
The certified written press as an element of the information Society: Case of Algeria.

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Abstract

The rapid evolution of information technologies and communications in the recent ten years has transformed developed countries into societies of information. The new technologies are in the heart of a debate in developing countries which also aim to take profit of the inheriting advantages. The daily press follows this evolution. For instance, it is transformed, and feeds in its turn, via its online editions, the wide web of digital networks. The observation of this adaptability permits to avoid the confusion between technical support (electronic tubes replace stain tubes) and informative continent. Computing is built upon the contraction of the word information and the words mathematics and electronics. The confusion, at this level, should be ended. The written information, in terms of daily newspaper, supported by paper, stores all its propulsive force. The daily written press' past has a bright future as long as it's real dynamic is resuscitated. There a strong link between the information society and the delivery function of the written press (quality of delivering), it doesn't exist a unique function of delivering newspapers. In this context, the role of messengers should be examined and assessed relatively to the universal norms of delivery. From this, since its creation in 1922 in France, in order to control the issuance, then the distribution of the paid press (the association for the control and the distribution of the media) the OJD which has seven bureaus (the bureau of the paid press is the older and the mos important); in 2007, it counts some 1,100 adherents titles; and certified by more than 4.7 billion copies, 900 titles of paid press 'main stream'; 85% of the distribution of the French press, 99% of French titles with more than 100,000 copies, to gain share of the advertising market. The advertising market does not give, in fact, the same value to the different means of distribution. However, the distribution certified by the OJD serves the editors to build their advertising tariffs and to announcers, also to their media agencies, to accept their evolutions.

Hence, the obligation to have normalized indicators, similar from a title to another and timely. In France, nearly 5 billion Euros are invested in the press each year. For Algeria, the written press market knew a remarkable development during the last years, more than 141 daily newspapers, but four newspapers (El Khabar ,El Watan , Echourouk El Yaoumi , Ennahar El Djadid) certified by the association for the control of the media, the OJD. This gave birth to the private messaging in the landscape of the Algerian press. The aim of our work is to assess the results of the Algerian written press experience certified in the field of delivery.

1. Introduction

The rapid evolution of information and communication technologies during the last ten years has transformed the advanced countries into information societies. The new technologies are amidst a debate between developing countries, desiring taking advantage of the associated technologies. The daily press follows this evolution. Obviously, it transforms, and feeds on its turn, by its online editions, the wide web of digital networks. The observation of this ability permits to avoid the confusion between technical support (electronic pipes replace the stain pipes) and informative content. Computing is built on the contraction of the word information and the words mathematics and electronics. The confusion, at this stage, should be ended. The written information, in the form of daily newspaper, supported by papers, holds all its propulsive force. The past of the written daily press has a big future, requiring its real dynamic to be resuscitated. It exist a strong relationship between information society and the function of distributing of the written press (distribution quality), and there is not only one way to distribute newspapers. In this context, the role of messaging deserves to be examined.

The written press market in Algeria has known a remarkable development during the last few years, giving birth to new private messaging in the Algerian press. The aim of our work is to assess the results of the Algerian written press experience certified in the distribution (El Khabar, El Watan, Echorouk El Yaoumi, Ennahar El Djadid).

2. Methodology

a. Définitions of the Concepts

1) **The Certified Paying Press** : The certification of the paid press by the Association for the Control of the Publishing Media (OJD) which was created in 1922 in France initially in order to control publishing, then the diffusion of the paid press. The OJD has seven bureaus; the one of the Paid Press is the older and most important. In 2007, it had 1,100 adherent newspapers/magazines; certified more than 4.7 billion issues; 900 paid print press « mainstream media »; 85% of French press diffusion; 99% of French press having more than 100,000 issues.; 85 % of the French press diffusion, 99 % of French titles having more than 100.000 copies.

It follows a three step procedure: declaration of the editor, control and minutes. For the paid press, the quality of control lies on the double analysis of both physical tracability and financial accounting; that's what makes it original and guarantees its performance. In addition to the accounting (balance sheet, results, closing book, balance of suspicious customers, ...), the main checked points are the selling by subscription and the selling by issue; control the number and the breakdown of different types of subscriptions or purchase by issue, in order to be classified in the minute. Medias of the paid press are classified into two big branches due to their function and their readers: the "mainstream" press and the "technical and professional" press. In each branch, the issues are ranked by the nature of their content (news, women, magazines, cars, people). The OJD combines the titles of the paid press, publications benefiting from a joint commission number or justifying a paid diffusion above 50% of their total diffusion. The paid diffusion takes into account only the effective bought copies. Whatever the origin (subscription, selling by number, portage ...), the price could not be 50% below that mentioned in the issue.

