

# Revenue and Branding Strategy in the Norwegian News Market

## *The Case of TV 2 News Channel*

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### **Abstract**

Future revenue streams for journalism are said not to lie in breaking news, but in specialist journalism that can engender income to sustain news production. A case study of the Norwegian TV 2 News Channel, however, shows that its profit-making features lie not in its content but in its mode of distribution. The added value of the channel to DTT subscription packages is as much due to TV 2's market power and news brand value as to the news channel concept itself. This article analyses the function of the news channel in today's competitive journalistic landscape from the perspective of news sociology and media economy, presenting a quantitative content analysis of the news output of TV 2 News Channel, qualitative interviews with TV 2 news editors, and analysis of key strategy documents of the organization.

**Keywords:** news channel; news market; professional ideology; journalism; quantitative content analysis; digitalization

### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The future of news seems predicated on the increasing fragmentation of journalistic products into niche publications, specialist programming and quality, in-depth investigative reporting. This is the direction predicted to engender income to sustain news production. Whereas flagship television news programmes on mainstream television most likely will continue to serve the majority of audiences for years to come, the continuous news agenda implies there is also a market for supplementary news sources catering to both wide and narrow news interests. In the television sector, the kind of event-centred, live and repetitive reporting we commonly find on news channels is facing increasingly hard times, particularly as the competition from free online news publications intensifies. However, while audience figures for the traditional large international news channels such as CNN and BBC World News are stagnating (Rai & Cottle 2007: 64), the number of national, regional and local news channels is on the rise across the world (Rai & Cottle 2010: 51; Thussu 2003: 121). The question is what might be the competitive idea behind, and advantage of, aiming for a journalistic market in which the competition is strong and the news are non-exclusive, ubiquitous and predicted to lose future battles for revenue.

One example of such a venture is the Norwegian TV 2 subsidiary *TV 2 News Channel*, launched in January 2007. TV 2 is Norway's only commercial public service broadcaster, established in 1992 with licence provisions to provide news programming that would function as an editorial alternative to the licence-fee-funded public broadcaster NRK [the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation]. TV 2 remains a steady number two in the television market with a national share of 28 percent (2009) for its total television output, behind NRK's total share of 39 percent (2009). TV 2 entered the market in 1992 in competition with the two existing commercial ventures in Norway – TV Norge and TV3, where TV 2 has a 61.4 percent share of the commercial television market (Annual Audit 2009). TV 2 is the only commercial Norwegian broadcaster with regular news programming, as both TV3 and TV Norge have discontinued their previous news services. News market competition in Norway is thus less related to publication platform than to publication frequency, and is subject to the relative deadline-independent news interest among the public, which remains high. It is within this context TV 2 launched its news channel in 2007.

While the content profile of TV 2 News Channel reveals an adherence to traditional fact-centred rolling news, the channel has nevertheless rendered the mother channel increased revenues, as well as audience retention. These achievements should first of all be attributed to the channel's subscription-based distribution model. Secondly, however, we should also consider the brand value of TV 2's news production – and its identity and ideology – as a factor in its position in the news market. The present article asks how TV 2 News Channel serves the branding efforts of TV 2 overall by analysing how it conforms to the 24/7 genre, and by looking at how the venture is framed ideologically by the parent company and its editors. Here, my interest is not primarily to uncover the ideology behind the narratives presented, but to pause at the ideological surface – taking it at face value in order to arrive at and investigate TV 2's strategic self-presentation. Findings from a content analysis of the channel's news output, interviews with two of its editors and analyses of key strategy documents of the organization suggest that the venture is seen both as strategic and ideal. Here, TV 2's discourse about the news channel strategy associates journalistic value with market value, and vice versa. Taking into account the wider market structure in which TV 2's news strategies unfold, findings suggests that brand power contributes to the situation, enabling TV 2 News Channel to gain revenue in a crowded news landscape.

