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Determinants of the Media Product Management Process from the Perspective of Technological Innovation

ABSTRACT

In contemporary media ecosystems, the media product is increasingly shaped by a constellation of interdependent technological and infrastructural determinants that transform its form, internal logic, and managerial practices within media organizations. Technological processes—rather than content itself or classical media logics—now constitute the primary determinants of the media product. As a result, its definition has shifted towards an understanding of the product as an integrated configuration of content, functions, metadata, and user experience. Market success is thus conditioned by technological architecture, data quality, and organizational efficiency, which collectively determine content visibility and underpin revenue stability. The aim of this article is to identify and synthetically conceptualize the key technological determinants that shape the processes of creating and managing media products in media enterprises. The analysis is grounded in a critical interpretation of dominant theoretical frameworks and empirical findings in the scholarly literature, enabling the identification of key trends and their positioning within the broader context of ongoing technological transformations. The focus is placed not on the evolution of genres or formats, but on the functional and managerial logic of the media product within an environment characterized by deep technological restructuring. From a historical perspective, the article traces the transition from monolithic, single-channel offerings to modular, multi-platform product architectures, highlighting the increasing importance of platformization, content aggregation, and metadata systems as structural factors determining visibility and demand. The discussion further explores the implications of datafication, transformations in CMS architectures, and the rise of personalization and recommendation mechanisms as key tools for structuring product-portfolio management. The inductive reasoning employed in the analysis makes it possible to identify trends that either already dominate the market or are likely to become dominant in the near future: (1) the increasing strategic importance of data and metadata management across the entire value chain; (2) the emergence of AI as an operational environment for content production, distribution, and optimization; (3) the redefinition of audience relations, including

a renewed emphasis on subscription-based and direct-to-consumer models; and; (4) the potential resurgence of integrated content implementations in contexts where quality control and user experience constitute key competitive differentiators. The article contributes to the systematization of technological determinants in media product management and outlines directions for further research concerning their implications for editorial strategies, system architectures, and monetization models.

KEYWORDS: media product, media market transformation,
media management, technological innovation

STRESZCZENIE

Determinanty procesu zarządzania produktem medialnym w perspektywie innowacji technologicznych/ produktowych

Współczesny produkt medialny jest w coraz większym stopniu kształtowany przez zestaw współdziałających determinant technologiczno-infrastrukturalnych, które zmieniają zarówno formę i logikę produktu, jak i sposoby zarządzania nim w organizacjach medialnych. Obecnie to właśnie procesy technologiczne – a nie sama treść czy klasyczne logiki medialne – stały się kluczowymi determinantami produktu medialnego, przesuwając jego definicję w stronę postrzegania go jako układu treści, funkcji, metadanych i doświadczenia użytkownika, gdzie sukces rynkowy warunkowany jest przez architekturę technologiczną, jakość danych i sprawność organizacyjną, które razem wyznaczają widoczność treści i decydują o stabilności przychodów. Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja i syntetyczny opis kluczowych technologicznych determinant kształtujących proces tworzenia i zarządzania produktami medialnymi w przedsiębiorstwach medialnych. Przedstawiona analiza została zbudowana na podstawie interpretacji dominujących ujęć teoretycznych i wyników badań prezentowanych w literaturze przedmiotu, co pozwoliło na wyodrębnienie kluczowych tendencji i ich osadzenie w szerszym kontekście przemian technologicznych. Analiza ogniskuje się nie na ewolucji gatunków i formatów, lecz na funkcjonalno-zarządczej logice produktu w środowisku głębokiej transformacji technologicznej. W ujęciu historycznym szkicowane są przejścia od monolitycznych ofert jednokanałowych do modularnych i wieloplatformowych rozwiązań, z naciskiem na rolę platformizacji, agregatorów treści i metadanych jako elementu warunkującego widoczność i popyt. Omówione zostały konsekwencje datafikacji, zmian w architekturach CMS oraz personalizacji i rekomendacji jako mechanizmów porządkujących zarządzanie portfelem produktów. Zastosowane wnioskowanie indukcyjne pozwoliło na wyodrębnienie trendów, które bądź już dominują na rynku, bądź w najbliższej przyszłości zdominują praktyki rynkowe: (1) rosnące znaczenie zarządzania danymi i metadanymi w całym łańcuchu wartości, (2) AI-jako środowisko dla produkcji, dystrybucji i optymalizacji treści, (3) redefinicję relacji z odbiorcą (powrót do modeli subskrypcyjnych

