

Innovations in resilience strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses innovation initiatives in Norwegian news media in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. Based on a mapping survey among 24 top and middle Norwegian news media managers, the analysis reveals three strategies for coping and recovering from a crisis: bouncing back, bouncing forward, and bouncing beyond. Several news media bounced back from Covid-19 in a swift recovery from the crisis while maintaining and improving existing activities through incremental innovations. Other news media bounced forward by absorbing the crisis and exploring innovation possibilities in new service offerings, distribution channels, and markets. A few news media bounced beyond, suggesting that news media adapted to the crisis by digitalising the newsroom and reorganising towards more service-based mindsets, community engagement, and value co-creation.

KEYWORDS: resilience, news media, innovation, crisis, media managers

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Introduction

Crises can be turning points for news media organisations (Quandt & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2021). To survive a crisis, media organisations often need to change by coping with adversity, risk, and uncertainty (Bakken & Brinkmann, 2022). In this chapter, I discuss how Norwegian news media responded to the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. Combining the two concepts of resilience and innovation, the chapter provides an understanding of how innovative initiatives during a crisis can help news media “build back better” (Williams et al., 2017) and emerge stronger and even more resourceful than before a crisis. The chapter is based on a mapping survey among 24 top and middle Norwegian media managers from 24 news media organisations. The sample represents the broad and diverse field of news media in Norway, including the two public service broadcasters, ten national news media, six regional news media, and seven local news media.

A crisis often represents a serious threat to an organisation’s survival. For some organisations, crisis management is about maintaining stability by restoring equilibrium and bringing the organisation back to the pre-crisis stage (Wildavsky, 1988), that is, bouncing back. On the other hand, a crisis may offer learning opportunities and allow an organisation to grow by adapting to changing markets and technologies (Euchner, 2019), as in bouncing forward. Lastly, an organisation may use the crisis as an opportunity to strengthen and develop parts of its core business and dismiss others. In the last scenario, the crisis represents an even bigger opportunity to grow, change direction, and even thrive amid adversity. This is bouncing beyond. The nature of an organisation’s response to a crisis in any of these three ways “critically depends on the capacity to enhance improvisation, coordination, flexibility, and endurance – qualities that we typically associate with resilience” (Boin et al., 2010: 11). Thus, resilience is an organisation’s capacity to absorb disruptive surprises and recover from disturbances (see also Rudningen, Chapter 3; Krumsvik & Francis, Chapter 7).

Resilience is embodied in the existence of resources, people, finance, technology, ideologies, routines, and structures. These capabilities also serve as the basis for innovation ability (Furseth & Cuthbertson, 2016). As both resilience and innovation ability are based on the same types of capacity, they are inextricably intertwined (Euchner, 2019). Resilience could be a source of innovation or act as an organisational form supporting innovative processes. Resilient behaviour from persons or teams can, for instance, improve the chances for successful innovation. On the other hand, innovation could also be essential for resilience in terms of how an organisation responds to a crisis and grows stronger through challenges. Recovery in terms of “built back better” often suggests that the organisation has the potential to emerge stronger and more resourceful than before (Williams et al., 2017). Innovation plays a key role in this process.

Addressing the overarching topic of the book, news media's ability to respond to external shocks and create new and improved value for their stakeholders, I ask how Norwegian newsrooms initially recovered from the pandemic and what characterised the recovery process in terms of resilience. Doing so sheds light on news media's innovation ability in the face of crises. To analyse innovation in resilience strategies taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic, various types of innovation initiatives are identified and the relationship between these innovations and the resilience of news media strategies, activities, and mindsets is explored.

Theories of innovation and resilience

Innovative practices in the news media business

Existing literature on media innovation usually distinguishes between product innovation, process innovation, innovation in market position, and paradigmatic innovation, or the 4 Ps (Francis & Bessant, 2005). While Krumsvik and Francis (Chapter 7) explore and extend this framework, in this chapter, I employ the original "4 Ps of innovation" framework.

Product innovation refers to changes in the products a news media organisation offers its customers. Moreover, there is concrete production of service offerings, as news media start adding more and more advanced services to their original products. As outlined earlier in this book (see Chapter 1), the concept of servitisation is well-known in marketing and business management studies, but the perspective of *media as service* has been rare in media management studies (Viljakainen & Toivonen, 2014). Nevertheless, the intangible benefits of news (information, knowledge, and entertainment, for example) have always been at the heart of news media's offerings as "experience goods" (Viljakainen & Toivonen, 2014).

Servitisation also reflects a movement of the organisation from being product-centric to service-centric, as well as the adoption of a value-oriented mindset, highlighting customer value and customer collaboration. This is sometimes referred to as process innovation and changes how products and services are created and delivered (Francis & Bessant, 2005). This may include newsroom practices that rely more on audience metrics or interaction between journalists and users. Process innovation also includes digital workflow in the newsroom and the use of technology when communicating and collaborating.

In addition to product and process innovation, the media innovation literature includes position innovation, which refers to (products' and services' position in markets (Storsul & Krumsvik, 2013). This requires attention to brands, target customers, and competitors. Some researchers view servitisation as a new competitive strategy for media companies with regard to market position (Viljakainen & Toivonen, 2014); for example,

news media can obtain a competitive advantage and profitable growth by offering users new value beyond the conventional context. The value offerings arise from understanding and responding to users' problems, needs, and wants.