## **The News Market: Technology and Ideology**

In the television sector, the move to the digital terrestrial transmission system (DTT) for many markets means that future revenues lie with audience subscriptions. TV 2 as a broadcaster is financed directly by advertising revenue and indirectly by subscription revenue, as is TV 2 News Channel, whose primary income is subscription based. As the number of channels offered in a market increases, audience numbers continue to fall for each existing channel. This situation leads to reduced market power for each channel competing in the advertising market. Given that new channels entering the market are sufficiently different from existing offers and that consumers indeed consider them different, they can retain some market power to make a positive profit from direct payments (Kind et al. 2008: 2). TV 2 News Channel does not charge consumers directly

for access to the channel, but primarily obtains subscription revenue from distribution companies that charge customers on a package basis. Therefore, the question of market position is less dependent on the strength of this individual channel than on the market power of TV 2 as a brand and its ability to gain a position within the distribution systems.

To this effect, it would seem DTT renders added market power in the hands of distribution companies. This is because most distribution systems such as DTT, IPTV or Internet television, cable and satellite are dominated by competing companies that offer customers pre-designed subscription packages of 20 channels or more. Channel revenue is thus primarily based on the subscriptions gained from a position within a package, while most channels are also partly funded by advertising. As the analogue switch-off became a reality, TV 2 moved to establish a number of new channels that would ensure a separate broadcasting segment within the digital terrestrial distribution system. Although TV 2 does not offer its bouquet of channels as a separate subscription package on all platforms, its share in the distribution spectrum means it has access to a larger frequency range than its competitors. This entails increased control and possibilities for further channel expansion. Since the desired bandwidth was obtained, TV 2 has been able to establish a number of niche channels that would not only strengthen its bargaining power with the distribution companies, but also allow it to retain audiences migrating away from omnibus channels and towards more niche channels. As of 2010, TV 2 has 6 subsidiary television channels all together<sup>2</sup>, as well as 8 additional sports channels where it distributes its exclusive rights to the Norwegian football league and the English Premiere League<sup>3</sup>.

While TV 2 News Channel was part of a strategic effort to expand the spectrum offered to TV 2 by the DTT distributor RiksTV, bandwidth alone should not be regarded as the only reason. This channel expansion could also be seen as a strategic move to attain increased subscription income. Should TV 2 gain added market power in the future, this could justify charging higher prices from distribution companies. Furthermore, had TV 2's combined channel profile been seen as a purely secondary strategy to gain a stronger overall market position, a second film channel would have been both cheaper and easier to establish than a news channel. The news channel venture can thus be seen as an effort that adds brand value to TV 2 as a media house. News and journalism holds a certain value in the branding process of TV 2 overall, primarily because the perception that it is serious about news adds legitimacy. As such, notes James T. Hamilton, "The development of brand reputations is even more important as the number of news outlets expands, because reputations based on past consumption allow a paper or program to stand out among competitors" (Hamilton 2004: 4). Moreover, it seems distribution companies reflected this perception and regarded a news channel as valuable content to add to their portfolio, all the while choosing to include TV 2 News Channel in their basic subscription packages. This inclusion rendered TV 2 enough revenue to sustain financial balance for the news channel even before its launch (Kampanje 29.05.2007). The concept of a news channel thus represented added brand value both for TV 2 as a media house and for distribution companies as channel providers.

News is professionally legitimating not just as an ideological process, but also functions as a counter-measure to the growing pressures of commercialization and the marketization of news. Underlying the function of this type of discourse is the commonly held assumption that a growing market orientation within news organizations

contributes to diminishing the professional-ideological status of the journalist (Eide 1992: 32). Within this conflict, notes Martin Eide, “elevated journalistic ideals have a substantial legitimating power” (ibid.: 39). The contents of journalistic ideology seem easily agreed upon, both in the academic literature and among media professionals<sup>4</sup>. When journalism is regarded as an institution, the practices and conventions, rules and norms of that institution are seen as carriers of the profession’s ideology (Eide 2001: 18, 31). Furthermore, journalists are themselves the producers of ideology in the sense that *good* journalism brings legitimacy to the news organization. Success in communicating the quality of this production – effectively the branding process – can therefore help raise the legitimacy of a news organization, and thus its commercial value. Looking at the expressions of such ideological narratives helps reveal the journalistic ideals mobilized in such a measure. Useful here are the narratives that have currency in such an attention market, and how they function as strategic assets. Journalistic ideology provides the brand value that is created and recreated by the structured properties of the activities of the journalistic institution. The rules and resources inherent in the structuring of the news market are thus ideal as well as economic. Journalistic ideology therefore has a tangible, economic and strategic value in the news market.

