

Satellite Meeting: Recruiting and Managing the New Generation of Employees to Attract New Markets and Create new Services

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Library and the Media – Analysis of How Libraries Are Presented in the Print Media

Stanka Jovičić

Assistant director, Belgrade City Library, Serbia.
E-mail address: stanka@bgb.rs

Bojan Kundačina

Lending Department, Belgrade City Library, Serbia.
E-mail address: bojankundacina@gmail.com



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Abstract:

This analysis encompasses the articles on the topic of libraries in the time period from 2003 to 2018, published across five daily print media (the Politika daily, the Danas daily, the Blic daily, the Vecernje novosti daily and the Kurir daily) as well as two weekly news magazines (Vreme and NIN). The above mentioned print media were selected for the analysis as having the most readers in Serbia and also as the media that were continuously published in the given time period. Besides, taking into consideration all the differences among the editorial policies, ownership structures and the versatile social structure of the readership the above mentioned media were addressing, we have tried to include the widest possible range of reporting on libraries, and in doing so, to provide a more detailed overview of the media coverage on libraries.

The method of quantitative-qualitative analysis of the media discourse was used as the research method. For the purpose of the analysis the following eight categories were created: 1) exact print media, 2) the year of publication, 3) cause\occasion, 3) location\venue, 5) authorship of the article, 6) value context, 7) value context of the journalist towards the text and 8) the number of readers' comments and reactions.

The research is to be seen from two perspectives; the first part encompassing the analysis of the press releases created by the libraries themselves which are then distributed to the print media for their transmission as well as discussion on what approach the libraries adopt to the cooperation with and understanding of the media. The initial assumption is that the libraries are not taking full advantage of the media space they have and that they should be more proactive and more visible in that domain.

The other research perspective is the one the media themselves adopt by selecting the most frequent topics related to the libraries they want to cover and how they decide to deal with them. When these

two perspectives are compared and considered in terms of their mutual relationship, it transpires that the libraries should by all means present themselves more actively and creatively, and also should come to understand the importance of the media visibility not only for the purpose of promoting their activities, but also their general existence in the society as well as to help promote accessibility to culture and education for all social structures of the population.

The conclusion is that libraries (as well as culture and humanism) in the marketable media environment cannot rely only on their own strengths without a broader social and state-enabled affirmation and strategy.

Keywords: Library, Culture, Media, Visibility, Strategy.

Introduction

Nowadays, media have, maybe more than ever before in the history, the power to create cultural patterns and social trends. Media satisfy our ever-greater need and demand for information, but they also conspire in its abuse, which leads to the manipulation of public opinion. The question that then arises is – are media taking societies towards uniformity and pleasing petty pleasures or can they actually help express all the diversity there is? Are media helping us create the middle-brow societies or the societies of singularities?

Media have their four functions to perform, i.e. they perform the informative, educational, socializing and entertaining function. As far as Serbian media are concerned, since being left to the mercy of free market, without anyone having explicitly challenged such a decision in terms of its consequences, the media in Serbia, in the last few years, have given less and less coverage to the educational contents, thus failing to perform their educational function. What is now called into question is the general profitability of reporting on the cultural sphere. Under the pressure to sell as many copies as possible, the newspapers first sacrifice arts and culture section. The media give more and more coverage to entertainment and topics that can be dealt with easily and require no deep mental involvement from the readers. In Serbia, in an impoverished society, where the need for culture and education is at the bottom of the priority list, such a media policy cannot be a sign of a great future. The need for culture is replaced with trash and kitsch contents. Paradoxically, it is exactly there where moving upwards from the lower social strata could be facilitated only with the aid of culture and education, that the cheap and lowbrow entertainment is offered most. A certain kind of tabloidization of the society is being done, offering a spectacle as the only kind of media content. The greatest number of media workers, when asked about the future of the media, perceives the tabloidization as the gravest threat to the media.