The fourth kind of innovation, paradigmatic innovation, can be defined as the field of innovation that includes changes in mindset, values, and business models (Santos-Silva, 2021). The process of servitisation also includes changes in an organisation's value proposition (Viljakainen & Toivonen, 2014) and movement toward a viable new business model for the industry (Chen et al., 2021). It includes a renewal of how the news media view their audiences and how they are transforming the traditional two-sided business model by involving both technological and organisational changes (Dogruel, 2014). The distinction between the four types of innovations may not always be clear, as they are often intertwined and take place at the same time. Moreover, one type of innovation may come across as incremental changes over a long period of time, while another innovation may take place as a sudden, new, and radical change. To better understand the four types of innovation, particularly how a crisis may reduce or increase an organisation's ability to create value, I turn to resilience theory.

Resilience to crisis: Bouncing back, forward, or beyond

Applied in several fields, the concept of resilience has become increasingly important to understanding how people and organisations cope with and recover from crises (Bakken & Brinkmann, 2022; Wildavsky, 1988). The basic assumption of resilience is that systems need to change to survive a crisis, first by recognising the complexity and uncertainty of a crisis, and second, by handling the situation (Bakken & Brinkmann, 2022). For instance, according to a Reuters Institute report in November 2020, remote working practices have made media organisations more efficient, although respondents also worry about the Covid-19 impact on creativity and on building and maintaining team relationships (Cherubini et al., 2020). A resilient organisation may be considered immune, flexible, or productive in the face of disturbances and disruptions.

The concept of adaptation features several process-oriented definitions of resilience (see also Olsen & Solvoll, Chapters 1; Rudningen, Chapter 3). Adaption suggests that organisations can master the disruption and use uncertainty as a positive resource. The latter plays an important role in studies of resilience, as attributes of uncertainty are the ability to thrive, nurture optimism, and capitalise on opportunities to improve. Hence, resilience may also be conceptualised as the ability to emerge from adversity as a strengthened and more resourceful organisation (Degbey & Einola, 2020). The resilience literature has identified three main types of resilience: bouncing

back, bouncing forward, and bouncing beyond (Martin, 2012). These are three “ideal” response strategies organisations may use during a crisis. Some organisations may use a mix of these strategies, different strategies for different levels of their organisations, or even different strategies at different times during a crisis.

Resilience as bouncing back focuses on the resistance of a system to disturbance and the speed of return to its pre-shock state, that is, to maintain continuity. In this context, resilience may work as a “shield” that is both flexible and hard to break, allowing threats to bounce off. The shield allows the organisation to carry on with its usual activities and plans and protects the organisation from interventions and setbacks produced by the crisis. The resilience dynamic is like a punching bag, which can absorb impacts and withstand heavy punches, rather than a bouncing ball in chaotic motion. The organisation may experience some minor setbacks but can recover and bounce back quickly to continue its normal activities. This type of resilience includes immunity, robustness, and flexibility to uphold strategic plans regardless of external disturbance. In the context of innovation, bouncing back is mostly concerned with incremental product and process innovation along prevailing paths, which often lead to continuity (Isaksen & Trippel, 2016).

Resilience as bouncing forward refers to positive adaptability and a focus on an organisation’s ability to move forward following a shock while maintaining some of its structural stability (preventing the organisation from collapsing) – in other words, adapting to a new normal. This resilience strategy can also be thought of as elastic storage, “measured by the magnitude of disturbance or shock that can be absorbed” (Martin, 2012: 7) before the structure of the organisation changes (Holling, 1996). Like shock absorbers on a car or shock-absorbing shoe insoles, the bounce-forward strategy absorbs energy and controls unwanted and excess motion. In this situation, an organisation’s flexible structures allow for culture, routines, and workflows to adjust to the crisis, but simultaneously offers stability, preventing the whole system from collapsing. How much disturbance and the degree of shocks an organisation can absorb depend on the stabilising structures of an organisation. Some organisations can endure big crises and many disturbances, while others are more fragile and easier to knock over. Bouncing forward implies a certain degree of organisational change and innovation to both absorb the crisis and stabilise the organisation. An organisation that has experienced a crisis before may, for instance, be more adaptable when a new crisis occurs and would have the ability to handle radical innovation processes during the crisis. Other organisations may struggle to absorb the crisis and spend all their resources implementing small, incremental changes.

Lastly, resilience as bouncing beyond is also centred on the notion of positive adaptability, but with directionality focusing on reorientation of mindset and a long-term restructuring and renewal of the entire organisa-

tion (Martin, 2012). Bouncing beyond has a different scope and duration than bouncing forward: it is about responding with significant changes and adapting with new systems (Boin et al., 2010), suggesting that there is no turning back for the organisation. Viewing resilience as a deliberate process suggests that robust systems are also enabled to change without perishing. A suitable metaphor to illustrate this strategy is modelling clay, which can completely change its form when exposed to external influence, while remaining modelling clay.