## **TV 2 News Channel and the 24-Hour Genre**

To investigate the relation between the ideal of news and news as market strategy, I consider the presentation of TV 2 News Channel through the narratives and discourses used in the official presentation of the venture in TV 2’s annual reports, its annual audits, and its license agreements<sup>5</sup>, as well as in the internal discourse presented in interviews with the editors of the news organization<sup>6</sup>. The narratives presented are then related to the results of a content analysis<sup>7</sup> of the actual news dissemination on TV 2 News Channel.

TV 2 News Channel follows the basic 24-hour news formula established by CNN – with a ‘market-attractive’ journalism style focused on breaking news, unlimited live coverage and fact journalism (Thussu 2003: 117-120; Volkmer 1999: 130-138). This format is adapted according to its own national news market realities and to coincide with the news identity of the mother channel TV 2. It follows a 30-minute cycle of broadcasting from 6:30 am to midnight, and carries a rolling news feed during the night. Regular bulletins are broadcast every half hour except during breaking news, but there are also half-hourly segments of talk and discussion, and regular news magazines (business, politics and foreign news) throughout the day. Prime time is between 5 pm and 9 pm, and peak audiences are attained during the 5 pm and 8 pm daily round-ups of the news agenda.

TV 2 News Channel is distributed via cable, satellite, DTT and IPTV, is also available online through TV 2’s Internet programming service TV 2 Sumo, and reaches 77.5 percent of the population (Annual Audit 2009). Viewers are primarily males with university degrees between the ages of 25 and 66 (SSB 2010:50). The channel is also popular among politicians, journalists and finance professionals (Media Survey 2009; 2010). With a budget of NOK 50 million<sup>8</sup>, the channel made a profit in its first operational year, primarily from distribution revenue. In 2007, TV 2 News Channel reached an average of 120,000 viewers weekly. This average climbed to 265,000 viewers in 2008 and 380,000

viewers in 2009. It regularly achieves a 2 percent market share and continues to set new records during breaking news events (Kampanje 15.01.2009). Such events include the Swedish Crown Princess's wedding in June 2010 (resulting in an all time high of 5.1 percent share of the market) (Kampanje 21.06.2010) and the Icelandic ash cloud in April 2010 (666,000 viewers) (Kampanje 19.04.2010). As such, it fulfils the staple feature of the news channel in bringing large audiences together during breaking news stories and significant events (Rai & Cottle 2007: 52). Ratings are thus seen to present a clear picture: the news channel satisfies a public need (Annual Report 2007: 36).

## **Content Profile**

The aim of the quantitative content analysis is to investigate how TV 2 News Channel conforms to the news channel genre, to consider the extent to which it lives up to its own journalistic ideals, and to analyse how this news ideal serves a strategic purpose in the market. Content has been measured across a constructed week<sup>9</sup> throughout 2009, and coded according to 9 categories – business and economic issues; crime stories; social issues including health, work and education; political issues; accidents; issues of general interest comprising features, culture and entertainment stories; sports; miscellaneous content such as advertising; and weather forecasts<sup>10</sup>. Each of the 9 content categories contain up to 8 sub-categories that further specify content. Categories were established based on previous quantitative content analyses of television news in Norway (Waldahl et al 2002), are mutually exclusive and designed to register cases according to news angle.