i bezpośrednich więzi), oraz (4) możliwy renesans zintegrowanych implementacji treści tam, gdzie kontrola jakości i doświadczenia użytkownika staje się strategicznym wyróżnikiem. Artykuł stanowi krok ku systematyzacji determinant technologicznych w zarządzaniu produktem medialnym i wskazuje kierunki dalszych badań nad ich wpływem na strategię redakcyjne, architektury systemowe oraz modele monetyzacji.

SŁOWA KLUCZE: produkt medialny, transformacja rynku mediów, zarządzanie mediami, innowacja

Introduction

Over the past decades, the media market has undergone significant transformations, compelling media organizations to implement changes across virtually all areas of their operations, including the design and delivery of media products. Although the drivers of this transformation are heterogeneous, they all—directly or indirectly—pertain to technological innovation and its impact, shaping both the behavior of market actors and the rules governing the media industry. While scholarship on the technological transformation of the media market is already well established, it should be emphasized that the study of technological media innovations constitutes a relatively new field of research (Ibrus, 2024, p. 43). This field is characterised by interdisciplinarity, integrating concepts from innovation economics, media economics, and the broader fields of media and cultural studies. The present contribution situates itself within this body of research.

The analysis proceeds from the premise that changes in media products stem from technological determinants that influence value-creation logics, product architectures, and market relationships among producers, platforms, and audiences. Here, *determinants* are understood in functional terms as key systemic factors that, taken together, structure both the form and internal logic of the contemporary media product and the practical modalities of product management within media organisations. The objective is to articulate a theoretical framework that synthesises existing perspectives and reconstructs the trajectories of change—from monolithic, single-channel offerings, through phases of convergence and platformization, to the integration of technological infrastructures enabling the production and distribution of content. In this sense, the study identifies salient patterns and inflexion points in trends and innovations that are reorienting media products toward modular, multiplatform configurations and management models that are increasingly data- and technology-driven, while reinforcing direct relationships with audiences.

The section that follows systematises the conceptual frameworks that structure the analysis and enable the derivation of implications for media product

management. The discussion is anchored in the traditions of media economics, wherein products are conceived as elements of a portfolio governed by the logics of scale, scope, and diversification. Historically, the field has witnessed a shift from monolithic offerings (a single title or channel) to multiplatform portfolios and transnational competition, necessitating changes in planning practices and the allocation of product-related resources. This perspective provides the basis for distinguishing between single-channel products and multi-channel configurations and for analysing cross-media market entry decisions. A second framework is the theory of product platforms and modularity, according to which products are assembled from subsystems and interfaces into standardised architectures that enable the rapid generation of variants and cost reduction. In the media industries, this has translated into the replacement of “monolithic” solutions with modular ones and, subsequently, into the strategic planning of product families organised around shared components. In the present account, modularity functions as a mediating variable linking technological determinants to the flexibility of product portfolio development. Equally salient are the processes of platformization and the associated phenomenon of datafication. From this perspective, media products operate within ecosystems in which metadata (describing content) and user data (describing consumption) condition the availability, personalisation, and monetisation of content. The standardisation of metadata by aggregators reconfigures the logic of value creation: not only the content itself, but also the description and structure of metadata associated with that content, determine visibility and distributional effectiveness. This framework clarifies why contemporary product management necessarily encompasses data stewardship and content taxonomy governance. In the technological dimension, the analysis highlights the evolution of CMS architectures: from monolithic systems, through headless solutions, to AI-enhanced tools that support planning, content selection, personalisation, moderation, and format optimisation. Particular attention is given to the emerging tendency toward a “return” to full-stack solutions, in which control over user experience and quality becomes a strategic differentiator. This development is interpreted as a rational response to dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of distribution through content aggregator channels and to the growing importance of quality in subscription-based business models.

