without any state financing at all thanks to crowd-funding and international grants, and operated under the unfavourable political conditions for the freedom of speech in the time of president Yanukovych. Nevertheless, Hromadske succeeded in sustaining editorial independence by operating on the digital platform, the only niche where political interference was practically impossible because of the lack of regulations. Finally, Hromadske’s high popularity proved that public service content was in demand in Ukrainian society. So, with European public service broadcasters currently struggling to reinvent their identity in the digital age, I posit that the case of Ukraine can help us see clearly how contemporary public service media outlets are embracing new media channels, navigating the collision between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ media cultures, and evolving from public service broadcasters to public service media.

Today, ‘old’ and ‘new’ are converging with increased velocity: public service broadcasters disseminate their content online, and online media are venturing into conventional broadcasting. Yet their distinct cultures of content production and distribution are rarely explored. In the first part of this article, I, therefore, set the scene by analysing the on-going academic discussion about the very concept of ‘public service’ in the digital age, by proposing a clearer terminology to account for the different approaches to public service content delivery in the new media era. In the second part, I offer a close examination of UA:Pershyi as a ‘public service broadcaster online’ and Hromadske as ‘public service media’. My study ultimately seeks to contribute to the broader theoretical discussion about more effective models for neoteric media in the public interest, both in Ukraine and beyond.

‘Public service media’ vs ‘public service broadcasting online’: clarifying terms

For the last few decades, the ever-changing identity of public service broadcasting has been a rich topic of academic discussion. Yet the problem of the concept of ‘public service’ in media studies is still unsettled. Today it encounters proliferating complications linked to a number of factors: technological (e.g. the explosion of the internet, social media, mobile technologies and multi-media platforms); political (e.g. the development of ‘participatory culture’ [Jenkins 2013] as a step towards direct democracy); and social (e.g. the ‘individualization’ of society in ‘liquid modernity’ [Bauman 2000]).

The technological factor—especially the disruptive character of the internet—leads many to support David Hendy’s argument that ‘at the very least, we need to stop talking about public service broadcasting and start talking about public service media or public service com-

munication' (2013: 106). The term 'public service media' is already used by scholars such as James Bennet, Lizzie Jackson, Michail O'Neill, Ike Picone, Koen Willaert, Karen Donders, Abigail Wincott, Kathleen Griffin, Janet Jones, Hsiao-Wen Lee, Ágnes Gulyás and Ferenc Hammer (Gulyás et al. 2013). As Gulyás and Hammer note in *Public Service Media in the Digital Age*, however, there is still no academic consensus on its definition (Gulyás et al. 2013: p.xiv). Other researchers avoid the term 'public service media' and instead prefer to use the classical term 'public service broadcasting' (PSB) with an addition of 'online' or 'on the internet' at the end (Brevini 2013). This terminological division is problematic. Indeed, I posit that 'public service media' and 'public service broadcasting online' are in fact two very different enterprises founded on divergent concepts for public service delivery. To clarify the state of play, I refer to *digital culture for public service* and *broadcast culture for public service*, focussing attention on the principal differences between 'old' and 'new' media cultures.

In this article, for the sake of clarity, I define *public service broadcasters online* (PSB online) as distributors of pre-produced public service content through traditional televisual and new media channels, sustaining the one-to-many model of communication. This is representative of broadcast culture. By contrast, *public service media* (PSM) are multi-media platforms allowing for the production and circulation of public service content following the mixed (one-to-many, many-to-many, many-to-one) model of communication. This is representative of digital culture.

Before the advent of the internet, broadcasters distributed their content by means of terrestrial television networks and satellites to relatively passive audiences following the highly hierarchical top-down and one-to-many model of communication. In the era of mass communication, interactivity through calls to the studio or letters to the editor were sporadic and bore little influence on the broadcaster. Indeed, although conventional broadcasting was utterly important for effective informing of the publics, there was still 'relatively little more that they could do with this information' as the philosopher Gordon Graham remarked (Graham 1999: 32).

By contrast, the emergence of the internet and the arrival of affordable digital cameras and convenient photo and video editing tools have disrupted this traditional media landscape, offering individuals previously undreamt opportunities to project their voices through digital means. The citizen journalism, community media, media activism and advocacy became so wide-spread, that some researchers identify it as a legitimate social movement (Napoli 2007). Our contemporary mediascape increasingly becomes a site of 'participatory culture', one 'which sees the public not as simply consumers of preconstructed messages but as people who are shaping, sharing, reframing, and remixing media content in ways which might have not been previously imagined' (Jenkins et al. 2013: 2). In effect, the hierarchical one-to-many model of communication has changed to a mixed one, incorporating one-to-many (e.g. traditional media uploading content online), many-to-many (e.g. content re-shaping and sharing, discussions amongst users in commentary sections) and many-to-one (e.g. comments and questions from the audience to media producers).

However, it would be oversimplistic to claim that this new mixed model of communication is typical for any digital content online. Indeed, from classical Athens and to the digital era, the point-to-point and one-to-many models of communication has always been interwoven (Balbi 2016), and they remain entwined on the new media platforms. Therefore, I sug-

gest to untangle the knot, formed as a result of encounter of the ‘new’ participatory digital culture and the ‘old’ broadcast culture on the internet, and look at two Ukrainian exemplars of these distinct cultures—conventional broadcaster UA:Pershyi venturing into online communications, and inherently digital grassroots media Hromadske.

