

Abstract

With the continuous advancements in digital journalism, numerous forms and styles of storytelling have emerged, including cross-media storytelling. These interactive, multimedia files integrate various elements offered by the electronic medium, such as text, images, graphics, video, audio, and links, in various forms and types. The goal is to produce a comprehensive journalistic file or story that encompasses different journalistic arts within a cohesive and integrated artistic framework, based on graphic design principles. This can be achieved through a one-page design or multiple pages that the reader navigates using the cross-media story's internal navigation system.

This study aims to explore the design of cross-media storytelling in Egyptian online newspapers and its relationship to enhancing their performance, within the framework of an applied study of Egyptian online newspapers and the media richness theory and the hybrid model. To achieve this objective, the researcher monitored and analyzed cross-media storytelling on the following websites: Al-Dustour, Al-Watan, Al-Bawaba News, Cairo 24, El Konsulto, Massrawy, and Ahram Gate, from August 2017 (the date of the first cross-media storytelling published on Massrawy) to August 2022. This involved analyzing the formal aspects of cross-media storytelling, including both traditional and interactive elements, design forms, and styles. Additionally, the study explored information sources, the most focused-on topics, and persuasion techniques used in cross-media storytelling. Furthermore, the performance of these files was evaluated.

The study also analyzed the results of a field study conducted with a sample of cross-media storytelling producers at the studied websites to understand the methods of selecting different design forms for cross-media storytelling, the nature and steps of producing this type of storytelling files, the roles and responsibilities of communicators in the design process and performance improvement, and their impact on overall website performance. The goal was to develop a roadmap to guide designers, in finding innovative and clear entry points for designing cross-media storytelling.

The overall results of the analytical study revealed a diversity of forms, styles, and design methods for cross-media storytelling on the studied websites. The topics, sources, and persuasion techniques, whether rational, emotional, or both, also varied widely in cross-media files. The performance level of most cross-media storytelling on the studied websites was generally low and required improvement, especially on El Konsulto. The results of the field study emphasized the importance of a specialized newsroom and a dedicated team to help maintain the continuous production of cross-media files on the website. Most of the sample respondents confirmed that the design process is the cornerstone of producing cross-media storytelling due to its significance in helping users understanding the story with minimal effort. Most of the study sample also sought to evaluate the performance of cross-media storytelling on the website. Additionally, the study's main objective and hypothesis were confirmed, as the results indicated that the quality of cross-media storytelling design affects the performance of the website.

Keywords: Multimedia journalism, Digital media, Website performance, Cross-media storytelling.