The broader discussion adopts an innovation-oriented perspective. As highlighted in the literature (Mroczko, 2014, p. 175), the concept of innovation is interpreted relatively broadly by scholars in the field, and there is no single, universally accepted definition. Moreover, since the emergence of innovation studies in the second half of the twentieth century, the meaning of the term has evolved from relatively simple explanations to multidimensional frameworks that closely mirror business practice. Given the aims of this study, it is therefore appropriate to elaborate on the notion of *product innovation*. As

Richard A. Gershon notes (2013, p. 302 ff.), the term refers to a complex process encompassing the introduction of new products and services to the market, as well as the improvement of existing ones. This process has become one of the defining trends in the contemporary media landscape. In the present discussion, which focuses on the evolution of media products, the article adopts the position articulated by J. Sixto-García and X. López-García (2025, p. 67), who argue that media innovation should be understood as an interconnected, interdependent process spanning both media technologies and media practices. From this perspective, media innovation constitutes an interdisciplinary field, and its dynamics explain the transition from monomedia products to multi-platform, data-driven, and AI-assisted configurations. This conceptual framework is applied here to interpret trajectories of change and to identify critical turning points, such as the emergence of streaming platforms and the widespread adoption of recommendation systems.

For the purposes of this discussion, a literature review was conducted covering the years 2005–2025, using the Web of Science and Scopus databases. The primary search terms were “media product” and “product management.” A relevance-based selection process—conducted through an analysis of keywords and abstracts—allowed for the identification of publications that constituted the corpus for qualitative analysis. The review of the available scholarship indicates that the nature of the media product is conceptualized, within the scope of this study, through at least four main paradigmatic lenses: (1) media economics and media management, (2) media theory and intermediality (the ontology of the media product), (3) platformization and datafication (the product as data and metadata), and (4) innovation and organizational studies (the role of product management and system architectures). Within the tradition of media economics and media management, representative works include, among others, those by A.A. Reca (2006), R.G. Picard (2005; 2011), C. Royal, A. Bright et al. (2020), B.W. Wirtz (2020), A.B. Albarán (2010; 2024), and G. Doyle (2013; 2024). From an ontological perspective, recent contributions of particular significance include those by L. Elleström (2021), E. Timplalexi (2023), and S. Pitoňáková (2023). In the domain of platformization and datafication, representative examples include studies by M. Medina, A. Sánchez-Tabernero, and A. Arrese (2016), T. Hess (2005), and D. Nieborg, T. Poell, and M. Deuze (2019).

Finally, research aligned with the paradigm of innovation and product management encompasses works such as those by S. Pérez-Seijo and A. Silva-Rodríguez (2024), F. Harbers, S. Banjac, and S.A. Eldridge (2024), R. Ali-bakhshi and C.S. Srivastava (2020), A. Breiter and A. Hepp (2018), P. Ballon (2014), A.H. Krumsvik, S. Milan, N.N. Bhroin, and T. Storsul (2019), as well as M. Villi and R.G. Picard (2019).

