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Pilot Project – Digital European Platform of Quality Content Providers

"Sharing Quality Content in Europe: From political Vision to three practical Ways"

Final Report

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Objective of the study

The general objective of the feasibility study is to test and analyse the viability of creating a European online platform for the creation and distribution of news and content of general interest, with particular emphasis on assessing the long-term sustainability of a quality content platform and its relevance, impact and value for EU citizens and media outlets. The study addresses all the relevant dimensions that are essential to develop the platform, mitigating potential risks and focusing on business models, legal and governance options, multilingual solutions, technological aspects, and user experience. Indeed, quality content needs greater visibility and revenues, to strengthen democratic processes and ensure that citizens can access plural and fact-based news content.

Our approach

We represent a multi-disciplinary consortium to combine all the required skills and areas of expertise relevant for this study. IDATE DigiWorld and Europe's MediaLab worked together with the active participation of Francine Cunningham (Bird&Bird), Gian-Paolo Accardo (Voxeurop) and Daniel Knapp (Gannaca) as additional experts to ensure we fully address the challenges and cover all the dimensions of the mission study.

We have split the work in 4 main tasks. Starting from a comprehensive view on the available solutions to understand the full array of potential options, we then defined the key requirements necessary for the creation of a new platform, developed several options for a new platform through scenarios and tightened the selection through an impact assessment. Finally, we developed a main scenario that was co-created with stakeholders. We included industry experts and stakeholders at every stage of this mission to build consensus and obtain practical feedback. We conducted at 40+ in-depth interviews in the course of the feasibility study and organised 6 collective workshops with media stakeholders and 2 thematic workshops which gathered around 50 experts and stakeholders.

Digitization has brought profound changes to the way that citizens consume news media over the last 15 years.

Massive shifts in consumer behaviour and sharing platforms has transformed the news ecosystem. To counter online intermediaries, news industry stakeholders have occasionally partnered to co-develop their own platforms. Mutualizing online content services generated some positive outputs while sharing know how, costs or news contents. Unfortunately, hurdles have been too high so far for content/news sharing to reach a broad scale. Among the core obstacles are business models, standards, as well as efficient use of data or stakeholders' involvement. Moreover, handling copyright-related issues and GDPR compliance have been challenging for players, even more in cross-border initiatives. At the same time, disinformation is developing through new formats and tools, creating harms for democracy.

Faced with steady costs and decreasing revenues, media companies are keener than ever on sharing resources. Sharing quality content across borders could help build up additional revenues for the news ecosystem and catalyse technological developments that could help to overcome past hurdles. A reason for optimism in the news media sector is that consumer appetite for news remains high.

Key requirements and Building Blocks for content sharing

This study first defines minimum conditions for a platform to meet the objectives of the EC to develop a Digital European Platform of Quality Content Providers. 12 Building Blocks supporting content sharing with or without a new platform were identified.

Requirements for features are broken in 6 building blocks:
- Translation for multiple languages and European coverage. This is addressed the Technology building block.
- Editorial choices and curation to cover the needs of journalists for publication and to tailor specific content to specific audiences.
- Copyrights and negotiation to address the issue of content rights management.

- Content strategies to address national/European end users and tackle content sharing options. In turn, business models address content monetization for the end user and in B2B mode.
- The opportunity to use a cross border environment to co-produce or co-create (end user) news content is challenged.
- Change management highlights the need to adapt to the digital environment, networked technologies and new know how.

Some features are already in use, others need consolidation or are on track for further deployment. Moreover, features vary depending on market and news media needs.

The 6 major technology building blocks identified to meet the objectives are the following:
- Architecture for content sharing, as sharing is clear prerequisite of the solution.
- Content search and discovery, that will rely on content metadata likely to be shared with content itself.
- User data (and enabling data management tools/technologies like Big Data) that could be also shared in addition to content and metadata.
- Translation, as the platform is expected to offer European coverage and therefore multiple languages.
- Quality check and traceability, as the platform is expected to convey quality information and European values and be used against disinformation.
- Advertising technologies, when advertising is considered a relevant business model to sustain the platform.

These blocks might use enabling technologies like artificial intelligence (especially machine learning), analytics/Big Data or blockchain.

Finally, analysis and feedback from the industry indicated that quality content sharing requires notably: Translated Syndication, Indexation, Copyrights management, Change Management, AI for content verification, creation and indexation.

Several options for a new platform

The study then explores potential changes in the news market over the next 3 years, being aware of a high degree of uncertainty over the timing and end points of these changes. This industry is developing at a fast pace, driven by new ways of consumption, innovation in technologies, business models, transformation of incumbent stakeholders and the emergence of new challengers. Therefore, a set of scenarios for the media industry over the next 3 years have been designed, focusing on technologies and actors building news content strategies. Key scenarios are positioned according to stakeholders versus supply chain axes and incumbents versus new players. The interaction of factors is reorganising:
- existing news media groups (press, broadcasting), (US) Tech giants and social media, Vertical industries investing in the news segment) and their cooperation with traditional news players to develop cooperation that could lead to sharing platform(s) and/or collective innovation/R&D initiatives,
- positioning in the content supply chain, from optimisation in news production, content sharing or exchange to more client facing activities (typically distribution).

Three potential platform options are feasible: B2B2C broadcasting, Agency Syndication Model, Tooling/formatting + Building Blocks
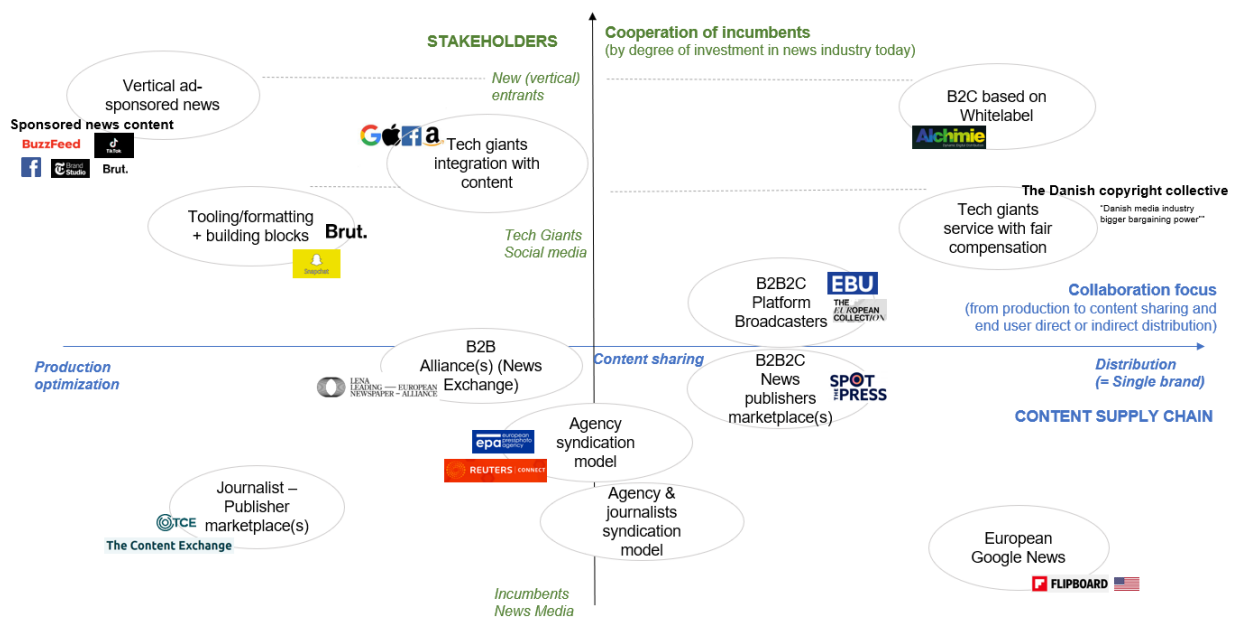
Source: Consortium

Not all scenarios require the development of new platforms, some are indeed only stakeholders' cooperation leveraging existing ones without new major developments. The selection of the possible options has been based on complementary approaches: an impact assessment based on key criteria that could favour the take-up of an option; interviews and workshops with the industry; in-depth analysis of possible configurations (building-blocks) for the options and their impact on the market and the society/citizens.

Three ways to go, one sketched out in greater detail

Based on stakeholder input and on the study consortium's analysis, three ways of content sharing are therefore recommended:
- Tooling/formatting + shared building blocks, which could be developed soon.
- B2B2C broadcasting, which is already under way.
- An entirely new approach, the Agency Syndication Model.

The three ways are compatible, possibly re-enforcing each other. The third one, the Agency Syndication Model, requires the most rethinking and innovation. It is therefore outlined in greater detail in this report, here in the summary, and in the report. It also is underpinned by quantitative modelling.

The analysis concluded that top options (in green on the figure above) include:
- In Tooling /Formatting + shared building blocks, there is no creation of a European sharing platform for news, just a series of initiatives with tools and/or training to mutualize costs. This option enjoys the best scores on tech cost savings and innovation (processes and new formats). In this way, news media companies (press or broadcast) leverage the tools provided by social media and Tech giants or by current and future EU R&D and training programs to streamline their production process and create new formats. Possibly, they can also leverage ad tools and/or solutions favouring citizen's engagement with the content. Some missing or critical tech tools are developed separately and mutualised between (some) news publishers. Moreover, some additional training / support for digital transition might be needed.

- In the B2B2C broadcasters option, where, beyond first mutualizing their news exchange through a B2B platform, European broadcasters pick and select content (text, video) according to their individual or shared editorial needs, targeting the end user though their own consumer destination services. Public service broadcasters and potentially private media groups can be involved. This option is already well advanced under EBU initiatives, with only Public service broadcasters so far. It was specified in July 2021 with the launch of "A European Perspective"[1]. This collaboration has a clear leadership, brings higher content circulation up to the end user and preserves EU Sovereignty.

- Both the Agency Syndication and the Agency & Journalists Syndication models generate the most positive impacts. This is in particular true for the possible economic impacts for the news industry (cost optimization and revenues for content sharing) and for the ability to find a leader (News Agencies) and to cooperate. In this option, news agencies also syndicate content from news media and/or open syndication players. Under this model, a new marketplace would be created as agencies would act two ways with news media partners (licensing in and out). The Agency & Journalists Syndication Model goes beyond this: it also opens-up a marketplace for individual journalists and freelancers to syndicate their content via agencies.

Alternative options (either less innovative or much complex to operate) are the following:

- The concept of a B2B2C News Marketplace (similar to the B2B2C model presented below for broadcasters) is facing major challenges regarding the leadership to develop such an approach with stakeholders still focused heavily on their own brands. The development of a B2C component would require additional investments from news publishers. At this stage expected revenues from such end-user component would not justify the investment needed by news publishers.

- The concept of a Journalist-Publisher marketplace, content posted by journalists would not be directed to one specific publisher, but to a whole community of publishers. It is often presented as the future but requires a clear leader for operations and an advanced decentralization approach that is complex to establish with the current unstable business models of news. Developing at large scale will remain a challenge. However, it could be an add-on to the Agency Syndication Model, in a second stage leveraging its distribution strength.

Several options were excluded, based not chiefly on attractiveness but on feasibility. Indeed, some options that may seem politically attractive would require very large resources plus major commitments from European media, both of which are limited.

Options not retained include:

- B2C solution based on Whitelabel industry technology.
- Tech giants integration with content.
- Vertical ad sponsored news.
- Tech giants services with fair compensation.

Finally, a "European Google News" would be the holy grail with a European platform for news delivering quality news content to many EU Citizen. But the steps are high in terms of investments needed, willingness of stakeholders to take the risk of such a journey, where "coopetition" would be the rule. Risks are high and chance of success facing the so-called Gatekeepers' competition is low.

Agency Syndication model as a short-term opportunity

Press agencies possess the greatest media distribution channels, so far used in one direction: from agencies to media chiefly for one type of content: agency news ready for republication or adaptation. However, new content and formats already started to appear on these channels. In addition, the main idea is to use the channels also in reverse: feeding media content from the media to agencies, and then onward to other media. Notably "cold" items (excluding domestic politics), which can "travel" to other countries, ready for adaptation. Some agencies will be reluctant to host "competing" content from their clients. Others will understand that, if they don't do it, the Gatekeepers will soon play this role, moving from feeding consumers to feeding other media.

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[1]https://www.ebu.ch/news/2021/06/providing-a-european-perspectivepublic-service-media-allied-to-offer-an-innovative-news-sharing-model-across-the-continent.

Building on syndication between agencies and their media clients is feasible, provided certain prerequisites are fulfilled. Optionally, the model would extend to a marketplace for individual journalists, including free-lancers.

The first prerequisite to achieve is the right dimensioning of the platform, including a minimum number of active partners and a minimum volume of content shared. The selected content is made available to a separate independent platform "(Agency syndication platform)", without creating a new "European new agency". This content is licensed to existing agency clients as additional items as well as to further new clients (corporate, news industry outside EU, etc.). Focus is not put on "hot" domestic or new wires, but rather on premium cold content like deeper features (on a few good themes, e.g. EU affairs, Digital, health, which "travel" well), or on investigations (extending the reach beyond investigative media). The model relies on existing content and distribution channels across borders.

In order to address the potential profitability for an Agency Syndication Platform, the consortium modelled a conceptual platform. Assumptions are based on industry interviews and interactions, expert input and additional desk research. Related costs and revenues have been simulated. Based on our assumptions, the economic simulation shows that a breakeven is achievable 3 years after launch. Over a 3 years period, revenues generated by the overall platform ecosystem could reach 26.7 million EUR, shared between the new Agency Syndication platform (around 20% of revenues), news media sources (around 20%) and news agencies (60%).

Next steps for implementing the Agency Syndication model

Concerning options for governance, the Agency Syndication Platform should operate as a stand-alone legal entity under its own branding. Following a preparation phase starting end of 2021, the platform might be operational by 2023. Next steps include clarifying EU support, building alliances around the project, followed by the set-up of the legal entity of the platform as well as its branding. A dedicated management team would have to be recruited. Finally, the technical and operational part of the platform would have to be secured. The launch of the platform could then, be envisaged in 2023. Alliance building will be key. Indeed, the main risk factor for the success of the platform is lack of agreement between the possible partners, strategically and/or economically. This risk can be mitigated by subsequent and regular communication around the benefits of such a platform for citizens, pluralism and the media ecosystem.

The study stressed the importance of wide media stakeholder involvement (to maximise beneficiaries and prompt alliance building), differences between segments of the media sector (formats, revenue models and even cultures), and synergies between content and data sharing (to maximise revenue generation). This could inform future calls aimed at integrated content & data platforms, helping the transformation of specific media sub segments, while sharing some building blocks and standards across the whole sector.

1. Introduction & Methodology

The overall objective of the feasibility study was to test and analyse the viability of creating a European online platform for the creation and distribution of news and content of general interest and in particular its relevance, impact and value for EU citizens and media outlets. The study addressed essential fields to develop the platform, mitigating potential risks and focusing on business models, legal and governance options, multilingual solutions, technological aspects, and user experience. Indeed, quality content needs greater visibility and revenues, to strengthen democratic processes and ensure that citizens can access plural and fact-based news content.

We provided a tailor-made consortium to combine all the required skills to match with the objective of the study. IDATE DigiWorld and Europe's MediaLab worked together with the active participation of the experts Francine Cunningham (Bird&Bird), Gian-Paolo Accardo (Voxeurop) and Daniel Knapp (Gannaca) to ensure we fully address the challenges and cover all the dimensions of the mission study.

We have split the work in 4 main tasks starting from a comprehensive review on the available solutions to remain as open as possible with regards to potential options. We then defined the key requirements necessary for the creation of new platforms, developed several options for a new platform through scenarios and tightened the selection through an assessment of options. Finally, we developed a main scenario that was co-created with stakeholders. We included industry experts and stakeholders at every stage of this mission to build consensus and obtain practical feedback. We conducted at 40+ in-depth interviews in the course of the feasibility study and organised 6 collective workshops with media stakeholders and 2 thematic workshops which gathered around 50 experts and stakeholders. [2]

The consortium provided an in-depth analysis of available solutions and of previous approaches in the news industries. The analysis is based on both:

- the description of existing online news content solutions and services broken-down by segment (Broadcast, social media & aggregators, platforms for content exchange, online News Media),
- interviews with stakeholders.

This initial work phase aimed to draw relevant lessons from political, legal, economic, technical, linguistic, and societal perspectives in the news media industry and related segments.

We defined the minimum conditions ("Building blocks") a Digital European Platform of Quality Content Providers would have to meet to comply with the expected quality requirements while being attractive to the target audience. Potential building blocks for the platform(s) were assessed under several options, from basic ones representing status quo with the current organization to more disruptive approaches. The analysis is also based on:

- In-depth knowledge of consortium experts.
- Discussions in stakeholder workshops.
- Individual interviews to check with the sector to identify specifically the key requirements. Interviewees include news media providers (traditional press, digital pure players and broadcasters), news agencies, solution vendors, digital news providers, R&D projects focused on the news industry, etc…

12 building blocks for a new platform (6 for features, 6 for technology) were defined.

We identified and discussed the possible options for digital European platforms while exploring the potential changes in the news market over a period of 3 years[3]. A set of scenarios describe a range of possible states for the industry, focusing on the way that the technologies, roles and actors are configured to build news content strategies. **We then selected the best options.**

We mobilised the collective expertise of interviewees and wider stakeholders to develop recommendations likely to improve our hypotheses. A co-construction approach with the stakeholders was put in place to share the main findings of the first tasks to check our assumptions, validate our options and draw on their various experiences to develop recommendations. This has helped to select the best-case scenarios

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[2] See Appendix 4 - List of interviews & stakeholders.

[3] See Appendix 1- Factors affecting development of news platforms' configurations.

according to industry and citizen needs and to fine tune them. An assessment and ranking of options has also been conducted to select the best options for a new platform, based on rigorous criteria.

In summary, the selection of options for a European online platform for the creation and distribution of news and/or content of general interest is based on the aggregation of different entry points:

- An assessment and ranking of options covering several criteria: Economic Impacts for the news industry, Acceleration of Innovation, Impact for the citizen, Implementation conditions, Incumbent Stakeholders' involvement, Impact on the EU news ecosystem.
- The detailed analysis of most realistic options, including "players involved", "drivers & hurdles" and "Implementation conditions and need for support".
- Two Stakeholder groups took place with respectively Press and Broadcast industries to critically interrogate the first options for a possible platform. Two Thematic Workshops, respectively on "Innovation" and "Alliances Building" were added to determine and rank the best opportunities in terms of the introduction of disruptive technologies & innovations and in terms of possible means of collaboration.

Finally, we described in detail the preferred options and characterized these options for platforms in relation to the "building blocks". We finally deep dive the preferred option, "Agency syndication", through:

- the analysis of the economics of this potential platform through a simulation model of revenues and costs based on hypotheses (consortium experts' views and industry feedbacks),
- a roadmap for the next steps of implementation of the news platform.

These elements have been tested with industry stakeholders during the last stakeholder group workshop.

Outcome in three ways

In the end, the project led not to a single solution, but three possible ways forward, which are compatible with each other. This is different from the initial hypothesis to be tested, reflecting sector needs, and in line with such a feasibility study.

This includes a model which would not lead to a platform per se, where News media companies leverage the tools provided by social media and Tech giants to streamline their production process and create new formats. Some missing or critical tech tools[4] are developed separately through a set of building blocks and mutualised between (some) news media.

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[4] Automated translation for instance.

2. Context for new European platform(s)

News consumption is growing through digital interfaces, but increasingly at the expense of quality content. Even if some first cross-border initiatives have been launched in the Union, the market for digital news remains today fragmented. The lack of a clear business model and essentially purely national approaches has hampered the development of cross border news content platforms.

Media revenues are shrinking within national borders. Independent news media organisations are crucial to support a fragmented European public sphere and to provide healthy competition for the dominant online intermediaries[5], and mitigate threats to democracy and fundamental rights. In this context, it is necessary to foster cross-border cooperation between leading media outlets, to ensure citizens' access to plural information of general interest, to save on costs and to increase the reach of that content.

2.1. Digital drives the news consumption

Even if television remains the most common source of media consumption, European citizens are increasingly consuming news via messaging and social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp). Access to news continues to become more diversified, with entry points often being websites or apps. E-mail, mobile and social media alerts are getting more important, enabling viral circulation of low-quality content. **Social networks**, together with the increasing use of smartphone to access news[6], are positioned as a core entry point to consume news.

Figure 1: Use social network for news in the last week (2014-2020) – Average of 12 countries[7]
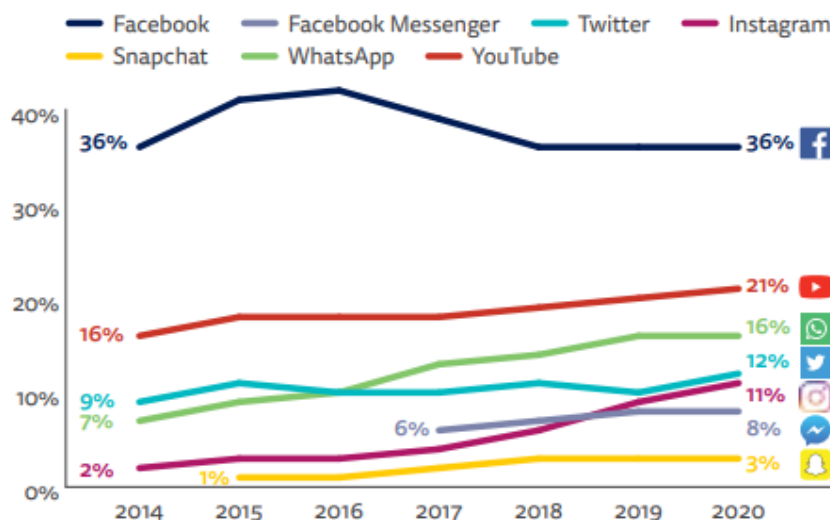
Q12b. Which, if any, of the following have you used in the last week for news? Base: Total 2014–19 sample across 12 countries ≈ 24000 (~19000 in 2014). Note: From 2015–20 the 12 countries included are UK, USA, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Ireland, Denmark, Finland, Japan, Australia and Brazil. In 2014, we did not poll in Australia or Ireland.

Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2020

In their media consumption, a large majority of Europeans trust radio, television and press, rather than Internet and online social networks[8]. Moreover, Public service media remain by and large the most trusted brands, especially in Northern European countries, where they have a strong tradition of independence.

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[5] Also known as "Gatekeepers".

[6] "Over two-thirds (69%) of people now use the smartphone for news weekly and these devices are encouraging the growth of shorter video content via third-party platforms as well as audio content like podcasts. Those who use smartphones as a main device for news are significantly more likely to access news via social networks" Reuters, 2020.

[7] UK, USA, Germany, France Spain, Italy, Ireland, Denmark, Finland, Japan, Australia, Brazil.

[8] Media use in the European Union, European Union, 2021.

Figure 2: Trust rate for different media

QA6a How much trust do you have in certain media? For each of the following media, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?
(% - EU - TEND TO TRUST)
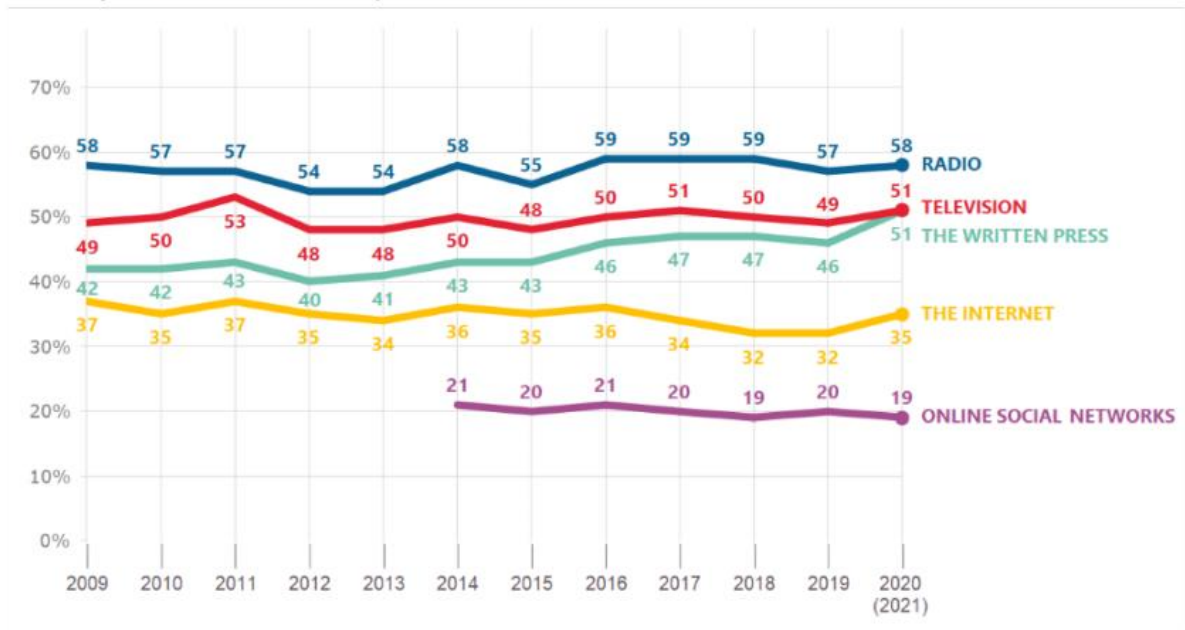
Source: Media use in the European Union, Standard Eurobarometer 94, Winter 2020 - 2021- European Union

European Citizens are also concerned about plurality and quality of information. 70% of Europeans consider that the media in their country provide a diversity of views and opinions, but over half of them also believe that their national media are subject to political or commercial pressure. Finally, European are aware of the risk of disinformation. Over 70% say they often come across news or information that misrepresents reality or is even false[9].

It is worthwhile to take a specific look at the news consumption of the younger generation. Flamingo/Reuters institute analysed this question in a recent report focusing on the UK and the USA[10].News media are facing the competition of indirect exposure to news (through social media, other online conversations, documentaries and TV shows, etc.) with the young generation. **News are coming to them.** Also to take into account is the interest by the younger public for the periphery of the news space (infotainment, lifestyle, cultural, grassroots, bloggers and vloggers). Moreover, young people are looking for content and platforms that allow them to **seamlessly flow through the digital space in an uninterrupted way**. Smartphones are a key device in this context. It allows them to have all their online entertainment, information and connection in one place.

2.2. Main lessons from past experiences and available solutions

Past experiences of mutualizing online content services generated some positive outputs for stakeholders while sharing know how, costs or news contents. In news publishing, several networks, from informal to slightly integrated, have appeared in recent years for sharing valuable content, allowing these companies to widen their coverage at an affordable cost.

▪ Some platforms for content exchanges were met with success, such as LENA, Project Syndicate, Eurozine, The European Data Journalism Network, the NYT Syndicate.

▪ Some drawbacks in setting up content exchange platforms include the dependency on editors' input or a lack of members' participation (for instance Europa and Select respectively), a lack of business model, or overly high dependency on EU subsidies (Presseurop).

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[9] Media use in the European Union, European Union, 2021.

[10] https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2021-02/FlamingoxREUTERS-Report-Full-KG-V28.pdf.

- Too early to call in terms of success are the likes of the "Content Exchange"[11], which are third party platforms with respect to partners' publishers. They provide interesting hybrid models, membership-based and pay per use and subscription-supported respectively.

Moreover, European broadcasters already share news content across borders through news exchanges[12] and some initiatives launched by public service media also started to address the EU citizen with mutualized European news content[13]. New services driven by start-ups also meet with some success, including "The Content Exchange" or Brut, a web native news media.

