

**Broadcasting Entrepreneurial Brainchild Based on Some Social  
Media Experiments in South / East Europe**

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# Broadcasting Entrepreneurial Brainchild Based on Some Social Media Experiments in South / East Europe

## Abstract:

International donors in the South East Europe have strived to support a regional competitiveness aiming post-conflict social cohesion; however, the entrepreneurs seemed helpless and disoriented like if they had been left alone.

Therefore, we have come to hotbed the entrepreneurial ideas hoping that potential business persons would recognise their chances once they had visualised several proposals for business activities. To make the results of our efforts in collecting & elaborating business programs visible, we have organised for the production and releasing of visual communication events especially devoted to such should-be-entrepreneurs.

So, as we needed during the field action research to understand and contextualize the influences of relationship we thought was social media and its reflecting influences on everyday life. The purpose of this paper is to analyze what had happened. How long that lasted and what were the effects of those events to change economic post crisis milieu, if any.

Key words: visual communications, entrepreneurship, social media, bricoleur, communication canals

## 1. Short introduction with the research questions

International donors in the South East Europe have strived to support a regional competitiveness aiming post-conflict social cohesion; however, the entrepreneurs seemed helpless and disoriented like if they had been left alone.

Therefore, implementing several international technical assistance projects on Local Economic Development – LED, we have come to idea to try to hotbed the entrepreneurial ideas hoping that potential business persons would recognise their chances once they had seen our proposals publicly displayed. To make the results of our efforts in collecting & elaborating business programs visible, we have organised the events for the production and releasing of visual communication: television emissions, fairs, etc., especially devoted to such expected entrepreneurs to be. In that way, such palliative invented services become a kind of

social media. As that serendipity just happened, we were forced to understand and contextualize the influences of that we thought was the social media and their reflecting changes in everyday life during the real life programs implementation.

This study is centralised around the following research questions: How long activities lasted and what were the effects of those emissions to change economic post crisis milieu, if any.

Except for the purposes earlier mentioned, this research had ambitions to provide for the platform for learning some new state-of-art information, as well as to acquire the whole new qualitative research techniques of media impacts on post crisis behaviourism.

## 2. Instead of theoretical background: action field settings

### **What is the epistemological position from which researcher would act?**

Epistemological position provide fundamental aspects of research as they concern the philosophical questions of what counts as reality and how beings come into being as well as what constitutes knowledge and how knowledge comes to be established (Bolinger 2008:web).

If constructionist ontology assumes the world we can study is a semiotic world of meanings, represented in signs and symbols, language is central to this position, than constructionist epistemology advocates that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered, it is a representation of the 'real world' and, as such, interpreted by the researcher.

These positions significantly shape research designs and methodologies. Keeping in mind that all of our real-life South East European projects were methodologically „action research“ oriented, the idea in this particular case, as well, was not to apply some kind of general theory to praxis, but:

- to develop local theories from that practice, which may contribute to solve practical social problems of the project, and
- to improve human conditions (Bortoletto 2007:ppp).

As mentioned earlier, that real-life projects we had implemented were therefore permanently evaluated around several research questions embedded in the qualitative research paradigm.

Industrial media are commonly referred to as "traditional", "broadcast" or "mass" media. Profit oriented, industrial media use one way communicational channels. That creates

a space for new bidders, even “amateurs”, to start expressing themselves in such markets. This time, a new two-direction communications channels are being used. Now, communicological technology has reached a point where everyone, whoever wants to be, has a voice, which has been articulated through social media. Those voices have already become powerful and able to change contemporary behaviourism: behaviourism of transactions in between of individuals and collectives. The assumption is that such transformation is made possible through social media.

At its most basic sense, social media is a shift in how people discover, read and share news, information and content. It is a fusion of sociology and technology, transforming monologues (one to many) into dialogues (many to many) and is the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into information producers (Wikipedia: xx).