In this empirical study, I draw on the theoretically informed concepts from the literature on resilience and innovation types, as presented above. Having theoretical concepts available helps adopt a more narrow and deductive approach to coding by creating a matrix that identifies different types of innovation and resilience strategies. The first part of the matrix consists of the four types of innovation: product, process, position, and paradigm (Francis & Bessant, 2005). The second part of the matrix applies the three resilience strategies: bouncing back, bouncing forward, and bouncing beyond. When using a structured matrix of analysis, we can systematise, analyse, and understand the relationship between innovation initiatives and resilience strategies during the Covid-19 crisis. In the following, the matrix of resilience strategies and innovation initiatives is used to analyse how Norwegian news media responded and coped with the Covid-19 crisis, applying the data and methods described below.

Methods and data

To identify resilience strategies, I examined innovation initiatives in 24 Norwegian news organisations. Data was collected in qualitative interviews focusing on innovation initiatives during the early phase of the Covid-19 pandemic in Norway. The sample of respondents represents the broad and diverse field of news media in Norway, including the two public service broadcasters (NRK and TV 2), nine national news media (*E24*, *Aftenposten*, *Dagens Næringsliv*, *Dagbladet*, *Klassekampen*, *Dagsavisen*, *Vårt Land*, *Nationen*, and *Nettavisen*), six regional news media (*Nordlys*, *Romerikes Blad*, *Fædrelandsvennen*, *Stavanger Aftenblad*, *Adresseavisen*, and *Bergens Tidende*), and seven local news media (*Jærbladet*, *iFinnmark*, *Avisa Nordland*, *Telemarksavisa*, *Fredriksstad Blad*, *Bergensavisen*, *Drammens Tidende*). Managers with both editorial and business functions were contacted. In smaller newspapers, eleven editors-in-chief answered our questions; in bigger organisations, we talked to either news editors (5), development editors (3), the chief innovation officer, the managing director, the digital editor, the digital news executive, or the vice president for production, news, and sports. The

interviews were carried out in January 2021, either by telephone or e-mail. Nine news media had net circulation below 25,000, six had between 25,000 and 40,000, five had between 50,000 and 110,000, and four had above 250,000 (MediaNorway, 2021; Høst, 2021). Net circulation refers to both digital and print publications and includes subscriptions, digital newspapers, single sales, and combinations of these.

Informants were asked one question about the kind of innovations their news media initiated during the Covid-19 pandemic. This broad and open question allowed the informants to freely talk about activities, products and services, processes, mindsets, and working practices. If necessary, a few follow-up questions were asked for clarification or elaboration. The telephone interviews lasted for about half an hour. Notes were taken during the interviews and transcribed immediately to facilitate a detailed mapping of innovation initiatives. Quotations (translated to English) are not attributed to specific informants because several informants asked for anonymity.

Analytical design

The theoretical framework of resilience strategies and innovation types has been converted into a coding framework. The number of codes is limited, as is common in the deductive coding approach, but still flexible and open for adjustment if something new and interesting emerges that existing codes don't capture (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). Inspired by the approach adopted by Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013), the data was coded in three cycles. The first-order informant-centric analysis included descriptive codes about statements related to activities, actions, opinions, and processes, as well as repeated phenomena, surprising data, or things stressed as important by the informant. In the second more analytical cycle, the data was sieved and coded according to Francis and Bessant's (2005) understanding of the four types of innovation (see Table 2.1). Combining descriptive first-cycle codes and theoretically informed categories allows for analysing the connections between similarities and regularities in patterns.

TABLE 2.1 Analysis according to innovation type

Innovation type	Activities, actions, opinions, and processes
Product	Product developments (apps, podcasts, newsletter, content, etc.) Service developments as (advanced) add-ons (live tracker, streaming of events, webinars, press conferences)
Process	Utilisation of audience data Remote working practices Digital meetings Resources development and coordination Cross-functional interactions Restructuring of newsroom roles, communication, and activities Digital competence development External collaboration
Position	Audience-centred strategies Redefining customers' needs, problems, and demands Cross-selling and bundling of products Social media strategies Explore new customer segments (children and young adults) Develop content for niche audience groups From print products to digital products Establishment of new online news websites
Paradigm	New mindsets Development of business models Multimedia offerings Value co-creation with customers and partner networks Stronger integration of activities and departments

Next, data were brought together by creating categories on a more abstract level according to the three resilience strategies. This completed the matrix and allowed exploration of patterns across codes, as presented in Table 2.2.