But, unfortunately, **hurdles have so far hindered initiatives for content/news sharing on a broad scale.** The lack of clear business models, of standards, of efficient use of data or of stakeholders' involvement are among them. Moreover, handling copyright-related issues and complaints, GDPR compliance, have been challenging for players, even more in cross border initiatives. On top of that, News Media mainly focus on national audiences in national language pursuant to cultural habits and rely strongly on their national brands. They also had to deal with a negotiation disadvantage in relation to so-called "Gatekeepers"[14].

Some uncertainties remain (see Table 1 below). These could either have positive or negative impacts on the development of cross border news media platforms. They include the advent of new (hybrid) business models, the use of disruptive technology such as AI, the risk for publishers in sharing content, the navigation between various media laws and the evolution of anti-trust concerns, the role of quality content and linked Trustworthiness indicators to enhance the user experience.

More specifically, with regards to audiovisual media, one of the main hurdles and uncertainties concern the costs related to translation, adaptation and dubbing, which are way higher compared to photo or written media versus text. Entirely dubbed radio programmes don't work well, and there are very few dubbed TV programmes/shows – mostly broadcasted by ARTE.

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[11] A marketplace for journalists ; https://tce.exchange/.

[12] EBU for Public service media with Eurovision and Euroradio, ENEX for private players.

[13] "A European perspective", "The European Collection".

[14] The Digital Markets Act (DMA) establishes a set of narrowly defined objective criteria for qualifying a large online platform as a so-called "gatekeeper". These criteria will be met if a company: has a strong economic position, significant impact on the internal market and is active in multiple EU countries, has a strong intermediation position, meaning that it links a large user base to a large number of businesses, has (or is about to have) an entrenched and durable position in the market, meaning that it is stable over time.

Table 1: Lessons from available solutions

	Drivers	Hurdles	Uncertainties
Business model	▪ Continued and increased interest in news might open monetization opportunities. ▪ The principle of subsidiarity showed interesting outputs using public (EU) funding[15]. ▪ The audiovisual sector (mainly commercial broadcasting) is forging national and transnational alliances to innovate and compete in a digital environment from a monetization perspective.	▪ Pay per content model by the consumer proved to be unsuccessful[16]. ▪ It remains challenging for news media companies to monetize a service based on advertising revenues. ▪ Radio advertising is challenged by online streaming services. ▪ Complex rights structures still hinder content exchange in the audiovisual sector. ▪ Multi-territory audiovisual and press platforms have been B2B zero sum games so far.	▪ Hybrid models might allow to target different source of revenues and reduce dependency in an uncertain environment. ▪ The digital advertising sector is facing huge transformation, spurred by the deprecation of 3rd party cookies. There is a risk of a widening gulf between mid and long-tail publishers[17].
Technology	▪ Data still key for internal operations like recommendations. ▪ Successful developments for content sharing mainly from large news media alliances with a clear common superstructure for mutualization of costs from technology developments.	▪ Lack of use/adoption of standards that would facilitate content sharing. ▪ Data (user or content data) not generating significant direct outputs (monetization) for the news industry outside leading digital providers operating at large scale with Big Data.	▪ Artificial intelligence driving workflow improvements and cost savings for many operations handled by journalists/editors, including tagging/indexing, curation and translation, but not for quality check.
Platforms for content exchange among publishers	▪ Availability of relatively cheap content. ▪ Being part of network/platform and related opportunities (good practices…).	▪ Managing costs & resources. ▪ Lack of involvement from partners. ▪ No business model.	▪ Fear of recovering costs. ▪ Uncertainties on copyrights/royalties. ▪ Unknown impact on audience. ▪ Hybrid models: promising but too early to call.
Governance and legal	▪ Copyright: Media organisations working together can exchange knowhow and pursue efficiencies regarding rights management across various territories. ▪ Competition: Media organisations working together on joint projects	▪ Handling copyright-related issues and complexity of rights has been a central challenge, requiring significant investment of time and resources. ▪ Differences in national approaches to the independence of the	▪ Diverse Member State laws regarding defamation, hate speech or national security, as well as various approaches to contempt of court and protection of journalistic sources, raise compliance issues for news media outlets working across borders which have

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[15] Subtitling of audiovisual works, for example in Arte Europe.

[16] "Five Failed Paywalls And What We Can Learn From Them", https://www.businessinsider.com/failed-paywalls-2010-4?IR=T.

[17] Digital advertising is a crucial revenue stream for media companies in Europe. For instance, for traditional newspaper and magazine publishers, advertising make up about 80% of digital revenues, with the remainder coming from subscriptions, membership and other transactional models. Although some publishers, like the New York Times, have been successful in diversifying revenue sources with a successful subscription model, the ability to establish a paywall is unevenly distributed among publishers, making most of them dependent on advertising in the future. Digitally-native publishers – defined as those who were incepted as and only exist in digital form – have an even higher reliance on advertising.

	Drivers	Hurdles	Uncertainties
	can develop a stronger negotiating position with regard to large technology platforms than media organisations acting alone.	media sector and to the handling of complaints have been a challenge for cross-border projects[18]. ▪ Compliance with the GDPR and privacy laws, in the context of accessing consumer data for advertising and recommendation systems, is demanding. ▪ Using web intelligence technology to provide real-time data analysis, has increasing regulatory issues related to continuous, real-time data.	to comply with diverse national laws[19]. ▪ Partners in content sharing projects need to be mindful of any anti-trust concerns that may arise when different media outlets cooperate on one platform, although the attitude of competition authorities to joint ventures in the media sector may be evolving.
Journalistic, cultural aspects, impacts on public discourse	▪ Broadcasters (TV & radio) and press are heavily regulated and responsible and liable for the content they publish. Thus, quality of information is inherent to news media outlets. It is a driving element for a quality content sharing platform.	▪ News outlets mainly address national audiences in national language pursuant to cultural habits. ▪ Audiovisual and News publishers rely strongly on their national brands. ▪ Reach of wider European audience across borders limited to English language initiatives. ▪ Online intermediaries do not have a comparable rulebook. News media faced a systemic disadvantage in the marketplace.	▪ To increase prominence of quality content, trustworthiness indicators are very important and very interesting for the audience. However, such trustworthiness indicators are currently not frequently used and their generalized use in the future is still not a given.

Source: Consortium

Faced with steady costs and decreasing revenues, media companies need more than ever to collaborate. As news consumption is constantly growing, sharing quality content across borders could have the potential to foster dissemination of quality news. A new platform could help to build up additional revenues for the news ecosystem and rapidly developing technological developments could help to overcome hurdles of the past.

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[18] For example, only 14 of the 27 EU Member States have an independent Press Council for handling complaints about press and broadcast media.

[19] For example, Member States differ in their approach to addressing 'hate speech'. The German NetzDG law adopted in 2018 enables fines for online platforms of up to 50 million EUR for failure to remove illegal content within 24 hours of having it notified to them. Meanwhile, the French 'Avia law' on hate speech which entered into force in July 2020, was considerably watered down after the French constitutional court rejected this core 24 hour notice/complaint provision.

3. Requirements for new digital European platform(s)

This section explains what the major components (or building blocks) are that should be at the core of new European platform(s) targeting cross-border sharing of quality content. The target being content sharing applicable in the short term, a new platform will be mainly about reusing existing content, technologies and processes to be combined into a new solution with a new business model (beyond cost savings).

The key factor for success is the alliance building and the involvement of stakeholders coming from various parts of the news ecosystem. Therefore, the requirements were established in good synchronisation with industry stakeholders through workshops in March and dedicated interviews conducted in March-April.

The analysis of the minimum conditions which Digital European Platform(s) of Quality Content Providers has to meet (in terms of expected quality requirements, attractiveness to target audiences, etc.) are shown below.

▪ **From the features point of view**

The analysis of features embraces 6 potential building blocks to meet with the requirements of future news media platforms. They are interrelated with some solutions & technologies addressed in "technology building blocks".

▪ **From the technological point of view**

The analysis identified 6 major potential building blocks to be considered. They may need themselves to use enabling technologies like artificial intelligence (especially machine learning), analytics/Big Data or blockchain, that can play a role for several of the building blocks, but enabling technologies do not help to define requirements for the platform of content sharing.

Figure 3: Building blocks for new platform(s)
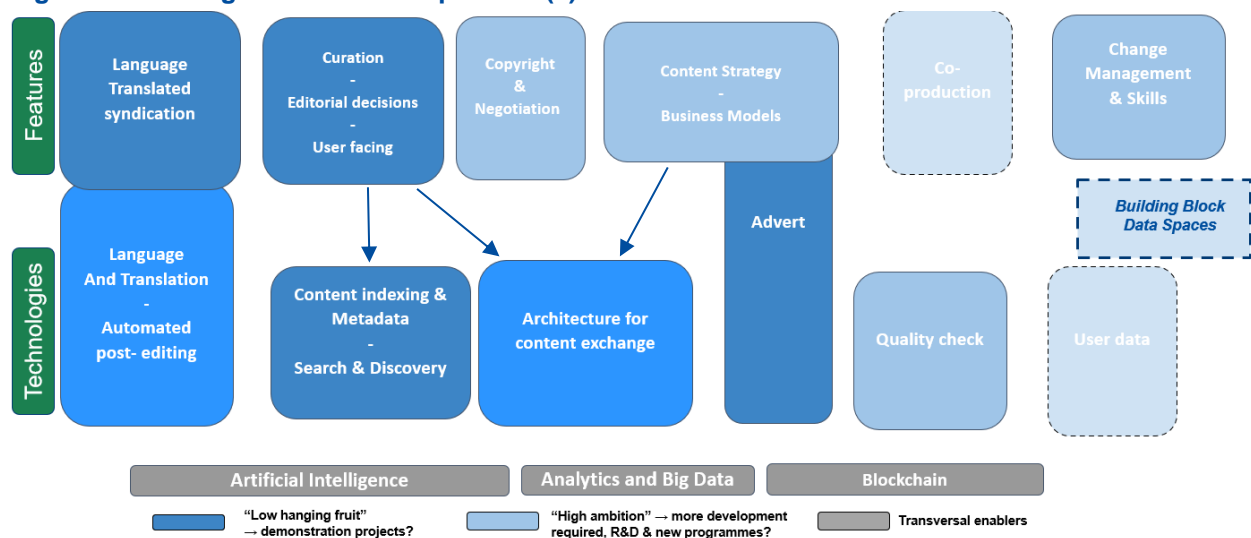
Source: Consortium

3.1. Features analysis

Requirements for features are broken in 6 building blocks

▪ Editorial choices and curation to cover the needs of journalists for publication and to tailor specific content for specific audience.

▪ Copyrights and negotiation to address the issue of content rights management.

▪ Content strategies to address national/European end users and tackle content sharing options. In turn, business models address content monetization for the end user and in B2B mode.

▪ The opportunity to use a cross border environment to co-produce or co-create (end user) news content is challenged.

- Change management highlights the need to adapt to the digital environment, linked technologies and new know-how.
- Translation for multiple languages coverage and European coverage. It is merged in the Technology building block.

Some features are already in use, others need consolidation or are on track for further deployment. Moreover, features vary depending on market and news media needs.

3.1.1. Editorial choices and curation to cover the needs of journalists for publication and to tailor specific content for specific audience

Currently, content curation is largely done manually, both for News publishers and Broadcasters. Journalists write, produce, edit and adapt their articles and reports. They may enrich and complement these with third party content. Content curation also aims to ensure the full exploitation of the value of news offering by tailoring specific content for specific audience demographics, on the most appropriate platform.

- **Content can be curated by an editorial team**, increasingly helped by relevance and quality software. Individual journalists choose the content they want to use and include in their articles.
- **A recommendation system** is a powerful tool and is extremely fast. The other side of the medal is the lack of nuances. Transparency of algorithms has become an issue in recent years. Quality of content is not an element yet taken into consideration by most algorithms[20].
- Going forward, curating external content could follow **hybrid workflows,** using the editorial choices made by human curation, combined with the efficiency of automated tools. This would help to secure quality of curation and to speed up the curation process.

Efficient curation of content will be key in any scenario for content sharing and distribution to the user. It is likely that this process of curation and editorial decision making will remain mostly manual for the time being. However, automated tools may help to speed up or increase quality of the process, especially for curation.

3.1.2. Copyrights and negotiation to address the issue of content rights management

Copyright and related rights include "economic rights" which enable rightsholders to control the use of their works and other protected subject matter, such as audiovisual productions and broadcasts, and to be remunerated for their use. News media and audiovisual productions require licensing of rights by different holders of copyright and related rights, including authors, performers, producers and publishers. Demand for access to such copyrighted media content, particularly in digital forms, has only increased in recent years. In this context, management of copyright and related rights helps to facilitate this access and includes, among other things, the granting of licences to users, monitoring the use of rights and the distribution of the amounts due to rightsholders.

Unless a Member State provides for a particular type of rights management, media organisations will have the ability to choose between individual or collective management of rights, in accordance with European Union law and international obligations.

- **Bilateral contractual agreements** allow media organisations to exert strong control over the way in which they choose to license copyright and related rights. This bilateral approach also enables media organisations to decide voluntarily on a case-by-case basis whether it is advisable to enter into such agreements with users. In addition, bilateral negotiations offer flexibility and the possibility of adapting arrangements in line with evolving ideas about new products and services or the demands of readers/views.
- **Collective Management of Rights** has proven to play a central role in facilitating the licensing of copyright and related rights. The development of technological solutions has made this collective licensing approach even more important to many rightsholders. In circumstances where individual licensing of copyright and related rights is not practical or effective, CMOs and RROs can be effective in managing those rights on a collective basis on behalf of rightsholders. They offer the ability to streamline the rights management process, which in turn enables copyright owners to clear rights to a large number of works in a more efficient and cost-effective way. In some instances, CMOs and RROs can ensure that rightsholders are remunerated for uses where individual negotiations with individual creators would be impractical or involve high transaction costs.

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[20] As already outlined in the report of the high-level expert group on disinformation online, trustworthiness indicators would "among others" be useful to increase visibility of sources recommended by such recommender systems.

- **Extended Collective Licensing (ECL)** is an advanced system that can work well in states with a developed copyright infrastructure. It requires a context in which copyright owners are effectively represented in collecting societies who can conclude contracts on their behalf. Under ECL arrangements, rightsholders are closely engaged in the licence development process. Both rightsholders and users in Nordic countries have made positive statements about ECL. The system is credited with having contributed to a better climate around the management of rights.

3.1.3. Content strategies to address national/European end user and tackle content sharing options…

Never has consumption of news been higher than today, especially online. But, so far, the news media players are mainly directed at national audiences.

Target End-users: European Citizen or achieving EU wide reach?

News media outlets focus on national markets and interact with their national audience via their trusted brands and the quality of their content. These brands are not transnational. Certain news content is however suitable for content exchange across borders. There is potential for sales growth with cross border reach and less costs by optimising newsrooms.

New meaningful EU wide platforms would likely encounter substantial complexity issues, which are usually burdensome and thus costly. An EU wide mass market does not exist, which puts a particular challenge on the possible sustainability of an all-encompassing EU wide platform.

Content Sharing

One main advantage of content sharing is joining forces and sharing resources. Exchange of articles of participating members across borders through a shared platform would work. Focus is on content sharing and distribution (syndication), also working together from different newsrooms on joint projects. Combining forces rather than expanding individually across borders is a strategy which is taking shape in the broadcasting world. Such initiatives could be envisaged by news media publishers as well, specifically across borders. Several options arise:

- Common network platform between press players.
- Open syndication between press players through a B2B marketplace.
- Journalist - editor marketplace, content posted on this marketplace would not be directed to one specific publisher, but to a whole community of publishers.
- Reverse agency model. Agencies could start to license content from national media to license it on to further partners. Agencies would act two ways (in and out licensing). Thus, they would increase the content they could make available to third parties.

Partner with social media

News media could enter collaboration with these players to benefit from their large reach and access a broader audience. They could play an important role in any content sharing scenario, provided that reasonable terms are set with the news media sector.

Many news media outlets are already interacting with their audience via social media channels, building communities and interacting. Be it on Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat[21] or any other existing or emerging service. A myriad of "new" digital formats are the vehicle of this collaboration (see section 5.3).

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[21] In France, Snapchat Discover started partnerships with Le Monde, Paris Match, L'Equipe, Melty, Cosmopolitan, Vice, Konbini et Tastemade) and added BFMTV, 20 Minutes, Brut, Vogue, Society, France TV, Topito, MAD, Arte, Chef Club, Loopsider, O1 Net, Le Figaro, RMC, Mademoizelle.com, Cuisine Actuelle, Radio France, Europe 1, Bein.

Driving traffic to own websites or networks: building communities

Newsletters are particularly important. Some are bundling content, translating it and sending it in Newsletter format to their subscribers. Interaction with communities is an important driver to reach the audience. It is also a first step to content sharing as non-network articles may be linked to a network community. It can help to change market participants' mindset regarding the opportunities that content sharing can offer[22].

This interaction is a substantial change since the advent of social media and new online intermediaries. It is a continuous process of experimentation and development for any news media, press or radio/broadcaster, private or public. Consumer needs are at the centre of such interaction. News media get more and deeper knowledge of the consumer needs. It is not only driving traffic to news media offerings, but also helping to provide more meaningful content to the consumers and citizens.

3.1.4. … content monetization for B2C and B2B models

The news media market is highly competitive, it is growing but revenues for publishers are diminishing. Furthermore, production and consumption are not the problem, the issue is intermediation and monetization, including diversification and innovation. With the advent of systemic online intermediaries, the so-called "Gatekeepers", particular pressure is exercised on quality news providers. The competitiveness of the market has led to several different and constantly evolving business models.

The success of **pay model for news** (paywalls, pay per article) will depend on the forward going willingness of the user to directly pay for content. A particular challenge relates to the younger generation who got used to free models. According to Reuters Institute Digital News report in Belgium 12% pay for online News, in Denmark 17%, in Finland 19% whilst in France and Germany only 10% do so. Leading countries are Sweden with 27% and Norway with 42% who pay for online news. In Croatia just 7% are paying. On the other hand, according to the same report 80-90 % who pay for accessing news will continue to do so next year.

In a very competitive **free and ad-based** market, publicly funded entities are in a privileged position. Indeed, they have more resources to experiment with content sharing than private entities. Collaboration between private and public players remains though a possibility.

Among financing options,

- advertising is a difficult market, increasingly complex and dominated by Gatekeepers,
- content integration models, including sponsoring and events, can help to diversify income streams but independence needs to be guaranteed.

The B2B model seems to be the most likely one to be successful and sustainable. A one size fits all approach is unlikely. Several architectures of platforms / marketplaces could emerge, potentially serving different alliances or different ventures. Several options exist:
- Licensing of content - agency model.
- Licensing of Brands/franchising.
- Additional businesses (brand exploitation, beyond their publication).

Diversification of income streams will help to foster economic independence especially of private news media. Brand licensing models can help to raise visibility of brands across borders. This could also help to improve cross border content sharing as trust is a relevant factor.

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[22] According to the Reuters Institute Digital News Report e-mail remains one of the most important tools available to publisher's for building habits and attracting the type of consumer that can help with monetization.

3.1.5. The opportunity to use a cross border environment to co-produce or co-create (end user) news content

A new area of application of this **co-production** could be the field of data journalism, in particular leveraging the potential of shared analytics could be beneficial for media outlets and journalists. Co-production may likely have a positive impact when it comes to content sharing. It enhances available content, fosters creativity and helps joining forces and reducing costs and thus lead to economic gains.

Co-creation between professionals and those until now considered as being the audience could be an interesting avenue to explore, in particular when it comes to content sharing. It would enable re-inclusion of parties in the information exchange who, rightly or wrongly, felt that they did not have a voice anymore. It also works to the benefit of social dialog and enhance democracy. Co-creation is a bold idea, but the concept is still at an early stage. It may become more relevant when the question arises whether co-creation can be an element of content sharing platform(s) or marketplace(s).

3.1.6. "Change management": need to adapt widely to digital technologies, innovation, and cross border cooperation

Most experiences show issues are not only about technology, user and competition challenges. But also about the lack of change, in the news rooms, in other key departments, and last but not least, in leadership and boards. What this really takes is positive experiences, leading to tangible results, plus trusted relations with partners in change projects.

- Competition pushes for scale: cooperating and sharing (more than content).
- Change may accelerate, combining technology, policy, competition and innovation projects.

Media change projects could strengthen others in the media ecosystem

Past projects on European, national, local and regional level entailed many projects and initiatives on digitalisation[23]. Most R&D projects entail directly or indirectly some HR and change management benefits: HR by profiling researchers, change management by increasing cross border cooperation skills. But many lack the sustainability of these benefits, even if the technology developed does work and persists. And, in the media sector, apart from a few key broadcasting initiatives (notably EBU, DW and in the past BBC), not enough media companies have been involved.

The news media industries are embracing digital transformation. However, there is reluctance in learning new skills. An innovation culture is required.

For content sharing and other changes, a small pilot project does not suffice, and a major endeavour across many newsrooms at once may not work. Content exchange is an area with especially high needs for change. Indeed, interviews conducted in this study point to the potential for exchanges (attractiveness) but organisational and cultural blocks to turn them into reality (endangering feasibility). It is not doable on a wide scale without 'unlocking' some mindset blocks.

Building blocks could be used. For example, team building, piloting, external recognition, and HR packages: better selection, training, promotion opportunities, financial rewards. This toolbox seems fairly standard but works best if there is leadership.

Typically, even for a specific goal like content sharing, there are several stages of skill & experience building. Here are some general steps in management development and change management: - (early career) - (early training on functional skills & innovation) then high hurdles to get to real change leadership: - broaden vision: strategy & policy - cooperate: major projects - share: strategic networking across the sector, across borders - top promotion: full leadership - governance: supervision and supporting change agenda. These steps hold true both for individuals and for a corporation, hence one should train and nurture change with several individuals per company.

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[23] Company internal programmes (Axel Springer programme in California etc, Washington Post recruiting engineers, thanks to Bezos push (not only investment)) ; Current media training (Academic ; conference, associations like WAN-IFRA and sub-sector benchmarking associations like EBP), and some short programmes (like EJC) ; Media pilot projects - GAFA funded Google and Facebook News Initiatives ; Media projects - EU funded (journalism exchange projects ; stars4media.eu ; Stadiem.eu).

3.2. Technological analysis

The 6 major technology building blocks identified to develop a Digital European Platform normally exist already at the news media provider level (except for advertising for some stakeholders, especially public stakeholders, and unfortunately for creative content regarding quality). **This section therefore deals not with the need for such building blocks in general (they are needed and deployed by most stakeholders) but more with the need to develop a collective/shared technology solution when addressing future platforms** (as compared to simply reuse solutions from news media providers with limited or no sharing of tools) and also the need for upgrading to more advanced technologies.

The 6 major technology building blocks identified to meet the objectives are the following:

- Architecture for content sharing, as sharing is clear prerequisite of the solution.
- Content search and discovery, that will rely on content metadata likely to be shared with content itself.
- User data (and enabling data management tools/technologies like Big Data) that could be also shared in addition to content and metadata.
- Translation, as the platform is expected to offer European coverage and therefore multiple languages.
- Quality check and traceability, as the platform is expected to convey quality information and European values and be used against disinformation.
- Advertising technologies when advertising is considered a relevant business model to sustain the platform.

These blocks might use enabling technologies like artificial intelligence (especially machine learning), analytics/Big Data or blockchain.

There are also a few other technologies expected to be used, depending on the final configuration of the platform. But **they can be considered as commodity technologies**, that can be easily integrated into any platform like account management (needed to allow journalists and consumers for B2C solution), billing (needed for money flows between news media providers and if needed with consumers) or content delivery (required only for B2C solutions, leveraging CDN that can easily serve the full Europe at low cost per unit). Therefore, we will not address them in the rest of this section.

The six technical building blocks were:

- short listed by the consortium based on expertise. The consortium has already advised in the past some technology vendors (under NDA) on components needed to develop new content platform(s). It has reused this as a starting point and has then selected priority blocks for further investigation (many blocks being already today commodity technology),
- tested early on during the first stakeholder workshop (around 20 participants from the industry) to confirm/amend the list of priority blocks,
- analysed in more details through 15 interviews[24] with CTO/head of R&D or CEO for smaller structures during 1+ hour interviews with very different point of views of agencies, press, broadcasters, technology vendors, etc…,
- addressed in a feedback loop process during the innovation workshop in June (around 20 participants[25]) determining future technologies to focus on for the news industry and that could be integrated into the new content sharing platform,
- and finally used as a framework to determine more explicitly the selected platforms at the end of the study.

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[24] Interviewees include AFP, APA, ATC, Compedia, DW, EBU, EFE (and indirectly EPA), Groupe Rossel, LENA, Lie Detectors, Ontotext, Ozone, Project Syndicate, Reuters Institute, Storyful, VRT and some undisclosed participants.

[25] Including some of the participants to the interviews related to technology assessment mentioned above, but also additional participants like ARTE, EFJ, Euractiv, NEM Initiative, NY Times, The Content Exchange, WAN-IFRA.

3.2.1. Architecture for content sharing between news media, as sharing is clear prerequisite of the solution

Content sharing between news media will obviously be a building block of the proposed common solution(s) (while developing a solution for just content co-creation would be way too expensive). **Content sharing will therefore come mostly as a complement to existing content production (co-production still being offered as a potential complement) and workflow from each news media provider**. Largest providers operate with their own tools, often developed internally and far from being standardized to allow exchange outside small clubs of very similar stakeholders, often exchanging content by email or FTP, especially for the press. There is indeed no major appetite identified for developing standards for such exchanges.

The only significant elements of consensus from interviews and stakeholder groups are around the reluctance of newsrooms/journalists to want another tool (and therefore they will keep using their existing CMS unless they get a strong business incentive) and **the current lack of standards in the news industry or more precisely of their usage**. Content will therefore likely be pushed into a CMS from receiving parties. Most interviewees have pointed out that many outlets still rely on low tech approaches (email, FTP) for real exchanges in bilateral mode. Indeed, only news agencies seem quite advanced around the use of NewsML. Content shared between News media through the architecture will be therefore integrated in existing CMS of News media, willing to maintain a strong control on their editorial and their brands. The consumers will consume directly on traditional tools/platforms/apps provided by News media, with just more content coming from third parties.

The overall choice of media content architecture for content sharing will heavily influence choices for other technical building blocks. Indeed, many tools could be developed as modules complementing a CMS or equivalent solution like billing, copyright/right management (which may include in some cases a marketplace if relevant i.e. if content is not shared for free between participants[26]) and even other building blocks, especially around data (user data, content data, metadata, etc.) and any operations that may require some form of content traceability (copyrights, quality check, etc.).

When sharing content, publishers may therefore exchange the content itself, the traditional descriptive metadata used for indexing (see next section) but also other elements like trustworthiness indicators (treated separately as an option in quality check section) or other interesting live data.

The choice of the architecture will really depend on the configuration and alliance building (type of players, number of players, funding, volume of content) as seen in sections 4 and 5.

The **central CMS solution** will likely be quite expensive and complex to initiate in most situations, unless the initiative remains limited in volume, concentrated on small and organized top-down alliances and does not try to expand or develop as a B2C solution with its own publication. Indeed, news media providers (but not their journalists) would have to deal with at least two systems in such case. With significant funding and support from large organizations, it could in a second step take on board additional smaller players. Easier discovery is the main advantage here to improve the capacity to discover content.

A fully decentralized approach, praised only by some advanced technology players, would be also a solution mainly for small alliances to scale faster, but with more a bottom-up approach with exchanges essentially between journalists themselves before getting back into their traditional CMS structure. **This could be highly innovative (not just for technology aspects) and a good fit with future developments.** But this may also require a long timeframe to develop. This is the solution with the highest potential in terms of scale and value added for production, as it would enlarge the potential number of producers. However, this is a solution of major interest only if trying to reach a very large scale.