. As per definition, Solis 2009:web, a social media describes the online technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives. Social media can take many different forms, including text, images, audio, and video. Typically, place of information transaction use technologies such as blogs, message boards, podcasts, wikis, and vlogs to allow users to interact. Social Media is the democratization of content and the understanding of the role people play in the process of not only reading and disseminating information, but also how they share and create content for others to participate in. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism to a many-to-many model, rooted in a conversational format between authors and people. (Solis, 2009:web)

### 3. Methods

#### **Which methodology will researcher follow in this research?**

Based on the chosen paradigmatic framework, the case studies research strategy seemed appropriate here; we have simply been there in the field of action.

#### **What research materials will be collected and used in project?**

As accustomed among qualitative methodology researches, also present here, we will not use a term “data” but „empirical materials“ for all researchable materials regardless of a their forms. Now, in the writing research report phase, --several years since the events we wanted to elaborate in this paper have passed--, we might have encountered sever problems in

empirical materials collection. Therefore we would introduce secondary sources of data. Primarily are those data which are unpublished and which the researcher has gathered from people or organisations directly. Secondary sources, refer to any materials (book, articles, etc.) which have been previously published (Vidakovic 2006:99).

Based on above mentioned, the following programs, organisations and people were meant in research design as the primarily sources of empirical materials:

**Table 1: Primarily level empirical materials were sought from the following sources:**

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The SEDA-RTV case, 2003-2004

SEDA, the Sandzak Economic Development Agency, current staff

Former SEDA Managing director, staff and sources

RTV Regionalna televizija Novi Pazar

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Secondary level empiric materials were thought to come, at least, from:

**Table 2: Secondary level empirical materials**

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Different Media consultants' materials:

Internews company in Azerbaijan and Armenia

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**Empirical Materials Collection Method:**

**Participatory observations**

As already said, the case studies research strategy seemed appropriate here:

We were commissioned by the international organisation to consult the Sandzak Economic Development Agency, SEDA, with mechanisms for carrying out their daily operations in the process of economic development program implementation. Being there in the field, and relevant for this paper, we have participated in the following:

-Support, train and supervise the organs of the SEDA: the management, staff and its Local Economic Development Forum, which, basically was the local development partnership created by different private-public-stakeholders.

Within that task of references, the constant on site observation was secured.

**Empirical Materials Analyse Techniques:**

**Content analysis**

The content of empiric materials collected were qualitatively analysed being put in the

historical perspective. Namely, cases were finished several years before this research report was written and therefore we wanted to understand historical development, the current status and results. Pending on feedback information, that could, per se, serve as the techniques of argumentation of research findings.

### **Approach to concept operationalization?**

Operationalization is a part of the empirical research process. Take for example one of our empirical research questions: How long that lasted and what were the effects of those events to change economic post crisis milieu? To answer, apparently, the time should be measured adding to the effects and impacts that change social situation.

However, does the time alone influence social changes? Both the time and caused changes need to be measured. Therefore, the concepts and their relationship are important for the time being as we deal with a new kind of social media. In that sense, both, the duration of happenings and its usage volume commonly contribute to the epistemology of that occurrence.

## **4. Results and discussion**

### **4.1 Primarily level empirical materials source:**

#### **4.1.1 The SEDA-RTV case, 2003-2004**

Central for this study, is the case of interim TV experiment we have organised for in the Sandzak during the winter of 2003-2004.

The Sandzak, seen as an economically underdeveloped region, was the home for several projects donated and implemented by international institutions. However, in many of those cases, “aid industry” did not achieve desired efficiency. So was our project financed and implemented by international donors. Eventually, the researcher involved was commissioned to assist the SEDA with so called BDS – Business development services, mainly the operational and good practice issues in order to launch finally SEDA's operations meant for the promotion of Small and Medium size Enterprises - SME sector.

#### **4.1.2 Epilogue**

During one of “on the job training” for the local staff in different Business Development Services, BDS, we had a case of initiating the production and dissemination of business ideas.

The goal of that activity was to create a business idea catalogues which could be later offered for realisation to interested investors.

The execution form was the following: the consultants employed with SEDA formed a kind of editorial office, a team in charge for production of short video units which were later emitted through local television station channel. Each video unit were basically a business proposal with full set of elements of business plan. The business plan elements were typical: marketing elements, technological and operational parts, financial indicators, profit analysis, etc. The team was very enthusiastic about this, so each activity was performed very professionally. Video business plan was shown on Wednesdays' nights, on the regular basis, and the next morning the Team was organised to accept enquiries of interested audience.