TABLE 2.2 Matrix of resilience strategies and innovation types

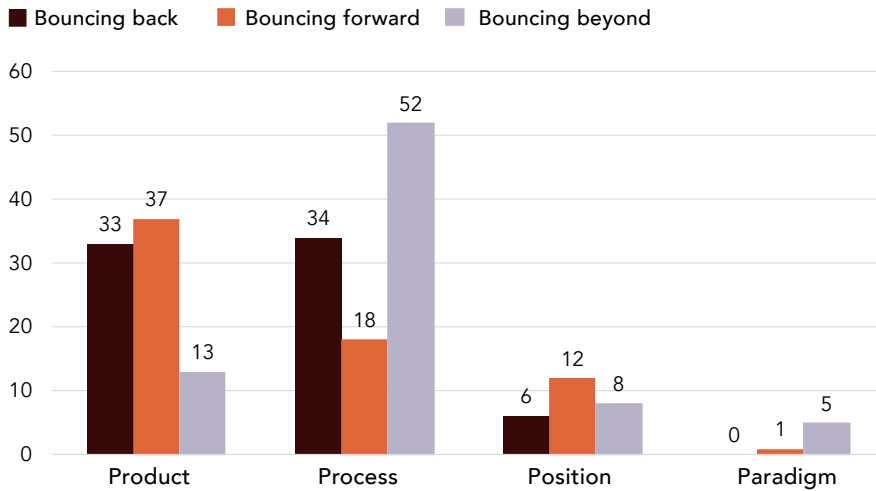
Innovation type	Resilience strategies		
	Bouncing back	Bouncing forward	Bouncing beyond
Product	Improvement of existing products and services	Development of new digital products and services	Value co-creation Servitisation
Process	Securing existing activities Resource flexibility Digitalisation to simplify and streamline activities Digital competence development Adapting newsroom practice and structure	Service-oriented thinking Audience-first strategy Co-existence of existing and new activities Application of lessons learned Challenging professional standards and norms More interdepartmental collaboration	Remote work Digital workflow Virtual management Computational newsroom Stronger integration of departments
Position	Maintenance of existing distribution channels and markets	Development of new networks, distribution channels, and markets	Introducing new offerings Community engagement
Paradigm	Maintaining stability Incremental changes	Process development Radical changes	Development of sustainable business models Complete restructuring of an entire system

Results of the analysis

The mapping of innovation initiatives in the 24 Norwegian news media reveal a high level of innovation activity across the three resilience strategies, ranging from product and service development and organisational changes to repositioning in markets and overall industrial developments. After the mapping, these initiatives were manually counted and summarised. An estimate suggests that the bounce-back strategy is mostly used within product and process innovations, bounce-forward dominates in product

innovations, while the bounce-beyond strategy is extensively used within process innovation. There are only a few initiatives categorised as position and paradigm innovations (see Figure 2.1).

FIGURE 2.1 Innovation initiatives across innovation types and resilience strategies



Comments: n = 219

The mapping of the activities as bouncing back, bouncing forward, or bouncing beyond depend largely on the informants' own reflections of whether a certain activity was part of an existing activity or a new activity and whether they regarded it as an incremental change (small improvements) or a radical change, which also included collaboration with external actors. Most news media were, for instance, already producing their own podcasts, so new podcasts launched during the pandemic were simply viewed as small improvements of an already existing product, and therefore mapped as bouncing back. Other news media used podcasts to target new market groups or niches, which were viewed as a radical reorientation, and subsequently mapped as bouncing beyond.

Bouncing back by maintaining continuity

The focus of a bounce-back resilience strategy is to uphold existing activities in existing markets to achieve stability. In terms of innovation, this is exemplified by small improvements to news platforms (*E24, Klassekampen, Stavanger Aftenblad, Aftenposten*), introducing new sections of content (*Dagbladet, Aftenposten, NRK, TV 2, Nordlys*), information pieces (*Romerikes Blad, Fredriksstad Blad*), debate pages (*Adresseavisen, Nettavisen*), podcasts

(*Stavanger Aftenblad*, *Bergens Tidende*, *Adresseavisen*, *Aftenposten*, *Dagens Næringsliv*, *Vårt Land*), and app development (*E24*, *Dagens Næringsliv*). Most of these product developments were incremental changes aimed at the news media's core users in existing markets. The most extreme version of bouncing back is for a well-positioned organisation to remain unaffected by the impacts of Covid-19. For example, the newspaper *Nationen* started to implement an innovation project for boosting their digitalisation process in September 2021 and continued throughout the pandemic, reaching more digital users and subscribers, and developing digital content and differentiated services for specific target groups. This also included working with new teams of journalists, developers, and interactive designers. Podcasts and apps are examples of product developments that were not driven by the pandemic. For the last four years, both commercial and independent podcasts have flourished, and today, most news media offer podcasts within their field of interest. A couple of podcasts introduced, though, were directly linked to the pandemic. For instance, the regional newspaper *Stavanger Aftenblad* launched "Smellen" to shed light on how Covid-19 affected young people in the region of Stavanger. The newspaper *Aftenposten* expanded its news for children (*Aftenposten Junior*) by adding two podcasts for children, both addressing issues related to the pandemic.

Overall, incremental product developments included a tremendous acceleration of already ongoing digitalisation processes in newsrooms (*Telemarksavisa*, *Avisa Nordland*, *Bergensavisen*), streamlining of work processes (*Nettavisen*, *Stavanger Aftenblad*), creation of more aligned organisations and better use of resources (*Bergens Tidende*, *Klassekampen*, NRK), and changing prioritisation (*Romerikes Blad*, *Nordlys*, *Stavanger Aftenblad*, *Klassekampen*, *Adresseavisen*). In 2020, the pandemic was the biggest news story across all media types, which led to increased prioritisation of breaking news about Covid-19, including statistics, background information, fact-checking, and live coverage of press conferences. Although these elements do not represent something new within journalism, they affected the organisation of journalists and their work routines, especially journalists who used to cover sports and cultural events, who had to find new areas to cover due to the uncertainty of access to their usual beats.