The choice of architecture will have some impact on the need for software development. Decentralized solutions are just emerging and would therefore need to be built for this initiative, while a central solution would use a central CMS and/or marketplace, for which there are many off-the-shelf solutions. Providing content sharing functionalities between news media (whatever the choice between centralization and decentralization) could be done through APIs, but this will be a major challenge as most news media stakeholders operate with their own CMS and have not yet adopted the few standards already available out there. APIs will require in most cases specific developments. It is therefore likely that APIs will be developed and customized for biggest contributors while other contributors will likely just use simple mechanisms like FTP or emails.

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[26] This is detailed later when required specifically in some syndication models in sections 5 and 6.

Ideally, technologies underlying the exchanges for content sharing should be able to expand towards new trends (i.e. for instance new content formats) to avoid the need to re-make or re-buy a solution with each new innovation. If using a central CMS/marketplace, this should be considered when selecting the product with a clear vision on the roadmap. APIs can then be adapted to take into accounts new trends.

3.2.2. Content search and discovery that rely on content metadata likely to be shared with content itself

Content discovery can be done through various mechanisms, but **the main way to discover content is indexing**, which requires to create metadata for further queries (generally by relevance and/or by popularity, potentially combined with other criteria like date of publication, category or even quality) and then using a search engine crawling the database of metadata. Metadata can be created by the content creator and/or by the indexer.

In the following, we focus on the strategies and options around metadata, as there are already plenty of off-the-shelf search engines available in the market. There is still a challenge for search engines in multiple languages but that can be bypassed by combining metadata strategies explicated below and automated translation (see translation section).

The creation of metadata records is key for effective information management. Traditionally, metadata records are produced manually. Most of the library activities (i.e. keywords' assignments, etc) require manually assigned values following a set of rules. Dublin Core (aka Dublin Core Metadata Element Set) is recognized as the most common metadata format with Extensible Markup Language (XML) being the common encoding scheme. Standards for metadata are still quite rare and are essentially technical, but this does not prevent from different operational procedures.

Except for a few specific cases (B2C, co-production), **the preferred option for metadata will likely derive heavily from the content architecture choice. By default, nonetheless, as mentioned repeatedly during interviews, the dominant model would likely be indexation at receiving party** (in addition to origin metadata to be exchanged with the content itself ideally through standards) potentially based on common semi-automatic tools on content already translated and adapted/localized by the receiving party itself, as each stakeholder has its own way of indexing and using such data (including for SEO). Indexation at receiving party would as a consequence minimize the efforts (somehow an extension of current situation with more volume due to exchange).

This building block has therefore some importance, but is not really a top priority, as it would either rely on the architecture itself (combined with translation) or on usual workflows. **Most initiatives would not bring much value added compared to the current situation. All stakeholders could nonetheless benefit for common tools[27] rather than common approaches for indexation of non-text content.**

3.2.3. User data is only a priority for B2C or to a lesser extent B2B2C solutions with large volumes

In the discussion below, user data refers to consumer data. This differs from data that will be addressed by data spaces in Phase II of the pilot project[28]. Other data (typically related to content and metadata) is treated either in other sections (typically metadata) or is a natural complement to other building blocks. For instance, content consumption data (including at least content name and ID, origin party, receiving party if any, timestamp) will likely be collected and organized to allow in most business models remuneration between parties involved in a specific content.

Access to data is considered today as a key asset in all industries, to optimize its activities (especially online). This is also true for journalism and news media. The benefits can be through direct monetization, typically with targeted advertising addressed in the next section, or more indirect (better discoverability of content through recommendations, identification of most popular content in real-time to optimize the front-end publication system, identification of most popular topics over time to determine future content

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[27] Examples include Picovoice, follows an acoustic-only approach which indexes speech directly without relying on a text representation or Wedia's Digital Asset Management (DAM) able to complete the automatic keyboarding task on existing images by analysing metadata and automatically assigning keywords. Both were presented shortly in the interim report.

[28] "The second phase of the Pilot Project (CNECT/2021/OP/0002) is a feasibility study on the opportunities for the creation of media data space(s). To complement the first phase the development of a European media data infrastructure should be encouraged. It should explore on a technical level the data topologies for media products, audience data and other relevant data and meta-data which should be hosted by the data spaces, and define technical requirements needed to build an agile data infrastructure."

production, churn reduction by increasing loyalty through push of more relevant content to consumers, fraud detection for paid content subscriptions, etc.). Beyond the user-facing activities, user data can be used for numerous optimizations of internal operations related to journalism (identification of topics generating more audience, crossing topics, connections between journalists) but also for more administrative operations like any other industries (churn reduction, detection of fraud for instance around account sharing, etc…).

With data, value increases with volume but more importantly by crossing data from multiple dimensions. This can be done with Big Data or analytics solutions. Many off-the-shelf solutions can be used, thus the biggest difficulty is to get access to large volumes of data, which can be done more easily either by dominant players (like large OTT providers) or by alliances of stakeholders. **There is therefore a clear incentive to develop data sharing.**

However**, the volume of data shared may remain too small to provide enough benefits in case of low volume of content shared** (content shared could be a tiny proportion of data generated by standalone news media providers) and/or small number of stakeholders involved in the alliance. This is generally the case for most B2B solutions, having no consumer data in the end. In addition, most interviewees have expressed that handling additional personal data would be a burden.

Unless the user has created an account (essentially for paid content, most free content is accessible without such account from news providers) and has provided additional details (typically demographics and potentially interests), the data that can be collected is through essentially navigation and cookies, which can help to collect location through IP address and the list of content consumed/accessed (even from multiple content providers).

In the end, sharing raw user data does appear to be a top priority regarding building blocks of the future platform, whatever the architecture behind it. Most stakeholders consulted during interviews and workshops do not seem interested by user data, but **rather by content popularity (in real time, which would create more value) with "popularity insights" to adapt rapidly their production (internally or externally).** This can be done without tackling personal information, by building on top of content consumption data. This is likely to provide a quick win without handling personal information. **For B2C platforms (and for some B2B2C platforms), consumption data should at least be an optional module and represents the best trade-off between stakeholder engagement for data sharing and return on investment.**

If budget allows, user data could still be obviously tested for a small alliance of stakeholders sharing a large proportion of their content. But this looks difficult to scale anyway when involving more stakeholders and would provide unclear benefits beyond popularity insights (which can be done with tools from the market) and advertising (addressed in the following section).

3.2.4. Advertising Tech for B2B2C or B2C platform

Digital advertising increasingly relies on an infrastructure called "programmatic advertising" that allows the real-time buying and selling of advertising through data and algorithms via specialised intermediaries which are subsumed under the label "ad tech". Outside of the "walled gardens" of Facebook et al, over 50% of digital advertising revenue in Europe was generated programmatically in 2019, with 2020 likely having seen a further increase.

Digital advertising is entering a transformative period. Third party cookies, which have formed the backbone for targeting, measurement and attribution, are being deprecated in 2022. The industry is currently building alternatives. For publishers, the role of first-party data, i.e. data about its readership obtained with GDPR consent, as well as the ability to interpret and commercially package the editorial context with data about user demographics and behaviours, becomes a competitive advantage.

In order to strengthen their competitive position, **publishers and broadcasters alike have been forming advertising alliances to pool their audience data and advertising inventory**, such as NetID and d-force in Germany, Nunio in Portugal or Ozone in the UK. Advertising is a scale business, and the more audience and ad inventory is aggregated through a single sales channel, the higher the ability to attract advertisers and better prices. This has sparked wider considerations across the media industry, where aggregation and consolidation, for instance via M&A is seen by some as a necessary requirement to ensure media

pluralism as it is the only way to maintain a viable business, as becomes apparent in Bertelsmann's recent proposal to create a national TV champion in France.[29]

In this environment, this study analyses what role a digital European platform of quality content providers has to play, if any, in the domain of advertising, under special consideration of the dynamics of programmatic and aggregation.

The platform should not act as a seller of advertising in its own right. This option should only be revisited if participating news media companies favour the option of a B2C platform, can take over the ad sales, and if advertising is just an ancillary business model to public funding, funds through platform taxation etc. to limit the burdens and reduce risk.

In contrast, **the advertising data exchange model makes the platform more attractive for participants from a commercial point of view** and expands on the core technical feature of the platform. Not including advertising at all allows the tightest focus of resources, but potentially leaves commercial applications on the table.

3.2.5. Language and Translation, as the platform is expected to offer European coverage and therefore multiple languages

There is **a natural need for a pan-European media platform to deal at some point with translation/multilingualism.** The issue of language concerns both the working language and the interface (the platform itself) and the product (the shared content). If the platform's operating language can be English-only, the output (syndicated content) should be available in multiple languages at some point (consultation, pre-editing or editing), as users will not have the time/resources for translating it themselves.

Machine translation (MT) can help tackle the issue of multi-lingualism, especially on the discovery side and on the financial side (efficiency, speed, cost). MT can be used for on the fly discovering text and videos, possibly mentioning that the displayed text is MT-generated. MT is also widely seen as ok for captions and subtitles. **It is also understood as the only solution that would allow the platform to scale.**

Finally, **the translated content will need to be published/publishable going through a post-editing and adaptation stage** – media partners would not be keen on publishing dodgy translations under their brand, whatever the caveats. Having platforms (back and front-office) available in several languages should not be a major concern however (translating its features is a one-time cost).

Issues with regards to translated content might come from journalists or editors who are not used to work with translated texts/not used to adapt translations. A new type of content can add to workload or the workflow complexity, plus possible trust issues with regards to sources/translators. This would entail management having to deal with possible complaints and to set up trainings/mitigation processes.

With regards to syndication, **partner news media companies need to keep some form of control on who is reusing their content or at least on the condition for their content to be reused**. Some also reckon in-house journalists may not be happy with having to "fight for room in the newspaper" with content syndicated from other media, especially if they don't know/trust them, if they don't have the final word on using them or if they fear to be side-lined. Syndicated content can be centrally translated by the platform – on-demand or by default (though the latter is perceived as costly) – or by the partner publishers.

Languages are a key component of the platform(s), whatever shape they will have, should they be mono-language – and English is unanimously seen as the best option – or multi-language. The skills available on the market for developing multi-language platforms and the available machine translation software (although some language combinations need to be enhanced) should suffice for setting up a proper multi-language platform. Technical tools (software, plugins) for designing, implementing, and hosting it are also easily available.

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[29] https://www.ft.com/content/811c3d18-498b-4648-a26e-20da8125e9b1.

Translation is at the centre of the rationale behind the platform: the availability of translated content they would otherwise miss or not afford is what would make publishers willing to join it.

▪ Content evaluation requires at least machine translation (and possibly AI for summarisation/indexation) so that users can check whether content is potentially interesting. The benefits are speed and cost, as MT is fast and relatively cheap. The drawbacks are in the fact that machine translation is not infallible and can provide poor results on some languages combinations or some type of content.

  Content syndication will require that the content delivered is as close as possible to a ready-to-use state. This can be achieved in a cost-effective way through MT plus human post-editing for adaptation and editing. Experienced editors would make the best use of MT.

  Developments might be requested for improving MT thesaurus in the most uncommon – though not completely unlikely – combinations, such as Latvian-Portuguese or Dutch-Greek. The platform could start with fewer combinations, then scale up.

Likewise **syndication**, though less critical, is key, as publishers want to be sure that the content they share is being reused accordingly to the agreed conditions – and possibly cashing in additional revenue – while partners want to be sure that copyright is cleared by the platform.

▪ If syndication is among the services provided by the platform, becoming part of its business model and sustainability, the process has to be designed so as to be able to scale. **This requires designing, developing and implementing an automated selection/purchase-copyright clearing-delivery-billing process** that does not currently exist, if not on paper (CrossLingual) or at an experimental stage (Spot the Press), and poses a few challenges (especially when it comes to translated AI-generated summarisation and indexation).

3.2.6. Quality check and traceability highly necessary, but likely handled out of the platform

As the platform aims to differentiate thanks to the quality of the content, in line with European values against fake news, the quality check building block appears as an essential part of the final offering for consumers (which are also citizens). But there are different ways to implement procedures for fact checking, which could be operated by origin parties (potentially outside of the platform initiative) and/or by other parties. Indeed, **the quality check may not be needed in some situations, provided that the platforms provide methods for trustworthy content exchange.**

Fact checking is essential to guarantee the authenticity and trustworthiness of content as fake news spreading (in particular social media bots) and deepfake tools among others are advancing at an increasing pace. Media outlets are employing different methods (human resources, automated tools or a combination of both) to verify the source of the information as well as fact check content. Typically, at editorial level the content is verified by multiple layers before being published. Automatic tools are aiding the fact checking, process but editorial control is still in charge of the final decision.

Quality checks are of utmost importance, and **we can expect that stakeholders that would join a platform would already have strong commitments for quality**, which allows potentially to imagine all possible options. Moreover, news outlets have introduced correction procedures which allow them to correct flagged content and communicate it to consumers to build trust. This limits the potential extra efforts needed. If the platform was to expand to other stakeholders (and also for co-production), the central verification option would nonetheless be the only real solution.

In most situations, unless building tools that provide high trust levels, **stakeholders will spend time rechecking content, despite its non-optimal nature. The default situation is therefore likely to remain a manual check of content or within small to midsize alliances transitive checks from whitelisting (i.e., no recheck of content when the source is trusted because being part of the alliance). In both cases, this would mean fact checking will not be done within the platform.**

A more innovative approach would eliminate redundant checks and verification layers through certification mechanisms that can be for instance supported by blockchain. Significant savings in terms of money and time could from this approach and would support a better capacity to scale.

4. Potential options for new platform(s)

In this section, we first identify and discuss possible options for new digital European platform(s) over a 3 year period, by focusing especially on different activities for the platform and different types of stakeholders for potential collaboration. Again, potential options were debated with stakeholders through specific workshops, addressing in different groups (agencies, broadcasters, etc…) the top options identified during the building of scenarios.

The news media industry is developing at a fast pace, driven by new ways of consumption, innovation in technologies, business models, incumbent stakeholders and positioning of online intermediaries (incl. "Gatekeepers"). There is a high degree of uncertainty over the timing and end points of these changes. Therefore, this section built a set of scenarios. We then select between the scenarios, leading to 3 feasible options for new content platform(s).

4.1. Drivers for change

The news media industry is being affected by many forces for change (drivers) which will determine its development and future shape. The scale of these forces varies, from minor changes in content monetization to the creation of new ecosystems. The potential impact of these forces on the possible future news media platforms also varies.

Table 2 : Factors affecting development of news platforms' configurations[30]

Drivers for change
EU Citizens increasing interest for news
Increasing demand for news
Appetite for cross- border content
Need for Quality content
Limited use of social media for quality news consumption
Better content monetization
Willingness to pay for news content
Sustainable advertising market for news
B2B News exchange monetization
Deep incumbent stakeholders' involvement
Journalists demand for a mutualized content platform
Publishers demand for a mutualized content platform
Willingness to collaborate / alliance on a multi-countries scale
Partnerships between press and Broadcasters
Higher news content circulation across boarders
Collaborative management of rights for cross border content circulation
More efficient Legal framework (copyright/privacy)
Editorial independence maintained
Policy drivers: rebalancing the ecosystem
Horizontal: DSA, DMA + existing competition rules
Vertical: NEWS bundle, then news media industrial strategy (Media Freedom act)
Adoption of disruptive technologies
Adoption of disruptive technologies like blockchain by traditional news players
Adoption of AI-based (and more generally technology)
Increasing role of global technology companies
Tech giants/social media vertical integration in the news segment
Tech giants/social media in house development in news content
Tech giants/social media as solution enablers for EU news media players

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[30] See details in Appendix 1 - Factors affecting development of news platforms' configurations.

Emergence of new and disruptive production models
Unbundling of production and distribution
Data & AI journalism
Co-production (between news media & with citizens)
Emergence of new and disruptive distribution models
Public transportation companies' cross broader distribution
Cross fertilization with third party industries

Source: Consortium

Many of the factors listed are related and are grouped appropriately. Figure 4 summarises the relative uncertainty and impact of these grouped forces. The position of each force on the chart corresponds to the assessment of impact and uncertainty. We focus here on forces for change (drivers) that will have both the most impact and uncertainty. This way, we can define a framework to build new and independent options. Conversely, addressing forces for change with a high degree of certainty will lead to the description of a main trend and not to several options for the future (independent scenarios).

Figure 4: Identification of important forces for change
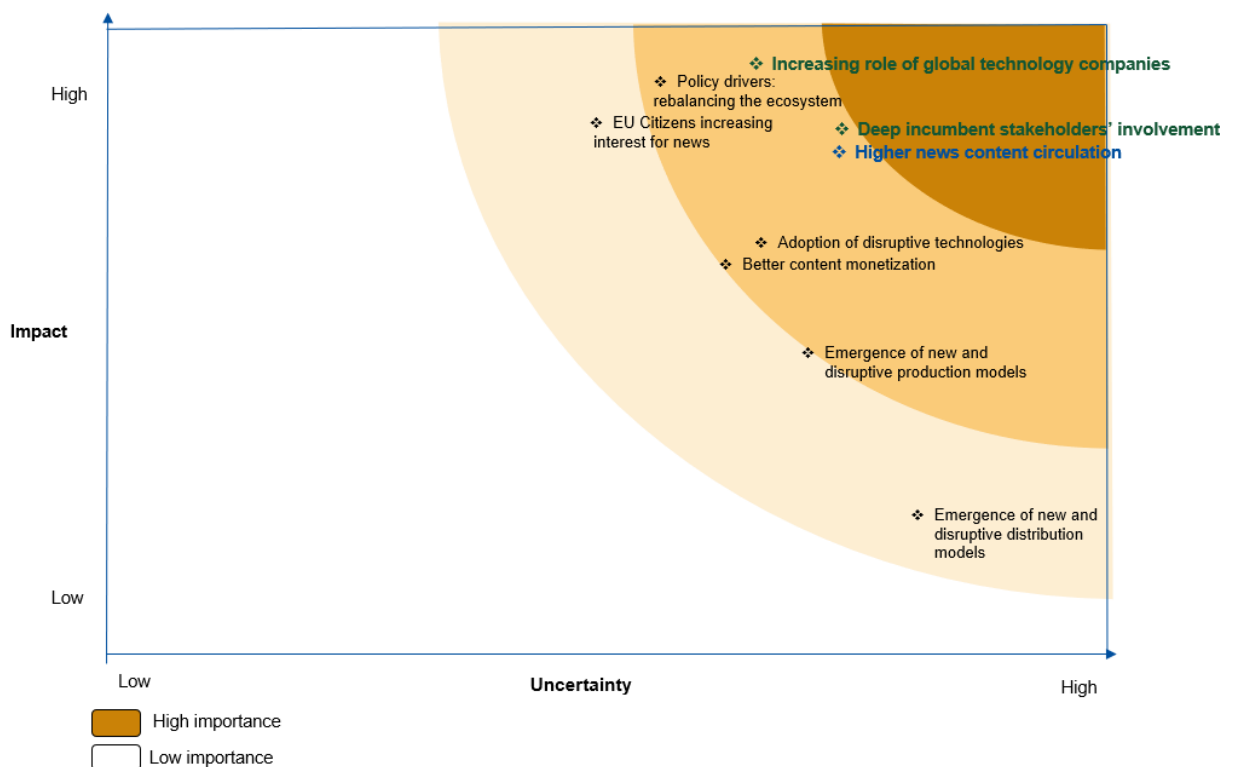
Source: Consortium

4.2. Overview of options

In this section, **we describe the possible options for a new platform in a near future**. They are positioned according to:

- the diversity of players possibly involved (Incumbent news media groups (Press, Broadcast TV & Radio), (US) Tech giants and social media, Vertical industries investing in the news segment) and their cooperation with news players to develop cooperation that could lead to sharing platform(s) or collective innovation/R&D initiatives,
- the positioning in the content supply chain, from optimisation in news production options, content sharing centric and more client facing options (typically distribution).

Figure 5 : Potential options for new platform(s), with illustrations
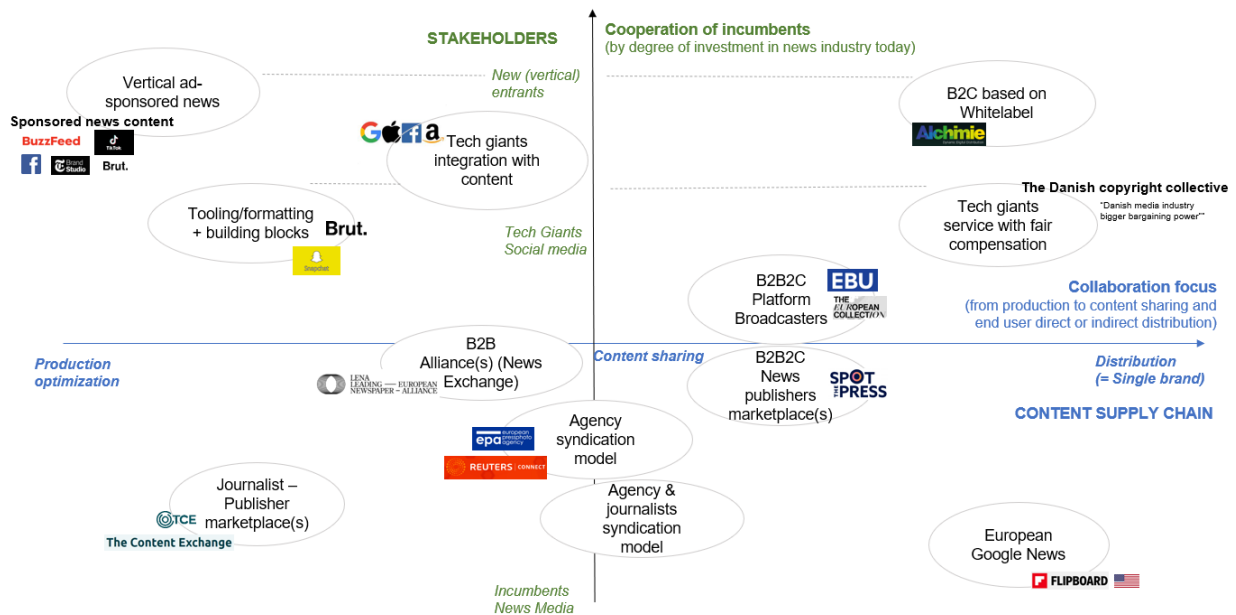
Source: Consortium

Not all options in the graph above correspond to platforms. Some options are indeed only cooperation between stakeholders without new major technical developments.

Vertical ad sponsored news

Under content integration or ad sponsored models, external partners can sponsor content. They can set a topic which then will be covered by the publication. It can combine a series of articles and interviews around the subject. It can also include the possibility to publish an opinion piece. Such packages are flexible and vary in sizes and accordingly amounts payable by third parties. It is important to note that the sponsor has no influence on the content of the respective articles or interviews, except of course for an opinion piece written by the sponsor. An opinion piece would be labelled as such. The sponsor can only set the topic. **Various industries (verticals) use this option and thus help to finance news content. In this scenario, they can do it at a multi countries or European scale.** This approach balances between the need for Editorial independence and the creation of a new revenue stream for digital news publishers. Ad sponsored news' format is used by incumbent news publishers and even more by social medias.

Tech giants integration with content

The main focus of Tech giants and online intermediaries remains reach as opposed to quality content. To date, they have not engaged in content production themselves in any significant way. However, these stakeholders may be interested in benefiting from network effects. Incorporating news media companies could have a self-multiplying network effect for both news media companies and Gatekeepers[31]. News media companies could benefit from wider reach via "Gatekeepers" significant control in respect to market access. Online intermediaries could increase the content available via their networks, enhancing user experience and optimising their algorithms to maximise traffic.

There are different forms of vertical integration:

- Structural ones like the **acquisition of media companies by online intermediaries/tech giants** (which would be one more reason to consider the overall information market and to the dynamic, proactive use of competition law).

- Strategic operations like **exclusive, long-term distribution and payment schemes** (which are often an alternative to sector-wide payments, undermining collective negotiations). The issue is risk of news media dependency, and later changing of terms.

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[31] "Vertical and horizontal integration in the media sector and EU competition law" by Miguel Mendes Pereira, p.8.

- Development of **in-house content production.**
- A further scenario would be **news syndication by Gatekeepers not only on their own platforms, but also towards other news media.** This configuration would increase even more the dominant position of the Gatekeepers.

B2C based on White Label

The value proposition in this option is to use a "low cost", "easy to implement and use", news platform for companies that are not active in the news publishing market but are willing to provide news content to their customers or audience. **This Kiosk provides to vertical companies a set of news content ready to integrate (rights are cleared) in their digital environment.** Companies can select from an existing catalogue of news content and to possibly customise the offer with additional news assets. Revenue sharing with news publishers/content owners or fees per use and/or per user might be core business model options. A third-party player might develop (for instance a software vendor) and possibly run the system while aggregating the content, clearing the rights, managing revenue flows and defining APIs for content syndication. This model already exists in other media industries like video.

Tech giants service with fair compensation

Leading social media platforms and other online intermediaries focus on extraordinary reach and access to consumers. News media could be interested to collaborate with these players to benefit from access to a broader audience and higher revenues through revenue sharing or licensing approach. However, the dominance of these systemic platforms may lead to difficulties for European news media to come to reasonable terms with them.

Success of this option would depend on the willingness of online intermediaries (and notably, the "Gatekeepers") to agree to "at arm's length terms" and on the ability of media players to join forces to balance the negotiating power. Regulatory intervention would be helpful here. For example, the newly introduced remuneration right for press publishers in the recently adopted Copyright Directive a better framework. It would help to foster agreements between the news media industries and such online intermediaries and in particular so-called "Gatekeepers" to engage with them in sharing content on their platforms.

European "Google News"

In this option, incumbent European news media stakeholders succeed in mutualizing infrastructures and services into a single destination for the EU citizens. There is no need for close cooperation with Tech giants, neither on technical solutions nor in the distribution environment. A balanced governance mode is established between European media stakeholders (independent board) to run the solution, the heavy technical investments needed are secured. News media content is partially co-produced to meet with EU audiences, but the core of the service offer relies on the heavy and seamless circulation of news "branded" contents produced by national publishers. To make this possible, a platform would have to succeed in building and monetising a mass audience at an EU level, facing competition of leading social media platforms. Taking into consideration the unlikely prospect for broad cooperation from European news publishers (Cf. 1st stakeholder group, a newcomer developing a platform might be the best option).

Tooling / formatting + shared building blocks

In this option, **news media companies (press or broadcast) leverage the tools provided by social media and Tech giants to streamline their production process and create new formats.** Possibly, they can also leverage ad tools and/or solutions favouring citizen's engagement with the content. **Some missing or critical tech tools are developed separately and mutualised between (some) news media.** Moreover, some additional training / support for digital transition might be needed. But, **there is no creation of a European sharing platform for news**, just a series of initiatives with tools and/or training.

B2B Alliance(s) (News Exchange)

B2B alliances collaborate on B2B markets across borders. They do it via a common B2B platform within a specific network, which is open to its members. **Articles are shared by its members on that common B2B platform. Participating members can then use this content for publication on their respective national B2C platform or network**, supporting their (strong) national brands, not creating new transnational ones. Due to national (even regional) cultural specificities republished articles would need post-editing and translation. Differences between (like-minded) clubs are respected. B2B alliances combine forces rather than individually expand across borders. Such B2B alliances are adaptable in size. Some B2B alliances already exist. Looking forward, cooperation between different B2B networks could be possible scenarios too.