- 2) **Individual paid diffusion:** individual bought copies by subscription or by a purchase at a point of selling.
- 3) **Paid diffusion by a third person in number:** It comprises purchase by quantity and the subscriptions by numbers in the limit of 50% of the individual paid diffusion.
- 4) **Unpaid diffusion:** all the copies not responding to the paid diffusion criteria may be retained in the unpaid diffusion, except the archiving and the justifications in the broader sense.
- 5) **Useful issue by number:** The number of finished copies returned to the editor for not being in circulation.

6) The paid diffusion:

- **Subscriptions paid by the receiver subscriber:** These subscriptions are subscribed and paid by the receiver (legal person or entity, public institution, association,), or directly by the editor, or via a library or a sales agent.

These individual subscriptions are available for a determined period or not (free period given by certain intermediaries), at a price not inferior to 50% of the subscription one, indicated on the issue.

- **Sales by issue paid by the purchaser:** Sales by issue represent the number of copies sold directly to the customers by the editor, by the press messaging, via sales agent (depositories of press, libraries, libraries at stations, sellers,), at a price that cannot be 50% inferior to the price mentioned in the issue. Every issues sold taken on unsold are reckoned separately.
- **Free Distribution:** These are copies distributed for free, by post, by portage, on a sales area, on an event or by any other mean.

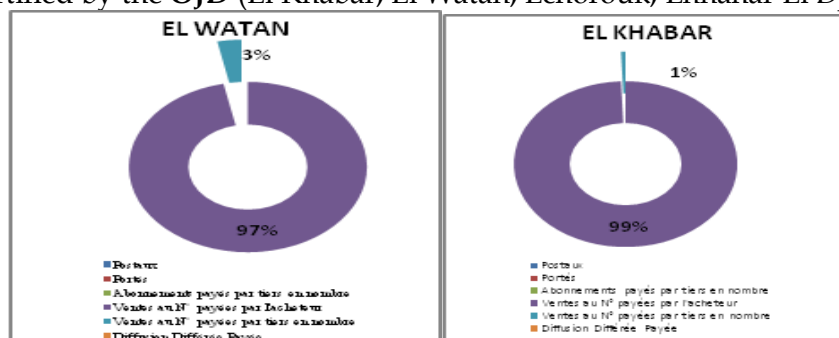
b) The différent menas of distribution

If we rely on the paper based issues – the online press is of a particular case and cannot treated on the same way – we reckon 4 methods by which press companies may reach their readership : the postal subscription, portage, purchase by a reader, purchase by a third party.

3. Results

For the case of Algeria, during the recent years, the written press market has achieved a remarkable evolution, and we can summarize the results of that Algerian written press experience certified via a comparison with other countries on different means of diffusion as follows :

a) **Postal subscription:** It represents actually a changing percentage following families of press and also countries. As for French daily press (including the seventh-day newspapers), its share is approximatively 14%. But, in the case of Algeria, in 2011, it represents 0% for the 4 newspapers certified by the OJD (El Khabar, El Watan, Echorouk, Ennahar El Djadid).



Graphic 1 : Breakdown by mean of diffusion for El Watan et El Khabar newspapers

Bearing in mind that its development supposes investments in terms of prospection and promotion, it is admitted that this system presents the most advantages for the editor. Surely (the sales are stable), rational (the problem of unsold copies is put aside) and financially securing (the product is prepaid). Despite this, its shares are decreasing. This trend takes on the conditions under which is delivered : organizations of tours, inadapted hours of delivery, lack of distribution during Saturday afternoon and on Friday, recurrent irregularities of the postal services, difficulties of the post offices to support a growing weight of copies. The regional daily press in France uses a little of this mode of diffusion, but we reckon there to many imbalances following the regions or the titles. Hence, the postal subscription represents 36% of the sales for La Montagne, 22% for La Dépêche du Midi, 18% for Ouest-France, and 16% for Sud-Ouest, and only 8% for La Provence, 4% for La Voix du Nord and 3% for Le Télégramme, Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace or Corse matin.

b) The portage : This mode of diffusion consists in a delivery of the newspaper to the home. Essentially used by daily newspapers and especially regional newspapers, theoretically it has the same advantages as the subscription; two elements distinguish this mode, which the lecturer benefits: the copies are delivered early in the morning to their receivers and risks are less frequent than postal subscription. It also allows retaining readers. In this system, a network of porters is rewarded by the editor, the depositary or the distributor. The service may be prepaid or paid by week, bi-monthly or monthly by the receiver.