In actual fact, what we need to acknowledge is that the media should be absolved of the major portion of responsibility being the smallest link of the chain that primarily consists of the elements such as: cultural institutions, schools and the state.

Library and media-public relations

Sam Black (2003) provides the public relations definition: “Public relations practice is the art and science of achieving harmony with the environment through mutual understanding based on truth and full information”. The history of building public relations and understanding how important they and their application are date back to the first great civilizations. However, scientific examination and specification of public relations came into existence relatively recently. Public relations is the term first used by the American president Thomas

Jefferson in 1807, and only two years later the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs introduced the position of the spokesperson for the foreign affairs.

In 1923 Edward L. Bernays wrote “Crystallizing Public Opinion”, the book about the phenomenon of public relations.

In former Yugoslavia, in 1952, the Tourism Association of Yugoslavia, in its attempt to improve its operations, introduces a special office dealing with public relations.

If an organization is in the state domain, this also means that its operation serves the public interest or is the object of the public interest, hence the press will publish the reports and comments on it, and even maybe the photographs of it. And on condition that the cooperation with the journalists is established, the articles that are published will be more accurate, truthful and specific. (Blek, 2003).

Serbian libraries, understanding how important and influential media are as well as their own presence in them and the perception of them by the public, define their cooperation with the media in institutional terms. The leading libraries in Serbia (the National Library of Serbia, Belgrade City Library, University Library “Svetozar Markovic”), within their job positions systematizations, have envisaged the departments and professionals specifically dealing with public relations. However, there are some differences among the ways these three libraries have described the job responsibilities of the person in charge of public relations. The clearest and most precise description can be found in the National Library of Serbia’s description:

“The employee is to implement and develop the policy of public relation; to design, develop and formulate the communication strategy; to coordinate the organization of campaigns, media and other promotional events; to control the content and up-to-dateness of the information of the Internet portal; to coordinate the production and prepare the press releases; to coordinate the production and prepare the contents of the presentations and publications; to develop and maintain media and public relations (NLS, 2019).The job title: public relations manager”.

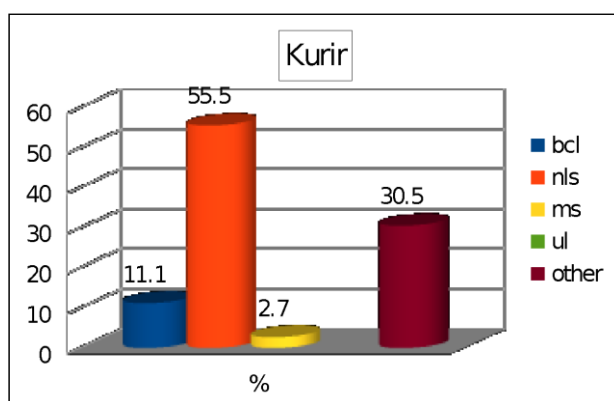
Belgrade City Library and University Library “Svetozar Markovic” have added some more tasks to the job description of the employee in charge of public relations, so the dealing with public relations constitutes just a part of all responsibilities. Judging by the very job titles from the two above mentioned libraries’ systematization, there is a clear difference from what the National Library of Serbia has formulated, namely: the editor of program activities (Belgrade City Library) and librarian- associate for PR and marketing (University Library “Svetozar Markovic”).