Before moving to the case study, I would like to stress that I conceptualize Ukrainian UA:Pershyi as ‘public service broadcaster online’ and not ‘public service media’ not because UA:Pershyi was established as a public service broadcasting enterprise, but because of the prevailing top-down model UA:Pershyi has chosen for its content dissemination online. While David Hendy believes that ‘rhetorical polarity between “top-down” and “bottom-up” media—or ... between “old” and “new”—is somewhat misleading’, I posit that this distinction would not be misleading if drawn not between mere communication channels, but by their approaches to the content delivery. David Hendy supports his argument by noting that nearly two-thirds of British adults used social media to discuss the ‘old’ medium of television (Hendy 2013: 118); however, I suggest that if the televisual content is produced in a convenient form for an audience to share and discuss it online, we must acknowledge the change of the top-down model for the mixed one emblematic for the ‘new’ digital approach to content delivery.

Thus, established public service broadcasting enterprises might primarily orient on creating a broadcast moment, but nevertheless build an entire digital ecosystem to invigorate broadcast television by digital play-along and audience engagement, the way BBC does.⁴ BBC’s digital strategy is based on two principal goals: to convert all BBC content to be placed online, and to refresh and renew how BBC approaches storytelling by stretching the world of some television programmes—the storyworlds of BBC drama, the formats of entertaining shows, the events of BBC coverage—to the new media platforms (Evans 2011: 107–108). BBC, the world’s oldest national public service broadcaster, arguably demonstrates an overarching interactive multi-platform digital approach to public service content delivery and therefore is conceptualized as ‘public service media’. At the same time, internet television might be focused on solely transmitting information and therefore reflect an ‘old’ broadcast-

⁴ In her interview dated July 7th 2010, Head of Multiplatform Commissioning for Drama, Comedy and Entertainment at BBC Victoria Jaye described the digital ecosystem that BBC had been actively developing around its broadcast content since 2000s. BBC management treats digital platforms as new ways for BBC audience to connect with like-minded people, to come together as a nation, organize fundraising events such as parties around Sport Relief (Evans 2011:114). BBC event websites such as ‘Children in Need’, ‘Comic Relief’ enable photo sharing amongst users, and facilitate crowd-funding. According to Victoria Jaye, such websites have been witnessing traffic increases by 30-50% from year on year. Another element of BBC’s digital ecosystem is stretching worlds of television drama and comedy to the digital space. BBC created online *EastEnders* spinoff ‘E20’, which aimed to increase the value of BBC content for younger viewers by reaching them through multi-media platforms. ‘The way [E20] was released and how it unfolded was absolutely built on what internet platform does’, Victoria Jaye said (Evans 2011: 110). The storyline of the show had been developing and unfolding with BBC audience actively discussing it on the fan pages, giving show producers valuable insights to audience interests and helping them to develop the show accordingly. Also, the producers uploaded the funniest *EastEnders* sketches on YouTube few weeks before an actual broadcast of the new episode in order to make content go viral and create interest in the new broadcast show. Victoria Jaye explained that such digital content created to support specific broadcast moment, like ‘E20’ or ‘Doctor Who: Adventure Games’ (a public service game), has a new value: people keep playing the game, keep watching ‘E20’ and discussing it online years after the broadcast moment, increasing its lifespan and giving it a new public service value.

ing approach, despite operating on the ‘new’ internet platform, and would be then conceptualised as ‘online broadcasting’.⁵

The Ukrainian mediascape provides a unique opportunity for examining the relationship and distinction between public service broadcasting online and public service media because it is characterized by co-existence of the conventional governmentally funded top-down public service broadcaster UA:Pershyi and innovative grassroots multi-media public service media Hromadske. These two media organisations are working for the same society, in the same historical period, in the same media segment (broadcasting and online) and are dedicated to the similar public service goals. However, they differ in the way they approach their audiences, and this distinction seems to be the cornerstone of the transformed public service remit in the digital age.

The case of Ukraine: UA: Pershyi and Hromadske

Since this case study scrutinizes the different cultures of public service content delivery on the digital platforms, it is fruitful to begin a comparative analysis of UA:Pershyi and Hromadske with an exploration of their interactive and participatory practices online. Both UA:Pershyi and Hromadske have developed content-rich websites (1tv.com.ua and hromadske.ua) and embraced social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Google+; Hromadske additionally works in VK, Instagram and Coub).⁶ UA:Pershyi and Hromadske operate mostly on the same media platforms, but demonstrate contrasting approaches to cultivating relationships with their audiences and delivering public service content more generally. In this section I will argue that the online multimedia activity of the ‘public service broadcaster online’ UA:Pershyi and the ‘public service media’ Hromadske makes clear that the former uses social media mainly as an additional channel for distribution of its televisual content, whereas the latter actively engages the public in conversations on these platforms.

UA: Pershyi

UA:Pershyi is a television broadcaster reaching around 97 percent of Ukraine’s households with potential reach of approximately 37,900,000 viewers. Yet due to its low ratings, it reached only 460,000 viewers in April 2016⁷, for instance, with only 30,000 viewers on average watching it regularly.⁸ It could be assumed that the smaller the audience is, the easier it gets to communicate with it effectively, which could constitute an area of opportunity for this

⁵ Similar account of online television continuing the logic of broadcasting can be seen in Joshua Green’s work ‘Why Do They Call it TV When it’s Not on the Box’. As Joshua Green has mentioned in his study of earlier online projects Innertube (now CBS.com) and Miro, ‘each of these new television sites attempts to negotiate an identity as an evolution of broadcasting television, rather than necessarily positioning itself as an object that breaks from it’ (Green 2008: 97).

⁶ Until May 2016, Hromadske used to have a comment section under each piece of content and to provide special ‘surveys’ and ‘discussion’ sections on their former platform hromadske.tv. This website was dismantled, however, by a former leader of Hromadske, Roman Skrypin, following his conflict with the rest of the Hromadske team. The new website hromadske.ua does not have a comment section.

⁷ Measured by Nielsen for Industrial Television Committee in Ukraine, data provided for the author’s request.