B2B2C News Publishers Marketplace(s)

This option is based on existing editorial networks. **It goes beyond B2B alliances, whereas B2B alliances could be included in the network. It is a sales-driven commercial marketplace.** The marketplace provides for a (light) infrastructure supporting content deals (shared content) and possibly data deals. Several marketplaces could be envisaged. A cross-border dimension is of particular interest in this option. (Automated) translation tools have been improved to seamless the content sharing. The platform would clear copyright issues and would deliver on demand a full machine translated version of the selected content. Publishing partners would set up conditions for re-use. The marketplace is primarily directed at news publishers. The content available on the marketplace would also matter to end-users with a specific interest in international content. These end-users could access this marketplace individually through a web destination (to C element), on a pay per use basis.

Agency Syndication Model

Agencies usually produce their own content which they then license to news media. Such licensing is normally done on a national level. In this option, **news agencies would also syndicate content from news media and/or open syndication players. The selected content would be made available to a separate independent platform ("Agency syndication platform"), without creating a new "European new agency". The content made available on this platform would be licensed to existing clients as an additional items-feed as well as to further new clients.** This would increase content to be made available to their partners. Focus would not be put on "hot" domestic or new wires, but rather on premium cold content like deeper features (on few good themes, e.g. EU, Digital, health, which "travel" well), or on investigations (extending the reach beyond investigative media). The model would rely on existing content and distribution across borders would be a good value proposition. Under this model a new marketplace would be created as agencies would act two ways with news media partners (in and out licensing).

Journalist–Publisher Marketplace

An (open) marketplace for journalists and press publishers could provide an innovative solution to increase shareability and exchanges of content, potentially addressing new publics. **Content posted in this marketplace would not be directed to one specific publisher, but to a whole community of publishers. The interest of the journalist would be to be published by a maximum number of publishers.** Journalists would see a whole range of publishers as potential partners. The editor would have a much broader access to journalistic content, way beyond its core team. At the same time, editors would keep the exclusivity of their audience (via their news publisher brand). Journalists would get credits for every piece of content published and remuneration would be based on the number of credits. Publishers would have access to more content at lower cost. Publishers would become network editors. As key consideration here is the price, and the quality standards. This is dependent notably on the governance. An analogy would be the initial United Artists, rather than Uber's drivers. Setting a market-wide price on this marketplace would also impact the negotiations with online intermediaries.

Agency & Journalists Syndication Model

This option goes beyond the scenario described in the Agency Syndication Model. In addition, it would open-up a marketplace for journalists and freelancers that could syndicate their content to agencies. The agencies would include such content in their exchange programme. Content delivered would not extend to "hot" or breaking news. Journalists and freelancers would not produce new content specifically for the platform, but re-use existing relevant content. This model could also extend to include other marketplaces, for example once developed sufficiently, the journalist-publisher marketplace(s). Available quality news content would significantly increase and distribution on regional level would also improve.

B2B2C Platform Broadcasters

Beyond first mutualizing their news exchange through a B2B platform, European broadcasters pick and select content (text, video) according to their respective or shared editorial needs, targeting the end user through their own consumer destination. PSBs and potentially private news houses are involved.

4.3. Selection of options in a near future

The selection of options for a European online platform for the creation and distribution of news and/or content of general interest aggregates the following entry points:

- The detailed analysis of options, including "players involved", "drivers & hurdles" and "Implementation conditions and need for support" (see Appendix 3).
- The assessment and ranking of options covering: Economic Impacts for the news industry, Acceleration of Innovation, Impact for the citizen, Implementation conditions, Incumbent Stakeholders' involvement, Impact on the EU news ecosystem (see detailed approach in Appendix 2).
- Feedback from the industry though stakeholder groups.
- The timeframe considered is 3 years.

4.3.1. Assessment of options through criteria

Impact was assessed for each option detailed in the previous section through a dozen of criteria regrouped in 6 categories (cf. Table 3). The criteria are designed to cover "all" the ecosystem, linked players and impacts for industry and the European citizen. These criteria are applied to all the options for a new platform.

Table 3 : Selection criteria of options for new platform(s)

Categories are in bold, criteria in normal font

Criteria	Description, ability to…
Economic Impacts for the news industry	**Generate positive impacts on the news media economy and linked revenues and/or cost savings.**
Cost optimization	Drive spending and cost reduction thanks to the mutualisation of solutions.
Revenues generation	Generate incremental (B2B or B2C) revenues thanks to the creation of a common news platform.
Acceleration of Innovation	**Innovate both in new formats and/or work process.**
Innovative (news) end user product	Develop new formats in order to better fit with new (mobile) usages and increase consumer engagement. Adapt to advanced user interface, for instance AR or connected device.
Innovative process	Develop advanced workflows. "Learning by doing" for news publishers creating new formats.
Impact for the EU citizen	**Ensure that EU citizens can access plural and fact-based news, being well informed, which is an essential pillar of European democracies.**
Pluralism	Enhance diversification of content, ensure independent journalism addressing disinformation and ensuring that Europeans are well-informed.
Quality content	Ensure that Quality content provided by the media are widely available to EU citizens.
Implementation conditions	**Develop with short time to market and (cost) efficient solutions.**
Tech maturity - Easy to leverage existing solutions	Reuse existing tech solutions without major investments. It both involves the availability of mature solutions and of highly qualified human resources.
Easy to operate without significant additional budget	Operate on available workflows without the need for major specific developments.
Incumbent Stakeholders' involvement	**Find the best framework to favour the involvement of the news industry.**
Willingness to cooperate	Bring on board news industry's stakeholders that collaborate in a new platform. The good balance between cooperation and competition should be found.
Ability to find a leader	Find a leader to pilot the project. The trade-off is between representativeness and wide footprint (the typical European cooperation approach) versus leadership and speed (the typical corporate approach when enough capital is available behind a clear strategy).
Impact on EU news media ecosystem	**Generate positive impacts for the ecosystem of stakeholders and linked European news circulation.**
Increase in the circulation of EU content	Increase the sharing of EU news quality content.
Sovereignty	Ensure the independence of the native news industry (especially from "Gatekeepers") and favour EU based content platform and solutions.

Source: Consortium

4.3.2. Ranking of options

Based on the evaluation made for each of the criteria in the assessment analysis (cf. table 3), we have determined the following ranking of options ("having the most positive impacts") regarding an EU news content platform.

We measured for each scenario the level of impact of 12 key factors of success, regrouped in 6 categories with similar weighting[32].

The detailed notation per factor[33], from 1 (low) to 5 (high) was made through a co-construction process with consortium experts though several internal workshops. It also integrates results and trends from previous tasks of the report. The notation also considered the remarks provided during the first workshops in June in which top 6 scenarios were presented without marks and ranking to fine-tune the assessment per factor.

Finally, this analysis arrives at a ranking of options presented below and tested during workshops (during the first workshop, the options were presented without ranking, while late June and in September, options were presented with ranking).

Figure 6 : Ranking of options for new platform(s)
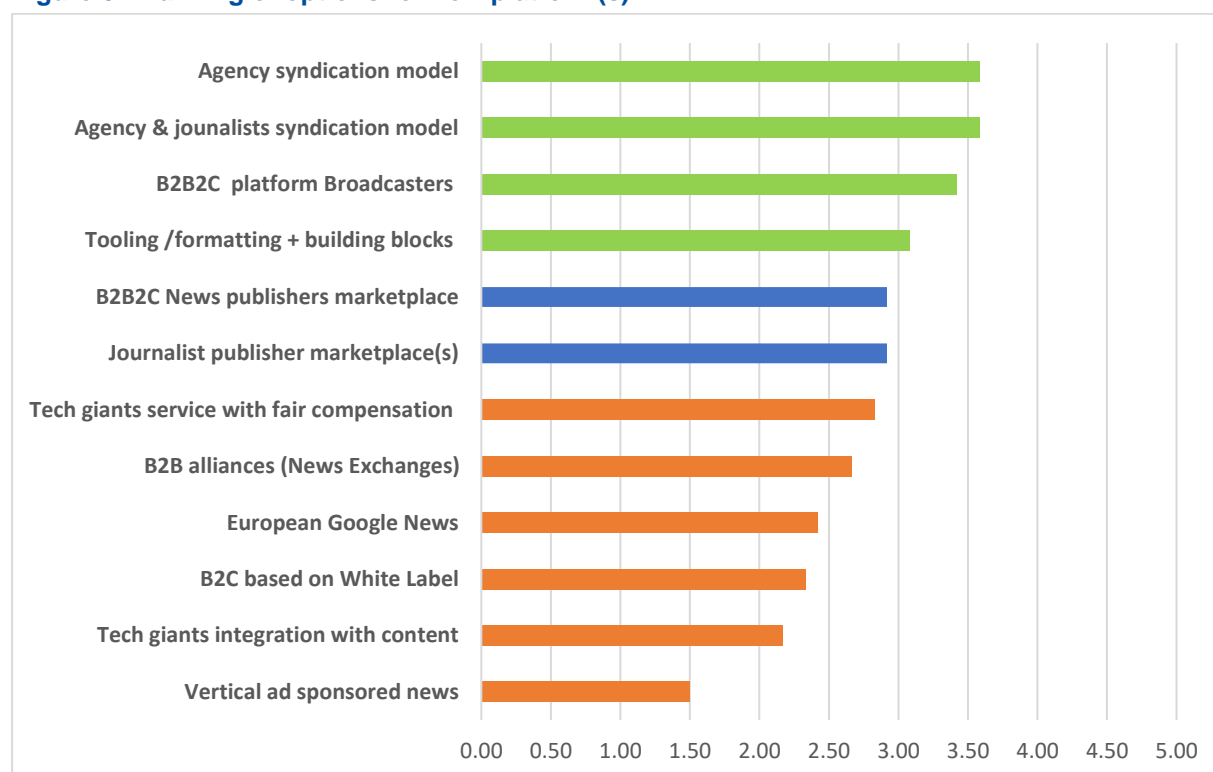
Source: Consortium

Top options include:

▪ Both the **Agency syndication and the Agency & journalists syndication models** generate the most positive impacts. This is especially true regarding possible economic impacts for the news industry (cost optimization and revenues for content sharing) and in the ability to find a leader (News Agencies) and to cooperate.

▪ It is closely followed by the **B2B2C broadcasters** option, which is already well advanced together with EBU initiatives with PSBs. It has a leader, brings higher content circulation up to the end user and preserves EU Sovereignty.

▪ **Tooling / Formatting + shared building blocks** enjoys the best scores in its ability to save on tech costs and to innovate (processes and new formats). Solutions and services partially rely on Tech giants' tools.

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[32] See Table 3 above.

[33] See Appendix 2 - Assessment of options for the platform – detailed notation.

Alternative options (either less disruptive or much complex to operate) are the following:

▪ **B2B2C news marketplace** is facing major challenges regarding the leadership needed to develop such an approach with stakeholders still focused on their brands. The development of a B2C component would require additional investments from news publishers. At this stage expected revenues from such end-user component would not justify the investment needed by news publishers.

▪ **Journalist-publisher marketplace** is often presented as the future but requires a clear leader for operations and an advanced decentralization approach that is complex to establish with the current unstable business models of news. Developing at large scale will remain a challenge.

Some options lag behind:

▪ Even if **"Tech giants with fair compensation"** demonstrates some attractive points such as the capacity to enhance the business model for the news industry (while saving on tech costs and generating more revenue sharing through fair compensation) or the easiness of implementation, it is not fitting with the project of developing an independent EU news platform. The stakes are here more around regulation than innovation or development of a platform.

▪ **B2B alliances** (News exchange) lack of investment from stakeholders and existing projects are mostly zero-sum games.

▪ The **"Tech giants integration with content"** model would not be a European driven project and would negatively impact the EU news industry.

▪ **Vertical players** don't show enough impact on the market to be selected. Investing in the news production (sponsored content) or deeper in news distribution through a common white label platform which is to build from scratch) would have at best marginal positive impacts on the market. Moreover, no clear positive externalities can be drawn for the news industry or for the EU Citizen (pluralism could be at stake). Finally, it is unclear who would take the lead to create a mutualized new platform.

▪ A **"European Google News"** would be the "holy grail" with a European platform for news delivering in a best-in-class way quality news content to the EU Citizen. But the steps are high in terms of investments needed, willingness of stakeholders to take the risk of such journey where coopetition would be the rule. Finally, risks are high and chance of success facing the Tech giants' competition is low.

Figure 7 : Four selected options for new platform(s)
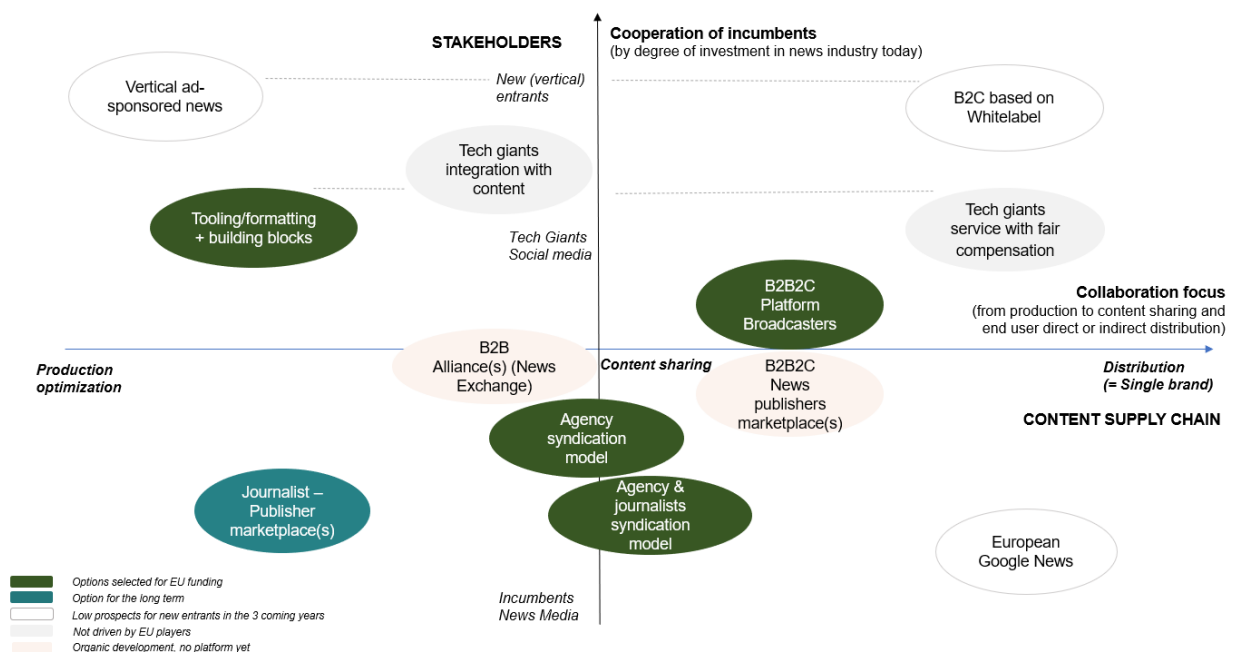
Source: Consortium

5. Characterisation of the best options in a 3 years' timeframe

In this section, we provide elements to describe the 3 best options selected in the previous section. The characterisation of preferred options is structured around the building blocks and on the previous presentation of options. It takes into consideration,

- Editorial Features including curation of content, recommendation system or content formats, identified earlier in section 3.
- Economic analysis & business models with a first review of revenues generated and cost savings (before a more granular review in section 6 for one option).
- Technology with the 6 main technical building blocks identified earlier in section 3 (architecture for content exchange, content search and discovery with focus on metadata, user data, ad tech, quality check and traceability, translation).
- Copyrights and Governance configurations (before a more granular review for 1 option in section 6).

We engaged again with stakeholders through 2 workshops late June to fine-tune the models described in the previous section to realistic configurations and better understand potential concrete engagement. One workshop was dedicated to the agency syndication model and its variants (with a focus on alliance building) while the other one was addressing more openly technology innovation as part of the assessment of the tooling/formatting option. The B2B2C broadcaster was not analyzed as extensively, as the model emerged in late June as a live offering and was already debated with more time than other options in a specific broadcaster workshop (including PSBs and private broadcasters) early June.

5.1. Agency Syndication Model

5.1.1. Features

Agency Syndication Model	
Content Curation	Hybrid curation with human intervention, using a dedicated specialized syndication staff supported by tailored technology.
Editorial decisions	News media publishers and Agencies both keep their editorial independence. Investigative or "cold" content rather than breaking news.
Recommendations	Leverage and integrate existing tools.

Editorial

Editorial decisions would autonomously be taken by the agencies and the news media editors. News media publishers would set their content priorities at their own national level and would select content accordingly from the agency hub (newsroom). They would however have to reflect on possible cross border relevance of (available) content.

Participating entities will have to agree on the broad direction of content themes (e.g. health or environment) that should be subject to this model. It may be **more investigative or "cold" content rather than breaking news. No new content would be produced**, existing content would be reassembled and made available via the new platform, opening-up and additional exploitation channel.

One should bear in mind **the importance of "subsidized content"**, i.e. broad themes that may deserve public support, so they are bought from media by the platform and then distributed for free. This should however not "crowd out" content sourced from media and distributed on a paying basis.

Curation

Meaningful curation of existing content will be important. While this requires similar skills to editing, it may be in a different department or indeed in a different organization, supported by AI, to increase productivity and avoid privileging own content editorial teams will be in charge to define relevance of content for their audiences, even if increasingly helped by relevance and quality software.

It is likely, that a first stage, curation and editorial decision making will remain mostly manual. It would guarantee high quality standards and be flexible. It would also be time consuming, thus expensive, and potentially slow down the exchange process. However, automated tools (AI in effect) may help to speed up and/or increase the quality of the curation process. **Hybrid curation (human and AI) could be the way forward, using recommender systems, automated translation and post-editing tools complementing human intervention.** This is even more relevant if additional type of contents, like video content is exchanged.

Recommendation and data

Powerful recommendation systems are already available. Based on the usage and the needs of agencies and news media publishers, such **algorithmic recommendation systems should be included in the curation process**. It would greatly speed up the selection process. In order to merely amplify tendencies and thus risking losing diversity of available content, leading to undesired uniformity of content, the editor or a specialized syndication staff should give in addition general trust to content and the diversity of content exchanged. Indexation of content will be very relevant.

5.1.2. Economic analysis

Agencies license their own content to news media and mainly on a national level. Producing quality news content is expensive. Many news media companies are under financial pressure. For many news media outlets it is not possible to maintain a large network of correspondents and journalists. Agencies have addressed this issue by curating content themselves with their teams of journalists. They produce articles and provide these adapted to domestic media outlets (language and editorial wise) for publication. Agencies are licensing such content to press publishers. This is generally happening on a subscription basis. Individual articles can however be licensed as well. The agency syndication model would open-up an additional source of revenues for the news ecosystem (agencies and news media sources).

Agency Syndication Model	
Advertising	No direct monetization through advertising to avoid cannibalising the existing media market.
Subscription	No impact on existing agreements.
Paid Model	Revenue-sharing after the syndication of news publishers' content. Option for payment for additional services.
Public funding	Content sharing could be for free with publicly funded / state owned agencies. Subsidized content.
Tech cost savings	-
Production, Managing cost savings	Decrease in overall production costs.

Agencies syndicate news content from news media (two-way licensing):

- **no up-front payment** for existing news content,
- **revenue-sharing** after the syndication of news content.

Agencies are not directly licensing content from news media but make such content available on the agency syndication platform via content deals with the media source. The media source would deliver content directly to the agency syndication platform. A share of revenues would be retained by the agency in case of successful licensing of publishers' content to their clients.

An objective of this option is to decrease overall production costs and increase potential revenues. The volume of shared content would augment and the syndication potential for such content would be strengthened.

Benefits per player

- Agencies would have **a significantly increased amount of diverse content for distribution available**. They would also have **fewer costs for content** as they will not have to produce all content they distribute. The market size for distribution would become bigger.

- Publishers would have the opportunity to have their **content distributed beyond their national borders and thus get additional income from a new marketplace**. They would increase revenues and improve income streams (going beyond current models "selling content to media that have much content, but little money"), extending to other content purchasers (governments, corporate, and platforms). It also helps to set an "at arm's length price" for content sharing in general, including for negotiations with GAFA. Actors of the sector itself will value the prices for selling and buying pursuant to news media ecosystem.

5.1.3. Technical & technological analysis

In the option Agency Syndication Model, the following elements should be considered as the main components of the platform to be implemented.

Agency Syndication Model	
Content exchange architecture	Central CMS + standards APIs.
Quality check and traceability	Whitelisting within the alliance – Manual check.
Content search and discovery	Metadata at producing party and at receiving-party.
User Data	No sharing of personal data.
Advertising	While the platform would note generate advertising revenues as such, advertising could be an ancillary business where advertising revenues generated from content sold on the exchange could be shared between parties or used to finance the acquisition of content.
Translation	Machine translation + on-demand post-editing and localisation.

Content architecture exchange

A central CMS is considered as the best option, but a central index could also be considered to limit costs, especially if the focus is mainly on images and videos, depending on the configuration. The central CMS makes it easier to manage the rights and billing. Standard APIs, when available, may be used to facilitate content sharing.

Decentralization approaches are not relevant as the alliances involved are rather small (essentially involving agencies reusing their distribution channels). Production is still decentralized, but content is directly sent to the central platform.

With a real B2C component, the central CMS is even the only viable option, unless all agencies align on standards to facilitate the exchange.

Quality check and traceability

The quality check will be essentially done by agencies and selected publishers, following quite strict procedures. With again a focus on small alliances, the central platform will not re-check the content (while publishing parties may still want to do it anyway). The approach will therefore be relatively based on transitive check through whitelisting of trusted third parties. All parties could nonetheless benefit from side tools (presented in the no platform alternative) to check the content, even though a large part of content verification will be done manually (faster, cheaper and more reliable for now).

Content search and discovery

A search engine will be necessary at the central platform level to help B2B users find the content. The central platform plays a key role for other operations but is unlikely to add significant additional layers of indexing that would represent huge costs of operations, beyond translation of metadata (that will be necessarily done for all contents, in addition to snippets; this is covered below in another sub-section), as the platform would have limited editorial approach. It is also very likely that receiving parties will use

translated original metadata but will re-index manually most of the content to localize it and to adapt it to local search engine optimization (SEO) strategies.

User data

This scenario is essentially an optimisation of reuse of content already produced through efficient distribution channels represented by news agencies. **Their core activities do not involve user data and therefore there is no expected sharing of personal data.** Audience data, that could fuel trending topics type solutions, is also very unlikely to be shared by publishers, due to the intermediary role of news agencies, which do not themselves focus on audiences. The scope of content covered by this scenario is also very likely too narrow to be attractive for trending topics.

Advertising

A solution for advertising would not need to be baked into the platform. However, it could be presented as one of its additional benefits from a B2B perspective. In order to share advertising revenue from content bought on the exchange, the purchasing publisher would need to report the advertising revenue that this piece of content has generated. The reporting systems that publishers have in place typically do not allow such a granular analysis of advertising revenue. To enable this, as part of the agency distribution model, a tag would be developed that would be integrated on the publisher page to correspond with the URL of the content in question. This way, the number of impressions that the content has received, and potential ad revenue can be measured. The platform would then need to establish a payment infrastructure between publishers. It could also leverage existing content syndication technology that is already used within the advertising technology space.

Translation

Translation is key for navigation through the available content: users, especially if they are not familiar with foreign languages, probably want to get to discover and assess it in their own language if possible, or at least in English – which would in any case limit the number of potential users, keeping out publishers with little or no familiarity with English. **Machine translation is sophisticated enough to provide with fast and relatively accurate translations for the curation/display/assessment part, and is likely to improve,** especially in the most uncommon combinations (e.g. Maltese-Lithuanian). Strong automated translation tools are already available and efforts to improve and further individualize these are continuously on-going.

Post-editing tools may be further developed, but post-editing is human and requires qualified human intervention will though for the time being remain necessary. **Human post-editing and localisation is therefore needed in any case if one wants the machine-translated content to be of publishable quality**. The platform can provide it as an optional additional service (with additional cost) or it can be done by client publishers if they prefer to use their own staff for post-editing and localisation (plus adapting to the publisher's own stylesheet).

We would recommend the first option, as many publishers don't have the resources for in-house post-editing.

5.1.4. Copyright and Governance

Under any of the options under consideration in this study, copyright and related rights remain a central issue for parties wishing to collaborate for the purpose of fostering greater distribution of quality news content. Copyright and related rights are "economic rights" that enable right holders to control the use of their works and other protected subject matter and to be remunerated for their use. The copyright "acquis" of the European Union, including the Information Society Directive (Directive 2001/29/EC of 22 May 2001) and the recent Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market (Directive (EU) 2019/790) which is currently in the process of implementation at national level, have had a harmonising effect across the 27 Member States.

Nevertheless, copyright remains territorial and there are still diverse rules and exceptions and limitations across the bloc. Furthermore, regulatory anomalies have arisen from a strictly territorial application of various aspects of copyright law to the Internet. A series of influential rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union, regarding key copyright concepts such as "communication to the public" or hyperlinking, should also be considered. Correct interpretation of the existing and evolving copyright framework and body of relevant case law is likely to require access to multi-jurisdictional legal expertise. The handling of

copyright-related issues has therefore proven to be a considerable challenge and one that has required significant investment for parties undertaking common projects.

Agency Syndication Model	
Bilateral contractual agreement	-
Collective Management of Rights	Collective management organisations (CMOs) or reproduction rights organisations (RROs) work to collectively manage the rights.
Extended Collective Licensing	-
Governance	National New Agencies holding a central role for coordination.
Competition	Need to be mindful of any anti-trust concerns that may arise when different media outlets cooperate on one platform, including entities that would normally be competitors on the market.

Copyright and rights management

With respect to the Agency Syndication Model, the two-way system envisaged for distribution of content will necessitate the licensing of rights by different holders of copyright and related rights, including authors, performers, producers and publishers. **Effective management of copyright and related rights will be crucial to facilitate access to content within this model.**

An appropriate rights management system will include, among other things, the granting of licences to users, monitoring the use of rights and the distribution of the amounts due to right holders. Unless a Member State provides for a particular type of rights management, media organisations will have the ability to choose between individual or collective management of rights, in accordance with European Union law and international obligations.

Bilateral copyright negotiations and contractual agreements enable media organisations to exert strong control over how they opt to manage their copyright and related rights. This approach provides tremendous flexibility, allowing right holders to adapt to different types of uses and diverse circumstances.

During its initial phase of establishment, bilateral individually negotiated agreements will prevail. However, individual, bilateral copyright negotiations require significant time and staff resources for the purposes of negotiating individual licensing agreements with a range of right holders and users. When the model is scaling up, a more collective approach may be developed. Different collective management of right tools could be available as set out herein below.

Collective management is likely to be a more efficient approach long-term solution under the Agency Syndication model. In this scenario, collective management organisations (CMOs) or reproduction rights organisations (RROs), which are bodies traditionally set up by rightsholders at national level, work to collectively manage the rights. CMOs and RROs aggregate one or more of the rights of certain categories of rightsholders for the purpose of granting licences to commercial users on behalf of those rightsholders. In addition, they usually provide services such as auditing and monitoring the use of rights, as well as collecting and distributing royalties to the copyright owners they represent. In most EU Member States there are several organisations representing different categories of right holders and, in some instances, different rights.

The EU Collective Rights Management Directive[34] adopted in 2014, highlighted the key role of collective approaches to negotiation deals with licensees and securing fair remuneration for creators. While CMOs and RROs were historically organised on a national basis, they increasingly offer multi-territorial licences and work across borders. This approach could therefore be conductive to an Agency Syndication Model that includes the possibility of cross-border distribution of content.