The product developments taking place in 2020 also included incremental digital competence development, often taking the form of "learning by doing" (*Nettavisen*, *E24*, *Fredriksstad Blad*, *Adresseavisen*, *Avisa Nordland*, *Jærbladet*, *Vårt Land*). In some of the news media, the use of digital courses increased during the pandemic, such as *Romerikes Blad*, *Aftenposten*, *Avisa Nordland*, and *E24*, to boost competence in different fields. In relation to online news videos, journalists executed the whole process, from the script, through recording and editing, to publishing. As some journalists (like sports journalists) had to cover different events than what they were used to before

the crisis, they developed their competencies, became more flexible, and learned to master digital tools. In *Bergens Tidende*, as one of the previous “live event journalists” suddenly had no events to cover, he used the free capacity to produce a new product, “Koronapodden”, a podcast with Covid-19 news, Q&As, and daily updates on information regarding the virus. Journalists in *Stavanger Aftenblad*, *Fredriksstad Blad*, and *Telemarksavisa* improved their skills in data journalism while working with data scraping and Covid-19 statistics. As emphasised by several respondents (*Vårt Land*, *Stavanger Aftenblad*, *Dagens Næringsliv*, *TV 2*, *Adresseavisen*, *Nettavisen*), journalists increased their multimedia competencies and used their smartphones to produce podcasts, videos, and publish photos. In particular, the television company TV 2 strengthened their ability to produce television programmes remotely. According to one informant:

Old dogs don't have a choice – they must learn new tricks. Journalists are no longer intimidated by using their mobile to produce, edit, and publish content. They are fully mobile and have become Inspector Gadget in the field. (Chief innovation officer, national online news media)

Most of these resilience activities were geared toward the maintenance or strengthening of existing market positions, for instance, the maintenance of existing distribution channels such as mobile news (*Stavanger Aftenblad*) or strengthening the relationship with target groups, such as parents and children (*Aftenposten*) and young adults (*E24*). Overall, the focus of the bounce-back strategy was on short-term readjustments to retain “business as usual” and rebound to a stable position. The Covid-19 pandemic led to an inevitable surge in news production, and most of the informants reported a tremendous acceleration of already ongoing digitalisation processes, stressing the need to respond to audience demand for up-to-date information. News media that executed a bounce-back strategy are characterised by a high degree of robustness, agility, and the ability to maintain business as usual amidst transformation.

Bouncing forward by adapting to a new normal

The bounce-forward resilience strategy is found in the development of new digital products and services, such as the production of a “corona live tracker” that provided the cumulative number of confirmed Covid-19 cases and deaths per region or municipality (*VG*, *E24*, *Fædrelandsvennen*, *Avisa Nordland*, *Dagbladet*, *Aftenposten*, *Nordlys*, *Adresseavisen*, *Stavanger Aftenblad*), streaming of events (*Aftenposten*, *Avisa Nordland*, *iFinnmark*, *Jærbladet*, *DT*, *Adresseavisen*, *Stavanger Aftenblad*, *Bergens Tidende*, *E24*), and a live news studio (*Dagbladet*, *Aftenposten*, *Bergens Tidende*, *Drammens Tidende*, *Stavanger Aftenblad*, *Dagens Næringsliv*, *Fredriksstad Blad*, *Jærbladet*). Although these types of innovations were part of the general digitalisation process within the media industry, they were radical for most of the news

media in this study. In particular, the innovations reflect a movement of the service system from being product-centric to service-centric, as well as the adoption of a value- and service-oriented mindset that highlights customer value. It illustrates well how resilience as bouncing forward can be understood as the ability to maintain the purpose of an organisation while adopting new ways of organising. A digital editor from a regional news media described the experience as follows:

Taking a public service role in the region of southwest Norway by acting as the town square, where people could gather to access useful and helpful information in addition to experiencing streaming of press conferences, concerts, church services, business conferences, etcetera.

In presenting massive amounts of digital data related to the pandemic visually and comprehensively, some of these innovations played out as service journalism, in which news media provided users with information, advice, and help about issues related to the pandemic. Several informants (*Bergens Tidende*, *Fædrelandsvennen*, *Nationen*, NRK) claimed that producing “pandemic news” helped them develop a better understanding of how to address their audience, either by explaining complex issues regarding Covid-19, providing Q&As, participating in the news media’s online comment sections, or creating a visual presentation of large statistical data.