⁸ The data counted by the author as 0.09 percent of 37,900,000 of the TV-viewers in Ukraine; the data about the channel’s share taken from <http://tampanel.com.ua/ru/rubrics/canals/> (27 May 2016).

newly introduced public service broadcaster, which must allow for ‘public participation in media governance and program policy formation’ by the Law of Ukraine on Public Broadcasting (‘Zakon Ukrainy’ 2014). Yet the channel does not seem to have developed a comprehensive model for such participation yet. The website of UA:Pershyyi provides contacts (phone numbers and e-mails) for the news, sports, and advertisement departments and the press centre exclusively; there are no other means for audience participation such as forums or comments sections on the website. However, there are hyperlinks for the channel’s profiles on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, where viewers can comment on public service content. Yet only around sixteen percent of the programmes currently aired on UA:Pershyyi have their own pages on Facebook⁹ and only one – ‘Debates Pro’ (‘Debaty PRO’) – has its own Twitter account. The others are represented by the official Facebook page and Twitter account of UA:Pershyyi.

The televisual content of UA:Pershyyi does not leave the audience many options for participation. Only two out of the forty-three programmes aired in May 2016 have integrated participatory practices, trying to build a dialogue between their viewers and experts in the studio. One of them is ‘Debates Pro’ (‘Debaty PRO’), a programme discussing controversial aspects of social and political life. It provides viewers the opportunity to address questions to experts either in the studio or by means of social media. Yet in April 2016, only one question was asked via the project’s Facebook page, and only twenty-six comments were posted. The one hundred and eight Twitter followers were even less active with only six retweets in a month.

Another ‘interactive’ programme, ‘The Government in Touch with the Citizens’ (‘Uriad na Zviazku z Hromadianamy’), provides a television platform for the representatives of government to answer the questions they receive on the governmental hotline and the website. However, since the public broadcaster cannot control collection and selection of public questions, the programme does not necessarily serve as a dialogical public space; it also can be used as an arena for the governmental representatives to speak up on issues of their choice.

Aside from the televisual audience, UA:Pershyyi also has a relatively sizeable internet audience with the website attracting over 150,000 people in April 2016¹⁰ and its YouTube channel attracting 7,762,997 views in two years (on average around 320,000 times per month).¹¹ Its website serves simply as a platform to upload televisual content, which is identical to the content broadcasted and emblematic, as I argue, of the general practice of public service broadcasters online. According to Similarweb.com, in April 2016, an average number of page views on UA:Pershyyi was two, so it is very likely that people mostly use a website as a source for online television or the on-demand video: first they visit the main page, then go to a page of the programme they like and press watch online, or go to YouTube.¹² Of course, the possibility to watch televisual content at any time, place and order empowers the audience in a way. Yet simply allowing for a more convenient way of content’s consumption is still arguably not enough to satisfy needs of ‘participatory’ audience.

⁹ Seven programmes out of forty-three, and one of them is, in fact, the page of the communal project with Hromadske ‘Slidstvo.info’, managed by Hromadske team.

¹⁰ The data from similarweb.co <https://www.similarweb.com/website/1tv.com.ua> (11 May 2016).

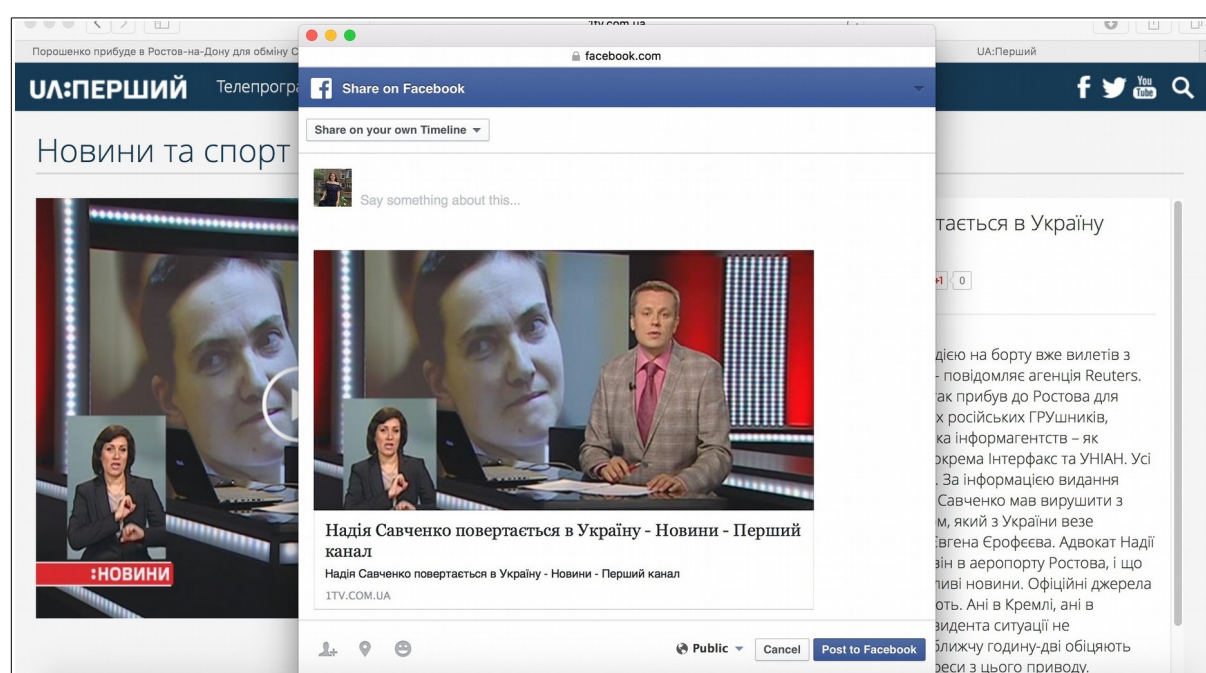
¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/user/1tvUkraine/about> (11 May 2016).