The development of technological solutions has made this collective licensing approach even more important to many right holders. CMOs and RROs offer the ability to streamline the rights management process, which in turn could enable the Agency Syndication platform to clear rights for many works in a more efficient and cost-effective way.

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[34] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32014L0026.

Governance issues

Apart from copyright and rights clearance, there are other legal issues to be considered when it comes to the governance of any joint content distribution project, including the Agency Syndication model. Issues related to data protection and access to data should be taken into account, as well as jurisdiction and applicable law, in addition to national rules regarding defamation, hate speech, or state security. An Agency syndication platform must be mindful of competition rules since it would require various parties to collaborate on one platform, although regulators may become more permissive when it comes to such cooperation in future. Below is a non-exhaustive overview of some of the governance and legal issues that may be encountered by the Agency Syndication Model or other common media platforms operating across borders.

Culture and Markets: insofar as the Agency Syndication Model involves distributing content across borders, it will be necessity to adapt not only to language and cultural habits, but also to the very different market sizes across Europe. Tailoring business operations to both large and small markets, with national, regional and sometimes local levels of activity, brings with it additional governance challenges.

Jurisdiction: to the extent that the Agency Syndication Model distributes content across borders, the project will need to address issues around jurisdiction and applicable law. Defamation laws (civil and criminal), for example, vary from state to state, with some countries known to award high damages against media outlets. There are also widely differing laws regarding hate speech across the Member States. Contempt of court is another key issue, since some national courts may be stricter than others in relation to media reporting that could be seen as prejudicing the outcome of a trial, or cases in which journalists refuse to reveal their sources. Furthermore, national security laws, the Official Secrets Act or the Prevention of Terrorism Act have been relevant in some cases to the distribution of investigative reports.

Media complaints: there are different national approaches to the handling of any complaints that arise from media coverage, and how such complaints are handled varies from country to country and according to different types of media. Not every EU Member State has a Press Council to handle any complaints that arise from newspaper content. Furthermore, there are different regulatory different bodies handling issues in the broadcasting sector. Various media, journalists' trade unions and individual brands also have their own professional codes of conduct.

Data Protection: although one of the main goals of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has been to harmonise data protection law across the EU, it has permitted Member States to have some discretion regarding how certain provisions apply. For example, GDPR specifically allows Member States to introduce broad derogations concerning national security, prevention of crime and the enforcement of civil claims, where such derogations respect the principle of an individual's right to data protection and are deemed to be a necessary and proportionate measure. In addition, Member States can provide exemptions or derogations in relation to specific processing activities, including processing that relates to freedom of expression and freedom of information or public access to official documents, among other provisions.

Privacy laws: news media outlets have to be mindful of privacy law based on Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the right to freedom of expression (Article 10 of the European Convention). Journalists and judges must strike a balance between these two rights; reporting that is deemed to be warranted on the grounds of "strong public interest" in one country may not benefit from a public interest defence in another. Additionally, media platforms must comply with the 2002 e-Privacy Directive, which provides for the confidentiality of communications and the rules regarding tracking and monitoring.

Competition: partners in an Agency syndication platform need to be mindful of any anti-trust concerns that may arise when different media outlets cooperate on one platform, including entities that would normally be competitors on the market. For example, competition authorities may apply conditions before giving the green light to joint ventures that will have a strong impact on the governance of the new entity. Instances in which the same media business is both editing content and negotiating with rights holders for rights to content may also raise competition flags. Overall, however, the approach of competition authorities to joint ventures in the media sector may be evolving, against the backdrop of increasing scrutiny regarding the role of very large tech companies in the digital market.

5.2. Agency & Journalists Syndication Model

5.2.1. Features

Agency & journalists syndication model	
Content Curation	Hybrid curation with human intervention, using a dedicated specialized syndication staff supported by tailored technology.
Editorial decisions	News media publishers, Agencies and Journalists keep their editorial independence. Discoverability of content on the platform/marketplace will be important.
Recommendations	Leverage and integrate existing tools.

Agencies and news media publishers will retain their respective editorial control. The selection process of content will become more sophisticated and data driven as more content will be available. Discoverability of content on the platform/marketplace will be important. Increasing the automatization process will be vital in this model.

Recommendation tools could be a fast and not expensive way to increase efficiency of findability of content. Countering polarization of views of news and maintaining relevance of content is however only likely to be achieved with additional human intervention.

Hybrid curation with human intervention, using a dedicated specialized syndication staff supported by tailored technology could be the way forward.

Co-production between content producers, in particular between participating journalists, freelancers and journalist networks could be very interesting under this scenario. Gathering forces, resources and individual national expertise to produce enriched stories as well as teaming up for shared stories would significantly help to increase the availability of meaningful quality content available for syndication on the marketplace. Investigative journalism and data journalism, leveraging the potential of shared analytics could also be beneficial for journalists, but also for news media outlets and certainly news agencies.

Going forward, such model could also include a B2C gateway. A sufficiently developed platform could open-up to give (limited) access to the content directly to consumers.

5.2.2. Economic analysis

This model would go beyond the economics of the agency syndication model. It incorporates some of the principles of the journalist editor marketplace by opening-up to journalists, freelancers and journalist networks. They could post their content on the Agency syndication platform and Agencies could license them to their clients. It is therefore an exception to the two-way scheme.

Agency & Journalists Syndication Model	
Advertising	Ad revenue sharing through B2C Gateway.
Subscription	No impact on existing agreements.
Paid Model	Revenue-sharing for freelancers and journalists. Revenue-sharing after the syndication of news publishers' content. Option for payment for additional services (i.e. non automated translation).
Public funding	Content sharing could be for free with publicly funded / state owned agencies.
Tech cost savings	-
Production, Managing cost savings	Decrease in overall production costs.

Agencies would likely post-pay freelancers and journalists.

▪ Journalist would bear the risk of not being published[35], the **prospect of accessing a larger marketplace with "at arms' length" and fair financial conditions** should justify the investment of the freelancer or journalist. Only existing articles would be used, no new content would be produced.

▪ Income from articles proposed on the marketplace, if taken up by client of the agency syndication platform, would be **shared with the journalists /freelancers**.

In the future, a sufficiently developed marketplace could open-up a window for a specific B2C gateway, offering for example a direct news window on EU topics for consumers. The B2C gateway could be a prospect for additional income. Income could be generated on this gateway via a paywall, but also under an advertising financed or even under a content integration model.

Advertising could play a role if a B2C gateway is implemented. Contributors –be they publishers or individual freelancers– would receive payment (in lieu or on top of paying for the content) based on the advertising revenue it generates. The platform would effectively supplement the exchange of content with a monetization infrastructure for content syndication, which is already common in the advertising space. The publisher which sells the content might also share aggregated data on people who consumed the content to help the buying publisher with advertising targeting.

Benefits per player (in addition to Agency Syndication model)

▪ **Agencies would benefit from more and less costly content for distribution.** Market size for syndication would increase for them. A B2C gateway would possibly open-up a new marketplace for new income.

▪ **For journalists, freelancers and journalist networks this model would help them to foster their independence and provide for additional income streams.** The model should deliver fair value for the content they provide. It would also allow them to re-use and adapt existing articles outside of the original country (cross-border).

5.2.3. Technical & technological analysis

In the option Agency Distribution Model, the following elements should be considered as the main components of the platform to be implemented. From a technology point of view, there are no real differences for the platform itself.

Agency & journalists distribution model	
Content exchange architecture	Central CMS + standards APIs or central index
Quality check and traceability	Whitelisting within the alliance – Manual check
Content search and discovery	Metadata at producing party and at receiving-party
User Data	No sharing of personal data
Advertising	Use of technology to monetise syndicated content for ad revenue sharing
Translation	Machine translation + on-demand post-editing and localisation (possible by freelancers themselves)

Content architecture exchange

There is no major difference with previous scenario, as long as the platform is not open to any freelancer and has access screening criteria in place (journalists would be pre-selected) to limit the scale and to avoid too many quality checks. They would send their content directly to the platform, likely by email.

Quality check and traceability

The model would have little impact here regarding content traceability. Agencies may play in this scenario a central role to organise the platform at national level with national journalists/freelancers. They could therefore handle the quality check themselves with slightly larger volumes due to freelancers' contributions. But they could also limit to a few freelancers to be also whitelisted after a global quality check analysis.

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[35] Hence may in some cases provide just a "pitch" (essence of an article or video, before actually producing it). It could also be layered: national marketplaces by national agencies, plus a European marketplace to set standards and syndicate transferable content (likely a minority).

Whatever the option selected, this is not part of the platform and therefore does not generate any additional costs.

Content search and discovery

The model has limited impact here compared to the previous scenario, apart for larger volumes of content to handle and therefore of metadata. Freelancers would likely have to reuse the formats imposed by the national agencies and/or the central platform.

User data

The model has no real impact here, as freelancers are involved for production only and do not get access to any user data. They could have some interest on trending topics to develop additional contributions with different angles but will not get access to it as it is unlikely to be developed.

Advertising

The Agency & Journalists Syndication Model –if advertising as a revenue stream is added (essentially for the B2C gateway)– requires more technical "plumbing". This is mainly due to the addition of individual contributors (e.g. freelance writers), who need to be compensated for advertising revenue.

The platform would need to license or build –we recommend license– content syndication technology which allows tracking the revenues of a piece of content on a 3rd party site and then establish a payment and settlement infrastructure between participating publishers and freelancers. It would need to register the freelancers on the platform with bank account details and issuance of data for invoicing (and therefore taxation, up to the recipient). However, given the complexities involved in building systems that share advertising revenue, we consider an advertising component not integral and merely optional for the platform.

Translation

Similar to Agency Syndication Model.

5.2.4. Copyright and Governance

Agency & journalists syndication model	
Bilateral contractual agreement	
Collective Management of Rights	Properly designed and well-functioning collective licensing systems can prove to be the most convenient option for right holders, by simplifying the management of rights, offering convenience, reducing delay and facilitating compliance with the legal obligations.
Extended Collective Licensing	
Governance	National New Agencies holding a central role for coordination.
Competition	Need to be mindful of any anti-trust concerns that may arise when different media outlets cooperate on one platform, including entities that would normally be competitors on the market[36].

The copyright-related issues outlined under the Agency Syndication Model are also highly relevant to the Agency Journalist Syndication Model. Furthermore, the extra layer of complexity due to the involvement of journalists and freelancers, alongside news agencies, means that a collective approach to the management of rights may be even more important to facilitate the licensing of copyright and related rights in an effective way. Properly designed and well-functioning collective licensing systems can prove to be the most convenient option for right holders, by simplifying the management of rights, offering convenience, reducing delay and facilitating compliance with the legal obligations. CMOs and RROs can streamline the rights management process, thereby enabling copyright owners to clear rights for a large number of works more efficiently.

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[36] However, this scheme could be covered by general exception re: collective bargaining being greenlighted.

In some instances, CMOs and RROs can ensure that right holders are remunerated for uses where it would not be practical for individual journalists to carry out negotiations with each and every content user, or this would involve high transaction costs. Collective management can also enable journalists and freelancers to be remunerated for uses which they would not be able to control or enforce themselves, including beyond their domestic market. When it comes to adapting journalistic content to different national audiences or translating it into different headlines, moral rights may also come into play.

Syndication Model including media laws and jurisdictional matters, culture differences and market size, media complaint handling systems, data protection and privacy issues, as well as competition concerns, are equally relevant to the Agency & journalists syndication model.

5.3. Tooling / formatting + shared building blocks

This model does not correspond to a platform but is more akin to a collaboration around standalone building blocks that would complement existing services from stakeholders of the news industry and would contribute to the further development of European platforms. The technology focus is globally longer term than with other models, opening the door to technologies that may not be all mature yet (lower TRL, no off-the-shelf products or services). This was specifically analysed during the interviews and during the innovation workshop organised in June that determined the priorities of top technologies to be addressed. We reuse below the presentation through building blocks analysis.

Tooling/Formatting + building blocks	
Editorial decisions	New formats to address the younger generation (social media, voice assistants, etc…) and/or to engage more with the audience.
Recommendations	Option for a safe sharing of aggregated user data that the publisher of a piece of content can upload so that a potential buyer can assess the fit with its own audience.
	Tooling and Formatting – No platform.
Content exchange architecture	Exchange Standards.
Quality check and traceability	AI for content verification.
Content search and discovery	AI-based analysis of video and images.
User Data	Sharing of data on how the piece of content performed with certain audience segments in order for potential buyers to maximise the fit with their audience and buy the most relevant content for its target demographics or tap into adjacent demographics.
Advertising	B2B ID-exchange. Sharing of advertising performance data and first-party data via IDs to allow for personalized advertising.
Translation	Translated Syndication: Machine translation. Post-editing and adaptation possible under separate agreements.
Other	Training to new formats. AI Journalism for niche contents. AI-assisted tools for humans. Recommendations.

Other key innovations (typically formats) may also come from the market, including some de facto standards from Tech giants and social media. In this case, the need is more focused on **how to help digital laggards to transition to such innovations rapidly.** Specific innovations may also complement the platform architecture of the scenarii analysed before.

Content Exchange Architecture

There is therefore no need for content exchange architecture per se. Each stakeholder would have full control of its own CMS and may exchange bilaterally or through news exchange some content. Developing or adopting standards for exchange is not seen as a top priority by the news industry (especially by news media providers) but could be quite helpful. There are already some interesting formats available with NewsML and more IT-centric ones around JSON. Standards would facilitate the development of the agency syndication model, by limiting the costs to develop APIs (likely to be needed for biggest contributors and representing significant IT costs, see section 6).

Quality check and Traceability

Despite numerous emerging projects around traceability of content verification, **there is so far limited trust beyond strong alliances**, established with a larger purpose of collaboration than content verification. There are therefore projects that could use blockchain or digital signature to share content already verified, but they fall short in terms of interest in the case of alliances. Decentralization is nonetheless expected to get more importance not in the short term but in the long term for the news industry.

Developing (open?) shared content verification tools therefore remains the priority, especially around video/images deepfakes, that require a lot of processing power to analyse images/sounds and detect alterations (through identification of modifications and/or comparison with images/sounds from trusted sources). That would facilitate the content verification from stakeholders involved in the agency syndication model, for upfront verification at the content producer level (the syndication platform is not expected to recheck the content).

Content search and discovery

Improving the automatic indexation of audiovisual content is still seen as necessary (such operations are essentially manual today and highly depending on speech-to-text which is in many situations irrelevant). Many stakeholders have expressed an interest for such developments in the discussion. Indexation efforts will be mostly significant at the content producer level and at the content distributor level. Platforms selected use a B2B approach and therefore platforms would not need it so much themselves. Common tools (as news media have a lot in common regarding the content themselves) would be of more interest than a tool integrated in the central platform.

Ad tech & data

A key challenge that publishers face today in advertising is the lack of scale compared to the tech giants. Publishers across Europe have already come together to form alliances and partnerships to pool their audience and advertising inventory. This option reflects these macro-trends. While tight collaboration between publishers typically happens on a national level, the advertising model proposed here allows light-touch collaboration across borders. **It would take the form of an ID-exchange, where any content that is being shared on the platform has advertising-specific first-party identifiers attached to it, which will be shared in a privacy-safe way with the publisher who buys the content**. This then allows the purchaser more powerful ways of selling the content to advertisers as the buyer can rely on the "audience intelligence" from the publisher who originally ran the content in a different language. The sharing of advertising IDs, which is already taking place as 3rd party cookies are being replaced, is being baked into this platform. The sharing of IDs requires the integration of various ID vendors in the platform. Currently, there are over 50 different ID providers, which publishers use to synchronise their first-party data. However, any given publisher typically only uses a subset of these potential options, and market penetration of ID solutions varies by country. To ensure interoperability between publishers and countries, the platform would need a meta-solution to match the different IDs like a "switchboard". Existing commercial providers headquartered in the EU-27 exist and could be beneficial partners.

Translation

Additional efforts can be done around machine translation, leveraging initial investments in EU CEF for instance to cover languages of EU that are not as well covered by automatic tools in the market, especially for couples involving less popular languages without using English as pivotal language. Being able to deliver the syndicated content in the partners' language through MT translation + on-demand post-editing is key for the platform to be adopted by non-English publishers. They would otherwise only perceive the platform as a tool for syndicating their own content, with little interest in it as a content provider – unless of course they are ready to invest in translation and post-editing themselves.

Other elements

As a more long-term prospect, **there is an interest to benefit from AI to develop creative intelligence, which can range from AI-assisted content creation to AI-journalism**. The potential benefits in the short term seem quite narrow when talking about news but could be useful to automate the production of financial news and of repetitive content (weather, etc.) that can be generated from regular publications of data and statistics. This could be especially of interest to reduce costs of local news providers. **More generally, AI is expected to aid various journalistic operations by simplifying operations.**

Finally, recommendations mechanisms are also considered as technologies of interest, but with a more limited importance. When combined with Big Data, this can help to provide more personalization and likely therefore more engagement. Like for content verification and content indexation, this would mostly be used by content producers outside the central platforms.

Formats

There are still numerous formats that news media providers need to adapt to, especially to address the younger generation (social media, voice assistants, etc.) and/or to engage more with the audience with more storytelling for instance. **There is especially a significant digital gap with digital formats used by younger generations,** as many publishers are missing the digital wave. Training could come from most advanced stakeholders. For instance, NYT is providing trainings to other media companies on other formats and editorial process involved for them stay on track with the innovations.

The illustration above shows innovative news digital formats, organised according to size and type. It looks at innovations in article and video formats online. It focuses particularly on story formats used for news that aren't legacies from print or broadcast and have been specifically designed for news and that are re-usable across stories and genres:

- Short & vertical video: short in length, portrait format, often eyewitness views. Used for eyewitness or highly visual stories on mobile.
- Video with captions: video with text, sometimes descriptive, sometimes subtitles. Used for short videos on social platforms.
- Horizontal Stories: full screens of images and words, swipe to progress. Used for short, visual storytelling on mobile.
- Longform scrollytelling: very visual, scroll-driven, long-form articles. Used for long stories with good visuals.
- Structured news: structured and reusable blocks of news. Used for creating news in multiple, flexible formats.
- Live blogs: reverse-chronological pages with frequent and short updates. Used for stories that are evolving right now.
- Listicles: fleshed-out lists, often with attention-grabbing headlines. Used for short, punchy and shareable stories.
- Newsletters and briefings: short summaries of the day's news, often delivered by email. Used for summarising the news on a regular basis.
- Timelines: lists of events, sometimes visual or interactive. Used for explaining stories that develop over time.
- Bots and chat: news delivered in the form of conversations or through chat apps. Used for reaching audiences on new platforms.
- Personalised: automatically personalising some aspects of a story. Used for making stories more engaging to individuals.
- Data visualisation: graphs, charts and interactives. Used for telling stories that are heavy on data, statistics or science.
- Virtual and augmented reality: telling stories with 360 video and VR. Used for immersing viewers in a story.
- Syndication and aggregation: originally RSS, this now includes Facebook Instant Articles, Google AMP and Apple News.

Reading modes: various "reading mode" platforms and apps (including read-later apps like Instapaper & Pocket or various browser's read modes) strip out the increasingly complex and noisy navigation, ads and cruft from articles.

Figure 8: Innovative digital formats

Source: Adapted from BBC News Lab, sept 2017

Access to news continues to become more distributed, with entry points often being websites or apps. E-mail, mobile and social media (Twitter) alerts are getting more important while favouring user engagement. Podcasts are on the rise including for the traditional press which is developing audio formats. Social media also drives the increasing use of "stories", while some success stories came up with the development or "short video + captions" (like Brut).

In some cases (AI stories, Data viz, Video captions, Listicles, Timelines), translation and syndication can be quite fast and cheap thanks to AI + MT. The main issue would be quality control, especially with automated workflows (when does the human intervene to check quality).

Recommendation & personalization

In order to provide data on audiences that have consumed a particular piece of content, an option could be the use of a safe sharing of aggregated user data that the publisher of a piece of content can upload so that a potential buyer can assess the fit with its own audience. This could also be a more sophisticated feature, where a publisher uploads/selects its audience criteria and is then recommended content to license/acquire based on the available audience data associated with that content. This would help to increase findability of content items and further contribute to users easier accessing content items more relevant to them.

5.4. B2B2C Platform Broadcasters

5.4.1. Features

B2B2C broadcast	
Content Curation	Hybrid curation combining human interaction with the help of automated tools
Editorial decisions	Made by the editor (own destination)
Recommendations	Example: EBU's PEACH system for recommendations

Editorial decisions are made by the editor who decides on the editorial line of the news channel. Editorial decision making, specifically for broadcasters, has always to take into consideration a strict regulatory and legal framework, securing independence and providing clear liability rules. Fact checking and securing quality of editorial content is and inherent part of the decision-making process. Technology can help to speed up the process, but it will always require human intervention.

Efficient curation of content is also key in any scenario of content sharing of broadcasters. In this scenario tools to optimize relevance and to secure quality of news content are needed. Automated translation, especially for subtitling or dubbing, and possibly post-editing tools should also be at hand. Recommendation algorithms and trustworthiness indicators could be used. Fully automated curation is however not fit for broadcaster purposes. It would increase polarization of views and not be able to secure the high editorial standards and legal /regulatory obligations of broadcasters. Maintaining trust in content is essential for any news media outlet. **Hybrid curation combining human interaction with the help of automated tools would be most appropriate.** It would secure trustworthiness and quality of news content whilst speeding up the curation process.

5.4.2. Economic analysis

B2B2C Platform Broadcasters	
Advertising	Optionally, each (private) broadcaster / country sells ads individually.
Subscription	-
Paid Model	-
Public funding	PSB don't necessarily monetize on their digital destination.
Tech cost savings	Yes, through tech mutualisation.
Production, Managing cost savings	Yes, for managing costs.

As of today, an initiative[37] is led by Public Service Broadcasters and there are no clear sources of revenues (Advertising free on their online destination). Commercial broadcasters lag behind.

In the B2B part, a news content exchange would not be monetized to favour news sharing and would not generate additional incomes. This is today the case of EBU News Exchange and ENEX for commercial broadcasters. There is no reason for change in this scenario.

In terms of advertising, broadcasters in national markets are increasingly coming together in streaming alliances in order to ward off global competition, e.g. by jointly selling advertising. In this option, broadcasters would share analytics and data about advertising performance and aggregated consumption statistics of existing content in order to facilitate advertising monetization in the target market. However, as broadcast ad markets vary significantly between countries, **each broadcaster/country would still sell ads individually.**

Benefits per player

This scenario has low to medium impacts for broadcasters, including the enhancement of news exchanges and the addition of some European news content. It might favour the migration to digital. There is no significant revenue generation prospect.

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[37] "A European Perspective".

5.4.3. Technical & technological analysis

In the option B2B2C Broadcast Model, the following elements should be considered as the main components of the platform to be implemented.

B2B2C Platform Broadcasters	
Content exchange architecture	Central cloud-based CMS (+ standards APIs to integrate with third parties CMS/widgets).
Quality check and traceability	Whitelisting within the alliance – Manual check ex-ante.
Content search and discovery	Metadata at producing party and at platform-level.
User Data	No sharing of personal data. Potential development of trending topics. Sharing of aggregated consumption data for advertising.
Advertising	Sharing of data for better advertising targeting.
Translation	Translation would be done through the tools developed by EBU within the "Recommendation Box" and the "A European Perspective" tools.

In this scenario, we anticipate that **technical developments could reuse or mirror current initiatives[38]**, that have been recently open to the general public and that have been already funded with the help of the European Commission. The initiatives of EBU aim so far to optimize costs by sharing tools and by relying more on automation in general rather than providing new revenue sources.

Many building blocks mentioned above are indeed already either available or in development. For instance, EBU has already promoted within its alliance news exchange, standards for metadata, automatic translation with English as central language (based mainly on third party tools) and widgets, with **initiatives like EuroVOX, PEACH and Recommendation Box**. Ad Tech is secondary due to the nature of the EBU alliance, mainly consisting of public broadcasters, and due to the fact that there is no central B2C platform component (Content is integrated in each public broadcaster system), considered too expensive to operate and scale.

The development of trending topics/audience modules could be a complement to the initiative (but EBU mentioned during the innovation workshop that there are already off-the-shelf solutions in the market). More generally, AI-based tools could complement the ongoing efforts around content verification, translation and indexing.

The extension towards private broadcaster is very likely to be limited in terms of number of active private stakeholders. Therefore, it looks more appropriate to build on top of EBU current initiatives rather than developing a new initiative.

Translation and dubbing would be provided thanks to the existing tools developed by EBU thanks to EU funding, in particular EuroVOX, which provides an open set of APIs for translation of multilingual content. The toolkit enables automatic translation of news produced in multiple languages, create subtitles for file-based or live content and improve the quality of content recommendation through use of automatic transcription.

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[38] "EuroVOX", "PEACH", "Recommendation Box", coordinated by the EBU.

5.4.4. Copyright and Governance

	B2B2C Platform Broadcasters
Bilateral contractual agreement	-
Collective Management of Rights	Collective management approach (large number of contributors and help to ensure the necessary collection and distribution of royalties).
Extended Collective Licensing	-
Governance	Leaded by EBU on the behalf of PSB. Potential interrelations with private broadcasters to be found, probably through ACT[39].
Competition	Model is built mainly on the content of Public Service Media, possible impact of such an initiative on private sector media. Maintaining contestable markets.

A collective management approach as outlined above, is also likely to be the most efficient approach for a B2B2C Broadcast model which may possibly build on public sector initiatives to in the future incorporate private sector broadcasters. Certain collective management organisations (CMOs) and reproduction rights organisations (RROs) specialise in aggregating audiovisual rights for the purpose of granting licenses to commercial users on behalf of those right holders. This system matters for audiovisual works that may involve large numbers of contributors and helps to ensure the necessary collection and distribution of royalties.

With respect to governance issues, differences in culture, language and market sizes and the degree of sophistication of those markets will be of utmost importance to the distribution of content across borders in the B2B2C Broadcast Model. Other governance issues related to jurisdiction, the handling of media complaints, data protection and privacy, will also be relevant to this model. Furthermore, the B2B2C Broadcast Model raises some additional considerations, including the following points:

▪ **Audiovisual regulation**: initiatives sharing content across borders should take account of potential impacts on compliance with the existing framework audiovisual rules and regulation, including national production content quotas and any contribution that may be required towards content production funds at Member State level. To give just one example, the Directive laying down rules with regard to certain online transmissions of broadcasting organisations and retransmissions of TV and radio programmes, which entered into force in 2019, allows for significant discretion of the Member States with regard to the definition of ancillary online services. The way in which principles in the Directive have been transposed have also been subject to different interpretation according to the legal traditions and industry practices in the various countries.

▪ **Independence:** while the European Commission has emphasised the importance of the independence of national audiovisual regulators in the revised EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive, differing national approaches to the independence of the media sector can still be a challenge for cross-border projects. The Directive, for example, explicitly encourages industry self-and co-regulation which may lead to diverse outcomes. There may also differing approaches regarding public service media or subsidized media and broadcasters operating in the private sector. For example, there are differences in the remit of the public service broadcasters as defined by national legislation in the various EU Member States. Such differences can include the proportion of state aid allocated to public service broadcasters and the scope of commercial activities they are permitted to pursue in the media marketplace.

▪ **Access to Data:** since the relationship between broadcasters and their viewers is a crucial aspect of the media value chain, access to consumer data and audience analytics will be a strong consideration for projects distributing content from a range of media sources. Participants in the B2B2C Broadcast Model will have to be mindful of access to data issues relating to this consumer interface.

▪ **Recommender systems and online advertising:** data access and analysis are key to monetization of content via targeted advertising and to offer customers recommendations for new content or services that may align with their interests. To the extent that the B2B2C Model will employ a recommendation system, or will include the potential for online advertising, issues around data access will come to the fore. Moreover, any potential use of intelligence technology to provide real-time data analysis, should take account of the increasing regulatory issues related to continuous, real-time data and the use of artificial intelligence.