TV 2 News Channel operates within a fairly narrow hard news framing, adhering to a 'fact journalism' described as the CNN brand of television news (Volkmer 1999: 130-138). TV 2 News Channel's former Managing Director Thomas Henschien emphasizes "continuous news" as the channel's main image, but also "credibility, accountability, ambitiousness" (Henschien 2009). In essence, he says, the channel "should set the agenda, publish news, run debates, have commentary, analyses, experts – everything" (ibid.). The pressure to be first traditionally inspires news channels to employ a journalism characterized by summaries and recaps, commentary and speculation, and a reliance on live, dramatic images (Rai & Cottle 2007: 68-71; Thussu 2003: 126; Volkmer 1999: 131). TV 2 News Channel is therefore predictably repetitive, with 19 percent original content, 16 percent updated content, and 65 percent repeated content. This rolling and repetitive format is broken up by studio commentary, interviews and frequent live coverage. News content is primarily national in character, although the channel has a relatively high level of foreign news, amounting to 20.5 percent of all news reports. Stories mainly fall within the sports, business, politics and crime categories. As Table 1 illustrates, TV 2 News Channel carries little news of general interest such as features or items from the cultural sectors, nor does it focus extensively on news concerning social issues such as health, work or education. Overall, 14.7 percent of news content is business news, 15.1 percent is crime news and 22.2 percent is politics, leaving sports, with 25.7 percent of the news content, as the largest content category overall.

**Table 1.** Content TV 2 News Channel 2009 (kappa = 81%/.78)

| Content | Business | Crime | Social issues | Politics | Accidents | General interest | Sports | Total |
|---------|----------|-------|---------------|----------|-----------|------------------|--------|-------|
| Percent | 14.7     | 15.1  | 7.9           | 22.2     | 7.4       | 6.9              | 25.7   | 100   |

n=3717

News from the sports sector (Table 2) scores a predictably high percentage, as this area is covered by a separate news segment in the half-hourly bulletins, and is anchored by its own host, broadcast from a separate studio and has a distinct audiovisual design that sets it apart from the content of the main news bulletin. TV 2 News Channel’s parent has invested heavily in sports rights over recent years, particularly in the Norwegian and English Premier Leagues. In order to capitalize on these brand-building yet expensive investments, these disciplines receive prominent treatment in the schedule on TV 2’s channels, as well as journalistic and production resources to further enhance the sports product. The sports segment on TV 2 News Channel is mainly concentrated on reporting results from the Norwegian and international sports worlds<sup>11</sup>. As international sports news are cheaply produced – with many of these items comprising news agency feeds reported as short 15-30 second notices – world sports dominates the sports coverage on TV 2 News Channel.

**Table 2.** Sports content on TV 2 News Channel 2009 (kappa = 96%/.89)

| Sports Content | Norwegian sports | World sports | Norwegian sports people abroad | Sports news | Sports personalities | Other | Total |
|----------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|-------------|----------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent        | 34.5             | 36.7         | 7.9                            | 14.5        | 6.1                  | 0.3   | 100   |

n=949

The amount of crime coverage (Table 3) found on TV 2 News Channel largely reflects the established news profile of the mother channel TV 2. TV 2’s particular brand of journalism can be recognized in its tabloid news format and focus on crime, accidents and personal tragedies, often with a conflict-oriented angle. This news identity has been essential in keeping a familiar and recognizable profile in the market (Enli et al. 2006: 15-37; Waldahl et al. 2006) – a profile that is recognizable also on the news channel. The primary focus here is murder, manslaughter and suspicious deaths. Considerable attention is also given to violence. These are fairly straightforward stories to report as narrative frames are easily established, and there is often a clear distinction between victim and perpetrator. The crime category nevertheless has a problematically large ‘other’ sub-category, accounting for 27.8 percent of crime reports. This entails a methodological problem, however 4-5 news items mainly dominate the sample – Somali piracy, illegal demonstrations, the miscarriage of justice, and a prison escape. In addition, stories concerning police routines and the organization of the criminal justice system fall within this category.

**Table 3.** Crime Content on TV 2 News Channel 2009 (kappa = 92%/.57)

| Crime Content | Murder & suspicious deaths | Violence | Smuggling & trafficking | Sex crimes | Financial crime | Petty crime | Other | Total |
|---------------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------------|------------|-----------------|-------------|-------|-------|
| Percent       | 31.6                       | 18.7     | 10.8                    | 0.9        | 6.8             | 3.4         | 27.8  | 100   |

n=557

In the business and politics categories, there is a predominance of stories with a national focus, as seen in Table 4 and 5. Stories about Norwegian business and industry operating in Norway (Table 4) account for 31.5 percent of the business content. In addition, 24.7 percent of business coverage concerns Norwegian markets. Table 5 shows that political content on TV 2 News Channel also predominantly relates to Norwegian issues, amounting to 44.6 percent of the coverage. Regional and local political issues only amount to 3.2 percent of political content, which further underscores the national political focus of the channel. This content profile reflects news channel genre developments internationally, where new national and regional news channels employ a narrower geographical focus than the more established news channels of global reach (Rai & Cottle 2007). Such national attention furthermore reflects efforts to establish the channel's relevance to audiences, and subsequently a position in the news market.

