MANAGING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Per Andersson, Staffan Movin,
Magnus Mähring, Robin Teigland,
and Karl Wennberg (eds.)

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Karyn McGettigan, Language Editor

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STIFTELSEN MARKNADSTEKNISKT CENTRUM

In his central role at the Wallenberg Foundations,
Peter Wallenberg Jr has furthered a broad range of important research and research-led education initiatives at the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) and its Institute for Research (SIR). This indispensable work has also helped create a fertile ground for research on digital innovation and transformation: a phenomenon currently experienced, shaped, and managed in and between organisations and throughout society.

This is the topic of this book, which we dedicate to him.

Contents

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Every year since 1992, the Stockholm School of Economics Institute for Research (SIR) has published an Annual Research Anthology, and this year SIR is publishing the book in cooperation with MTC (Stiftelsen Marknadstekniskt Centrum). The purpose of the SIR Annual Research publication is to enable managers and practitioners better understand and address strategically important challenges by showcasing SSE research on a selected topic of importance for both business and society.

This year's book, *Managing Digital Transformation,* features authors from academic areas across SSE together with representatives outside the institution. The book's eighteen chapters show the strength and breadth of SSE's research within the area of digitalization and reflect the importance that SSE places upon closely linking research to practice and on investigating the leadership challenges and their implications in order to support value creation in society.

Participating in the many ongoing research projects at SSE and the multitude of aspects of digital transformation addressed in the various chapters has been very rewarding for the editors. We would like to thank all the authors for their hard work and cooperation throughout the project. In finalising this book, we have relied upon the expert work of Karyn McGettigan for language editing, Petra Lundin for layout and graphic design, and Marie Wahlström for digital access to the book. We are, indeed, most grateful for their excellent and diligent work.

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Stockholm, January 2018
Per Andersson, Staffan Movin, Magnus Mähring, Robin Teigland, Karl Wennberg

Introduction

One of the hottest research topics lately is digitalization. Many research projects are focusing upon different perspectives. Gone are the days when digitalization or business implications of ICT were just about increasing efficiency. Instead, the ripple effect of digital development can now be felt wider and deeper than ever before. The way in which business is conducted and how it creates value, as well as how corporations can become more efficient and sustainable, are all implications of digitalization. Adapting to new demands and taking advantage of the plethora of possibilities, however, is not always easy.

Managing digitalization and the transformation of business always involves new challenges. The novelty and complexity of the digital age has led to an increased academic interest in the area of digital transformation and a call from companies that seek support in this process.

We take a look at digitalization from the perspective of business research. This creates a better understanding of the challenges that today's businesses are facing. We believe this anthology will serve as a tool to help businesses better understand the force that is digitalization and support these corporations in their digital transformation.

The idea behind this anthology grew as Marknadstekniskt Centrum was taking part in several interesting research projects. Companies were asking MTC to facilitate contact with scholars and supply them with academic insight. Vinnova came on board, by supporting the project *Progressiv digital utveckling förutsättningar för framgång (Progressive Digital Development: Pre-Requisites for Success)* of which this book is a part: its aim to stimulate business to become more progressive in digital change. At last, this book and the website www.digitalchange.com have become a reality.

This joint venture between Marknadstekniskt Centrum and The Stockholm School of Economics Institute for Research follows the SIR tradition of publishing an annual yearbook to showcase its vital research contributions. The book begins with an overview of digitalization, then moves to understanding the new digital customer, and ends by exploring re-organisational effects, business models, and ecosystems. We hope this year's anthology will be useful for managers by facilitating their digitalization processes.

PART 1: DIGITALIZATION – DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

The role of digital technology in business and society is rapidly shifting from being a driver of marginal efficiency to an enabler of fundamental innovation and disruption in many industrial sectors, such as media, information and communication industries, and many more. The economic, societal, and business implications of digitalization are contested and raise serious questions about the wider impact of digital transformation. Digitalization affects all private and public operations, as well as the internal and external workings of any operation. Digitalization is the major driving force behind sweeping large-scale transformations in a multitude of industries. Part 1 includes various perspectives on digitalization and digital transformation.

PART 2: THE NEW DIGITAL CUSTOMER

Digitalization has resulted in more user-centric business and user-centric systems. The changing behaviour of the digital consumer/customer is discussed here as it connects to new forms of customer involvement and engagement, as well as analysis models of what creates customer value in this digital context.