It is a form of individual subscription, even if sometimes it takes the form of a sale by issue done under the responsibility of the editor or one of its representatives; this method of diffusion is unequally practices in the world. Heavily used in Ireland (99%), in Japan (93%) or in Central/Northern Europe: 90% in Switzerland, 67% in Germany, 90% in Netherlands, 72% in Sweden ... it is considered as abandoned in other countries. The portage rate is 19% in the USA and 13% in United Kingdom for the national press - in contrast, local newspapers use this form of distribution a lot - 4% in Spain and 0% in Italy, France and in Algeria.

c) Purchase by the reader: We have to assume its history: the most fragile system and the least profitable for press companies are still dominant in our country. It lies on the daily freedom practiced by the act of purchasing. The resulting weaknesses are obvious: very tenuous link compared with other systems between the purchaser and the newspaper, imbalances in the act and place of purchase, high percentage of unsold (in 2011: 17.48% for El Watan, 14.32% for El Khabar, 10.76% for Ennahar El Djadid, 20.14% for Echorouk El Yaoumi). In France (26% in 2001 for national daily newspapers, which we add 11.6% for provincial daily newspapers).

To be efficient, this method of diffusion supposes the existence of sophisticated distribution chain and many sales points. Even if texts regulating the remuneration of press sales agents are in explicitly in reference to fixed-post crier, street vendors and peddler vendors, it appears that this form of sale is permanent? In 2011, the sales by issue (sales by issue paid by the purchaser and the sales by issue paid by a third party) represented 100% of the total paid diffusion in Algeria for the OJD certified newspapers (Table 1). In France, it represents 74% of the total paid diffusion of the national daily press and 47% of the regional daily press.

Table 1: Different means of diffusion for Algerian newspapers certified by the OJD

National Algerian newspaper	Issues	Diffusion in Algeria			
		Subscriptions paid by the receiver subscriber		Sales paid by the purchaser (by number)	Sales paid by a third party (by number)
		Posted	Ported		
EL WATAN	50 199 649	0	0	39 812 095	1 355 191
EL KHABAR	167 016 550	0	0	141 710 098	965 393
ENNAHAR	111 691 540	0	0	99 223 017	300 490
ECHOROUK	190 982 094	0	0	151 443 697	572 373

d) Purchase by a third party : Newspapers may be purchased in numbers by a person, a company or a group in a promotional operation, communication or a mean aiming simply at insuring the customers' comfort. In Algeria, sales by quantity to a third party represented 3.3% for El Watan, 0.7% for El Khabar, 0.3% for Ennahar El Djadi, 0.4 for Echorouk El Yaoumi (*Table 1*). In France, according to the 14th Press Observatory, the sales by quantity to a third party represented 4.3% of the paid diffusion in the French territory in 2003, individual diffusion is obviously 95.7%. Notice that this form of diffusion concerns mostly the national daily press (13.4%) than regional/departmental newspapers because the diffusion by a third party represents only 1.3% of the total paid diffusion.

e) Unpaid diffusion: all newspapers have free services. They can respond to individual demands of persons or entities expressed in writing, or sent to assistants of the publishing company, to correspondents of the publication or to administrations during a minimum duration. There may also be issues sent by numbers, here too for a minimum duration, to companies or group of companies which made an order for third party readers (institutions hosting public, universities ...). In Algeria, unpaid diffusion represented in 2011 : 0.46% for El Watan, 0.28% for El Khabar, 0.14% for Ennahar El Djadid and 0.30% for Echorouk El Yaoumi. In France, unpaid diffusion represented slightly more than 3% of the daily press total diffusion, whether being national or regional. In contrast, the strategy seems variable following categories of newspapers. Business press uses this mode more than opinion press and more than general press or political one. Hence, in 2004, Les Echos and La Tribune published for free 15.6% and 12.6% respectively, Le Figaro 1.6% and Libération 1.3%.

4. Conclusion

The advertising market does not allow the same value to different means of diffusion. However, the OJD certified diffusion serves editors to build their advertising tariffs and for advertisers, in addition to media agencies, to accept the evolutions. That is why the obligation to have normalized indicators, comparable in time from a newspaper to another. In France, almost 5 billion Euros are invested in the press each year. In Algeria, figures of press advertisement showed more than 600 million Algerian Dinars in 2011. For this reason, there is a necessity to develop and establish a modern regulatory framework, and implement a complete regulation offering to investors, journalists and readers a climate of certainty and predictability to benefit from international advantages. It is imperative to certify issue numbers and the distribution of

national and regional newspapers in Algeria, to allow to the academicians to do benefiting research to the Algerian written press.

We found evidence that the sales of written press in Algeria, based on the sales by issue (sales' issue paid by the purchaser and the sales by issue paid by a third party) are costly (irregularities in the act and place of purchase, high percentage of unsold copies); in consequence, Algerian newspapers should integrate other distribution methods (portage, subscriptions) to retain their readers and control the costs.

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