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[39] Association of Commercial Television in Europe.

- **Competition:** partners in a B2B2C Broadcast Model that is built mainly on the content of Public Service Media should be alert to the possible impact of such an initiative on private sector media. Maintaining contestable markets in the media sector is crucial to ensuring media diversity and pluralism, as well as ensuring a wide range of content for European consumers. Especially if the model incorporates online advertising, careful assessment of the effects on the current media market needs to take place.

6. Agency Syndication platform

Finally, this section provides a deep dive into the Agency Syndication Platform, the only real new model (as the B2B2C broadcaster is already operational). This is a cross-border platform yet to be developed. **To address the potential profitability of a new platform, we use a modelling process for a theoretical platform. Hypotheses are based on industry interviews and interactions, experts' knowledge and additional desk research. We then simulate possible linked costs and revenues for the theoretical platform.**

Costs were analysed through additional confidential interviews in July and August with selected stakeholders already offering or planning to offer syndication platforms (not necessarily agencies). This was done at a national or regional level to have order of magnitudes for IT costs (i.e. the technology building blocks discussed in previous sections) and staff handling features/editorial (and non-automated operations).

The next steps for implementation for the new platform are then detailed through a timeline. Finally, potential risks for implementation are addressed.

6.1.   Sizing of the Agency Syndication platform

In the Agency Syndication platform, Agencies both share selected news items on the new sharing platform and make news items from their national clients (media sources) available to the platform. The proposed **Agency Syndication model is a hybrid model combining as core model the news exchange between agencies and additional external sales managed by the new "Agency syndication" platform.**

Journalists and freelancers may participate in the content sharing process, creating a channel for distribution with news agencies.

At this stage, the new platform doesn't address citizens through a dedicated web site or showcase. This would lower potential partners' trust and willingness to engage because of the competition grey zone it would generate with their own service and the linked news content monetization. It could however be an option for the future.

The new platform is not a future European news agency. It is not producing new content but relying on already produced content. It is also not addressing "hot" or breaking news content.

The time frame of the analysis is 3 years. Several entry points are used to dimension the new platform.

Ecosystem of players

The overall ecosystem of the platform involves the following partners:
▪ agency syndication platform (few news agencies),
▪ news agencies as core partners with the platform (source of news content and sales),
▪ franchise agencies that link with the Agency syndication platform and sell to their clients,
▪ news media publishers' sourcing content.

The number of news agencies involved in year 1 would be four (4) agencies. In year 2, the number increase to six (6) agencies. Ten (10) agencies would participate in year 3. These figures provide a coherent EU geographical coverage and secure a significant volume of news items to be shared.

The number of media sources feeding news items via the agencies for inclusion in the new platform should be 10 to 20 in year 1, 20 to 40 in year 2 and reach 50 to 60 in year 3. This would lead to 50-60 news media providers (sources) participating in year 3 in addition to the ten (10) Agencies. Media sources would be aggregated upon existing relationships of the agencies with their national clients. Inclusion of external media sources would however be possible.

External clients are not existing clients of News agencies. They can be Private corporations, public institutions or News agencies based in the EU (for instance in "smaller countries") or in third countries in Europe or overseas.

Volume of content items shared

The content made available on the platform would be the highest value within the current production. On one side, the so called "cold" content (such as interviews, investigations, features, reportages, long video features…). The idea is making content available that partners could not otherwise afford (mostly for budgetary reasons) through their usual channels (staff reporters, news agencies they have subscribed, regular contributors). Items shared would not include items related to breaking news. The volume of items made available on the platform would thus include a small share of content of agencies and/or media sources. The volume would lie around 300 news items per week in year 1. This figure balances the need for providing a content feed that rich enough for subscribers in scope and frequency to believe they have good quantitative value for money, and the need not to flood newsrooms that already are not short of content in general, but that would be happy to have access to such content they cannot afford. A further selection by client media/newsrooms through filtering by type (investigations, reportage, interview, feature story, video…), thematic (politics, economy, society, sports…) or category (EU, LGBTQ+, the Balkans…) will make sure the 300 items/week will be reduced to what newsrooms can "digest" and look for. The volume will of course increase as new partners will join the platform, respectively to 600 and 1200 news content in year 2 and 3 but filtering and suggesting by the platform itself according to the users' preferences will make sure they will not be submerged.

News items could be organized around specific themes. Potentially relevant topics could include: European Affairs, Digital & Technology, Health, Climate Change / Green Deal. The proposed themes are the ones most likely to resonate with early adopters and the first clients, and which fit the most pressing issues in terms of public interest and newsworthiness. Complementary themes can be deployed over time, possibly after getting feedback from the users on their priorities.

We make the hypothesis that the breakdown by type of content would be as follows, 60% written, 20% video, 20% photo. This reflects the publishers' likely needs, as most of the photos are already distributed through existing syndication agreements between agencies (cross-syndication), and exclusive text content is scarcely distributed. Video could probably get a larger share, as there is a growing demand for it, and quality video are expensive to produce. Photos are more common and easy to get, through the established agencies, most of whom have syndication agreements between countries.

The amount of content sold should range from 40% in Year 1 to 80% in Year 2. This includes a high level of multiple sales per content made available on the platform.

6.2. Simulation of a business case for the new platform

6.2.1. Hypotheses for revenues

In this simulation, Agencies share the news items, aggregated on the new platform, with their national clients as an additional service. Additional (external) clients are also targeted. Financial incentive for the agencies is two-fold:

▪ additional direct revenue stream from their national clients,

▪ indirect revenues stream with a revenue share from news content used via that platform by other agencies.

The barrier to entry of the new platform should be low to favour traction and rapid take-off. A pure subscription-based service is not recommended. For the same reason, basic membership fee is excluded.

Most media sources would become clients of the items feed of the new platform which would be offered by their national news agency, as an additional service at a determined price. In a second step media sources could also extend to news media that are not clients of their respective national agency, to journalists and freelancers as well as journalist networks.

Additionally, external clients also acquire items directly from the new platform. Agencies and media sources would benefit from additional revenues and would share these revenues between them.

Additional revenues of the platform are also anticipated. They include,

▪ subsidized content,

▪ additional services sold by the platform to the clients such as translation.

Pricing and segmentation of clients

We take the hypothesis that the acquisition of news items by clients follows along these options:

- **Pay per news content item is the core model**, content items being packaged or not.
- Different tiers of clients and pricing could set according to their purchasing power and/or the number of news items acquired per week.

The price per item ranges as follow:

- Articles: between 100 EUR and 600 EUR, according to the typology. Typical pricing would be 100 EUR for an opinion piece, 200 EUR for an interview, 250 EUR for an analysis and 600 EUR for a reportage, an investigation or a feature article. These figures are taken from the studies carried out by Voxeurop for the Spot the Press platform project, from the current syndication prices within major syndicating agencies and from our experience at Courrier International and Internazionale.
- Photo: the average price for a non-exclusive photo varies between 30 EUR and 100 EUR depending on the author and the distribution channel (individual sale, agency distribution). The price is also intended as encouraging photographers to upload their photos on the platform.
- Video: Prices usually range from 0 to 1,000 EUR depending on the size, author/source, exclusivity, dubbing/subtitling.

For the largest clients, a subscription fee (packages or pay-per-use) could replace the price per item model, without noticeable impact on the model. It should be proportional to turnover and possibly to the geographical location (Western and Northern European media have more purchase power than South-Eastern European media on average), so as to best fit a client's purchase power and their news buying habits (some are keener on exchanging than on buying/selling content).

Additional services

The platform can generate additional revenues through offering **complementary, exclusive and tailor-made services, such as bespoke press reviews, summaries, thematic digests, on-demand feeds. It also can offer translations, subtitling, dubbing and adaptation of the available content** at a competitive rate, according to the client's means (turnover, geographical situation, media/private company, etc.). They possibly include:

- translation (post-edited machine translation),
- translation + adaptation (post-edited and adapted machine translation),
- press digests (collection of summaries of content on a given topic from a single or several sources) + translation,
- press reviews (summaries of articles on a news topic from several sources) + translation,
- archive search,
- on-demand feeds/newsletters on specific topics.

Pricing for those services depends on the service itself and on the client's financial means and type of client (turnover, geographical situation, media/private company, etc). Additional services could make up to 40% of the platform's revenues, if effort is put on marketing them.

Subsidized content

News media lost a sizable percentage of advertising revenues in the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential of recovery to pre-pandemic levels is severely constrained. In this context, state subsidies became more important than ever in securing the financial viability of media markets. State support can be sizeable – total French newspaper subsidies by the state were 32.8 MEUR[40]. However, state support is far from uncontroversial: it can go to the wrong actors, create dependencies, hamper innovation, or open the door to political interference, as particularly evidenced by the Media Pluralism Monitor (2021) in Hungary and Poland[41]. Other types of subsidies that support the production of content are required in order to ensure a

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[40]
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/924325/Plum_DCMS_press_sector_dynamics_-_Final_Report_v4.pdf.

[41]https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/71970/CMPF_MPM2021_final-report_QM-09-21-298-EN-N.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

vibrant and pluralist media. The media sector looks at a long history of content subsidies, spurred by digital disruption – Google News and recent deals between Facebook and Australian publishers are evidence of indirect subsidies to ward off regulation. Civic society organisations and foundations are also playing a key role in subsidies and grants, regarding specific topics of reporting which have a high social impact, such as climate change. For instance, the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation in 2020 provided a 3.5 MUSD grant to the Guardian over a length of 26 months to report on climate change[42].

The platform can generate additional funding through state, civic society, foundations and private sector subsidies and grants for specific content. Such subsidies would be embedded in a review of independence and ethics but could continue the model already prevalent in the media industry. The difference is that subsidies would not be given to a particular publisher, but to a piece of content available on the platform independent of the final editorial environment it appears in. This ensures a wider reach of subsidies and, paired with translation, enables them to reach cross-border audiences. Subsidies could be grouped into content verticals such as climate change, digitisation and others. Our estimate of subsidized content of 1 MEUR in year one is modest assuming the overall volume of subsidies in Europe via public and private sector sources. We base this estimate on a review of public and private subsidies available in Europe and their allocation on a by-publication basis. For instance, the grant afforded to the Guardian (see above translated into 1.37 MEUR per annum).

Revenue sharing of incomes

The revenues generated by the sale of news content is successively shared, proportionally to the number of news items sold. The Agency syndication platform keeps a percentage on sales to generate its own operational revenues.

We estimate that the sales house (Agencies, Franchise agencies or Agency Syndication platform) keep 40% of revenues and the remaining share of 60% is distributed to partners. Additionally, the Agency syndication platform keep a 10% share of revenues generated by the franchise agencies.

The balance of revenues is then shared in the following:

- Agencies members of the alliance keep a 10% share of remaining revenues generated through the Agency syndication platform, i.e. when member agencies didn't sale directly.
- Media sources (Member agencies, news media) get the remaining balance of revenues.

In real life, revenues to be distributed to different media sources may vary pending on the kind of media source (client media company, non-client media company, journalist/freelancer, journalist network) as different percentages may apply per media source.

Revenues for the new platform and media stakeholders

We estimate that over a 3 years' period, revenues generated by the overall ecosystem could reach 26.7 MEUR. Out of these revenues, **the new platform is cumulating 5.1 MEUR (19%), news media industry 5 MEUR, new agencies (net of the new platform) 16.6 MEUR.** Revenues increase per year together with the number of partners and the volume of shared content.

The agency syndication model would be an incremental source of revenue for agencies' media clients, providing a "second life" to some of their existing news content.

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[42] https://www.gatesfoundation.org/about/committed-grants/2020/09/inv017377.

6.2.2. Simulation of possible costs for the new platform

In this more specific implementation of the option Agency Syndication Model, the following elements should be considered as the main components of the platform to be implemented.

Agency Syndication Model	
Content exchange architecture	Central CMS (+ standards APIs when already in place) + FTP for transfer of incoming content.
Quality check and traceability	Whitelisting within the alliance – Manual check.
Content search and discovery	Metadata at producing party and at receiving-party. Central editorial team could also optimize tagging.
Advertising	Not part of the platform itself.
User Data	No personal data involved.
Translation	Machine translation + on-demand post-editing.
Other	Traditional marketplace components (including billing). Hosting/storage. Module for revenue sharing/copyright management.

Content architecture exchange

This Agency Syndication Model would have to be provided as a marketplace based on a central CMS. It is the only reasonable option for a development in the short term. It will also simplify the access towards content from at least 60 expected sources (10 agencies and 50 publishers) operating with their own CMS (let alone potential selected freelancers/high level experts having no CMS).

Due to limited volume expected (1,200 pieces of content per week in Year 3, due to the focus on cold content in a few categories), it looks unnecessary to engage into strong IT integration to automate the feeding of the marketplace with all partners. This would be both too costly and too complex to handle to deliver still limited volume of content in an industry that has yet to transition from email and FTP to more automated ways to exchange contents. An effort could be done on the biggest contributors for integration through APIs (on average 50K EUR between a platform and the CMS, not counting some costs to be supported by the contributor for interfacing at least for testing), but the platform should use essentially for other contributors standard APIs when available with relevant partners and rely otherwise on email/FTP transfers (representing only 20 content per week per source on average). Note that the integration will focus on integrating sourcing of content to the central CMS more than the reverse way, as there are rights management and billing involved on the downstream operations (i.e. content acquisition).

In addition, if the platform is successful, there will be many more customers than sourcing partners and it won't be possible to provide specific integration with all customers (which is not the case today for many agencies still delivering wires via FTP to some of their customers), especially as most of them will buy on a per item/per small packages basis.

The CMS, that would be operated in the cloud, would also come with usual search engine tools, account management and analytics/metrics. The CMS will likely be leveraging features from existing tools in the market but will still require some specific adaptations and developments.

Quality check and traceability

The quality check will be essentially done by agencies and publishers, following strict procedures. With again a focus on small alliances, the central platform will not recheck the content. **This will not involve extra costs for this scenario**.

Content search and discovery

The central platform plays a key role for most operations but is unlikely to add additional layers of indexing beyond translation of metadata (that will be necessarily done for all contents, in addition to snippets). It is also very likely that receiving parties will use translated original metadata but will re-index manually most of the content to localize it. Therefore, the central team's efforts should remain limited to indexation, with some potential additional tagging in case of a strong editorial strategy**. The central tagging would likely be human assisted by machine-based indexing tools, which implies limited extra IT cost** (integrated

with the CMS) **and potentially some staff costs** (likely the editorial team handling also some curation at the same time).

User data

This scenario is essentially an optimisation of reuse of content already produced through efficient distribution channels represented by news agencies. **Their core activities do not involve user data and therefore there is no expected sharing of personal data.** The core focus of this approach is on B2B users only. There is indeed no direct interaction with B2C users managed by the platform. The only B2C interactions are handled as usual by publishers and potentially with news agencies for the ones that have some B2C gateway. Therefore, there is no user data generated in this scenario at the syndicated platform level.

The CMS and billing systems will nonetheless provide consumption data to the platform that could be shared with partners. But this is not consumer data, but B2B user data and does not represent audiences, as content may be acquired but not used. This data won't also provide a view on the audience itself even if published.

Audience data (actual consumption from end users), that could fuel trending topics type solutions, is also very unlikely to be shared by publishers, due to the intermediary role of news agencies, which do not themselves focus on audiences. The scope of content covered by this scenario is anyway very likely too narrow to be attractive for trending topics type module when considering only the marketplace. Developments required are quite cumbersome to handle a very limited activity, which may even raise additional traditional data concerns (like privacy).

Translation

Translation will be done automatically at the platform-level for content description (snippets, etc.) and metadata to allow for easy content discovery by journalists/publishers/agencies. However, additional translation services will be offered to partners/clients as a complement. Translation can include different levels of complexity, each of which requiring different resources: machine translation + basic editing; machine translation + post-editing; machine translation + post-editing and adaptation to clients' specific needs.

Other elements

The marketplace will have to be able to handle traditional features of online stores, typically billing/payment and shopping cart, in addition to things like vendor panel (to set prices). Additional features could be rolled out to automate some processes in case the platform would take off, like notifications, chatbot or reviews/ratings.

Hosting in general will represent very small costs, as most of the content will be text-based and video will consist only in short clips (2 minutes max). We can expect the platform would generate around 10 GB per week of new content and therefore less than 2TB within the 3 years. When using typical cloud storage pricing tools, even if consumed significantly (pricing structure is based on total data stored and monthly downloaded data), the total bill is unlikely to be above 5,000 EUR for year 1 and 20,000 EUR for year 3. Web site hosting for the marketplace will be in the 5,000 EUR range.

More importantly, the billing system will have to be adjusted to handle **revenue sharing mechanisms to split the revenues generated** by the content buyer between the platform, the original content creator (agency, publisher or freelancer), the content distributor (an agency or the platform) and any other party contributing to the sales.

Pricing per packages rather than per item is a bit more complex to implement, as it requires to maintain credit systems (or virtual portfolio).

Investments

While a proper RFP will be needed to get into the details, we can provide here an early estimate of the total platform costs based on confidential discussions with industry stakeholders in the news industry already operating or preparing syndication platforms in Europe (generally with bigger volumes, as their focus in on fresher news/breaking news).

An alternative could be to leverage off-the-shelf e-commerce tools designed to build online marketplaces (generally white label providers) like Mirakl and consider here news media content as e-commerce items.

Indeed, the main difference with most operations of traditional CMS from news media stakeholders is that all content in the agency syndication platform is already produced outside of the platform.

We estimate that IT costs for CMS and extend billing systems and/or a marketplace would **be in the range of 150,000 to 200,000 EUR per year depending on features integrated in the platform to provide more or less automation** (machine translation, assistance for indexation, billing), not including permanent (limited) IT/functional staff to be required for customization, maintenance, support and general administration. We consider in the following the upper range target regarding costs to allow for integration of more (automated) features along the way. Total IT cost (without staff and integration) would represent around 600,000 EUR over the 3 year-period, which can be considered to be spent quite uniformly (more investments in the beginning compared to the size of the platform, but also more developments in year 3 due to integrate more partners and more billing options in the future).

In addition to that, integration with largest contributors (around 10 contributors) would **represent 500,000 EUR investment** (50 KEUR per API for initial development), a quite significant amount but which could reduce staff costs. This investment would likely be mainly supported during the first two years of the platform. In addition, maintenance for the APIs/integration should represent around 10% of cost spent per API per year. New contributors could be added from Year4 in terms of contribution, based on their participation level and volumes of content.

6.2.3. Synthesis of economic results

Figure 9 : Synthesis of the economic simulation for an Agency Syndication platform, MEUR
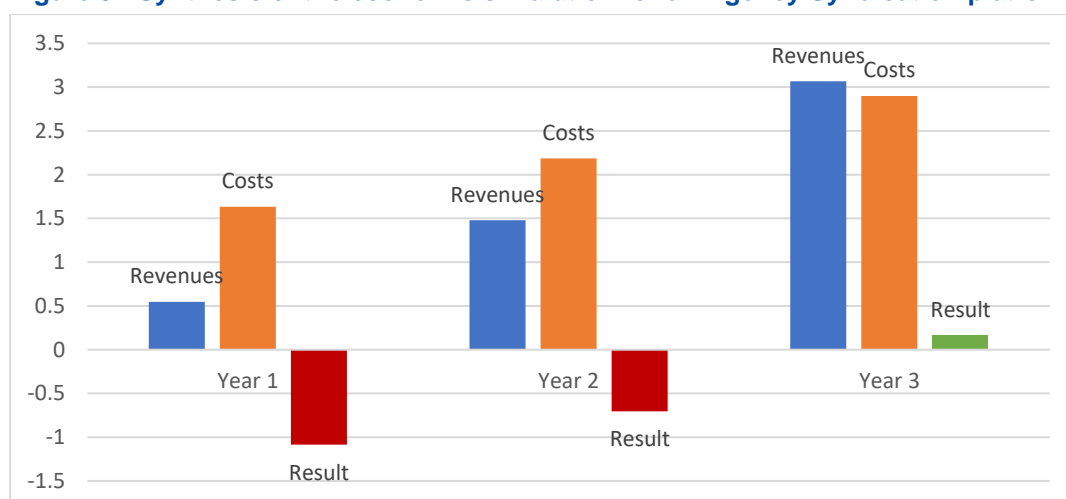
Source: Consortium

Based on our assumptions, the economic simulation shows that a breakeven is achievable 3 years after launch. The split of revenues over the 3 years shows that content sharing and subsidized content are equivalent, in the range of 40%. Concerning the costs, the cost of staff is dominant.

Figure 10 : Agency Syndication platform, breakdown of revenues and costs over 3 years

Revenues   **Costs**

Source: Consortium

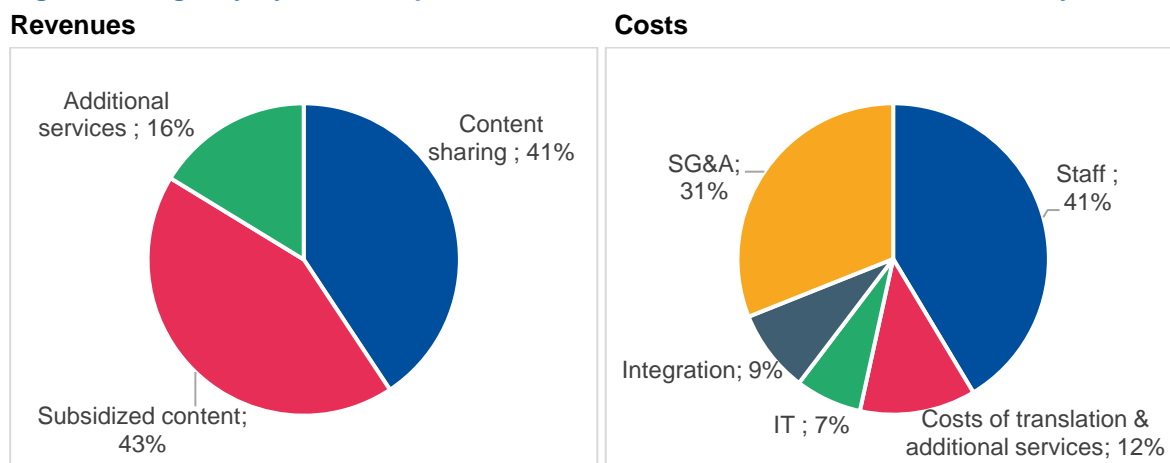EU or national funding, such as subsidies for start-up & development, might help to cover initial costs.

6.3. Next steps for implementation of the Agency Syndication platform

Governance and steps for implementation must be carefully considered. This will be important for the successful set up and running of the platform.

6.3.1. Governance structure

The Agency Syndication Platform should be operated as a stand-alone legal entity under its own brand. The legal structure should be a light one. It would contribute to a quick set up and agreement between participating partners. It would also have to be decided in which country the legal entity would be set up.

This legal entity should be owned and controlled by 2-3 core shareholders. These should include at least one large agency. They would be willing to spend some cash and some management time. It might be a Joint Venture with equity shares according to financial input. Some initial equity amount is necessary to secure the initial financing of the new structure, and to avoid a complete dependency from public funding, especially as its payment terms are not always competitive.

Two alternatives could be envisaged additional equity needs of the platform, particularly if larger players hesitate to join the project during its initial phase:

▪ **Support by a Venture Capital.** This is the case of the Dutch company "The Content Exchange", which operates a journalist – publisher marketplace.

▪ The platform should be considered as part of the sovereign infrastructure of the European Union and could **benefit from** national or EU **funding**, be it loans, grants or investments.

News agencies joining the project subsequently should become franchise partners. Progressively, a higher number of news agencies would become part of the agency syndication platform, without the need to become shareholders. This is particularly relevant for financially weaker small and mid-sized news agencies. Franchise partners would benefit from co-branding of the platform and meet minimum standards and provide sales targets.

A stakeholder advisory group should be set up, consisting mainly of news media professionals, from the publisher and journalist side. They will help to think through strategic, legal and content issues, then helping acceptance by media partners and journalist union. The advisory could also play a strong role when to extend or not the "journalist marketplace", which would help to shape prices for journalistic work and for royalties to be paid to online intermediaries. It should advise the board of the platform on a regular basis on all matters related to the functioning of the platform.

A dedicated central team should be appointed to manage the platform. This team should be fully in charge of running the platform. During the first year it should consist of two management executives (one senior, one junior), two communications executives (one senior, one junior) and two dedicated executives for marketing and training. Last but not least, it should have a content and IT team of two staff (not separating the two aspects to avoid journalistic versus IT culture, or an editorial room, which is not the point of this platform). In year two, an additional staff of six persons should be added and another staff of six in year three. This would also require a decision where to physically set up the offices. Office space, rentals and purchase of equipment as well as administrative organisation would have to be secured.

Issues to consider when planning a joint venture

While joint ventures may take various forms, the parties involved will typically have aligned strategic interests and will enter into a legal arrangement whereby each entity agrees to contribute certain resources in order to achieve a common goal. During this process, the parties should set out clearly the legal parameters of their relationship and how they will share any profits or losses resulting from the venture.

Specific issues to consider when planning a joint venture include:

- **Competition:** parties in the joint venture should be mindful of any anti-trust concerns that may arise when different news agencies and news media publishers cooperate on one platform, especially entities that would normally be competitors on the market. Circumstances in which the same entities are both editing content and negotiating with rights holders for rights to content can potentially raise competitive concerns. However, given the relatively modest size of the venture, the general interest it follows, and chiefly the vast domination by US "Gatekeepers", the endeavour might well be assessed as pro-competition, either allowed or not subject to a competition check at all.

- **Business opportunities:** joint venture parties should agree on a clear process for determining whether a participant is obliged to refer a business opportunity to the common entity or if they can choose to pursue opportunities that arise as an individual company.

- **Trademark law**: branding decisions of the joint venture which may involve use of existing news media trademarks in marketing materials will have to be taken in compliance with intellectual property laws and in agreement with the relevant rights holders.

- **Confidentiality:** joint venture participants should agree on any obligations in relation to confidential or business sensitive information that is shared or developed during the joint venture.

- **Employment laws:** depending on where the joint venture is located, national labour laws will have to be considered such as minimum statutory rights including notice periods, hourly rates of pay and the right to contest any unilateral termination of employment.

- **Taxation:** depending on the location of the joint venture, national laws must be observed regarding corporate taxes, such as corporate income tax and dividend withholding tax.

- **Real estate**: the choice of location will also define national rules that are applicable to real estate agreements. Most ventures setting up will initially rent serviced offices or lease their premises rather than buy them, which allows for more flexibility and avoids the need for a capital outlay.

- **Liquidation clauses:** it is also important to document if one of the participants in the joint venture can unwind and terminate the venture or whether all parties should agree on the termination. It should be clear if, for example, one party can buy out another party.

6.3.2. Next steps for implementation

To successfully implement the new Agency Syndication platform, the next steps could be as described below. Times are indicative and several processes may start in parallel.

Figure 11 : Timeline for implementation

Source: Europe's MediaLab

Preparatory phase (2021-2022)

Clarification and leveraging of relevant EU-financed studies.

Phase 1: Alliance building & strategy

It will be vital to **find a coalition of the willing**. Two to four agencies from different member states and different sizes need to converge on the project. A few news media sources will have to be convinced of the benefits of participating in the project. During the current study period many discussions have already taken place. A critical mass of partners may already be ready to engage in the project.