PART 3: THE RE-ORGANISATION IN ORDER TO CONNECT WITH THE DIGITAL CUSTOMER

How can companies connect with digitalized consumers and non-digitalized customers? This is a central issue in managing digital transformation, as it draws attention to the emerging intra-organisational, marketing, and customer interaction challenges associated with digitalization: for both the consumer and the supplier. Another aspect of this is the internal handling of new forms of organizational ambidexterity; that is to say, companies and organizations engaged in digitalization processes often require an internal re-organisation in order to handle the demands that digitalization brings, and to explore new digital opportunities while promoting their existing business and operations.

PART 4: BUSINESS MODELS AND ECOSYSTEMS

How do companies change, adapt, and innovate their business models? Given that digitalization leads to a convergence of previously unconnected or loosely connected markets, the digitalizing company and organisation is analysed in its systemic and dynamic context. This part draws attention to business models

and business model innovation. Incumbent firms need to adapt and change business models while competing with digital start-ups based upon new scalable business models, accessible ventures, and rapid processes of intermediating. These chapters discuss completely new co-operative business models: processes that need to be developed as companies shift from products to digitally based services.

The Ecosystem places digitalizing organisations and companies into their broader and systemic context. This includes discussions on digital disruption, industrial convergence processes, and shifting patterns of competition and cooperation. Digital technologies cause markets to converge in many new and sometimes unexpected ways. The result is the emergence of new roles and market positions of technical platforms.

Staffan Movin, Stiftelsen Marknadstekniskt Centrum

Explaining the Behaviour of News Consumption

ADAM ÅBONDE

Brave New(s) World

The way in which people find and consume news[1] and information about the world is changing. As the news industry is facing a textbook example of technological disruption (Küng, 2015), both scholars and industry have been very focused upon *what* is being published (Anand, 2016) in their quest to understand and adapt to the new rules of the game. Another point of departure is suggested in this chapter: I ask *why* news consumers are changing their behaviour. I adopt a behavioural perspective when looking to explain news consumption, thus, arguing that although *content* is important, it is even more critical to understand the *functions* of consuming certain content.

News publishing has been traditionally associated with large fixed costs (Anand, 2016). The costs of producing and distributing content today has greatly diminished and there has been an explosion in the number of news publishers and the amount of content created; fragmented media consumption is a result (Küng, 2015). The internet, smartphones, and social media have all had their profound impact. Indeed, with social media, people have, in a sense, become their own media producers.

In the digital era, money is not the primary currency anymore. Rather, consumers' time and focus are what matters (Goldhaber, 1997; Simon, 1971; Wu, 2017), since this is what brings in ad revenue (Anand, 2016). With the digitalization of media, news must now compete for consumer's attention with virtually all other kinds of information ("How the world was trolled," 2017):

1 The American Press Institute defines news as "that part of communication that keeps us informed of the changing events, issues, and characters in the world outside" (Dean, 2013).

both from other news sources and from completely new competitors providing other kinds of content ("Funnel Vision," 2017).

While some news publishers are succeeding in the digital world; others are not. Various online, mobile, and social media sources are on the rise (Küng, 2015; Wahlund, Rademaker, Nilsson, & Svahn, 2013); while print subscriptions continue to fall. Recent figures show that as many as 85% of Swedes consume news online from time to time: a 66% increase from in 2007 (Davidsson & Findahl, 2016). Social media has become an important news source for many (Müller, Schneiders, & Schäfer, 2016)especially younger, users use Facebook as their primary source for news about political and societal issues. At the same time, research suggests that Facebook use contributes to societal knowledge gaps. Against this background, we investigate the antecedents of using Facebook as a substitute for other news sources. We argue that exposure to news posts on Facebook increases the feeling of being well-informed, regardless of actual knowledge acquisition. This might lead users, especially those with a low need for cognition (NfC. In Sweden, more than every other Facebook user (53%) is using the platform as a news source (Davidsson & Thoresson, 2017). Consuming news is the third most common activity on Facebook, preceded only by chatting through messenger: of which 81% of Swedish Facebook users do, and being part of groups: of which 63% are (Davidsson & Thoresson, 2017).