**Table 4.** *Business Content on TV 2 News Channel 2009 (kappa = 96%/.87)*

| Business content | Norwegian business at home | Norwegian business abroad | Norwegian markets | Global business | Foreign companies in Norway | Personal finance | Other | Total |
|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent          | 31.5                       | 16.9                      | 24.7              | 23.1            | 1.1                         | 1.6              | 1.1   | 100   |

n=555

**Table 5.** *Political Content on TV 2 News Channel 2009 (kappa = 79%/ .53)*

| Politics content | Norwegian national politics | Regional and local politics | International affairs | War, terrorism and political violence | Norway and the world | Other | Total |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|-------|
| Percent          | 44.6                        | 3.2                         | 22.8                  | 20.5                                  | 8.4                  | 0.4   | 100   |

n=775

## The 24/7 News Genre

Journalistic ideology places a high value on in-depth reporting and analysis. Criticism of the 24-hour genre generally highlights the tendency for this formula to compromise depth, perspective and analysis in the news coverage (Thussu 2003: 121), something that can lead to conflict orientation and sensationalism in the reporting (Rai & Cottle 2007: 67-68). In the narrative surrounding the news channel, the official documents as well as the editors express the extent to which in-depth coverage reflects the organization's commitment to a journalistic ideal. The two daily business bulletins are particularly mentioned, as is the amount of foreign coverage on the channel, and time spent on commentary and analysis from guests in the studio (Annual Audit 2006: 11; Henschien 2009). News channel content in general primarily consists of non-exclusive stories that are freely available from many other operators, including public service broadcasters and online newspapers. The competitive force of the format lies in the added context such a channel can bring to this type of event-centred news. Comments, analyses and interviews with invited guests and experts add context to press conferences, breaking news stories and accidents that are exclusive to the news channel. Non-exclusive news content can thus be made exclusive through the editorial profile of the channel. This type of profile management through content must therefore be considered as part of the branding strategies of a news channel.

These aspects are reflected in the output on TV 2 News Channel, however the content analysis says nothing of the informative or critical quality of the journalism found in these segments. Nevertheless, the channel produces long packages covering fairly complex issues on a daily basis. Of the 220 news segments lasting 4 minutes or more in the sample (the longest lasting about 36 minutes), 25.9 percent concern international issues. In addition, 16.4 percent of segments are business issues and 43.6 percent cover political matters. Over half of the longer items addressing political issues – 53.3 percent – concern national political issues. An expert guest in the studio, who is usually allowed between four and nine minutes for analysis and commentary, is often part of these segments. The political stories are also the longest because they often consist of live broadcasts from press conferences. Of the longer segments, 45.5 percent are live broadcasts, and 44.1 percent contain longer interviews with experts and in-house commentators. Sources in these segments primarily come from organizations or NGOs (26 percent), the university and research sector (22.1 percent), and from the business sector (18.3 percent). In terms of gender representation among sources, TV 2 News Channel does not have the most balanced of records. Of the studio guests in the sample, 15 percent were female while 85 percent were male.

Being live and updated is clearly an important ideal for a news channel. This task is reflected in the differentiation made between the mother channel's news flagship *TV 2 News* and the subsidiary TV 2 News Channel. TV 2 will retain the social contract ideal by providing audiences with investigative journalism, documentaries and political debates, while TV 2 News Channel will supply the fast and the present. Here, Henschien emphasizes being first, live and continuous as their primary focus. The channel's function is thus to provide audiences with the latest as they tune in (Henschien 2009). When it comes to being updated, being fast with stories, and being live, numbers indicate TV 2 News Channel lives up to its claim. In an international perspective, TV 2 News Channel has a comparatively high level of live coverage, amounting to 20.5 percent (cf. Lewis et al. 2005: 465). However, the majority of live coverage is of predictable events such as press conferences and location packages.