¹² The data as of 27 May 2016, 15:32 GMT.

UA:Pershyi similarly does not promote effective social media activity. It is present on Facebook (14,741 followers), Twitter (6,310 followers), YouTube (13,600 followers), Google+ (141 followers) and regularly updates and refreshes its pages, but it does not succeed in engaging followers with its content. For example, despite having 14,741 followers, the Facebook page of UA:Pershyi got only 102 likes and three comments in April 2016. This low audience engagement is indicative of a disconnect between the social media content of UA:Pershyi and the needs and interests of its audience.

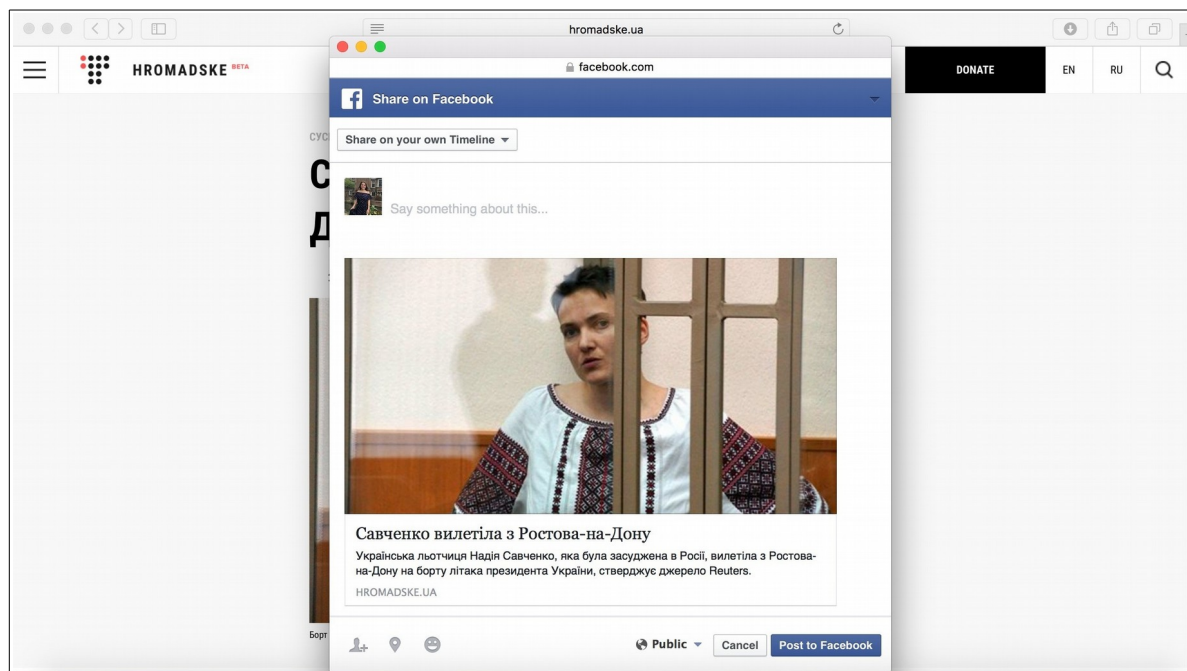
This argument is well illustrated by juxtaposing news coverage in social media by UA:Pershyi and Hromadske. Here I will refer to the example of an event with major resonance in Ukraine: the return of Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko to Ukraine on 25 May 2016, after 693 days in a Russian prison. UA:Pershyi released three posts on the matter on its official Facebook page, two of which invited people to watch a live broadcast of the arrival of Savchenko's plane or to turn on the TV and watch the news programme to learn more. The third post was a photo of the President with a comment 'Waiting for the President's commentary'. None of these posts invited people to discuss the matter, share the news or express one's opinion on it. On 25 May 2016, these three Facebook posts from UA:Pershyi were shared by thirty-seven people, liked by 105 and commented on by two. After Savchenko's arrival, a news video was released on television and uploaded on the website, and the public got a chance to share the video on their private pages (Image 3). As of 25 May 2016, however, there were no shares of this news piece. Its lack of distribution may be due to the foregrounded image of a 'talking head' addressing an anonymous viewer who is tasked with nothing more than to watch the video. This conventional visual representation does not invite content's re-shaping and sharing.

Image 3. The automatically generated news post to share from UA:Pershyi



Source: UA:Pershyi (25 May 2016)

Image 4. The automatically generated news post to share from Hromadske



Source: Hromadske.ua (25 May 2016)

By contrast, Image 4 illustrates a similar automatically generated post on the Savchenko story from Hromadske.ua. Unlike the previous example, the post features a touching personal photo and the simple informative title, ‘Savchenko has left Rostov-na-Donu’, with few explanatory details. The post emphasises a more personal story, inviting circulation of this news with an incorporation of the user’s opinion on the matter. This news piece was shared by 3004 users directly from Hromadske.ua website on May 25 2016. All of the posts on Hromadske Facebook page relating to Savchenko from 25 May 2016 were in sum liked by over 10,300 people, commented by 403 users, and shared by over 2,800 people at that day.

Comparing absolute numbers of shares on Facebook between UA:Persnyi and Hromadske offers limited illustrative utility, since the former has 14,737 followers, and the latter 536,030.¹³ When we focus on the ratio of the total number of followers to the number of people who liked, shared or commented the news piece, however, we see clearly the dominance of Hromadske, which engaged around twenty percent of its followers in active circulation of its content, whereas UA:Persnyi achieved slightly below a one percent engagement rate in April 2016.