Service-based journalism also took the form of live news studios and streaming events in addition to live corona trackers. These were extremely resource-demanding projects and were high-risk, without a definite long-term plan or endpoint. Nobody knew how long the pandemic would last or how it would affect society. Several of these projects developed at their own pace, acquiring more and more resources. The corona live tracker developed by VG soon became the most popular source of information about the pandemic in Norway, particularly since the government did not provide such a service for the public. It was initiated by one developer and one journalist on 4 March 2020. In a few days, the live service reached 1 million daily visits, and on 12 March, the day Norway experienced its national lockdown, VG registered an all-time high of 4.6 million visits (Online Journalism Awards, 2020). The exact and visual live update page quickly became a must-have tool for both the public and the Norwegian government, and the staff exceeded 40 people within a short time, including both news reporters and the editorial development team. In smaller news media, too, covering the pandemic was both time- and resource-consuming:

Journalists worked systematically every day collecting information about Covid-19 from eleven municipalities’ chief medical officers and mayors of the area. One of the journalists has sent 1,500 text messages to the municipal chief medical officers. (Managing director, regional news media)

Some newspapers (*E24*, *Dagens Næringsliv*) expanded the live corona tracker with, for instance, information about temporary layoffs and dismissals and the impact of Covid-19 on stock markets, gross domestic product, and currency markets. This combination of producing new types of services and at the same time carrying out normal activities, both in terms of breaking news and investigative journalism, is a good example of positive adaptability within the bounce-forward strategy.

Videos are another example of this resilience strategy. Before the pandemic, few of the smallest newsrooms were familiar with live video presentations and live transmissions. This changed dramatically following the outbreak of Covid-19. For instance, in November 2020, *E24* launched breaking news video updates twice every day. Another example is *Dagens Næringsliv*, which broadcasted more than 300 live transmissions with news videos in 2020, increasing the traffic to video content by more than 80 per cent compared to before the pandemic.

These types of innovations were often linked to reorganisations of the newsroom (*Nordlys*, *DT*, *Jærbladet*, *Avisa Nordland*, *Vårt Land*, *Bergens Tidende*) and collaboration across departments (*Nationen*, *BA*, *Fredriksstad Blad*, *Adresseavisen*, *Dagens Næringsliv*, *NRK*, *VG*). Editorial developers, designers, and concept developers were brought closer to the newsroom to create comprehensive journalism. At *Dagens Næringsliv*, the front desk collaborated with the subscription unit, focusing on value delivery through better audience experiences.

Several of the informants stressed the importance of live news studios with news presenters and regular broadcasts, illustrating how the news media gradually moved away from print-based articles to live video coverage. As an editor-in-chief from a regional news media explained:

We have done live-streaming in the past but realised live images became more important during Covid-19, for example, through daily press conferences. We also live-streamed a church service, which quite a few people saw, and several concerts. In addition, *Bergens Tidende* took the initiative to revive the festival Vill Vill Vest [Wild Wild West] in digital format, broadcasted on bt.no. This provided new knowledge and opened more external event collaborations in the future. It gives *BT* a different role than we would otherwise have, for example, in terms of broadcasting concerts.

Such organisational changes are characterised by a co-existence of previous experiences and new activities. Several of the news media organisations were already in a rather flexible and absorbing mood for change. The pandemic boosted these trends, for instance, the use of Big Data in journalism and more live video coverage. A few newsrooms (*Bergens Tidende*, *E24*, *Dagens Næringsliv*, *Aftenposten*) introduced differentiated newsletters and applications during the pandemic. At first, newsletters do not seem particu-

larly innovative, but they alter the daily work of some journalists in online newsrooms. More importantly, as newsletters are more personal channels of communication, they offer the newsroom a better opportunity to build a relationship with readers and increase their engagement with online news. In sum, the bounce-forward resilience strategy may help develop new audience markets (e.g., young people), as in the case of *Stavanger Aftenblad*, *E24*, and *Dagens Næringsliv*; new distribution channels (NRK's use of Snapchat and *Jærbladet*'s use of Facebook and Instagram); or boost digital instead of print (as in the case of *Nationen*, *Telemarksavisa*, and *Klassekampen*), with the main purpose to provide stability to the news organisation.

Bouncing beyond by restructuring and reorientation

The third way to innovate, bouncing beyond, is about the co-creation of value, community engagement, stronger interdepartmental collaboration, and restructuring the organisation. In the ideal form, servitisation permeates all operations of the organisation. For instance, this strategy takes place by developing new services and products in close relation with people outside the newsroom: municipalities, artists, and the audience. Most news media are familiar with user-generated content, and during the pandemic, this initiative increased through services such as “The Corona Help” (*Fædrelandsvennen*, *Agderposten*), “The COVID Map” (*Dagbladet*), and “The Corona Round” (*Romerikes Blad*), or simply by asking the audience for pictures, videos, and content as restrictions made meeting with sources unlikely. For instance:

“The Corona Help” was created as a public involvement matching service. Some people bought groceries for the elderly or performed other types of labour for their most vulnerable neighbours. (News editor, regional news media)

The public service broadcaster NRK launched an interactive participation section on their website the day after the lockdown began, called “NRK answering”. During the first month, NRK answered 20,000 questions about the pandemic from the public. Community engagement as a bounce-beyond strategy was described by some respondents as collaboration with external actors (*Stavanger Aftenblad*, *Nettavisen*, *E24*, *Vårt Land*, *TV 2*, *Adresseavisen*). Virtual “corona concerts”, in which news media streamed live concerts in collaboration with artists and municipalities, turned out to be a win-win situation for all parties. Live-streamed concerts, festivals, Christmas carol events, religious services, and more, were regarded as highly successful events for all news media, and several of them will continue providing coverage of such events post-pandemic. Other types of services developed during the Covid-19 pandemic were digital conferences and webinars, for example (*Dagens Næringsliv*, *E24*, *Adresseavisen*, *Aftenposten*). According to both *Dagens Næringsliv* and *Aftenposten*, a large event portfolio was forced to adopt a

virtual model overnight, but the news media managed the transformation creatively, technically, and financially.