Henschien maintains that the channel's main competitive advantage is its relentless focus on news 24 hours a day (Henschien 2009). Looking at the overall content of TV 2 News Channel, the question of whether it is 'news all the time' can be largely confirmed, as 78.1 percent of the overall schedule contains news, and subsequent content mainly consists of advertising and promotional material. TV 2 News Channel also fulfils the generic news channel genre with its fact-centred news profile and low level of entertainment and feature news. As such, TV 2 News Channel can be said to answer to its own branding efforts. The repetitive nature of the news channel format primarily entails a focus on the continuous news agenda, with sports, politics, business and crime comprising 77.7 percent of overall content. The fact that ratings peak during breaking news stories such as the Icelandic ash cloud further confirms the channel's adherence to the genre. News channels normally function predominantly as an update service during breaking news, unfolding events, accidents and political press conferences, while issues of greater social impact still draw large audiences to the mainstream news programming on the larger television channels. In terms of its position and function in the news market, TV 2 News Channel does not necessarily serve as first choice among the majority of audiences as of yet, however its breaking news audience grows larger with each major event.

Whereas the ideological narratives concerning news channel content are generally focused on ‘hard news’ – speed and presence is more prominently identified as the overall hallmark of TV 2 News Channel. The unspoken journalistic value of these qualities lies at the heart of the ideological narrative of TV 2 News Channel found in the official documents. Here, speed and continuous live coverage are identified as the main competitive factors in the news market (Annual Audit 2007: 30). These answer to distinct identifying markers in the news channel genre that reflect the possibility of technology. The fact that the technical qualities of speed and presence are more often mentioned in the TV 2 discourse than specific content alludes to the fact that competition within the news market is more technologically determined now than before. These possibilities nevertheless entail journalistic challenges that, when successful, should be rewarded. Ideologically speaking, rewards are distributed by adding these values to journalistic mythology. So if speed and presence are more important in journalism than they were before because of technological advances, then speed and presence should also be more ideologically rewarding than before. The news market success of TV 2 News Channel is hence attributed to the efficiency of TV 2’s news organization (*ibid.*).

### **Journalism between the Market and the Ideal**

Although much of the focus in research on media economy has been based on the dictum that television is in the business of selling audiences to advertisers, neither the advertising argument nor the audience argument is at the forefront of the TV 2 News Channel narrative. When asked about the idea behind the news channel, informants focus on market strategies through fulfilling journalistic ideals and obtaining subscription revenue. TV 2 News Editor Jan Ove Årsæther emphasizes the arrival of the digital broadcasting spectrum and the lack of other news channels in the market as reasons for launching TV 2 News Channel. The news channel is seen as a product and news as a commodity from which to gain revenue through distribution income and advertising (Årsæther 2009). Managing Director Henschien supplies more journalistic reasoning when he says the channel was launched to satisfy a need for and interest in news among the public, as well as “to strengthen our position: credibility, accountability, being the first choice in news and current affairs” (Henschien 2009). Journalistic ideology is tied to market currency both in the internal discourse used by the informants and in TV 2’s official documents, which state that,

TV 2 News Channel’s existence is legitimated on the fact that many advertisers wish to be associated with a serious and credible news provider, and by its distribution income resulting from the importance many Norwegians place on having access to a Norwegian news channel when something exciting happens. (Annual Report 2007: 36)

The arguments presented in support of the notion that TV 2 is a commercial success explicitly tie this to the quality of its content, its journalistic standards and its fulfilment of public service principles. The fact that TV 2 News Channel has not established itself on the softer side of news would indicate that the channel views the economic concept of news in ideal terms. So although news on TV 2 News Channel is a commercial product, it is also perceived as a public good that must be branded – particularly through product

differentiation, based on a presumption of positive spillovers. As Henschien explains, ratings are important for a commercial channel. However, he also points out that in order to survive, TV 2 needs to deliver quality in its key areas.