The first seeds of a broadcaster’s understanding of the specificity of the internet audience can be seen in creation of the unique content for it. For instance, at the moment UA:Persnyi creates entertaining content such as backstage videos of its programmes and uploads them on YouTube. In May 2016, a particularly interesting concept of the backstage video was introduced: UA:Persnyi launched the livestream from the Ukrainian commentators’ room during the Eurovision song contest, which could be watched on YouTube and Facebook. The YouTube livestream also integrated a chat box that appeared in the top-right corner of the

¹³ These statistics were collected on 26 May 2016.

screen. The Eurovision's commentators were monitoring questions and comments of the viewers online and answering the most interesting ones right away. Thus, both online audience and the television viewers could simultaneously hear commentators' answers while watching the live broadcast of Eurovision on UA:Pershyyi. Similar integration of live chats could be especially productive with the socio-political content of the public service broadcaster.

All things considered, UA:Pershyyi is only starting to explore the added values of the internet for public service delivery. It is still far from a transformation from public service broadcaster operating online to participatory public service media. UA:Pershyyi tends to produce closed-ended content, which is largely unavailable for personal sharing, discussion or redistribution in public space. Such content might be perceived as a 'pure broadcasting' in sense of the 'broadcasting for broadcasting's sake': the content is created in order to be distributed regardless of public demands and reactions. In the year since UA:Pershyyi has been established, its digital policy has not noticeably changed, which leads us to conclusion that its management still sees 'the people previously known as the audience', in Jay Rosen's terms (2006), as the same old audience as before.

Interestingly, the audience of UA:Pershyyi also seems to think so of itself mostly ignoring the interactive possibilities of the social media. The lack of public interest in interaction with the public service broadcaster online might signal that the broadcast approach of UA:Pershyyi not only fails to engage people in participatory practices, but might well be promoting social apathy by creating an impression that there is no point in sharing one's opinion on UA:Pershyyi webpages, because this would not have any impact. As a result, the fewer people speak up on the UA:Pershyyi official social media pages, the less likely other users become to vocalise their opinions and demands concerning public service broadcaster's content on UA:Pershyyi webpages, even if these users are normally actively engaging in conversations online. This aligns with an established mass communication theory, known as 'spiral of silence'. This theory developed by Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann back in 1980 suggests that the actors become less and less likely to express their voice when they think, they are in minority. This concept originated from mass communication in order to explain the phenomena of public opinion formation, but the logic of the 'spiral of silence' has been later extended to other spheres of communication research.¹⁴ Thus, I suggest that this mechanism can be also useful to analyse users' behaviour on the social media pages of public service broadcasters online.

The low audience engagement in social media can be also partly explained by the age of the audience of UA:Pershyyi lacking experience in social media. Unfortunately, there are no open data on the demographics of the internet audience of UA:Pershyyi to prove or disprove this. The data about the demographical audience of the televisual audience indeed shows that it is dominated by people over 45 years old, although the share of 14-24 years old men is also relatively significant (Dankova 2015). Yet, even if the internet audience is similarly dominated by the older generation, who lack digital literacy or still do not believe in meaningfulness of participation because of Ukraine's totalitarian Soviet past, it still would be beneficial for a public service broadcaster online to introduce and promote interactive and participatory prac-

¹⁴ For example, Bowen and Blackman, and Price and Allen extrapolated this principle on small groups and organisations research (Clemente et al. 2015: 97).

tices among the public. Indeed, as Clay Shirky reasonably said evaluating ‘lolcats’ (seemingly ‘meaningless’ participatory activities of internet users) ‘the real gap is between doing something and doing nothing’ (Shirky 2010: 18-19).

Hromadske

Hromadske represents a completely different approach to content distribution and actively promotes interactivity and public participation. Upon its emergence as online television operating on website and via YouTube, Hromadske immediately disrupted the Ukrainian media market, acquiring unprecedented popularity during the Maidan Revolution in part due to its unique participatory practices. Citizen journalists used Hromadske as a platform for livestreaming from Maidan, while presenters in the studio spent most of the time monitoring social media to glean developments of the revolution from people on the streets. Most of the content was provided via livestreams and so-called Hromadske ‘tele-marathons’—day-long programmes chronicling events in Kyiv and across the country, monitoring social media, and hosting discussions with experts in the studio and with viewers via Skype.

At this time, the Hromadske studio was an improvised space in a rented flat instead of a polished professional venue. The viewer was therefore privy to the entirety of televisual production, with all its flaws. The journalist speaking to the guest, editors working in the background, the next guest being miked by a producer—all were visible in the same frame. While public service broadcasting is generally characterized by ‘professionalisation’, Hromadske in its early days could be perceived as the exact opposite: guerrilla media.¹⁵ It enthusiastically embraced the poor quality video from mobile phones and showcased young and sometimes inattentive journalists instead of presenters with deep authoritative voices, overturning a long-established visual regime of media power and building egalitarian relations with an audience now empowered to participate. The success of *Hromadske* was unprecedented: on December, 1st 2013, in just eight days after the launch of *Hromadske*, 100,000 people were already simultaneously watching Hromadske, making this public service media one of the most important sources of information at the time (Minchenko 2013). A year later, in November, 2014 Google revealed that Hromadske’s channel on YouTube set a global record for the largest number of hours live streamed in the history of YouTube (Vorona 2014). In fact, the YouTube channel of Hromadske became by a large margin the most popular news source on Ukrainian YouTube followed by well-established successful commercial television channels 1+1 (their news programme ‘TSN’) and 5 Channel (Vorona 2014).