Recently, some news publishers have actually seen an increase in their number of digital subscribers. For example, both The New York Times and The Washington Post are now bringing in more money through subscriptions – for digital and print combined – than they do with advertising ("Funnel Vision," 2017). Digital sales for news publishers in Sweden are also increasing overall (both subscriptions and ads), yet are still at very low levels and, in most cases, are simply not enough to compensate for the loss in print sales, with only one exception: evening papers (Ohlsson, 2017; Wahlund et al., 2013).

What the future holds for news and journalism is not evident. Nevertheless, understanding the opportunities and threats of digitalization, and how this influences human behaviour (Levitin, 2015) is important not only from a business perspective (Anand, 2016; Küng, 2015); it is also significant for democracy ("How the world was trolled," 2017). While the disruption is largely driven by digitalization and diffusion of new technologies, per sé, a behavioural approach provides a theoretical basis for looking at *individuals' contemporary news consumption behaviours*.

I provide a cursory overview of behaviourist notions of learning. I argue that, as the environment changes, so does the function of behaviours. I further present four examples of news and media companies that are viewed as being successful in the digital sphere and provide a behavioural explanation for why they are successful. I end the chapter by concluding that news publishers must move away from thinking solely about what content they are producing, and begin to primarily focus upon the function the consumption their products offer their consumers.

* * *

The remainder of the chapter is organised in three parts. First, behavioural learning theory is reviewed. Here the role of nature and nurture in human behaviour in general is briefly presented and how it relates to digital technologies. Secondly, I discuss the specific behaviour of consuming news. Different functions of news consumption are considered and examples of news and media companies that are viewed as being successful in the digital sphere are presented in light of this. Third, the chapter concludes with a summary outlining the main points made and I offer some implications for practitioners.

Human Behaviour and Digitalization

NATURE, NURTURE, AND HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

One's behaviour is commonly attributed to nature or nurture – or both. Nature represents inherited capabilities or predispositions that have developed over many generations through evolution: that is to say, it is embedded in the genetic code (Dawkins, 2006). Nurture represents the effects of interacting with the environment: that is to say, one learns from experience (Myers, 2010: p. 291). Nature and nurture are different sides of the same coin; both represent the influence of the environment upon one's behaviour, yet their time horizon differs: nature over the course of evolution of the species, nurture during the lifetime of the individual (Skinner, 1974, via Delprato & Midgley, 1992).

The role of nature is quite easy to grasp (at least on a superficial level). Combinations of genes promote different behaviours. Natural selection favours combinations of genes that foster behaviours that increase the chance of survival of the organism (Dawkins, 2006). That is to say, organisms that behave in ways that increases their survival rate tend to live; organisms that

engage in less successful behaviours tend to die. As a result, certain combinations of genes – and the related behaviours – have a greater probability to survive to the next generation (Dawkins, 2006).

As an example, nature could explain why humans react to sudden noises or movements in our surroundings; the species has evolved to react to novel stimuli, which is why our attention automatically shifts to new things that are happening around us (Dawkins, 2006). Evolutionarily, this behaviour is likely to have been favoured, since it has increased the chance of survival. For example, by acknowledging sudden movements in the corner of the eye, individuals could save themselves from dangerous animals lurking in the bushes. Or by being extra susceptible to strong colors, one might be better suited to avoid poisonous plants. Of course, today's world is different. In large parts of the world, the number of dangers from which humans need to shield themselves has diminished – or at least they are of another kind.

The impact of nature is straight-forward; the principles of learning are less intuitive. Humans learn either by association or by observation (Myers, 2010, p.291-293): learning by doing or learning by watching others do, respectively. Here, the focus will be upon learning by association: that is to say, doing.

Associative learning is further divided into *classical* and *operant* conditioning (Bouton, 2016; Myers, 2010). Classical conditioning is when an organism "learn[s] to associate two stimuli and thus to anticipate events" (Myers, 2010, p.292). The archetypical example of classical conditioning is Pavlov's dogs: a dog learns to associate the ringing of a bell (stimuli 1) with food (stimuli 2); then when the dog hears the bell ring, it begins to salivate (response) regardless whether or not there is any food present (it has learned that the bell usually implies food is coming; therefore, its body starts preparing for digesting it [Bouton, 2016]).