Libraries in the media, the analysis of the current situation in Serbia

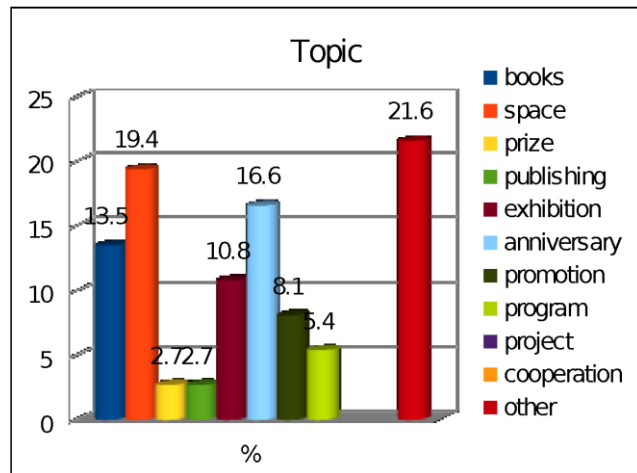
The association of citizens “Epomena”, founded in 2014, within the project *Belgrade Culture Reflexion in The Media Mirror*, have collected 300,000 articles on culture, published in the time period since 2003 until now in the daily and periodical newspapers, so as to encourage scientific work and research as well as the education of the employees in the culture sector. This archive material is supposed to encourage the research on the presence of culture and its treatment in the media as well as the analysis of the articles on culture.

We used this material as a starting point to analyze the articles published in Serbian media on the topic of the libraries (2018). The time period the articles selected spans the interval between 2003 and 2018. The analysis includes the following daily newspaper: the Kurir daily, the Blic daily, the Vecernje novosti daily, the Danas daily and the Politika daily, as well as two weekly news magazines: NIN and Vreme. All the above mentioned press media are well distributed and sold, covering current affairs across Serbia. Through the selection we made, consisting primarily of the five daily newspapers, we have tried to encompass the widest possible range of the readership belonging to different social and educational structures whom the given media address. It is relatively easy to identify what contents come into the media, but is almost impossible to determine what exactly reaches the minds of the target readers. This text can be expanded by adding the interviews with the editors of the media analyzed as well as with the journalists who wrote the articles selected. Another “drawback” that could be corrected and a possibility to include some additional material into this research would be to introduce a comparative analysis with the one on a similar topic conducted in some of the countries where there is a better connection between media and libraries.

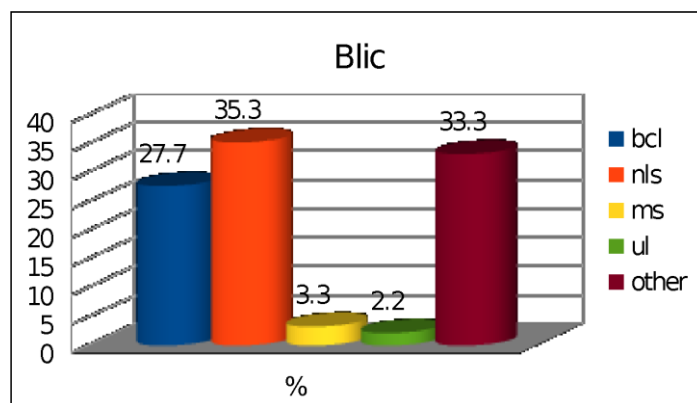
The Kurir daily was founded in 2003, and it is owned by a Serbian company Adria Media Group. According to the data from 2016, the circulation is about 60,000 copies sold per day. Since, out of all the media listed, only the Kurir daily has no culture section, we have tried, through the analysis of the articles published in this newspaper, to show how the tabloids look at the topics from cultural life, i.e. librarianship. And the starting assumptions have proved to be correct. The number of articles published in the Kurir daily covering the subject of libraries is utterly negligible. While the National Library of Serbia (NLS) received the greatest coverage, the others received much less of it. 11.1% of the articles were about Belgrade City Library, while only 2.7% were about “Matica Srpska” Library (MS). The University library “Svetozar Markovic” received no coverage.



However, even in such a small sample, some trends can be observed. In comparison with all other newspapers, despite publishing the smallest number of news articles about cultural events in the libraries (5.4%), the Kurir daily did publish the most news articles concerned with the interpersonal relationships, conflicts etc. (21.6%). As opposed to the majority of other daily newspapers, where the articles looking at the libraries in the negative context were utterly scarce, even 25% of the articles published in the Kurir had a negative connotation to the same topic.



