

The Social Shaping of Online Newspapers as Virtual Organisations

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Hypothesis

The shape taken by online newspapers cannot be accounted for simply by looking at the technical, user interface differences between the print and web based media. Rather, they are the result of a more complex path driven by social, cultural, economic and political factors.

Abstract

This study considers two daily newspapers and their Online counterparts. An organisational framework is used to classify the form of one tabloid and one broadsheet daily newspaper. The classification is combined with a qualitative content analysis to propose suggestions as to what shapes Online newspapers. Findings suggest that there is somewhat more to shaping Online newspapers than the simplistic route of technological determinism. More pertinent is the constructivist view of social shaping, that the shape of Online Newspapers is determined by a permutation of economic, social, cultural and political factors.