It means we have to be perceived as an independent, accountable and credible news organization. Our broadcasts must be good and credible; otherwise we're not an actor. And how can we be an actor? By having the right journalists, the right angles – we must set the news agenda in Norway in a manner that is beyond reproach. (Henschien 2009)

This strategy also reflects the ability of the hard news profile to expand distribution, attract valuable audiences and bring in added advertising revenue. Being a subsidiary, TV 2 News Channel is not bound by the public service provisions attached to its parent's licence agreement. Its news profile can thus be built to capitalize on the added value of attractive audience groups. There is a case to be made in this respect concerning the 'masculine' identity of the channel – the ideological value of the hard news genre and the commercial value of sports content, and the predominantly elite male audience it attracts. TV 2's flagship news typically caters to younger audiences and has a higher female demographic than the news channel (Waldahl et al. 2006). An orientation towards a more predominantly elite male audience can therefore be seen to fill a gap in demographics as well as with advertisers looking for targeted consumer groups. Aiding this strategic marketing is the professional-ideological news hierarchy in which higher echelons have traditionally been dominated by typical hard news topics such as politics and business (cf. Djerf-Pierre 2007: 97). TV 2 News Channel's strategic market positioning thus amply reflects the enduring dominance of established news hierarchies in the professional ideology of newsmakers. Being free from licence-bound content provisions and subscription-based, TV 2 can highlight the narrowness of the venture as a positive fulfilment of journalism's social contract. While being 'not for everyone' TV 2 News Channel brands TV 2's news enterprise as going above and beyond for the sake of journalism. But while this mythology is an important strategy behind – and the intended effect of – this branding effort, it also goes openly hand in hand with TV 2's commercial objectives.

TV 2 has often articulated its belief that profit and quality are not mutually exclusive entities (cf. Licence Application 1991: 14). What we see expressed in the discourses surrounding the news channel is that the quality of the service is the commercial value of the service. So from TV 2's perspective, just because a news venture is able to make a profit, this does not mean that it does not also fulfil its social contract obligations in an ideal manner. The association between quality and attention is made throughout the documents analysed here. Commercial success in terms of attracting distributors, advertisers and audiences is itself taken as an indication of quality. Quality in news production is what creates legitimacy and ultimately attracts these distributors, advertisers and audiences, which in turn increases the channel's legitimacy further. Thus, journalistic ideals are clearly projected by TV 2 as a currency within the news market.

The potential democratic spillover effect of focusing on hard news – and thus the professional-ideological incentive to engage in quality journalism – is only deemed economically viable in a regulatory environment in which this is valued (Hamilton 2007: 13). Research has suggested that for a commercial TV venture, the presence of

public service broadcasting and state regulations in the news market “appears to provide a benchmark that has helped maintain journalistic standards” (Cushion & Lewis 2009: 149). What we can conclude from this insight is that standards operating in the overall news market help maintain legitimacy and credibility as ideological currencies in this market. The rules and resources existing within the market determine the possible strategies of the various actors within the journalistic institution. If the rules of this structure value hard news and journalistic standards, journalistic agency should be encouraged to follow this ideal. Because of news market competition, strategies are based on product differentiation, identity and branding to a greater extent than before. These strategies must be understood within the context of an institution and a media system that carry a strong liberal-democratic journalistic ideology.

News ideals and practices established by the journalistic institution prior to TV 2 entering the Norwegian news market have affected the practices, ideals and identities of this new journalistic product. Thus, ideology, narrative and practice in TV 2 News Channel’s output are the results both of the established TV 2 news identity as different from other operators in the market as well as of the structuration processes of the journalistic institution. We therefore need to consider the ideology of the news venture as a factor in TV 2 News Channel’s news strategies, not just the size of TV 2 as a media house and its subsequent ability to gain access to distribution networks. Here, the usefulness of assuming a ‘face value’ approach to TV 2’s ideological narratives lies in its ability to reveal journalistic ideology as perceived and capitalized on by TV 2 itself. Exposing the unavoidable grandstanding of discourses aimed at branding the news venture vis-à-vis policy makers, advertisers and audiences is less interesting in a context where this discourse reveals the ideological rules of the Norwegian news market itself. The combined strategy of ideological capitalization and distribution presence indicates not only that TV 2 has strengthened its position in the news market, but also the extent to which news ideology remains strong within the Norwegian journalistic institution.