Determinants of Media Product Transformation

From a historical perspective, it is important to note that media enterprises traditionally concentrated on producing a single product: newspaper publishers typically published one newspaper title, and radio broadcasters operated a single transmission channel. The expansion of available media products occurred primarily through the replication of the original product—for instance, a publisher would acquire or establish a newsroom in a different city, while a radio company would launch an additional channel (Picard, 2005, p. 1). Each segment of the media industry—press, followed by the radio, and later television—constituted an integral and relatively self-contained market. The first major trend that, although not technological in itself, nevertheless enabled various forms of diffusion—including technological diffusion—across previously separate media markets was the transformation of market structures and organizational models at the end of the twentieth century. This process, accompanied by the international expansion of media corporations into emerging markets, led to a rapid increase in the number of media outlets operating within national markets. Consequently, audiences gained access to a broader array of press titles, radio stations, television channels, and other products generated by media organizations. Whereas media enterprises had traditionally sought to create products appealing to broad audiences (i.e., mass media), the emergence of a more competitive market environment forced them to make substantial efforts to differentiate their products. As a result, media organizations increasingly focused on expanding their portfolios through the development of niche media products that, on the one hand, were more likely to endure in highly competitive environments and, on the other, strengthened organizational competitiveness by fragmenting the product portfolio and thereby broadening the target audience base. A defining feature of these early differentiated media products was their monolithic nature: they were conceived, developed, and produced as single, self-contained units.

The fundamental change that influenced the transformation of media products was the digital revolution. As a consequence of this revolution, newly available technological solutions introduced significant challenges for media organizations in both the production and distribution of media products. Market changes—particularly industry consolidation and the process of convergence—prompted media companies to intensify, on an unprecedented scale, the expansion of their product portfolios in order to gain a competitive advantage through economies of scale and scope. A key distinguishing feature of this expansion, compared with earlier forms of diversification, was its exogenous character relative to media firms' core activities. Media enterprises expanded their primary product operations by developing cross-media portfolios, thereby extending their offerings into other media sectors. These new

products differed fundamentally from those previously offered, compelling organisations to revise their operational philosophy regarding content provision and to expand and develop their creative resources. Media products no longer possessed a monolithic character; instead, they evolved toward interactive forms. Consequently, media strategies shifted away from producing single products intended for distribution within a specific media sector and organizational context, toward designing products for multiplatform dissemination. Furthermore, as boundaries between media sectors blurred and global multimedia conglomerates grew in influence, media markets became increasingly shaped by multidimensional competition—manifested in simultaneous rivalry across multiple media industries as well as across multiple national markets. As a result, media companies seeking to build or maintain a competitive advantage were required to deliver products tailored to the needs of transnational audiences. Media products thus had to meet the expectations of recipients from diverse national (and at times cultural) backgrounds by appealing to universal values and accommodating broadly shared preferences. In this context, it is important to note that these transformations also altered how target groups are identified and defined. The technological revolution enabled a departure from audience segmentation based on traditional demographic variables (such as age or location) and encouraged an orientation toward audience attitudes and media consumption patterns. Thus, media products—previously designed for the press, radio, or television, and targeting users defined by demographic characteristics—were reconceptualized as multimedia products distributed across multiple platforms and intended for audiences differentiated according to individual preferences.

Another determinant of the shape and form of media products was the development of media platforms. Within the broader context of media product evolution, two elements are particularly relevant: content creation and content distribution. In this regard, it is instructive to refer to the work of T. Hess (as cited in Picard, 2005, p. 119), who argues that product platforms support the planning and implementation of complex products and production concepts, and that their operational logic is fundamentally modular. They may be compared to a construction set that enables the creation of a diversified offering by combining modular products assembled according to a defined product architecture. Within this framework, Marc H. Meyer and Alvin P. Lehnerd (1997, p. 210) define a product platform as “a set of subsystems and interfaces forming a common structure from which a stream of derivative products can be efficiently developed and produced.” The adoption of multifunctional modules in media products has been enabled by innovative technological solutions that unify product architectures. Although such practices raised concerns regarding the artistic and original qualities of media products, the benefits of increased production efficiency and reduced production costs strongly incentivized

media organizations to adopt modular approaches. As a result, monolithic approaches were successfully replaced by modular architectures, in which platform-based concepts foreground similarities among products and processes while rejecting the assumption that a company's products and technologies are independent elements (Świerczyńska-Głównia, 2025, p. 150).