The partners would have to agree on a common view. This would include an agreement on commercial terms and content strategy. Commercial agreements between agency and news media partners exist already. Trustworthy relationships have been developed in the sector for many years, thanks to inter-agency cooperation. An important issue will be the content strategy and the selection of relevant themes for items to be made available on the platform. Likely topics could include EU Affairs, Digital and Technology, Health, Climate Change. This overall strategy should be summarized into an economic strategy plan (deepening the sizing proposed in this study, certainly adapting, and modifying it), and an MoU between interested partners, subject to funding and shareholder's approval. Regarding media content clients and providers, principles should be clear, but detailed agreements are not needed at this stage.

This alliance building phase should start in 2021 and be finalized beginning of 2022.

The next step could be followed up by relevant EU calls for proposals that could help develop these projects. The Commission has recently outlined plans for the news media and audiovisual sectors in a Media Action Plan. Shareholder commitment would also be beneficial.

These activities should be done in parallel and may be continued beyond the alliance building phase.

Phase 2: Set up of management team, legal entity and branding of the platform

To function properly, **a dedicated management team** would have to be recruited by shareholders of the Joint Venture. This should include senior management staff, including communications and marketing executives. The legal entity would have to be set up in parallel. Specific formalities for the creation of the entity would have to be considered. A light structure without complicated statutes would help to move quickly. The platform's brand trademark would have to be deposited in advance by one shareholder on behalf of the Joint Venture. **The minimum initial funding of the project would need to be negotiated** by that time, even if paid later.

Regarding share capital, most eligible organizations to be involved have limited funds. But working as a consortium would not provide the necessary autonomy and commercial drive - a legal structure and share capital is required.

Contracts should also include **agreements on copyrights and the share of revenues**. These elements would be important to secure that the project can move quickly. Partners and new entrants would have to adhere to this model contract. A case-by-case negotiation with (new) partners would be over burdensome and would significantly slow down the take up of the project.

Current price ranges for the value of different type of items, content and packages will help to define the price setting. A model contract outlining in particular the share of revenues and the obligations of the franchise partners will be needed.

It is important to **distinguish clearly between**:

- **Governance** (a Board representing core shareholders, plus Advisory representing media).
- **Management** (which should have its own drive and autonomy, while the strategy and budget, suggested by management, would be approved on a yearly basis by the Board). Otherwise, whoever leads the management would have to cope with a team "reporting to capitals", and the joint venture would organize editorial cooperation, rather than industrial speed and volume.

In addition to management, and taking inspiration from previous media cooperation, management could chair a "coordinating committee" (see LENA, PressEurop, EURACTIV, etc.), made from content marketing representatives from each participating agency. The joint venture should probably not have an "editorial committee", except in case of new content production projects, as this could slow down decisions to be taken by individual agencies and by the management.

This set-up phase would start in 2022 and last approximately 6 months.

Phase 3: Preparing the technical and operational set up of the platform

The development of the platform should be done by **reusing as much as possible existing tools from the market** (the selection could be done by reusing vendors from the alliance building the platform). The innovation introduced by the agency syndication model is indeed more driven by business aspects than technology aspects. **Time for platform development, that will include at least CMS, search engine, curation tools, account management, metadata management, rights management, billing, is expected to be around 6 months after full definition of specifications** (which will take at least a few months, not including vendor selection). Indexation will be done through a combination of human effort and tools to assist humans reusing existing indexation (done by the source) with automatic translation. The platform will not include B2C user data management, advertising tech or quality check.

Translation will be done automatically at the platform-level for content description (snippets, etc…) and metadata to allow for easy content discovery by journalists/publishers/agencies.

The effort for integration of largest contributors with automation between the central CMS and their own CMS will be done over a longer period. Indeed, specific APIs will be needed to be developed with each agency/publisher differently (everybody using its own CMS, with different flavours). We expect progressive integration of up to 10 key contributors over a 2-year period. Additional key contributors may be added later. Other sourcing partners will provide content through less automated approaches (email and/or FTP), integrated in the CMS by staff.

If the platform develops significantly, some tasks performed by staff would then be automated further.

Phase 4: Actual (beta) launch of the platform

As soon as operational and technical maturity of the platform has been achieved, the launch of the platform should be prepared. Accompanying communications and marketing measures would have to be envisaged. A specific launch event would make sense.

Preparation of the actual launch should take 3 to 6 months, preceded by an important test phase. To "manage expectations" and encourage improvement by partners, it should be positioned as "beta launch". 6 months of operations as "beta" is a typical amount of time.

Phase 5: Expansion

The platform is adding on to current offerings and is not construed as competition to existing business models. The Agency Syndication Model has the potential to grow and to enrich the news media ecosystem.

Further expansion should occur throughout the project and once breakeven point has been achieved. The main objective of this step is to move from quality and partner satisfaction to volume and overall impact.

Efforts would be directed at new clients in small and medium countries, where resources lack to individually cover the topics displayed on the platform. Non-EU countries could be targeted as well. At the end of this phase, 10 agencies and 50-60 news media sources should be part of the project.

The expansion phase would be a period of approximately 1 year.

Phase 6: Leveraging

In phase 6, operations should be above break-even, and possible additional EU funding -subject to competition rules- should be limited to major technology upgrades or "subsidized content". The aim is not to grow a large organization, or a separate Brussels team, but to **expand the flow of content and data through the platform, at the service of the community of agencies and media providers.**

6.3.3. Risk Management

In year one, 4 agencies should be involved in the platform. The risk would be to have less content items available than projected in the starting phase. But the project would still be feasible with a lower number of agencies in Year 1. Firstly, it may be even easier in this case to agree on relevant content and economics, thus speeding up the process. Secondly, the amount of news items made available per partner on the platform is quite conservative in our modelling and could be easily increased to reach sufficient volume with two agencies in year one. Additional regular communication around the benefits of such a platform for citizens, pluralism and not least the media ecosystem, would also help to convince partners to join.

The risk of not sufficient media sources contributing to the news items feed is relatively small as the projection in the modelling is conservative. Even if only two agencies would start the project, first the agencies themselves have a large amount of news items they could pick from. It may even be more interesting for media sources to participate in such a case. Their news items could get more visibility. It may help to sharpen the profile of the platform, thus making it potentially more appealing for clients. This would also contribute to foster sales.

Even though technical costs to set up the platform are relatively low, they may become an issue as it would be an upfront investment for participating agencies. Some partners may not have the economic strength to carry out such investment. Such financing gaps could however be addressed via private (i.e. VC) or public investments (national or European).

7. Appendix

1. Factors affecting development of news platforms' configurations
2. Assessment of options for a new platform – detailed notation
3. Detailed analysis of major options
4. List of interviews & stakeholders

7.1. Factors affecting the development of news platforms' configurations

The following Table presents a list of forces for change, based on the analysis provided on trends. It groups these trends and assesses the approximate levels of uncertainty and impact on the drivers that would define the possible configurations of future news platforms. The assessment of groups of forces is based on consideration of the assessment of each of the component forces. Level of uncertainty and impact are ranked from low (1) to high (4). Concerning uncertainties, 1 means the probability of occurrence of the driver for change is high (low uncertainty) and oppositely 4 means the probability of occurrence of the driver for change is low (high uncertainty).

KEY: notes from 1 (low) to 4 (high)

Drivers for change	Description	Uncertainty	Impact
EU Citizens increasing interest for news		**1.8**	**3.5**
Increasing demand for news	▪ News media is being consumed more than ever before across myriad platforms on a 24/7 basis. The ongoing challenge facing press publishers is therefore to monetise the value of that popularity in the digital environment. ▪ The uplift in TV and social media was experienced during the Covid crisis across all age groups, with under-35s proportionally showing the biggest increase in use of television as well as for using social media to access news. On a longer prospect, online and social media gained the most viewers, mainly at the expense of print segment.	1	4
Appetite for cross-border content	▪ There is no massive but may be specific appetite for cross-border content… ▪ …Local news is still of interest for citizens, 47% of a 2020 Reuters' survey respondents said that they were very or extremely interested in local news[43].	3	3
Need for Quality content	▪ Even if Europeans' trust in traditional media is declining, most of them still trust radio, television or the press, against Internet and online social networks. ▪ The feeling of not being well-informed on European matters is on the rise. However, this trend is challenged on a longer-term analysis. ▪ European citizens are also concerned about the plurality of information. Just over two-thirds of Europeans consider that the media in their country provide a diversity of views and opinions[44].	2	3
Limited use of social media for quality news consumption	▪ European citizens are increasingly consuming news via messaging and social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp). This enables viral circulation of low-quality content. ▪ News media are facing the competition of indirect exposure to news (through social media, other online conversations, documentaries and TV shows, etc.) with the younger generation. News is coming to them. Also to take into account is interest in the periphery of the news space (infotainment, lifestyle, cultural, grassroots, bloggers and vloggers).	1	4

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[43] Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2020.

[44] Media use in the European Union, European Union, 2020.

Better content monetization		**2.4**	**2.3**
Willingness to pay for news content	▪ Pay per article model heavily used in the press didn't meet with success. The willingness to pay for online news is low, readers can find free alternatives, there is a need to develop a user-friendly digital wallet for micropayments. ▪ Experiments with paywalls, subscription models produced notable localised successes, but it is no one-size-fits-all solution.	2	3
Sustainable advertising market for news	▪ It remains challenging for media companies to monetize a service based on advertising revenues. ▪ The digital advertising sector is facing one of its biggest transformations within a decade, spurred by the deprecation of 3rd party cookies[45]. There is a risk of a widening gulf between mid and long-tail publishers in particular. ▪ New solutions are required, and so-called first party data become ever more important, creating potential new opportunities to generate higher ad prices.	3	2
B2B News exchange monetization	▪ Multi-territory Press platforms have been B2B zero sum games so far. ▪ Hybrid models might enable targeting of different sources of revenues and reduce dependency in an uncertain environment.	2	2
Deep incumbent stakeholders' involvement		2.8	3.5
Journalists demand for a mutualized content platform	▪ There is demand for broader access to a marketplace for journalists, leading also to more independence of journalists.	2	4
Publishers demand for a mutualized content platform	▪ There is not consensus on the need for a shared platform, publishers still want to capitalise on their brand and national audience[46].	3	3
Willingness to collaborate / alliance on a multi-countries scale	▪ Media companies know the status quo is not sustainable: they have to cooperate, or merge with others, or "die" (or stagnate). Quite a few intend to cooperate across borders, avoiding direct national competition. But typically, they do not know how to do it, with which infrastructure, or they encountered pitfalls during past experiences. ▪ Partners in content sharing projects need to be mindful of any anti-trust concerns that may arise when different media outlets cooperate on one platform, although the attitude of competition authorities to joint ventures in the media sector may be evolving.	3	4
Partnerships between press and Broadcasters	▪ Press and broadcast publishers mainly rely on separated models, reach or formats. Some linkages in the use of text and video contents, for dedicated needs.	3	3
Higher news content circulation across boarders		2.7	3.3
Collaborative management of rights for cross border content circulation	▪ Effective management of copyright and related rights helps to facilitate the access to copyrighted media content and to favour the circulation of (news) content, even more on a cross border scale. ▪ Besides Contractual and Collective Management of Rights, Extended Collective Licensing (ECL)[47] agreements have won advocates among both rightsholders and users and has been described as a fair and adaptable system. It has played a role in helping stakeholders to reach consensus around agreements for new digital uses of works and is also generally regarded by rightsholders as preferable to statutory approaches to licensing. However, the ECL system	2	2

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[45] https://theconversation.com/googles-scrapping-third-party-cookies-but-invasive-targeted-advertising-will-live-on-156530.

[46] First stakeholder workshop conducted by IDATE and MediaLab.

[47] Long-established in Nordic states, ECL agreements provide an extended effect to the clauses in a collective agreement by applying them automatically to rightsholders who are not direct members of the organisations represented in the collective management organisation.

	may not always align with the preferences of individual media organisations.		
More efficient Legal framework (copyright/privacy)	▪ Effectively handling copyright-related issues has been a central challenge, requiring significant investment of time and resources. ▪ Common platform initiatives have been confronted with the complexity of rights in the EU intellectual property framework.	4	4
Editorial independence maintained	▪ Differences in national approaches to the independence of the media sector and to the handling of complaints have been a challenge for cross-border projects.	2	4
Policy drivers: rebalancing the ecosystem		2	3.5
Horizontal: competition rules	▪ Settling remuneration of news content displayed on online platforms is often difficult. Efficient arbitration mechanisms that could help to ease disputes quickly are missing. Specific arbitration mechanisms could help platform set up. ▪ Bargaining power imbalance between news media industry and dominant online intermediaries is an impediment for the development of platforms. The introduction in Australia of a "News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code"[48],valued such copyrighted content. ▪ Antitrust rules remain burdensome for cooperation between (competing) media outlets and the approval processes lengthy. Market definition privileged so far dominant online intermediaries in relation to news media industry players. Evolving market definition into the role of very large tech companies could foster the creation of online platforms. ▪ Competition concerns may arise if parties operate trade-offs between the sharing of content and the retention of exclusivity for their own services (with possible attached revenues).	2	4
Vertical: news media industry	▪ Bundling (existing) national, EU programs in support of the news media industries might help to develop platforms, to foster pluralism and to avoid "news deserts". Initiatives like the NEWS bundle proposed by the EU Commission in the MAAP (Media and Audiovisual Action Plan) could be important. ▪ Specific media industrial strategies could bring further support.	2	3
Adoption of disruptive technologies		2.5	2.5
Adoption of disruptive technologies like blockchain by traditional news players	▪ A potential disruptive future of the news could rely on decentralized activities at least for content creation / production, provides different priorities, with mostly long-term opportunities. Before real availability at large scale of technologies, developments could unfold through shared procedures among small groups of stakeholders. Technologies would help to enable such developments at larger scale and would likely rely on blockchain to provide: - Quality Traceability[49]. - Content Exchange[50]. - B2B Advertising ID Exchange[51].. - Transactions around content	4	2
Adoption of AI-based (and more generally technology)	▪ Technology is already widely used to automate process and workflow for publication within all types of news media providers for internal operations.	1	3

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[48] On 31 July 2020, the Australian government announced the Treasury Laws Amendment ("News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code" or "News Media Bargaining Code"). The bill seeks to "address a bargaining power imbalance that exists between digital platforms and Australian news businesses" which the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission ("ACCC") identified in its Digital Platforms Inquiry report.

[49] WordProof, a Dutch start-up relies on Blockchain to fight the spread of fake news in the web.

[50] Sanjh is a blockchain-based content marketplace developed by Muvi (the OTT platform provider) allowing users to buy and sell media rights.

[51] Detailed in Task 2 Ad Tech section.

	▪ Digital news media providers distinguish clearly from other traditional news media providers regarding the intensity of usage of artificial intelligence/machine learning. The focus for such players is indeed to scale up which requires implementation of automated processes/tools not only for publication but also for monetization and for content exchange or retrieval (scraping, APIs, etc…)[52].		
Increasing role of global technology companies		2.3	3.7
Tech giants/social media vertical integration in the news segment	▪ A move to vertical integration in video or gaming (i.e. entertainment) content is a reality for some Tech giants such as Apple, Amazon[53], Alibaba or Tencent and help to drive sales. ▪ Social media platforms didn't follow the same path so far. News content is delivered by their (mobile) platforms which prevent successful challenges to their role as (tech) content aggregators. Google, Twitter, TikTok, Facebook look for mass audiences to sale ads, not linked to specific (news) content.	3	4
Tech giants/social media in house development in news content	▪ Development of original news content in house beyond vertical integration not very likely, main role remains content aggregators. While Google News acts as an aggregator and Apple News+ as a platform, there is no significant move towards the production of own news content [54]. ▪ If a deeper investment in news content occurs, impact would be very high according to the market power of their platform.	2	3
Tech giants/social media as solution enablers for EU news media players	▪ Some existing mutualized platforms use part of Tech giants' solutions. They can both focus on technologies (for instance translation) and editorial process (for instance adaptation to web / social media formats[55]). Large uses of these Tech giants assets accelerate adaptation to market needs but also the dependence on possible "Gatekeepers".	2	4
Emergence of new and disruptive production models		2.7	2.0
Unbundling of production and distribution	▪ The disintermediation process is occurring in numerous industries (Uber, Airbnb…), including in the media sector where the distribution chain is shortening ("cut the middleman" i.e. the distributor, between the producer and the end user).	3	2
Data & AI journalism	▪ Some Data journalism[56] initiatives have already been launched in Europe[57], but not on a wide scale. ▪ A further step, AI might increasingly be used in news production. It is already the case, but only for niche markets, where automated writing is based on bots[58], opinion AI based journalism is not yet a reality. Some respond to data about readers' appetites with "listicles" (Buzzfeed or MailOnline) others use AI to spot trends (FT).	2	2
Co-production (between news media & with citizens)	▪ Content is increasingly produced by so called non-professional creators and commonly called "Creators Content". Co-creation/co-production between professionals and content creators could benefit social dialog and enhance available content. ▪ Co-creation is at early stages, strong ethical standards and quality of content has to be secured in this context.	3	2
Emergence of new and disruptive distribution models		3.5	1

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[52] Interviews conducted in Task 2 to determine key technology requirements.

[53] Amazon recently acquired MGM.

[54] Jeff Bezos (not Amazon) acquired the Washington Post in 2013.

[55] Such as social media stories or initiatives like Google DNI.

[56] Use and examination of statistics in order to provide a deeper insight into a news story and to highlight relevant data.

[57] https://www.sonareurope.eu/ ; https://www.europeandatajournalism.eu/eng/Resources-for-Journalists.

[58] Los Angeles Times has Quakebot, BBC has Juicer, the Washington Post has Heliograf, "and nearly a third of the content published by Bloomberg is generated by a system called Cyborg".
Source : https://www.forbes.com/sites/calumchace/2020/08/24/the-impact-of-ai-on-journalism/.

Public transportation companies' cross broader distribution	▪ Some public transportation companies already provide news content to their customers (Buses, Airlines, Trains[59], Taxi companies). However, these services compete with mobile apps and target a very specific audience, which only in some cases crosses borders via public transportation. Impact on the overall news market is low.	3	1
Cross fertilization with third party industries	▪ News and general interest content don't generate enough traction in terms of consumer gains or as revenue' driver to generate a massive move from (European) vertical industries. Ad sponsor news might be an outcome. ▪ Some specific initiatives[60] could emerge, but not on the wide scale necessary to impact the market for news delivery and linked investment in new platforms.	4	1

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[59] https://www.trenitalia.com/en/services/entertainment_onfrecciarossaandfrecciargentotrains.html.

[60] https://tunein.com/podcasts/Podcasts/Animal-Talking-with-Garry-Whitta-p1359697/.

7.2. Assessment of options for new platform(s) – detailed notation

We measured for each scenario the level of impact of 12 key factors of success, regrouped in 6 categories (Economic Impacts for the news industry, Acceleration of Innovation, Impact for the citizen, Implementation conditions, Incumbent Stakeholders' involvement, Impact on EU news ecosystem) with similar weighting. The detailed notation per factor, from 1 (low) to 5 (high) was made through a co-construction process with consortium experts though several internal workshops. It also integrates results and trends from previous tasks of the report. The notation also considered the remarks provided during the first workshops in June in which top 6 scenarios were presented without marks and ranking to fine-tune the assessment per factor. Finally, this analysis drives to a ranking of options presented below and tested during workshops (during the first workshop, the options were presented without ranking, while late June and in September, options were presented with ranking).

Table 4 : Assessment for pre-selected options

	B2B2C News Publishers Marketplace		Agency Syndication Model		Agency & Journalists Syndication Model		Journalist Publisher Marketplace(s)		B2B2C Platform Broadcasters		Tooling / formatting	
Result		2.9		3.6		3.6		2.9		3.4		3.1
Economic Impacts for the news industry		3.5		4		4		3.5		3.5		3.0
Cost optimization	Mutualize the tech part only where necessary and more (cost)efficient. The marketplace tech would need to be mutualized but other aspects e.g. advertising not.	4	Yes, could build on existing agreements and collaborations, but promoting the content internationally would need reworking.	4	Yes, would build on existing structures, agreements, and collaborations. Would give access to more content and increase distribution capacity (across borders).	4	Cost savings related to news productions for publishers and agencies (costs are more variable than fixed).	4	Cost reduction in mutualization of tools (through mutual funding and larger scale). Options for co-production.	3	Use of cost-efficient tech tools. Increasing costs for new formats.	4
Revenues generation	Increase overall readership plus revenues by reaching a new nondomestic public across borders.	3	Helps to set ''arm's length price'' for content sharing; Requires an effective rights management system to ensure participants are appropriately remunerated in this two-way system.	4	Would contribute to set an "arm's length price". Different financing models of agencies are to be taken into account. Additional source of income for Journalists and freelancers. Could give direct access to consumer (BtoC gateway -e.g. "window" on EU topics).	4	Yes, if lead to a more direct relationship. Impact on incumbent revenues? Might give more revenue sources to journalists/freelancers i.e. Change of hierarchical (inter)dependence Could strengthen the ability of freelancers to ask for appropriate remuneration.	3	Increase overall readership plus revenues by reaching a new nondomestic public across borders. The impact on the market for private sector media should be taken into account.	4	Positive impacts if ad tools and/or tools favouring engagement with the content are used, neutral otherwise Potential for monetization of data be regarding users and targeted advertising.	2
Acceleration of Innovation		3		3.5		3.8		2.5		3.0		4.5
Innovative (news) end user product	Learning curve / consumer.	3	More content that be provided in bundles (articles, videos, images).	3	could deliver a mix of a multitude of content, across borders and on regional level	3.5	No major change, journalists to become more entrepreneurial.	2	Innovation focused on Multimedia content, but leading broadcasters already advanced.	3	Focus on the development of new formats by leading start-ups and social media. News content providers adapt to these formats.	5

	B2B2C News Publishers Marketplace		Agency Syndication Model		Agency & Journalists Syndication Model		Journalist Publisher Marketplace(s)		B2B2C Platform Broadcasters		Tooling / formatting	
Innovative process	Limited incremental innovation in processes, as broadcasters have already some technical.	3	New framework including many different players (agencies, media) and syndicated agency.	4	New framework including many different players (agencies, media, journalists/freelancers).	4	Disruptive, if Blockchain is used to scale (low prospect in the two/three coming years).	3	Limited incremental innovation in processes, as broadcasters have already strong technical alliances.	3	Use of best in class tools for widespread adoption.	4
Impact for the citizen		**4.5**		**4.5**		**4.5**		**4**		**4.0**		**2.5**
Pluralism	More diversified sources of content within a new network.	4	In addition to agency's content, compelling content from other leading media organizations. Leads to increase of available content with cross border relevance. Views from different member states increase pluralistic variety. Citizens would benefit via their national media outlets.	4	Agency content + independent journalistic /freelancers content plus syndication/media content would further help to foster pluralistic cross border views.	4	Increase in diversification of content production; multiplying sources, network editor needed for publishers.	5	More diversified sources of content, however within a pre-existing network.	3	No clear positive impact on circulation of content across borders Potential to keep consumers on online intermediaries system, with a detrimental impact for the online offers of established news media.	2
Quality content	Professional news content only.	5	Agencies and news media are guarantors of quality content. Upholding of quality standards will depend on the selection/agreements with third party sources; can also go to "broad niche content"; No "hot" or breaking news content, allowing more serene verification; adding of relevant video quality content.	5	Content would be by definition verified as it is professional quality content. Could include "niche" and "cold", investigative content. Could extend to video and other content and/or formats. No "hot" or breaking news content. No rushed verification risk.	5	Need for quality check; journalistic professional standards should apply for participating journalists /freelancers (as today), if nonprofessional players -quality control/trustworthiness indicators.	3	Professional news content only.	5	Grey zone. Will depend on each actor and the (editorial) choices made.	3
Implementation conditions		**2**		**2.5**		**2.5**		**2**		**3**		**4**
Tech maturity - Easy to leverage existing solutions	Current usage of tech quite limited Possible joint investment in software systems, digital rights mechanisms and remuneration systems.	2	Still some tech improvements needed for video and images (indexation, analysis)	3	Some tech improvements for video and images still needed. Effective rights management needed for proper remuneration.	3	Blockchain for tracking? technology for exchange on open markets is existing. Requires granular rights management system to track all uses of content.	1	Still some tech improvements needed for video and images (indexation, analysis).	3	Use of best-in-class technology, as leading tech players can leverage their technology expertise regarding content technologies.	4
Easy to operate without significant additional budget	Likely some central CMS or Index will be required, but overall investment should remain small and leverage existing tech.	2	Investments needed if focus on video (storage, CMS).	2	Technical development beyond text needs further investments.	2	Likely no need for central CMS but additional costs for Blockchain as the implementation for the news industry is not mature.	3	Still some significant costs due to video more developments around video.	3	Investments in specific blocks/solutions only as leading tech players can leverage their technology expertise for more traditional blocks (AI).	4
Incumbent Stakeholders' involvement		**1**		**3.5**		**3.5**		**2**		**3.0**		**2**

	B2B2C News Publishers Marketplace		Agency Syndication Model		Agency & Journalists Syndication Model		Journalist Publisher Marketplace(s)		B2B2C Platform Broadcasters		Tooling / formatting	
Willingness to cooperate	No clear willingness to cooperate Coopetition, national brands.	1	Interesting at least for medium and small agencies & media companies. More balanced for largest groups.	4	Interesting for agencies, syndication players, big and small media companies, freelancers and journalists.	4	Possibly win-win situation for publishers and journalists. More freedom for journalists/freelancers, but status of journalists possibly at risk.	2	Enhancement of existing cooperation for PSBs, unclear for private companies (Commercial TV & press) Potential to create synergies or tensions with private sector media, depending on the degree of cooperation.	3	Coopetition but publishers already using solutions.	3
Ability to find a leader	No clear leader Participants will have to be mindful of branding and co-branding issues.	1	New agencies as drivers Possibly governed autonomously by a management board.	3	New agencies would be drivers, support of journalist syndicates essential.	3	Existing (small) initiatives. New entrepreneurs Issue of governance of open marketplace.	2	EBU as a possible driver? Positive for PSBs, challenging for private players.	3	No common platform.	1
Impact on EU news ecosystem		**3.5**		**3.5**		**3.3**		**3.5**		**4**		**2.5**
Increase in the circulation of EU content	Likely increase by automation at large scale of alliances and peer exchanges.	3	Agencies know their content/customer needs and can tailor accordingly. Enhancement of "cold" content offering. Increases relevance of non-national content (content from other member states), Increases cross border dissemination of non-breaking news content.	4	Would enhance circulation at EU level, but also at regional level. Would provide for deeper insight and understanding of cold topics cross EU; no "hot" news content.	4	Very likely thanks to involvement of more contributors (freelancers) getting a better reach.	5	Very likely. Consideration should be given as to whether private sector media would have the right to re-use public service content.	4	Increasing content circulation thanks to user friendly formats and interfaces. Any negative impact on established news media will ultimately affect the creation and circulation of quality news media.	4
Sovereignty	EU based news media players. Possible joint ventures could operate across borders, such as in common language groupings.	4	Potential to provide international content for media without a foreign correspondent network. Could foster European angle and view in other member states.	3	Would be first with EU based players (Agencies, media). Could extend to non-EU players (i.e., NYT syndication).	2.5	Possibly broader scope than the EU. Could enable journalists to provide content to assignments for media outside their own country.	2	Solution mostly developed by EU based news media players.	4	Significant dependency on US technologies and platforms.	1

Notes: 1 to 5. 1 least favourable, 5 most favourable for the attractiveness of the option