The Blic daily was founded in 1996. It has been owned by the Swiss company Ringier Axel Springer Media AG since 2004. According to the data from 2016, it sold around 58, 000 copies per day. The Blic is positioned somewhere between the Kurir and the other three daily newspapers analyzed. When reporting on the libraries, the Blic is concerned with the dissemination of the usual kind of information, without analyzing or elaborating on the subject. The news they publish is about whether a library has been opened or closed down, the jubilees, anniversaries, etc. The way they cover a topic follows the trends set by the Kurir. Out of some general topics, they regularly report on the book purchase for the purpose of enhancing library collections, which is a constant subject for all the newspapers, and sometimes about some librarians specialists gatherings if any authorities representative takes part in them, such as the Minister of Culture and Information.

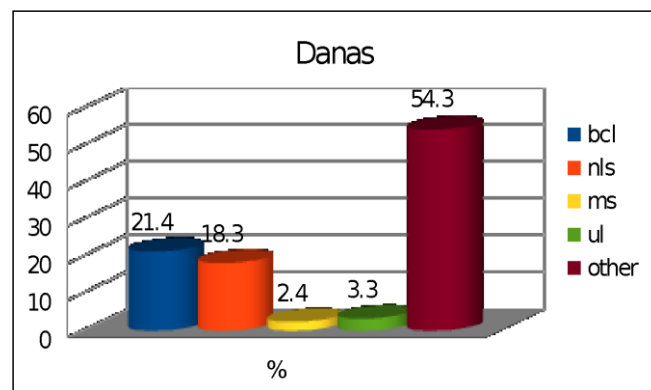


In a similar way to the Kurir, it pays most attention to the libraries placed in Belgrade, the National Library of Serbia and Belgrade City Library.

The remaining three daily newspapers, the Politika daily, the Danas daily and the Vecernje novosti daily can be analyzed collectively. Compared with the Blic, they all show a noticeable advance in terms of both quantity and quality of reporting. In addition to devoting appropriate attention to the libraries from smaller towns, they report on literary awards and public calls for the competitions organized by the libraries, on the books published and actions run by the libraries, cooperation and cultural programs and manifestations taking place in the libraries.

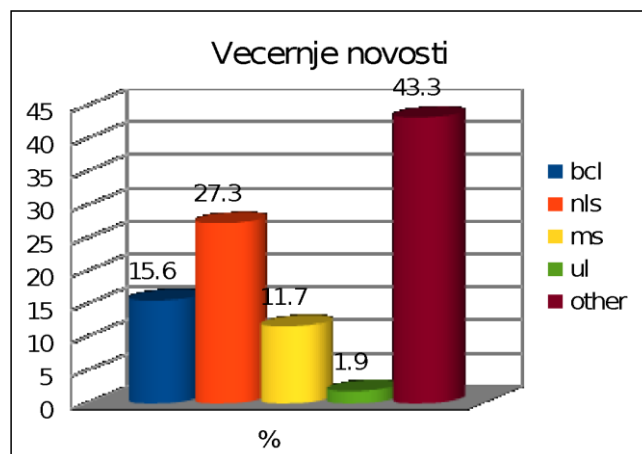
They regularly report on, at least, one librarians gathering. What is also discussed, from time to time, in the above mentioned daily newspapers, apart from the regular texts dealing with books purchasing, is the topic of the prevailing conditions in the libraries, as well as the topics of the librarianship in schools, the history of certain libraries and the results of their business operations. In any case, there is a solid ground for deepening the cooperation between these three dailies and the libraries and a good starting point, which the libraries can take advantage of in order to promote greater visibility. Another point to be mentioned is that the Politika daily and the Vecernje novosti daily are partly owned by the state.

The Danas daily was established in 1997. It is owned by 13 persons. According to the data from 2016, its daily circulation was 4,000 copies sold per day.