In this way, video business plan became a media produced by specialised SEDA's consultants for their customers. No one of SEDA staff was formally trained as comunicologist, but apparently comunicolgical code was happily adjusted to the receiving codes that prevailed in the Region. Activity lasted for several months and transferred a lot of profitable video business proposals to information users. Users, in turn, communicated feedback information and therefore profiled selections of the future emissions.

As part of this phase of the bricolage, and in order to secure for a trustful archive, we were recently tried to recall the memories of participants on that experiencing period and to record the material proves. The researcher – bricoleur has asked other participants:

- SEDA, the Sandzak Economic Development Agency, current staff
- Former SEDA Managing director, staff and sources
- RTV Regionalna televizija Novi Pazar

for the copies of some evidence: video records, scenarios, business plans presented, etc. Although very cooperative, our former partners were not able to provide us with any of the empirical proves of the existence of this interim venture of setting the interim info TV program for would-be-entrepreneurs in Sandzak. Simply, those materials were not saved nor stored! Neither by SEDA, the producer, nor by RTV, the TV channel operator!

#### **4.2 The secondary level sources of the empirical material:**

As we have anticipated formal problems of organising for more than nice memories, in continuation to the above description, we have searched for the secondary level sources of the empirical materials. Being interested in whether there was a similar form of such hybrid social media, we have found some empiric materials:

#### **4.2.1 Internews company in Azerbaijan and Armenia**

“Internews had produced a variety of broadcast programs. These programs have included political coverage, environmental and reporting on economical issues, feature stories and regional newscasts.

In 2000 and 2001, The Internews Azerbaijan and Internews Armenia also produced 24 programs of Front Line: The Baku-Yerevan Space Bridge. This program allowed for citizens of the two countries to discuss face-to-face via satellite the issues that surround the simmering Nagorno-Karabakh armed conflict.

During 2008, Internews was still producing the program called Perekrestok / Crossroads/ - the only pan-Caucasus weekly television program offering news and features from Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia.

#### **4.2.2. Epilogue**

The main goal of the program was to set the ground for information exchange among three countries of the South Caucasus. Perekrestok consisted of news headlines, the recap of three main events during the week and two special feature sections called Harite (map) and Portret (portrait). These two sections were produced not only by the Internews' work groups in each country, but also by the independent television companies. Internews had produced over 400 issues of Perekrestok, which was aired on ANS, Space, and Ictimai TV, targeting the program's potential audience across the whole region in (post) conflict.

In that way, a kind of hybrid social media was created: one had media content being driven by information users and communicological canals being paid for by international donors! Obvious purpose was to bridge over the political borders. However, although there were a long donor list, it seems that program concept has fulfilled its mission and that it is now finished (Internews:web).

### **5. Conclusions**

The case has studied hybrid social media created in order to secure for post conflict communications. Visual communication was made possible by teams of non-professional communicologists who happened to code with market driven demand.

Therefore, probably too much relying on international donor financing system, the hybrid media producers lacked on their product price positioning. As a result, the income they had from their operations was not adequate, and that was, as per rule, one of the reasons that

this type of social communications have stopped.

Cases were finished several years before this research report was written and therefore we wanted to understand historical development, the current status and results. Since the researcher has faced with sever problems encountered during empirical materials collection phase, like the technical negligence in archiving of the case studies, the set of secondary sources data was obtained, as well.

Such feedback information,-- not only serves as the techniques of argumentation of this research findings, but also --, indicate stakeholders' level of the validation of the programs they have commonly produced.

Operationalizaton is a part of the empirical research process. Take for example one of our empirical research questions: How long that lasted and what were the effects of those events to change economic post crisis milieu? To answer, apparently, the time should be measured adding to the effects and impacts that change social situation.

However, does the time alone influence social changes? Both the time and caused changes need to be measured. Therefore, the concepts and their relationship are important for the time being as we deal with a new kind of social media. In that sense, both, the duration of happenings and its usage volume commonly contribute to the epistemology of that occurrence that we have called hybrid social media.

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