The bounce-beyond strategy also includes radical changes and the restructuring of an organisation amidst a crisis. In this study, the biggest change for all the informants was the massive shift to remote work, digital workflow and online meetings. Again, the news media organisations were not unfamiliar with digital technology, but the lockdown following the pandemic's outbreak forced *everybody* in the newsrooms to work digitally and remotely. The forced shift was most evident in the case of the public service channel TV 2. As the pandemic turned television production upside down, TV 2 established remote production solutions within just a week, allowing technicians, programmers, news anchors, and journalists to broadcast television programmes from home. Highlighting Covid-19 as a kind of catalyst for the increasing use of (partly new) digitalisation in organisations, most informants stressed the benefits of such transformation (more work-life flexibility, improved digital workflow, streamlined processes, better cooperation, more effective formats and meeting structures, improved digital communication, and increased productivity), claiming that the digital workplace fostered a culture of belonging and community (*Stavanger Aftenblad*, *Nettavisen*, *Nationen*, *Avisa Nordland*). Some informants claimed that the reorganisation of the newsroom was the biggest innovation process instigated by the pandemic. At *Bergens Tidende*, old departmental divisions were replaced with new project groups working across the whole organisation, in which both managers and journalists were assigned new tasks and responsibilities. Similarly, the newspaper *Nordlys* divided the newsroom into three large groups, each with a separate editorial focus. According to an editor-in-chief from a regional news media,

the pandemic accelerated an already intended clean-up of work division and work shifts. [Organisational] silos were broken, and people are working together across departments. The tripartite division will continue after the pandemic.

The reorganisation at *Nordlys* quickly led to a changed mindset and more flexible working practices, as people work with different tasks. A similar regrouping of the newsroom took place in the newspapers *Avisa Nordland*, *Vårt Land*, *Bergensavisen*, *Dagsavisen*, and *Romerikes Blad*.

The most extreme example of bouncing beyond in crisis is represented by the digital-only news media in the sample. When noticing that Covid-19 fuelled a surge in online shopping, on 12 March, *Nettavisen* established an online shop selling books, chocolates, games, and home accessories. The news media also launched math learning games and a club concept (Curious), where users buy memberships to access various activities and services. In addition, *Nettavisen* holds an open editorial meeting via the social media app Clubhouse, founded in April 2020, allowing the audience to pitch an idea or topic to the editors.

Within the bounce-beyond strategy, there were radical efforts to increase services to the audience by offering the possibility to pay via mobile payment application (*E24*), adding a social media editor to expand the news media's social media coverage (*Klassekampen*), and operating as a community platform matching people in need with neighbours able to help (*Fædrelandsvennen*). Both *Aftenposten* and *Dagens Næringsliv* offered podcasts, webinars, and newsletters during the pandemic aiming at niche target groups and topics (e.g., management, wine, career, marriage, seafood, cars, and politics). However, only one informant addressed changes in the business model explicitly, when claiming that growth in digital subscriptions compensated for the decline in advertising and that journalism had become more important than ever, suggesting that a renewed strategy may have emerged in the news media where he worked.

Summing up the analysis, news media initiated a range of innovations across areas of product and service development, ways of working together, positioning processes, and the basic orientation of news media (see Table 2.2). Most changes took place as process innovations in terms of digitalisation, adapting new newsroom practices, and implementing a service-oriented mindset. Moreover, process innovations took place in close relation to innovations within products and services, both in developing and in improving digital products and services, suggesting that one news media organisation can display various innovation initiatives. In terms of resilience strategies, the analysis reveals rather even distributions between bouncing back (73 initiatives), bouncing forward (68 initiatives), and bouncing beyond (78 initiatives) (see Figure 2.1), although bouncing beyond is more at play in process innovations. One could therefore argue that a news media organisation could experience bouncing beyond in process innovation in terms of remote work, digital workflow, and online meetings, and bouncing back in product innovation as incremental changes of existing products and services.

Discussion: Robustness, adaptability, and restructuring

This analysis informs existing research in media innovation by identifying product, process, position, and paradigm innovation initiatives across three resilience strategies (bouncing back, bouncing forward, and bouncing beyond) for coping and recovering from a crisis.

Bouncing back is characterised by resistance, robustness, and the ability to quickly return to pre-crisis activities. According to Stark (2014), robustness is paradoxical: Sometimes, the more things change, the more they stay the same, while other times, things must change to stay the same. The latter argument explains why this study identified many product and service innovations along with the extensive process innovations as part of the bounce-back

strategy. Several news organisations were forced to accelerate the ongoing digitalisation process of their journalistic practices to cope with the unique challenges of the pandemic, as also noted by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (Cherubini et al., 2020). Norwegian news media managed, however, to bounce back quickly – often overnight or within a week – suggesting that they were ready to embrace the challenges of Covid-19. Following two decades of digital transformation, the news media was highly adept at responding and changing at a rapid pace. This robustness is also characterised by the ability to build the “capacity for resilience” (Degbey & Einola, 2020) and the newsrooms’ capability to change their work practices – which in turn sustained the performance of the news media. The crisis seemed to have brought out the best in the news organisations, focusing on the importance of traditional journalistic values in serving society, and the greater good. Although the analysis suggests that the bounce-back strategy led to continuity, it does not suggest path extension in terms of stagnation of constraints (Isaksen & Trippel, 2016), but rather a conservative approach of “doing journalism as usual” (García-Avilés, 2021).