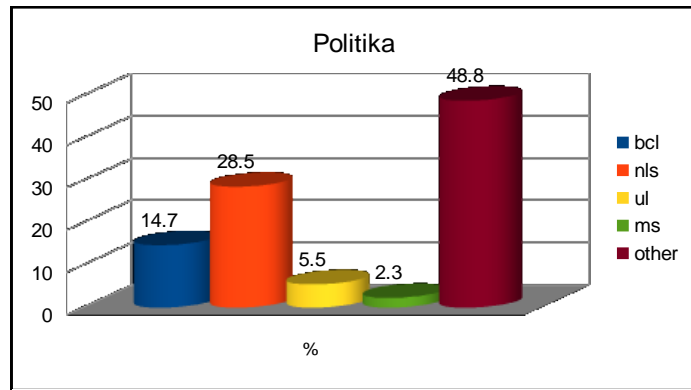
The most dominant topics are: programs, promotions, jubilees.

The Vecernje novosti daily was founded in 1953. It is owned by the Government of the Republic of Serbia (30%) and other shareholders (70%). According to the data from 2016, its circulation was around 68,000 copies sold per day.



The most dominant topics are: publishing, exhibitions, anniversaries.

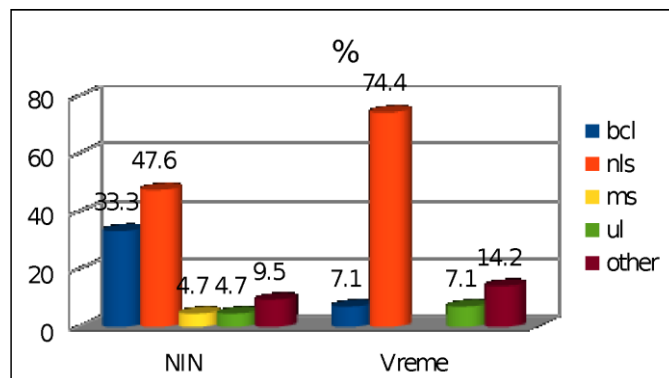
The Politika daily is the oldest daily newspaper in the Balkans, established in 1904. It is owned by the Government of the Republic of Serbia and small shareholders (50%), while the other 50% of it is owned by the company East Media Group. According to the data from 2016, the circulation was around 45,000 copies sold per day.



The most dominant topics are: publishing, awards, programs.

As regards the two weekly news magazines analyzed, namely NIN and Vreme, there are just a few relevant articles which are mostly about the events and happenings related to the National Library of Serbia and, to a lesser extent, to Belgrade City Library. NIN weekly published its first issue in 1935, but then it resumed its operation in 1951, since when it has been printed continuously. It is owned by the company Ringier Axel Springer Media AG, which is the owner of the Blic daily too.

Weekly Vreme was established by a group of journalists in 1990 and it is still owned by a group of journalists.



The most dominant topics: libraries spaces, publishing, promotions.

Conclusions

Apart from working on cultural strategies for institutions and schooling and their relationship as well as on understanding the new role of the media, it is necessary to enhance the media education.

“In general terms, the media education means preparing the young and future generations to live in the world which can no longer reverse to the bygone romantic unity of man and nature, to the idyllic past marked by the gifted and doyens who, by virtue of their powerful knowledge and wisdom, set the firm foundations on which the world could rest... What the media education should teach one is how to read media messages, which means to accept that they do not “transmit” what is happening in reality, they are not “the window onto the world”, but active creators of that very world.” (Vuksanovic, 2008).

Following contemporary trends and understanding that modern media are playing ever greater role in them, cultural institutions, including libraries, should try to build as active and creative as possible a relationship with media and via them reach the general public. The visibility of cultural institutions and their power to influence the general public depend on how successfully that relationship can be accomplished. The aim of public relations is to attain mutual understanding and acceptance, to facilitate the dialogue between an institution or an individual and the general public, so as to avoid a one-way street communication typical of propaganda and marketing.

Continuous and high quality informing the general public and the possibility of monitoring the situation in the libraries and cultural institutions would raise the awareness of the general public about the importance of and the need for libraries in the contemporary world, in addition to promoting reading and the importance of culture for the society.

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