Operant conditioning is when an organism "learns to associate a response [...] and its consequence and, thus, to repeat acts that are followed by good results [...] and avoid acts followed by bad results" (Myers, 2010, p.293). When a behaviour is followed by good results, it is *reinforced*, which increases the probability of the behaviour occurring again (Bouton, 2016). On the other hand, when a behaviour is followed by bad results, it is *punished*, which decreases the probability of the behaviour occurring again (Bouton, 2016). The prototypical example of operant conditioning is known as the Skinner Box: a rat learns to associate the behaviour of pressing a lever (response) with

receiving a food pellet (consequence); and, consequently, presses the lever over and over again (it has learned that the behaviour of pressing is followed by a good outcome: that is to say, the behaviour is reinforced (Bouton, 2016).

In theory, learning can explain all human behaviour (indeed, the behaviour of organisms in general). For example, operant conditioning can explain such things as why people exercise or eat candy: either behaviour is followed by a good consequence (positive reinforcement, in terms of an endorphin rush or a sugar rush, respectively).

According to behavioural learning theory, all behaviours that are not inherited through evolution are caused by external rather than internal factors: that is to say, within the organism. Changes in the environment are consequently bound to influence how an organism acts (Bouton, 2016; Delprato & Midgley, 1992; Simon, 1956) it follows quite naturally that widespread digitalization has had profound impact on the daily lives of millions, if not billions, of people around the world. Two important digital inventions – the smartphone and social media – and their impact upon human behaviour are discussed in the next section, in the light of behavioural learning theory.

THE SLOT MACHINES IN OUR POCKETS

News consumers currently find themselves in a constant state of distraction. Concerns have been raised, warning that the digital world is bad both for individuals (Levitin, 2015) and for society at large ("How the world was trolled," 2017). As information becomes ever more abundant, the new scarce resource has become people's attention. Companies currently must compete for consumers' time and focus, perhaps more than ever before. As a result, new technologies are often designed with the main goal of making its users spend as much time as possible with the technology, regardless of what is the actual value for the user of using the technology (Harris, 2016).

This discussion is not new. In the last fifty or so years, there has been much debate around the increasing amount of information that digital technologies bring with them (see Goldhaber, 1997; Simon, 1971; Wu, 2017). What is new, however, is the mobility and level of engagement of modern technology. More specifically, the little "Swiss army knife-like appliances" (Levitin, 2015) many people carry with them at all times: that is to say, smartphones and the enthralling social networks often accessed through these.

One can think of the many different reasons why people turn to their smartphones in an almost compulsive fashion – and people do. On average, Americans touch their smartphones more than 2,600 times per day: that is, every 33 seconds ("How the world was trolled," 2017). For example, it has been suggested that people are very aversive toward having nothing to do: that is, to be left with their thoughts (Wilson et al., 2014). Smartphones offer a simple escape from the discomfort of boredom.[2]

Smartphones are said to also supplant thinking (Barr, Pennycook, Stolz, & Fugelsang, 2015; Storm, Stone, & Benjamin, 2016)access to the internet and its associated knowledge base is at one's fingertips. What consequences does this have for human cognition? We frame Smartphone use as an instantiation of the extended mind – the notion that our cognition goes beyond our brains – and in so doing, characterize a modern form of cognitive miserliness. Specifically, that people typically forego effortful analytic thinking in lieu of fast and easy intuition suggests that individuals may allow their Smartphones to do their thinking for them. Our account predicts that individuals who are relatively less willing and/or able to engage effortful reasoning processes may compensate by relying on the internet through their Smartphones. Across three studies, we find that those who think more intuitively and less analytically when given reasoning problems were more likely to rely on their Smartphones (i.e.; extended mind. A behavioural explanation for this would be that individuals learn to manage just as well by "outsourcing" their thinking to their smartphones: rather than having to remember things, they have constant and immediate access to the full body of knowledge on the web.

In both of these examples, escaping boredom and outsourcing thinking represents behaviours that are reinforced by the environment through operant conditioning. As users learn that they can get a fresh dopamine kick just by checking their social media feed one more time (Levitin, 2015), or that they manage just as well by relying upon Google to retrieve information rather than trying to remember it themselves (Storm et al., 2016), this is likely to trigger a self-reinforcing spiral of behaviour. This ensures (or at least increases

2 Attempts have even been made to infer when people are bored based upon their mobile phone usage patterns (Pielot, Dingler, Pedro, & Oliver, 2015). The implications are straightforward: if a content producer or advertiser can know when a consumer is bored, they are more likely to grab the consumer's attention by pushing content to the personal device at these specific times than when the consumer has their mind focused upon other things. This would presumably also apply to news, for which attention is sought.

the probability) that people keep coming back again and again. Similar to the rat in the Skinner Box, smartphone and social media users are lured to pull-and-refresh only one more time to see whether there is some new piece of information waiting to be consumed[3]. This is why smartphones have been likened to slot machines (Harris, 2016).