After the revolution, Hromadske made an attempt to ‘institutionalize’ citizen journalism with the project the ‘Reporters’ Hundred’ (‘Reporterska sotnia’). It created a brief handbook for citizen journalists on how to create and upload their own videos covering the topics of public concern. These videos were broadcast on Hromadske in January-April 2015 and stayed available on-demand on the website until 13 May 2016, when Hromadske moved from hromadske.tv to the new domain hromadske.ua. The participatory practices of Hro-

¹⁵ ‘Guerrilla media’ alludes to Jay Levinson’s ‘Guerrilla’ trademark originating from the 1984 book *‘Guerrilla Advertising’*. The term *guerrilla marketing* was inspired by guerrilla warfare which is a form of irregular warfare and relates to the small tactic strategies used by armed civilians. Likewise, guerrilla marketing is unconventional low-cost marketing strategies, mostly aimed at surprising audience and distinguishing from the established big competitors on the market (‘What is Guerilla Marketing?’ n.d.)

hromadske are not limited to the citizen journalists, but also include professionals. Since 1 January 2015, Hromadske has been leading the project ‘Hromadske.Network’, which invites journalists from all over Ukraine to organize local community media under the Hromadske brand with funding from the European Commission. Eleven online broadcasters have been organized this way so far. This approach exemplifies a horizontal development of a network, a new concept of media emerging out of collaboration of like-minded journalists.

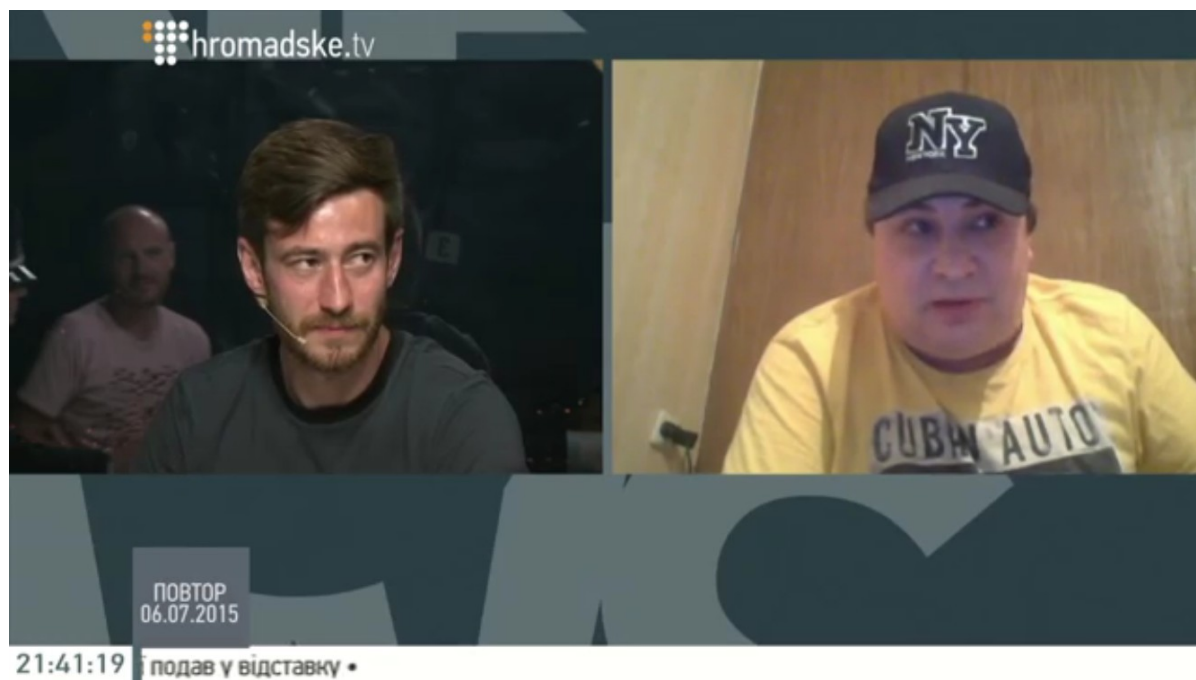
The egalitarian relationships with the audience established by Hromadske deserve particular attention. Hromadske is at times criticized for its pronounced attention to the conversations on social media and its active integration of social media content in their programmes (Image 5). One such critic, Oksana Piddubna, says that UA:Pershyi wins over Hromadske ‘at least because it [UA:Pershyi] better understands what television is’ (Piddubna 2015). UA:Pershyi may indeed understand conventional public service television, but it lacks an understanding of public service media, which is participatory and mixed in its format. Unlike UA:Pershyi, for instance, Hromadske welcomes people to make Skype calls and speak with the journalists and guests on the live programme ‘Hromadske.Online’ (Image 6). Experts are often interviewed by Skype as well, empowering viewers to feel that their input via Skype is valuable and authoritative as well.