Within the present analysis, the impact of technological transformation on content distribution must also be emphasized. In the era of analogue media, distribution occurred through traditional carriers such as radio receivers, television sets, or printed newspapers. Digitization fundamentally altered these practices, shifting media consumption from a push to a pull model. Although this observation is well documented in the literature, what is particularly noteworthy in this context is the role of new actors. The emergence and consolidation of streaming platforms and the subsequent aggregation of streaming services constitute yet another catalyst for change. While it is widely acknowledged that content aggregators have reshaped market structures (Kreft, 2016), it is equally important to underline that their operational logic has had significant implications for media products themselves. In essence, aggregators transform (and increasingly homogenize) the format of media content supplied by individual providers. This occurs through metadata standardisation (Świerczyńska-Głównia, 2023, p. 206), which enables, among other things, personalized content recommendations and, most importantly, automated searches for content that matches user profiles. As a result, in the age of content aggregation, it is not the content itself but its metadata that constitutes the core element of a media product and determines its market success. Metadata shapes the processes of sorting, organizing, and presenting content within aggregators, which in turn influence the user experience by offering standardised access to diverse content. In light of the above, it is essential to address the notion of "datafication" (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, p. 3). As Andreas Hepp and Andreas Breiter (2018, p. 387) argue, a defining feature of deep mediatization is the continuous collection, storage, and aggregation of increasing quantities of user data, particularly in the media domain, to facilitate the targeted distribution of both media products and advertising. The foundation of this process lies in the "digital traces" that users generate during their activities in digital environments.

The development of platforms that enable multichannel distribution also introduced a new paradigm in content management practices. As media organisations underwent digital transformation, the number of channels, platforms, and devices through which content providers could reach audiences expanded continuously, accompanied by increasing diversification and fragmentation. Consequently, user interactions with digital media became increasingly fluid and variable (3 Reasons...). Traditional monolithic CMS systems—which integrated the frontend (the user-facing component) and the backend (the content-management layer) into a single environment, thereby tightly coupling content

management with content presentation—became insufficient (Stasiak, 2024). Owing to their operational logic, monolithic CMS systems offered limited flexibility; even minor interface modifications or the introduction of new features often required system-wide changes, while the possibilities for technological integration and personalisation remained constrained. As a result, monolithic systems proved time-consuming to modify and slowed innovation, ultimately acting as a barrier to development in a platform-driven media ecosystem.

This situation contributed to the rise of the Headless CMS model—an architecture in which the frontend (“head,” the layer visible to users) is fully decoupled from the backend (“body,” where content resides) (Headless...). Such an architecture enabled the use of any tools for designing user interfaces, independently of backend operations. A Headless CMS operates as an autonomous content management system, delivering content via an API to multiple platforms, including websites, mobile applications, IoT devices, and even chat-bots (Bratslavsky, 2024). This facilitated multichannel content distribution by enabling seamless delivery across websites, mobile environments, and social media platforms while ensuring a consistent user experience across devices. Furthermore, headless architectures improved performance, reduced page-load times, and supported rapid updates and real-time content changes. They also enabled advanced models of content structuring and modelling, which are crucial for managing large volumes of content.

Given these advantages, the increasing interest of media companies in the Headless CMS concept appeared entirely justified. However, practice demonstrated that the model did not withstand the test of time. Several factors contributed to this shift, the most significant of which was the rapid development of artificial intelligence environments and tools. Early AI applications included automated content scheduling, simple algorithmic recommendations, and basic data analysis—capabilities that already improved operational efficiency and enhanced understanding of audience preferences. Today, advanced AI tools are fundamentally reshaping the operational foundations of media organizations, particularly in the areas of personalisation, content selection, and moderation (Kniazhina & Davis, 2024). In the domain of personalized content delivery, AI systems analyze user data and behavioral patterns to provide content tailored to individual preferences, thereby helping media companies strengthen audience engagement. AI enables more personalized user experiences, contributing to higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, AI tools optimize content for different platforms and devices used for content consumption. By evaluating user behavior and preferences, AI systems can recommend optimal formats, lengths, and styles for content distributed across social media, mobile platforms, and television (Chazen, 2024). This allows media companies to expand audience reach and increase engagement. In practical terms, AI frees organizational resources by automating tasks previously performed by editorial

teams, while simultaneously reshaping user expectations and placing greater emphasis on quality as a core differentiator.