Source: Consortium

Table 5 : Assessment for other options

	Vertical ad sponsored news		Tech giants integration with content		B2C based on White Label		Tech giants service with fair compensation		European Google News		B2B alliances (News Exchanges)	
Result		1.8		2.2		2.3		2.8		2.4		2.7
Economic Impacts for the news industry		1		1.5		2		4		2.0		2.5
Cost optimization	None.	1	In house for tech giants/online intermediaries. Limited only to partners/target acquired.	2	A white label platform to create, APIs to plug-in. No impact for the news industry itself for costs.	1	Yes, tech costs largely outsourced. Also cost of design of new formats for tech giants/online intermediaries.	4	Likely greenfield solution, therefore no cost optimization.	1	Deepening of existing alliances already focused mainly on cost optimization.	4
Revenues generation	Marginal gain for news media industry.	1	Captured by tech giants/online intermediaries, likely marginal.	1	Monetization of news content is not the core objective, rather based on audience engagement. Potential of large deals reaching non-traditional news readers (low value, large volume).	3	Agreements with tech giants/online intermediaries lead to consistent revenue sharing for publishers. Lower revenues per unit compared to publishers' B2C services.	4	Big opportunity, but challenging competition with Big Tech solutions.	3	Mostly Zero-sum game B2B partners have strong control over the way they manage their copyright & related rights.	1
Acceleration of Innovation		1.5		2		2.5		2		2.0		2
Innovative (news) end user product	Some new use cases or interfaces will merge due to the collaboration with verticals, but this will remain quite limited (or handled by vertical players themselves).	2	Innovation led by tech giants/online intermediaries, but not benefiting to the news media industry.	2	"Same type of news" will be delivered with some options for new user interfaces, but this will not change significantly the news media industry.	2	Low innovation needed on tech (handled by tech giants/online intermediaries) but more important on formats. News industry to adapt even more to tech giants/intermediaries services and formats.	3	Initiative would differentiate more on quality content than on formats to limit the financial risks (already huge).	2	Initiative limited to B2B scope, therefore no impact on products from the option.	1
Innovative process	Few positive externalities. Low innovation overall (reuse of existing products and services).	1	Innovation led by tech giants/online intermediaries, no positive externalities for the industry.	2	New ways to deliver news content outside the traditional news media industry.	3	Low innovation needed on tech (handled by tech giants/online intermediaries).	1	New workflow will be necessary, but this will come as an addition to existing workflows rather than modify existing ones.	2	Cooperation should bring benefits through more standardized approaches/processes.	3
Impact for the citizen		1		1.5		2.5		1		3.5		3.5
Pluralism	No impact.	1	Vertical integration drives to less plurality in quality content.	1	Not a main target.	2	Transparency of algorithms?	1	More diversified sources of content but depend on the number of partners.	3	More diversified sources of content, but no clear positive impact on circulation of content across borders.	2
Quality content	Partial views due to sponsoring. No guarantee for diverse quality content.	1	Quality content lives side by side with third party content. No quality control.	2	Preselection of quality content in the kiosk (but likely combined with some sponsored content).	3	Mix with external content, mostly unchecked.	1	Professional news content and addition of third-party content to scale with volume (critical mass).	4	Respect value of journalists - guaranteed via professional B2B set up.	5
Implementation conditions		4.5		4		2.5		4.5		2		3

	Vertical ad sponsored news		Tech giants integration with content		B2C based on White Label		Tech giants service with fair compensation		European Google News		B2B alliances (News Exchanges)	
Tech maturity - Easy to leverage existing solutions	Will essentially use existing tools (limited innovation).	4	Tech giants/online intermediaries leverage their advanced technologies and solutions.	4	Would likely reuse existing basic features. But major questions of integration to provide plug and play.	3	Tech giants, online intermediaries' tools Need to develop selected solutions.	4	Greenfield solution, reusing mostly existing technology concepts to limit the risk.	3	Current usage of tech is quite limited therefore training needed to bridge the gap.	3
Easy to operate without significant additional budget	Will essentially use existing tools (limited investments).	5	Tech giants/online intermediaries leverage their advanced technologies and solutions and therefore do not need investments.	4	Investments needed (unclear business model and capacity to scale).	2	One of the main goals of this option for publishers: no developments required as they are supported by tech giants/online intermediaries.	5	Greenfield solution to be developed and operated from scratch.	1	Limited investments for text based but almost starting from scratch / news exchange room.	3
Incumbent Stakeholders' involvement		**1.5**		**2.5**		**2**		**3.5**		**1.0**		**2**
Willingness to cooperate	Driven by vertical players, case by case Low implication of incumbent news media players.	1	Can either be one to one partnership(s) or takeover(s), depending on competition authorities and players' strategy. Only a few incumbent news media players involved.	3	News as an add on for verticals. Low implication of incumbent news media players.	2	Yes, on tech tools, more difficult on the distribution side, depending on the "fair compensation".	3	Very low prospect. Needs a very high implication of Low implication of incumbent news media players.	1	Some deals already exist, uncertainties on pushing further.	2
Ability to find a leader	Driven by vertical players, case by case Could also be driven by advertising association.	2	Tech giants/online intermediaries, linked publisher lose ground and control.	2	Driven by newcomer(s).	2	No leader needed besides common tech specific developments.	2	Who takes the risk?	1	No clear leader, would be case by case..	2
Impact on EU news ecosystem		**1.5**		**1.5**		**2.5**		**2**		**4**		**3**
Increase in the circulation of EU content	Limited impact	1	Circulation bordered to tech giants/online intermediaries' agreements/acquisitions with selected publishers, but probably on a wider (abroad) scale	2	Some additional channels for circulation of contents.	3	Very likely but exposure might depend on agreements, algorithms.	3	Very likely.	4	Limited to B2B scope.	2
Sovereignty	Depending on the players involved - EU native or not. Unlikely to foster European views.	2	Negative impacts on sovereignty. Only reach centred, pluralistic views not a priority at all. No adhesion to EU values.	1	Depending on newcomer(s) at the initiative.	2	Negative impacts on sovereignty. Quality, pluralism and EU values are not a concern.	1	Best option (unless open as in GAIA-X).	4	EU based news media players Offers flexibility and the possibility of adapting arrangements in line with any demand for cross-border products and services.	4

7.3. Detailed analysis of major options in a 3 years' timeframe

In the following, we have developed the analysis of top options and of remaining alternative options that can be considered realistic.

Option 1: B2B2C News Publishers Marketplace(s)

B2B2C News Publishers Marketplace(s)

The B2B2C marketplace would go beyond simple B2B alliances. It would be a sales driven commercial marketplace (to C element). The marketplace would provide for a (light) infrastructure supporting content deals (shared content) and possibly data deals.

Such marketplace would foster cross-border exchanges of quality content. The tech part would be mutualized where necessary and would provide for cost efficiency. It would not only allow the exchange on B2B basis but would be directed at a new public. It would also favour co-production of content.

Objective(s)	Main target(s) of the option	Main players involved
• Create a new marketplace for distribution of quality content across borders • Accessing a new public via that marketplace	• Increasing overall readership • Increase income for news publishers • Broader access to content for the consumer, bigger choice	• News publishers' companies • B2B alliances • News publishers' networks

Context

Articles are poorly reaching EU consumer across borders while press publishers are organized on a national basis. Some few initiatives such as Vox Europe exist but they have low reach so far.

Drivers	Hurdles
• Increase of content circulation • Sharing resources and joining forces • Mutualization of tech part • Scalability potential	• Post-editing and translation issues • Filtering of articles • Findability and relevance of content • A B2C component would require additional investments from news publishers, expected revenues would not justify the investment needed.

Impacts

For news publishers:

Impact for news publishers would be low to medium. This option would improve cross border access to content. It could provide for cost-efficiency gains for content production and distribution. It could open up additional income for news publishers as this option goes beyond B2B exchanges (end users would be able to access the marketplace and consume content against payment).

For end users:

Impact for end users would be low to medium. It would increase the choice of end users as additional news content would enhance the diversity of available content. This option would though not lead to one new single European destination for news content.

Competition:

In this option, several marketplaces could be envisaged. Brand identity of news publishers would be maintained at national level. Business models would continue to primarily focus on national audiences of news publishers. Moving to a more European footprint would mean to increase the risk of harming revenues on national markets of networks and news publishers. There is low willingness to cooperate at EU level. So far, no leader identified to push for this option.

EU added value & European perspective:

This option would have a strong impact on pluralism. It would foster the availability of quality content. End users would have access to more and diverse European content, with different point of views. European perspective as well as insights from the member states would be become more accessible.

Implementation conditions and need for support

The marketplace would be adaptable in size. It would need to have a (light) technological infrastructure. The issue of automated translation and post-editing would have to be addressed and further developed. Recommendation systems ensuring findability of relevant content and avoiding "echo chamber" would be needed.

Option 2: Agency Syndication Model

Agency Syndication Model		
Agencies usually produce their own content which they then license to news media. Such licensing is normally done on national level. In this option, news agencies would also syndicate content from news media and/or open syndication players. They would then license such content to existing and further clients. It would increase content to be made available to their partners. Alternatively, Agencies could likely choose not to focus on "hot" domestic and policy news, but rather on cold content like deeper features (on few good themes, e.g. EU, Digital, health, which "travel" well), or on investigations (extending the reach beyond investigative media). Distribution across borders would be particularly interesting. Content could also extend to video content or other content. Under this model a new marketplace would be created as agencies would act two ways (in and out licensing).		
Objective(s)	**Main target(s) of the option**	**Main players involved**
Increase exchange of quality news content of news agencies by two-way syndication: news agencies would go from selling to news media to also syndication from them. Contacts between them are already established even if (some) news media outlets are not customers of (all) agencies and could help to set up business models: • distributing on national level via agencies + European level marketplace via agency syndication platform, • selling and purchasing on national level + European wide meta marketplace. Helping to set an "at arm's length price" for content sharing in general, including for negotiations with GAFA. Actors of the sector itself will value the prices for selling and buying pursuant to news media ecosystem. Increase dissemination of non "hot" non-breaking news content across border.	New ways to exploit content, fostering diversification and monetization with focus on syndication. First focus is B2B.	Publicly financed news agencies, privately financed news agencies, state owned news agencies, news media companies, open syndication players.
Context		
News agencies are already exchanging content. In this option one could build on existing technical structures, but also on existing trust and commercial relationships between players. The model is scalable as new features and new (video) content could be added. It is prone to cross border exchanges.		

Drivers	Hurdles
• Increase of content availability • Could build on existing structures and agreements • Increase of cross border exchanges • Delivers additional income for "cold" content • Increase of availability of content for regional players (countering "news deserts") • Can be developed step by step; scalable • Open to different kinds of content and formats (i.e. video)	• Change of mindset needed (from competition to collaboration) • Adaptation of business models • Securing functioning rights management system

Impacts

For agencies:
Medium impact for agencies. This option would optimize the use of resources. It would also increase their syndication capacities. More quality content would be available. It would lead to broader income opportunities for agencies as they would have more diversified content on offer and provide for additional income sources for existing content.

For news media:
This option would open up a new revenue stream for news publishers by making their content available to the (strong) distribution capacities of agencies. News publishers could reach a new public in countries where their content has so far not been available and where they did not themselves have the capacities to monetize their content.

For end users:
Citizens would benefit from broader access to content via the destination of media publishers. This option would however primarily remains a B2B scenario.

Competition: A new business model would have to be introduced in order to remunerate news publishers furnishing quality content. Revenue sharing models possibly based on existing agreements between agencies and news media publishers would have to be developed.

EU added value & European perspective:
This model would foster pluralism and increase the availability of EU quality news content. Beyond EU topics it would allow to have additional views from member states and/or regional perspectives. Deeper understanding of EU and the functioning of the Union for the end user could be achieved.

Implementation conditions and need for support

• Other content like video could be added
• Governance important: should be run autonomously by management (95% of decision making ''not like a club''), controlled by (small) board (shareholders, media companies), + advisory partner group to test hypothesis., EU funding instruments, such as INVEST EU may help
• Optional preparatory joint Brussels newsroom, those gathering / producing content in Brussels could share a newsroom

Option 3: Agency & Journalists Syndication Model

Agency & Journalists Syndication Model
This option goes beyond the scenario described in the Agency Syndication Model. News agencies would sell to news media and also syndicate content from news media and/or open syndication players. In addition, it opens up a marketplace for journalists and freelancers that can share their content via the agency syndication platform. The agencies include such content in their exchange programme. This model could also extend to include other marketplaces, for example once developed sufficiently, a journalist publisher marketplace(s). Available quality news content would significantly increase. Distribution across borders would be particularly interesting. Circulation on regional level would also improve.

Objective(s)	Main target(s) of the option	Main players involved
Increase exchange of quality news content of news agencies by two-way syndication plus adding additional content sources by including journalists and freelancers in the model; Increase of syndication would be across borders, but also on regional level (countering the danger of having "news deserts"). It would further help to set an "at arm's length price" for content sharing in general. All actors of the sector itself will value the prices for selling, buying and licensing pursuant to news media ecosystem.	New ways to increase availability of quality news content. Overcoming given structures by opening up closed system, in particular with respect to Journalists and freelancers leading to additional income source for them. Fostering diversification and monetization with focus on syndication. First focus is B2B inclusion of additional players, with a possible extension to B2C from central interface/platform in the future.	Publicly financed news agencies, privately financed news agencies, state owned news agencies, news media companies, open syndication players. Journalist and freelancers. Journalist networks. Journalist Publisher Marketplace(s).

Context
News agencies are already exchanging content. In this option one could build on existing technical structures, but also on existing trust and commercial relationships between players. Journalist and freelancers are diversifying their activities and finding additional or new revenue sources. Journalist Publisher Marketplaces are such an example. It would help augment quality news content and secure a wider circulation of such content. The model is scalable as new features and new (video) content could be added. It is prone to cross border exchanges, but also to regional circulation.

Drivers	Hurdles
• Increase of content availability • Additional income sources for journalists/freelancers • Combining (new) marketplace(s) • Could build on existing structures and agreements • Increase of cross border and on regional level (countering "news deserts") circulation. • Can be developed step by step; scalable • Open to different kinds of content and formats (i.e. video)	• Change of mindset needed (from competition to collaboration) • Adaptation of business models • Breaking down of existing silos • Securing functioning rights management system

Impacts
For agencies and for news media: Impacts would include those outlined under the Agency Syndication Model. In addition, it would open-up additional revenue streams via the dedicated marketplace. The marketplace would be opening-up for new client and thus have the potential to provide additional income streams to agencies and news publishers. This could primarily be B2B income via new clients not linked to national agencies. This could also include new clients. Inclusion of journalist/freelancer content could increase syndication capacities and make more quality content available. It would create broader income opportunities. For journalists: This model would offer a new and additional income stream for journalists/freelancers. They could further disseminate their content, eventually refurbishing existing articles/reports. Journalists/freelancers would not deliver new materials. Income model for journalists /freelancers would be revenue sharing. Agencies

would not go out of pocket and bear the risk for (new) content production by journalists/freelancers. Journalists /freelancers would not produce new articles. This model would help to strengthen independence of journalists and freelancers by providing them with additional income via the exploitation of their content via the new agency syndication platform.

More quality content available for syndication.
Larger and broader exchange of quality news content across borders and within regions. Strengthening the independence of journalists and freelancers. Optimisation of the use of resources, possibility to share resources (in production); increase syndication capacities creating broader income opportunities.

For end users:
This option would lead to larger and broader exchange of quality news content across borders and within regions. It could provide a gateway for end users to get deeper insight on EU topics. Different national and/or regional point of views would be accessible.

Competition:
Revenue sharing contracts would have to be established between the different players. The business model would not include upfront payments by any of the players. Regarding the 2C element it could be either a show case only function or a 2C gateway for interested end users. To avoid unintended cannibalization effects between the new marketplace and the national new media outlets (no competition between themselves), the gateway should highlight the topics/headlines. The respective article /report/ analysis behind it should be linked to the respective news media publisher at national level.

EU added value & European perspective:
This option would foster and secure availability of EU quality news content across borders. It could become a dedicated entry point for specific EU topics beyond Brussels. It would offer a broader European perspective. A larger variety of views (regional and national) could become available. and thus increase This would benefit citizens with a larger choice of EU centered quality content. Availability of more diverse quality news items would foster pluralism.

Implementation conditions and need for support

- Cooperation and proper Governance between different partners/stakeholders are essential
- Breaking down and opening up existing silos
- Adaptation of business model
- Initial start-up funding

Option 4: Journalist–Publisher Marketplace

Journalist – Publisher Marketplace

This option would change and possibly break down existing silos and dependencies between independent journalists/freelancers and news editors. Content posted on this marketplace would not be directed to one specific publisher, but to a whole community of publishers. The interest of the journalist would be to be published by a maximum of publishers. Journalists would bear in mind the entirety of the publishers. The editor would have a much broader access to journalistic content, way beyond its core team. At the same time the editor would keep the exclusivity of its audience (via its brand).

Objective(s)	Main target(s) of the option	Main players involved
• Create on open (European) marketplace for journalistic work • Decrease dependency of journalists and freelancers • Broader access of publishers to quality content • Increase in choice, more syndication • Better tracking of author's rights • Less management and overhead costs	• Increase of available and more diversified content • Breaking down silos and interdependence • Increase of income for journalists, freelancers and journalist networks • Cost reduction for publishers	• News media publishers • Journalists • Freelancers • Journalist networks • Possibly: Broadcasters

Context

Dependency of independent journalists/freelancers towards publishers leads to silo mentality. Independent journalists need their editor/news outlet to be published. They thus constantly think of what a specific editor may want, with the risk of narrowing down content to these particular needs.

In this model, freelancers and independent journalists would increase their chances to choose their own content and sell it beyond a single editor. Journalists would get credits for every piece of them that is published and remuneration would be based on the number of credits. Publisher would have access to more content at less cost. Publishers would become network editors.

Breaking down these silos would also benefit consumers with broader choice.

Drivers	Hurdles
• Journalist, freelancers and journalist networks broader access to marketplace(s) • More independence of journalistic work • Additional/new income streams for journalistic work • More access of publishers to quality content	• Loss of hierarchical power of publishers towards journalists • Uncertainties regarding business model and revenue streams (race to the bottom vs virtuous circle) • Change management and skills required

Impacts

For journalists/freelancers:

This option would offer freelancers and journalists additional income sources. It would give freelancers access to a bigger marketplace. Articles /content would be shared across borders and beyond existing silos (with news publishers). A larger number of news publishers could be reached by freelancers. Journalists would have the opportunity to sell articles/reports/news content beyond outside their standard relationship with news publishers. This option would secure bigger independence of both journalists and freelancers as well as journalist networks and it would secure additional income streams. It should though be expected that revenues will be shared and no upfront payments will be made to journalists/freelancers.

For publishers: They would lose hierarchical power and influence over journalists and freelancers. They would however benefit to have access to more quality content at lesser production costs. They would have to adapt to this new business model. They would move more into becoming network editors.

For end users: This option remains primarily a B2B option. End users would however benefit from a broader choice of content. It would increase and diversify the availability of quality content.

Competition:

The governance of this option would be a major issue. It would require cooperation and it would need a sound governance structure. Fair share of revenues and reasonable pricing will be essential to make this model sustainable. Independence of the marketplace would be crucial.

EU added value & European perspective:

Quality of content would increase as journalists/freelancers would be able to address a more holistic view, i.e. the cross European perspective. More in depth reporting and more elaborated, rich and pluralistic news content would become available. It would strengthen the European narrative. It would lead to a more educated view on EU topics with cross border dimension.

Implementation conditions and need for support

Change management required as existing silos are dismantled. Concerns of publishers due to loss of hierarchical control towards journalists have to be addressed. For the model to work a critical mass of editors has to be attracted to the marketplace. Technical structures (findability, translation and possibly post-editing) need to be (further) developed, including for (author's) rights management. Business model to be further developed (i.e. specific credit(s) for each journalistic work published, remuneration then based on number of credits.

Option 5: B2B2C Platform Broadcasters

B2B2C Platform Broadcasters		
In this option, beyond first mutualizing their news exchange through a B2B platform, European broadcasters pick and select content (text, video) according to their respective or shared editorial needs, targeting the end user though their own consumer destination. PSBs and potentially private news houses are involved.		
Objective(s)	**Main target(s) of the option**	**Main players involved**
Favour the circulation of programs and address the end user though players and not a common destination Mutualize the tech part only where necessary and more (cost)efficient Favour co-production to meet multi-countries audiences? Accelerate cross platforms distribution and adaptation of formats	• professional broadcasters (newsroom and web editors with a client facing role) • National or EU citizens	PSBs, News broadcasters, Commercial TV channels, possibly other news media in a second step (partnership rather than convergence) Existing associations, such as EBU, could be a catalyser

Context

News Broadcasters already produce video and text news, including specific formats and adaptations for alternative platforms (social media, web-based destinations, apps…).
The circulation of news content doesn't start from scratch in the European broadcasting industry.
- B2C: Pan European (and sometimes world) news TV channels already exist on a large scale, for some in 3 to 4 languages, with international footprint and audience.
- B2B: besides agencies, a news TV exchange has been developed at the European level for PSBs, together with the EBU.
- B2B2C: the syndication market of news is already running between TV channels and third parties (web destinations, apps…).

Drivers	**Hurdles**
• Financial resources for large TV channels (not for news channels) and technical know how • Mutualization process started on a national level for entertainment (and more) through the development of HBVOD services • Trend for news content regionalization (local insertion, ads...) for international (news) channels • Local language is a powerful video audience driver	• Centralization of the platform can be an issue for video files (large size) • Rights management are still complex (length, territory, press agencies) • Translation tools need improvements • EU consumer destination would need to create an audience and a sustainable standalone business model • Ability to cooperate between TV public and private stakeholders

Impacts

Multiple possible configurations, News vs Generalist TV, TV or web destination (and written news), driving different level of impacts.
- For broadcasters: low to medium impact, enhancement of news exchanges and addition of some European news content. Favouring the migration to digital would have the strongest impact together with costs savings in in news production, feed.
- For end user: low to medium impact, no new single European destination for news consumption, securing access to quality content and higher media pluralism. The impact on media consumption is low as additional news content enhance the diversity of content but on a given topic and on a given (broadcaster) consumer destination.

Competition
- A client facing solution makes more sense for broadcasters but the question raises upon national vs European footprint (competition issues, brand). Moving further to PSBs on a B2C option with private players will involve some form of exclusivity. A step further, a single European destination for the consumer would open up tricky negotiations on exclusivity, editorial line-up (selection of categories of news), business model and would generate high risks on revenues on native markets for players.

EU added value & European perspective

- News content syndication helps to build a European B2B news market in a safe environment (all the news content is issued by members only). However, in the long run, less news content might be individually produced to benefit from cost savings.
- The cooperation involves only EU based players. It will reinforce the dissemination of European values and governance.
- US platforms could be involved in a second step only if members decide (if they are allowed to) to syndicate the content from their consumer destination to social media. Some US technologies might be finally integrated into the technical platform.

Implementation conditions and need for support

A mixed approach with some tech specs centralized (CMS, usage data?, copyright management tool (automated)…) and other decentralized (video storage). Translation processed by EBU tool?
Specific support when necessary (subsidiarity…) for larger geographic/linguistic scope, for acceleration/implementation of new formats…
PSBs are more advanced and more willing to cooperate than private broadcasters: European project in development include "European Collection project", "EBU recommendation Box", " A European Perspective".

Option 6: Tooling /formatting + shared building blocks

Tooling/formatting + shared building blocks

In this option, news media providers (publishers or broadcast) leverage the tools provided by third parties including especially Gatekeepers and Tech giants to streamline their production process and create new formats. Possibly, they can also leverage ad tools and/or tools favouring engagement with the content.
Some missing or critical tech tools can also be developed on the behalf on the news industry and mutualized to fill the gaps around specific innovations with the help of EC.

Objective(s)	Main target(s) of the option	Main players involved
Cut on distribution costs Save on process time, technician resources and tech investments Innovate on new formats and increase engagement of the audience Accelerate cross platforms distribution	• News publishers willing to streamline processes and innovate	Gatekeepers and Tech giants News media (Broadcasters, News publishers)

Context

European citizens are increasingly consuming news via messaging and social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp…). In the long term, online and social media are gaining the most viewers, mainly at the expense of print formats. Social networks, together with the increasing use of smartphone to access news, are positioned as a core entry point to consume news. This is even more true for the younger generation.
Besides competing for attention against other distractions, the news media are facing competition from indirect exposure to news (through social media, other online conversations, documentaries and TV shows, etc.) with the younger generation. News is coming to them. Also, it is necessary to take into account interest for the periphery of the news space (infotainment, lifestyle, cultural, grassroots, bloggers and vloggers).
News publishers (press, TV) are already using Gatekeepers and Tech giants tools in different ways:

- More (cost) efficient tools for content storage, management, or translation and more generally more automation through AI
- Production of new web/social app formats
- Monetization tools (ad based)

Drivers	Hurdles
• European citizens are increasingly consuming news via messaging and social media platforms • Learning by doing for news media houses (innovative work process) • Save on tech investments • Options for ad monetization • Opportunity for news publisher to drive audience to their owned destination	• Dependency on Gatekeepers. • Risk of being "stocked" in new formats • Cost of developing new formats • Lack of mutualization between news media publishers

Impacts

News media providers might benefit from best-in-class solutions available on the market and lower investments and costs in technology. In turn, adaptation of formats will involve additional production costs.

European citizens will get a pervasive access to news, which might circulate more and towards new or incremental audience. But, quality content would be diluted in a broader content line-up, including at the periphery of the news.

Gatekeepers (often also Tech giants themselves) will strengthen their position in the news market, in particular with the younger audience. EU news media players would increasingly depend on them for the first window of exposure of their content (technically, possibly on editorial choices and revenue sharing), but would benefit from an additional audience driving traffic to their own consumer destination.

This approach can be a rational option per news media player, but it doesn't favour European cooperation on content or technology, neither EU independence.

There might be a prime for the leaders in terms of news content and audience, with a risk on diversity for the end user. Moreover, EU quality news content would live besides various alternatives where trustworthiness and quality check would be in question.

Implementation conditions and need for support

There is a need to define "collectively" what are the critical tech tools to be developed and financed.
News media's Tech and marketing teams will need support for training to ensure a seamless digital transition

7.4. List of interviews & stakeholders

Name	Category
ACT	Association
AD Alliance	Advertising
AFP	News agency
Alliance press	Association
Ansa	News agency
APA	News agency
ARTE	TV Broadcaster
BBC	TV & Radio Broadcaster
BuzzFeed UK	Online news
ClassEditori	News publisher
Compedia	Technology
Der Tagesspiegel	News publisher
Die Zeit	News publisher
DPA	News agency
DW	TV & Radio Broadcaster
EANA	News agencies alliance
EBU	Association & News exchange
EFE	News agency
EFJ	Association
El Pais	News publisher
EPA	News agency
EURACTIV	Online news
European Business Press	Association
France TV	TV Broadcaster
Gazeta Wyborcza	News publisher
Groupe Rossel	News publisher
Gruner & Jahr	News publisher
Henneo	News publisher
La Stampa	News publisher
LENA	News exchange
Les Echos	News publisher
Lie Detectors	Technology
LT-Innovate	Technology
Mediaset	Broadcaster
NEM initiative	Association
N-TV	Broadcaster
NYT Syndication	Syndicator
Ontotext	Technology
Ouest France	News publisher
Ozone	Technology
Project Syndicate	News publisher
Publico	News publisher
Radio France	Radio Broadcaster
RCS MediaGroup	News publisher
Reuters institute for the study of journalism	Association
Revue XXI	News publisher
Rzeczpospolita	News publisher
SALTO	TV Broadcaster platform
Sky	TV Broadcaster
Snapchat	Social media
Sole 24 Ore	News publisher
Storyful	News agency
The Content Exchange	Start-up
The Economist	News publisher
The European Alliance of News Agencies	Association
The Times	News publisher
University of Cambridge	Technology
WAN-IFRA	Association
ZDF	TV Broadcaster