Image 5. Integration of open-ended social media discussions into TV programme



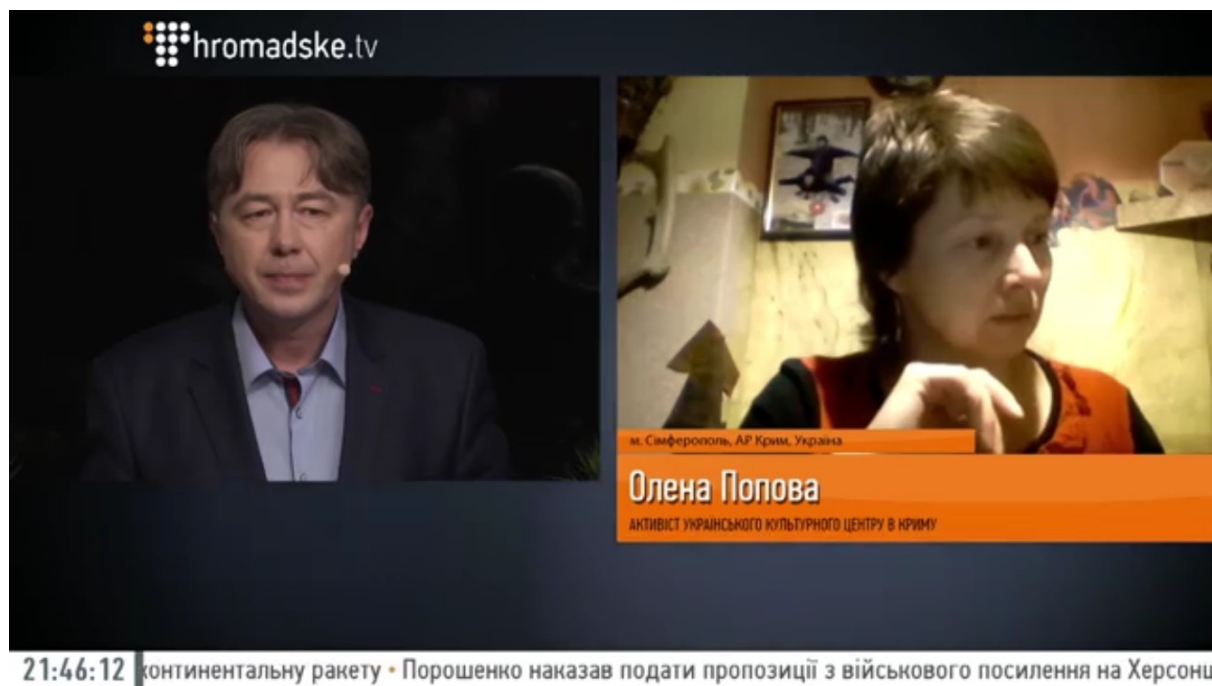
Source: ‘Hromadske online’, Hromadske

Image 6. A viewer calling to the studio by Skype



Source: 'Hromadske online', Hromadske

Image 7. A Skype interview with an expert



Source: 'Hromadske online', Hromadske

In addition to actively participating in content production, viewers can also directly contribute to the overall formation of Hromadske's programming by communicating their suggestions to editors by e-mail, on the website, or using the convenient feedback form in the Hromadske mobile application. This technical opportunity allows Hromadske to collaborate with the public to obtain insights about users' interests and crowd-source information like eyewitness photo and video. This enables Hromadske's journalists to obtain information about important events almost instantly. Such information is further verified by journalists and the editors of Hromadske to ensure that the information is true, balanced and socially important.¹⁶ Hromadske seems to be self-conscious that since it is financed by international grants and donations, which should be earned daily anew, a high level of public trust as well as interest and engagement are vitally important for the media outlet. In general, operating on the digital platform is a very convenient way to collect 'indications' about what users find topical and disputable simply by monitoring how they engage with the content. This helps Hromadske's editors to adjust their policies and decisions efficiently. As the Head of Hromadske's Digital Department Andrii Bashtovyi notes: 'We are always on the watch for a feedback; if people actively react toward some type of video, we will edit the next ones according to the same stylistics' (Blashchuk 2016).

Indeed, Hromadske constantly aims at improving users' experience on its platforms. In May 2016 Hromadske assumed a new platform on hromadske.ua, which is minimalistic, clearly structured, and conducive to the sorting of content in accordance with user's preferences. Boasting a revolutionary flexible interface, it can be re-constructed daily like 'Lego' from the blocks of the content, as Bashtovyi remarks (Blashchuk 2016). The idea behind this development was driven by the belief that the user wants to see the overall picture of the day on the first page. Therefore, in the morning the first page can be built from the blocks of news, opinion blogs and photographic reports. When Hromadske starts its live broadcasting online in the afternoon, the website administrator can 'drag' the video block at the top of the page and surround it with corresponding information blocks. Moreover, Bashtovyi explained that the appearance of the first page will be unique for each user and depend on his or her interests, deduced by the content he or she previously preferred. As a result, a user who has previously visited Hromadske mostly for cultural content, for example, will see on the screen a banner suggesting the top-two or three most important new cultural materials, whereas the followers of economics will learn about the most important economic news (Blashchuk 2016).

This new platform is surprisingly optimized for mobile devices. According to Google, in December 2015 the number of search queries from mobile devices officially exceeded the number from the personal computers worldwide.¹⁷ Taking into consideration the newly emerging needs of a mobile audience is therefore central to the evolution of public service media. Hromadske also provides mobile applications for smartphones, which allows one to choose a 'watching' or 'listening' mode for Hromadske's live broadcast.

¹⁶ As head of Hromadske Natalia Humeniuk said during her lecture at the University of Cambridge (26 February 2016), Hromadske is dedicated to representing high standards of journalism ethics and professional code, and always conduct rigorous fact-checking and verify that the information is balanced and unbiased. Hromadske has professional journalists and editorial board, that control and balance information and content, coming from citizen journalists and members of the public.

¹⁷ The information received by author from Google speakers during the conference 'Google Talent Days 2016' (London, 13-15 April 2016).

As mentioned previously, social media activity also makes evident Hromadske's digital approach to public service delivery. Hromadske is represented on all major social media sites, and its social media profiles are much more popular than the ones of UA:Pershyi. As of 27 May 2016, Hromadske's Facebook page had 536,115 followers compared to 14,741 for UA:Pershyi, 754,523 followers versus 6310 on Twitter, 329,639 followers on hromadskeTV channel on YouTube compared to 13,600 of UA:Pershyi, and finally 93,837 followers versus 141 followers on Google+. While UA:Pershyi primarily uses its Facebook page for announcements about the upcoming programmes, sharing the entire videos of its programmes in social media or showing live television broadcasting on the livestream tab (although such livestreams cannot be liked or commented), Hromadske usually posts brief news reports with photos and short videos and shows its livestreams integrated in the post on the page feed, which therefore allows audience to like, comment and share them.