Compared with bouncing back, the notion of bouncing forward is to see a crisis as an opportunity and a game-changing moment, as described by Quandt and Wahl-Jorgensen (2021) and Euchner (2019). The optimistic disposition of bouncing forward enabled news media to carry through long-term changes through adaptation to a new normal. Such organisational adaptation to changes in the environment is vital for a company’s survival, to stay competitive and at the forefront, and for organisational learning. Under normal circumstances, cultural resistance is often considered the biggest hurdle for newsroom innovations in terms of changes in journalistic practices (García-Avilés, 2021) and service transitions of product innovations (Findsrud, 2020). Concerning the Covid-19 crisis, the bounce-forward strategy embraced the paradox of change and stability, meaning that stable structures, such as culture, enable adaption while simultaneously ensuring security and consistency that prevents the organisation from collapsing. For instance, achieving successful service innovation is challenging and demands an agile approach to resource integration (Findsrud, 2020) and co-creating value in terms of changing practice, organisational learning, and experimenting (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). This suggests that, although many innovative activities taking place during the crisis may not endure and succeed amid crisis, they are as important as “learning by doing” and as “trial and error” adaptive practices (Wildavsky, 1988).

Bouncing beyond is characterised by the ability to adapt resources and skills to the renewal of an entire system and includes signs of both radical and disruptive innovations in the organisation. To develop sustainable organisations during the lockdown, all the news media in the sample quickly implemented digital meetings, remote work, digital workflows, and hybrid

work practices. Although the purpose of this digital transformation in some cases was to maintain the structural stability of the organisation to prevent it from collapsing (bounce-forward ability), some of the news media claim this resilience strategy changed the entire organisation's culture, mindsets, and structures. Such a reorientation towards service-oriented value creation includes a renewal of how the news media view their audiences (Costera Meijer, 2020), in addition to transforming the traditional two-sided business model away from advertising and towards user subscription.

Stressing that bouncing beyond is a strategy for coping with the crisis, the analysis does not reveal any information about long-lasting resilience and the development of this working paradigm post-pandemic, for instance, in terms of hybrid work models. As argued by Boin and colleagues (2010: 8), "a true mark of resilience is thus the ability to negotiate flux without succumbing to it". However, speaking of a new normal after the pandemic suggests that the way of living and working will not return to the way it was before the pandemic. The news media have built a more digitally enabled workforce and boosted more sustained cross-departmental collaboration, strengthening data journalism and advanced multimedia journalists.

Conclusion

Part of the ambition behind this book is to unpack news media's ability to innovate and to understand how news media organisations navigated the crisis as it unfolded in Norway. This chapter sheds light on the early and critical phase of the pandemic in 2020, where resilience acted as a source of innovation by supporting innovative processes, particularly within incremental product and service developments and organisational changes. As the data come from only 2020, long-term effects can't be suggested, but the findings suggest responses loaded with innovation initiatives, both in terms of product and process innovations. Position innovations were much less, and paradigm innovations were hardly identified, because such innovation types belong to larger transformational processes of a complete restructuring of a media system, business models, and organisational mindset.

For most news media in Norway, the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technologies and digital ways of working (remote and/or collaboration). Although digital technologies were implemented in most newsrooms before the pandemic, the crisis accelerated the pace and depth of digital transformation. In addition, the crisis advanced the way news media viewed their audience, paying more attention to user needs and wants on an ever greater and more thoughtful level than before. An audience-first approach, together with digital technologies, enabled a move from a product-oriented to a service-oriented newsroom, through which news media provided services and solutions to users, helping them cope during the pandemic. However, some changes brought about by the pandemic may

not endure, as they involve uncertainty and risks. Setbacks and failures will challenge the surge in digitalisation that happened during the pandemic, such as digitalised workflow, new practices, more agile organisations, strengthening collaboration, and the breakdown of traditional departmental boundaries.

Furthermore, resilience is about navigating both existing and future crises. For many of the respondents, leaning on bounce-back initiatives, the main goal was to maintain continuity and uphold existing activities. As a result of the robustness and flexibility associated with this resilience strategy, most of the news media managed a speedy recovery from Covid-19. A different strategy towards recovery was the path towards change. Some of the news media bounced forward successfully by turning the crisis into an opportunity for large improvement. In these cases, the organisations absorbed disturbance and adjusted their workflow, routines, and competencies. The endurance of changes caused by the pandemic is associated with the last resilience strategy, bouncing beyond, and the renewal of the entire system. Whether the effects of the pandemic may linger and how short-term changes on individual, team, and organisational levels become sustained in the long term remains to be seen. This study underlines the positive organisational learning outcomes, as Norwegian news media emerged stronger and different after the pandemic than before it.

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