With new contexts, comes new behaviour. Consequently, the function of news consumption inevitably changes, as do the technologies behind it. I will discuss news consumption and digitalization in the next section.

The Function of Consuming News

FROM CONTENT TO FUNCTION

News publishers have typically been concerned with the content they are producing, as this has been assumed to attract consumers and, hence, revenues (Anand, 2016). However, going back to nature and nurture, it is difficult to explain the evolutionary value of news consumption. While behaviors such as reacting to novel stimuli or being extra vigilant toward negative (threatening or dangerous) information can be explained by natural selection, the behaviour of consuming news cannot: for example, under normal circumstances, an individual will not be more or less likely to survive or mate as the result of news reading. Evolution may explain *how* we read (for example, focusing upon certain words, colours or features), yet not *why* we read (for example, picking up the paper to begin with). Thus, the behaviour of news consumption must be a learned one.

From a behaviourist perspective, it is possible to imagine several reasons why an individual learns to consume news. According to the definition provided by the American Press Institute (see the introduction; Dean, 2013), the function of consuming news is to stay informed in general. This, however, does not have any inherent value in itself: it is not evident that there are (directly observable) positive or negative consequences for an individual that "stays informed".

The value of staying informed through news can possibly be explained by cultural practices. As the human species began organising in larger groups (and eventually societies), there may be value for the individual to keep track

3 The fact that there are not rewards to reap every time users check for new content makes them even more likely to become "addicted": Different kinds of irregular reward patterns, called intermittent reinforcement, have been shown to be even more effective in reproducing behaviour than regular: that is to say, continuous reinforcement (Bouton, 2016).

of what has happened: not just in the immediate surroundings, however, in other parts of the community as well. Individuals are better able to make good decisions by staying informed about political developments, threats of war, emergencies, or similar things that may have an effect upon their lives. At the aggregate, a common basis of information also enables public discussion, which is vital for the proper functioning of a democracy.

An even simpler, and perhaps more accurate, explanation since it is directly experienced by the individual, would be to have something to discuss in social situations. Or, rather, to avoid the adverse consequence of being perceived by one's peers as being uninformed when talking about something (an example of negative reinforcement: the individual avoids negative feelings/expectations by consuming the news). In this case, the behaviour of consuming news has a purely social function. The behaviour enables smooth interaction with other members of the species: with colleagues at the coffee machine or at home by the dinner table.

News may also be consumed simply as a means for passing the time. This runs the spectrum of escaping boredom (that is to say, avoiding negative consequences, such as the dreadful "having nothing to do"), to actively seeking entertainment and stimulation (that is to say, pursuing positive consequences, such as reading a witty comic strip).

A counter-argument to the aforementioned functional explanations could be that behaviour depends upon factors within the individual. Say, for example, that an individual is very interested in sports. The argument would then be that this individual perceives joy or some other kind of satisfaction or utility, by consuming news about sports. Many other causes of behaviour residing within the individual, apart from interest, can come to mind as well: for example, cognitive style, personality, norms, self-enhancement, needs or a sense of belonging. From a behaviourist perspective, however, these are not causes of behaviour.

From a behaviourist perspective, news consumption is reinforced due to cultural practices. However, it has no inherent value for the individual: that is to say, survival or mating is not contingent upon it. Consuming news is *reinforced* by such things as enabling decision-making, facilitating social situations or helping the individual escape unpleasant feelings or states. Just as checking social media feeds or looking for new notifications on the smart-

phone, however, the behaviour of consuming news does not promote any other action from the individual apart from continuing to do the same thing.[4]

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF CONTEMPORARY NEWS CONSUMPTION

Four news and media companies that are viewed as being successful in the digital sphere are The Economist, BuzzFeed, Quartz, and Vice (Küng, 2015). These do not only differ in the content they publish; the function of consuming their products also differs.

The Economist has been almost notoriously slow to adapt to the digital world[5]; yet it has still managed to stay successful in the face of industry digitalization and disruption (Anand, 2016). While the content of The Economist provides its consumers – often busy individuals with little time to spare – with a perspective of the world (Anand, 2016), the function of consuming is something completely different. The Economist have kept their style and form intact; one function of reading The Economist now is an opportunity to stay away from the growing problem of information overload. Their content still provides perspective, yet the function has become the reduction of information.