Hromadske's content is characterized by heterogeneity of genres and is adapted for each specific medium. The visitors of the website receive individually targeted content, while the users of the mobile application can listen to Hromadske instead of watching (this suits the capacities of mobile internet). The users of social media are exposed to short, well-illustrated news content (specific for each social media), which is suitable for re-shaping and re-distribution. Overall, production of the content predestined for active circulation and discussion in the public space of the social networks can be seen as an evidence of the Hromadske's contribution to promoting public dialogue in society.

The radical differences in the way the content from the two different media (dis)engages the public to participate in content's formation, discussion, re-shaping and re-distribution lead to the contrasting public reception of the 'public service broadcaster online' versus 'public service media'. In fact, the one-directional model of distribution proposed by public service broadcaster online arguably results in the formation of relatively passive audiences, that are a disconnected non-collaborative sum of spectators, 'merely [an] aggregate of individuals' as Sonia Livingstone's defines 'the audience' (Livingstone cited in Jenkins et al 2013: 166). By contrast, the participatory model adopted by public service media contributes to formation of 'the public'—'an ensemble characterized by shared sociability' as Daniel Dayan explains (Dayan cited in Jenkins et al 2013: 166). Such active public is creating new value and meaning by using media texts as resources for their own conversations, spreading them to people, who share their interests (Jenkins 2013: 292). The new public service demands of such public, I argue, can only be fully satisfied when the public service media outlet provides an opportunity for active participation and creative collaboration amongst users, and between users and content producers.

The advantages of the digital culture represented by Hromadske can be illustrated by the number of people who have chosen public service content from Hromadske over the one proposed by UA:Pershyi. Although the potential audience of public service broadcaster online UA:Pershyi—the number of Ukrainian television viewers—could be significantly larger than the one of Hromadske—the number of the internet users in Ukraine,—the ratio of people who have actually chosen to obtain the public service content from the two analysed media exhibits the advantages of the digital approach to public service content delivery even in a country with a sharp digital divide (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of people UA:Pershyi and Hromadske were actually serving through various media in April 2016 and total audience potential

	UA:Pershyi	Hromadske
<i>Television</i>	460,000	0
<i>Website</i>	119,000	2,100,000
<i>YouTube</i>	13,600	329,639
<i>Facebook</i>	14,741	536,115
<i>Twitter</i>	6,310	754,523
<i>Google+</i>	141	93,837
<i>Instagram</i>	0	8,334
<i>Actual Audience</i>	613,792	3,822,448
<i>Potential Audience</i>	39,700,000	20,000,000

Source: Mariia Terentieva

Conclusion

This case study-based analysis investigates the transformation of public service broadcasting into public service media in the digital age through the example of the emerging public service media landscape of Ukraine. I have argued that public service media provide heterogeneous public service content specifically adjusted for each medium (television, the internet, mobile phones) and cultivate egalitarian relationships with the public applying the mixed model of communication (incorporating one-to-many, many-to-many and many-to-one communication models). By contrast, public service broadcasters online re-translate the televisual content on the multimedia platforms, sustaining the hierarchical one-to-many model of communications.

The concept of the two co-existing types of public service content providers has been explicitly illustrated by examples of the newly established, crowd-sourced Ukrainian digital media Hromadske and the official, government-funded public service broadcaster UA:Pershyi. My research does not aim to provide a qualitative analysis of the content per se. What is striking, however, are the different approaches to the role of the audience in shaping and re-distributing media content, which provoke a contrasting public reception of these two outlets and gesture to a pregnant divergence between broadcast and digital cultures. The data-based comparative analysis of the size of the ‘public’, who opted to choose the public service media Hromadske over services of the public service broadcaster UA:Pershyi, provides evidence for the advantages of the digital approach, which is particularly surprising in Ukraine, where only around half of the population has internet access. Therefore, the results of this study

have resonance beyond Ukraine and suggest the need for further investigation of the transformed public service remit attendant to the emerging needs of the 'post-broadcast' public around the globe.

I also posit that it might be worth re-theorizing the transformation of 'public service' in the media context by addressing questions in contemporary social philosophy and political psychology. The notion of Pierre Lévy's concept of 'creative conversations' developing public knowledge and culture (Lévy 2013: 99-107), for instance, might be helpful for rethinking the 'enlightening' function of public service media organizations. Lévy argues that our 'individual wisdom owes to ... our ability to think and decide together' producing collective knowledge, a means for individual's education and socialization (2013: 99). Lévy believes that nowadays collective knowledge is emerging from the 'creative conversations' in the new digital communication environment (2013: 99). Although Lévy says that his view on knowledge management draws much more on collaborative learning networks using social media than on the systems controlled by experts, I suggest that knowledge management might be useful for public service media, which might be particularly effective as learning platforms in social media (2013: 104).

Another public service function undergoing transformation in the digital era is nation-binding. While public service broadcasting is binding society together by providing homogeneous content and shaping public opinion, public service media might be more productive in promoting discussions and facilitating public polylogues, which can lead to the 'earned' unity of society that Bauman envisions in his work on 'liquid modernity' (2000). Bauman argues that 'the most promising kind of unity is one which is *achieved*, and achieved daily anew, by confrontation, debate, negotiation, and compromise between values, preferences and chosen ways of life and self-identifications of many and different, but always self-determining members of the *polis*' (original formatting) (2000: 178). Bauman explains that in liquid modernity unity is an outcome, and not an *a priori* given state of society, and this is the only formula of togetherness plausible and realistic nowadays (2000: 178). Thus, although in the short-term perspective an intensification of public discussions might deepen social fragmentation by revealing principal disagreements, in the long term it is arguably a promising way to achieve public consensus on the crucial issues of public concern.

Given that collective intelligence and real unity could be only a product of the active participatory public, public service media should engage the public in participatory practices, challenging possible preconceptions about the meaninglessness of public discussions and overall active participation in social life. These ideas in some sense align with Habermasian ideals of the public sphere for discussions and social agreement, prompting the question: can public service media potentially become a modern agora?

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