

I krympt kostym

Morgontidningarnas formatförändring
och dess konsekvenser

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Abstract

During the first years of the 21st century, the number of newspapers printed in tabloid format in Sweden increased dramatically. The major morning papers switched to a smaller page size and the tabloid format became the branch standard.

The empirical aim of the dissertation is to describe the process of format change and explain its significance for the newspaper market in Sweden. The process is analyzed from points of view – the organization's and the readers'. On the one hand, the study analyzes the change in format over time and the format's impact on the newspaper as a product and on its production. On the other hand, it analyzes present and potential readers' impressions and judgments' as well as their reading habits in relation to the change in format.

Material and methodology used are, among others: document analyses, personal interviews, content analyses, survey research and focus group interviews.

The results show that although changes in newspaper format are not a new phenomenon, the reasons for changing formats differ in time and between newspapers in various market situations. The overriding conclusion is that the format change has significant consequences for the product, the production and for the readers – either directly or indirectly – although there are variations between individual newspapers and different groups of readers.

The switch to tabloid format created new and more opportunities than the full size format did. Even though newspapers took this chance in various extensions, most of them changed their content character in some way. For example they reduced the number of pages and published generally more and larger pictures. From a reader's perspective, the format change is popular, and a change in format tends to lead to increased reading, especially among young people. But the importance of the format change for the reading habits are mainly indirect; connected to marketing and price reduction.

The conclusion is that format change can be important for the future of a newspaper in a competitive media environment. The way the newspapers handle the change is significant to how successful it will be in a longer perspective.

Keywords

Tabloid, tabloidization, format change, format, broadsheet, newspaper, paper size, newspaper production, printing press, audience, readership.