## **Conclusion**

With the launch of a 24-hour news channel, TV 2 has attempted a strategy that would ensure the channel’s particular news brand stays relevant across publication platforms. As TV 2 News Channel operates on both the digital television platform and as an online channel, this venture could entail a stronger market position as the future of journalism moves from free online news to paid services. Hence, it is not only the journalistic profile as such that determines the revenues of the news business, but also its distribution format. The combined push to the digital television platform and the subsequent strategic expansion of the channel portfolio has seen TV 2 attempt to retain its market share by focusing on the three content areas in which its efforts are already well established – sports, news and entertainment. Although the worldview of the particular TV 2 news brand is not that different from its main competitor NRK (Waldahl et al. 2006: 91), the sports, politics, business and crime profile of TV 2 News Channel – presented within the news channel genre of fast, live and updated news – suggests traditional hard news journalism can indeed survive, provided it continues to find novel strategies to attain revenue.

## Notes

1. This article presents an analysis of TV 2 News Channel from a 2010 perspective. Since the article was written, changes have occurred both with TV 2 and within the television sector. The article has been updated to accommodate minor factual changes only.
2. TV 2 Zebra (primarily entertainment and sports content); TV 2 News Channel; TV 2 Film Channel; TV 2 Bliss (primarily entertainment content); TV 2 Science Fiction and TV 2 Sport.
3. TV 2 Sport comprises the channels TV 2 Sport 1-5 (broadcasting from the Norwegian Football League), TV 2 Premier League HD, and TV 2 Premier League HD 2 and 3.
4. Key terms that describe news as a carrier of ideology are facts, objectivity, truth, accuracy, impartiality, neutrality, independence, credibility, authority and authenticity. News journalistic virtues inherent here are contemporary events, exclusivity, investigation, live coverage, immediacy, breaking stories, revelation and inside information. For references see: Eide 1992:27; Harrison 2006:1-8; Hjarvard 1992:3-4; Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001:37; Schudson 2003:40; Zelizer 2004:72.
5. TV 2's Annual Reports from 2006 and 2007; TV 2's Annual Audits from 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, Annual Accounts from 2008, and its license applications from 1991, 2001 and 2009.
6. TV 2 News Editor Jan Ove Årsæther, and Managing Director of TV 2 News Channel Thomas Henschien.
7. 125 hours of rolling news from TV 2 News Channel, n= 5480 items. Data and coding methodology can be obtained from the author on request.
8. This amounts to approximately GBP 5 million.
9. Wednesday 15 April; Thursday 14 May; Friday 19 June; Saturday 22 August; Sunday 19 July; Monday 21 September; Tuesday 20 October 2009. N = 5480 (news items, where one item is one news report, one commercial break, one weather report, etc.).
10. Inter-coder reliability was established using 2 independent coders measuring Cohen's kappa (k). Included in the reliability sample were all 7 9:00 am to 9:30 am bulletins, n=187. Primary content (Foreign/Domestic): 93%/.90; Overall content categories (business, crime, politics, etc.): 81%/.78; Business: 96%/.87; Crime: 92%/.57; Social issues: 85%/.54; Politics: 79%/.53; Accidents 96%/.68; General interest: 96%/.48; Sports: 96%/.89; Topical category: 93%/.73; Location: 86%/.78; Agenda setting: 74%/.66. As Cohen's kappa is a conservative measure, any measure above .70 is considered acceptable (Neuendorf 2002:143). For some of the categories listed here, high distribution and low variance has resulted in a low kappa (ibid.:151). But as raw agreement remains high within these categories, kappa still retains acceptable reliability.
11. "Norwegian sport" and "World sport" here comprise primarily news "on the pitch" – news relating to sporting performances and related areas such as transfers, injuries, etc. "Sports news" here comprises the political, economic and strategic elements of the sports world, while "Sports personalities" captures profiles and features not otherwise related to the results.

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**Interviews**

Henschien, T., TV 2 News Channel Managing Director, Personal interview, 05.02.09

Årsæther, J. O., TV 2 News Editor, Personal interview, 24.03.09