BuzzFeed and Quartz are both digital news publishers dedicated to understanding virality. These companies have outspoken strategies to target young, smart, and bored-at-work individuals (Küng, 2015). As such, their content is often clever and enticing, accompanied by headlines bordering on click baits[6]. Although they offer interesting or clever news pieces, however, the function of consuming their content is a few moments of distraction.

Vice also targets a young audience, oozing more sex, drugs, and rock and roll than does BuzzFeed and Quartz. While they claim to cover important and current topics – in principle, anything that their audience wants – they tend to focus a lot upon adopting its tone and style to appeal to the audience (Vice's founder has even claimed that it takes young people to address young people, which is why the average age of their journalists is only 25 years old [Küng, 2015]).

4 For an interesting discussion on culture and behavior, see Skinner's (1986)(b paper on how human behavior has grown weak).

5 Although The Economist now complements its weekly magazine with smartphone and tablet apps, audio versions of the paper, and are active on social media.

6 Click bait is not one specific type of formatting. Rather, it refers to a number of methods intended to attract attention and, quite obviously, make news consumers click on published content. Ultimately, the goal with click baits is to make content travel online: that is, to make it viral. Different click bait techniques include tweaking content and wording to vex curiosity, encourage interaction, or engage emotionally (Chen, Conroy, & Rubin, 2015).

Vice is known for its raw and intimate coverage "behind the scenes" on controversial topics. One example is when reporters from Vice visited North Korea with the Harlem Globetrotters: they played basketball against the North Korean national team, and met with Kim Jong-un (Küng, 2015). Another example is when a Vice reporter accompanied white nationalists during the Charlottesville riots in August 2017, interviewing several of the nationalist leaders, and "provid[ing] viewers with exclusive, up close and personal access inside the unrest" (Vice News, 2017). With its Gonzo-style journalism[7] the function of Vice is more entertainment and excitement than it is to inform people.

These news publishers, and others similar to them, have successfully managed to be relevant: not primarily in what they publish, but how they publish it. Although content is important, it comes in second place. The primary focus must be upon what is the *function* of the behaviour of consuming certain news.

By shifting perspective away from content to function, it becomes possible to understand why people act the way they do. From a content perspective, it seems unreasonable that anyone would rather consume news on social media than on a news publisher's website. From a functional perspective, it makes more sense: for example, if the function of the behaviour is to escape boredom rather than to become informed. Many traditional news companies are poorly fit for the digital world: not because they have poor content, but because they do not look to the functions of the behaviour of consuming their content.

Conclusion

In the digital era, people do not pay (directly) with money, but rather with their attention. So, any publisher trying to attract a public online will compete for the attention of the masses (Goldhaber, 1997; Simon, 1971; Wu, 2017). One common way to try to do this is by focusing upon what content to publish (Anand, 2016). In the worst-case scenario, the result is increased sensationalism (for example, click baits) and a degradation of quality. Even if a company succeeds in this new environment, there is always a risk that someone else will enter the playing field and outmanoeuver them: either because they have more money, more brains, or better algorithms with which to fight.

7 "Gonzo journalism" is an approach inspired by the practices of Hunter S. Thompson, for example evident in his book *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, where the writer departs from the journalistic aspiration of objectivity and instead combines subjective experiences with fiction (Küng, 2015).

Another strategy then, which is perhaps controversial for a news publisher, is to focus *less* upon the content that is produced. This does not mean that the things being published are irrelevant; from a business perspective, it is just as (if not more) important to also recognise the function of consuming the content. The behaviour of consuming news has little evolutionary value for humans. Instead, consumers have learned the behaviour through cultural practices, which is reinforced by good consequences. These consequences vary depending upon what function the behaviour serves, and can include things such as enabling good decision-making, facilitating social interaction with other individuals, or escaping boredom. By focusing upon function instead of content, it is possible to explain contemporary news behaviours: such as why consumers migrate from news publisher websites to social media platforms to consume news content.

In conclusion, news publishers should shift focus from *content*: that is to say, what they are producing and distributing, to *function*: for example, what is the purpose of consuming their product. Because digital technologies have changed the function of consumer behaviour related to news in numerous different ways.

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