Another factor contributing to the decline in Headless CMS adoption was growing dissatisfaction among content providers with the functionality and effectiveness of aggregators in generating visibility and traffic. Initially, many media companies viewed cooperation with distribution platforms as an opportunity to reach broader audiences; however, over time, it became evident that aggregator-based models relegated them to the role of content suppliers with limited control over recommendation algorithms and platform-level content prioritization. While this process is complex and multidimensional, it is presented here in a simplified form to preserve conceptual clarity.

In response, media companies began seeking solutions that would restore control over the entire content creation and delivery chain while enabling them to rebuild direct relationships with audiences, hence the renewed shift toward subscription-based financing models (Doyle, 2024).

In the age of artificial intelligence, media enterprises increasingly prioritize direct relationships with audiences, in which both content quality and the user experience serve as strategic competitive differentiators. As a result, product management has become a critically important organizational capability. This trend has contributed to a return to monolithic or “full-stack”—implementations that integrate all elements of content management into cohesive, organization-controlled systems.

Conclusions

In summary, as demonstrated in this study, the ongoing technological transformation of the media market entails fundamental changes in both the nature of media products and the ways they are managed. The digitalization of the market, processes of convergence and platformization, and the subsequent development of artificial intelligence tools and environments have led media products to evolve from compact, integrated artistic creations closely tied to a specific broadcaster, toward content whose defining components are metadata. Metadata not only enables the creation and modularization of content through recommendation systems, but also shapes its visibility and accessibility to users. In parallel with these developments, the management of media products has also undergone a significant transformation. The analysis presented here allows us to anticipate the key tendencies that will dominate media operations in the near future. Above all, market success will depend on the ability to manage diverse types and sets of data effectively. This capability may foster both the re-emergence of monolithic content-organization models and the expansion of editorial environments supported by AI-driven tools. Inductive reasoning

applied in the study reveals four major trends expected to shape future market practices among media organizations.

First, there is a growing importance of data and metadata management across the entire content value chain—from conceptual design and production processes to distribution and monetisation. Data are emerging as a critical asset that determines visibility, personalisation, and content effectiveness, while serving as the foundation for building competitive advantage. For media organizations, this implies the need to develop analytical capabilities, integrate disparate data repositories, and implement tools that support real-time data processing.

Second, the role of artificial intelligence is becoming firmly established as an infrastructural layer for content production, distribution, and optimisation. AI is no longer merely a supporting tool but has become a critical component—the technological core enabling the automation of editorial processes, content recommendations, dynamic resource allocation, and the prediction of audience behaviors. This points to an ongoing “algorithmization” of content management, which may ultimately give rise to new editorial workflows and redefine the role of content creators.

Third, in response to intensifying platform competition, the relationship between media organisations and audiences is being redefined. Subscription-based models and direct, long-term relationships are gaining strategic importance. The audience is no longer a passive, anonymous consumer but an active participant in a relationship grounded in trust, predictability, and reciprocal value. The return to subscription-based models signals a shift from mass distribution toward personalized experiences and the design of service ecosystems centered on loyalty and recurring engagement.

Fourth, the growing importance of content quality and user experience suggests the emergence of a renaissance of integrated content implementations, especially in market segments where control over the entire process—from production to delivery—becomes a key competitive differentiator. This may lead to a departure from highly atomized distribution models and a return to more cohesive, monolithic content management structures that offer stability, predictability, and superior user experience. This trend may coexist with the accelerated development of AI-driven editorial environments, resulting in hybrid content management models that combine human creativity, process automation, and the quality control characteristic of integrated systems.

This article does not exhaust the complexity of the topic; rather, it constitutes a step toward a deeper exploration of the technological transformation of media products and proposes avenues for further research. It also represents an effort to systematize technological determinants in media product management and to indicate directions in which their influence on editorial strategies, system architectures, and monetisation models is likely to become increasingly significant.

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