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## **Digital Social Media (DSM) as tools to develop the audience for the Moroccan Medias: “Cases of the private radios”**

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**Abstract:** At the beginning of the 21th century multitudes of economic, political and cultural mutation have been observed. These transformations are due to the recent audio-visual reforms concerning the multiplication of private platforms (TV and Radios) and the instauration of the higher quality of programs. Our reflexion focused on the facts which have lead some private radios to base their marketing and communication strategy on the digital social Medias (DSM) to promote their editorial line and radio programs.

**Keywords:** social media, strategy, digital media, audio-visual

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*Les réseaux sociaux numériques, outils de développement de l'audience pour les médias marocains : cas des radios privées*

**Résumé :** Depuis le début des années deux mille, le paysage médiatique marocain a connu une multitude de transformations aux niveaux économiques, politiques et culturels. Ces réformes avaient pour but une multiplication de l'offre audiovisuelle ainsi qu'une amélioration de la qualité des programmes. Notre but est d'étudier les

raisons qui ont mené certaines radios privées à se positionner au niveau de la toile par le biais des RSN afin de promouvoir leurs produits thématiques et éditoriaux.

**Mots-clés :** médias sociaux, stratégie, médias numériques, audiovisuel

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### **Introduction**

Since the early two thousand Moroccan media landscape has undergone a multitude of changes of economic orders, political and cultural. These reforms should theoretically result in a multiplication of audiovisual offer and improved its quality, to ensure the greatest number of citizen's fair access to new diversified and complementary audiovisual services between public and private operators.

So a lifting of the state monopoly allowed the entry of the liberalization of the audiovisual sector in the period 2002-2014, an operational phase with the granting of the first generations of establishment licenses and operating private service radio and television.

Also, since the introduction of audience measurement mechanisms for television and radio, the dynamics of the advertising market experienced some rationalization at the level of expectations in advertising spending advertisers in the criteria for selecting programs and target audiences and especially the most relevant media.

In another development, liberalization and development of competition in the telecommunications<sup>1</sup> sector level has allowed the deployment of infrastructure for high and very high speed to meet the changing uses and communication practices the establishment of the conditions able to stimulate a significant drop in prices of services and platforms (smart-phones, tablets, etc.).

Reflecting the determination of users in emerging countries to reduce the digital divide, technological convergence and the development of telecommunications services uses materialize significantly in DSM in terms of circulation and exchange of information's.

Far exceeding the figures of the hearing national media, the phenomenal growth in the number of used DSM in the media sector in Morocco has arrested the leaders of private and public service broadcasters.

Characterized by interactivity and attractiveness, DSM have attracted the interest of the national media in order to use them as means of "concentration and assembly of the national audience and / or transnational" dispersed at the canvas. Specifically, the objective of audiovisual operators to target is a dynamic audience, accurately

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<sup>1</sup> Liberalized since 1999 and currently has three audiovisual operators for a market of 35 million habitants and communications prices lower in MENA

measurable in real time in order to sell advertising and information with formats that do not necessarily obey the regulations in force.

For this reasons we are studying the interest of some private radios to lead a position on the web through the DSM to promote their thematic and editorial products. Therefore, amounts to a reflection on the economic model of radio operators, consumer<sup>2</sup> reality and measure the potential impacts of this strategy in relation to the audience and advertising revenues. The current radio production cannot be isolated from the general context of the evolution of audiovisual technologies which it is inseparable. The nature of production is thus linked to the institutional, societal and economic imperatives.

It is therefore to analyze the working practices of radio operators in the audiovisual landscape in economic and technological change in the presence of a diversified and various sources. With current technology, the Moroccan public may have to opt for "alternative radio", which combines multiple forms of content on the same DSM. Thus, the economic and technical analysis of the visual radio offering will push us to explore the correlations between the use of the DSM by the Moroccan media and the development of their business model. So, you can actually ask the question: is that social networks could be the vector of a new radio era, impregnated digital change?

Empirically, we will rely, on one side, on interviews and surveys of animators, professionals and on the analysis of all the websites of private radio stations, their DSM (facebook, tweeter, YouTube channel) and their flagship programs. The data generated by audience ratings and exploration operators websites can help in a better understanding of the vocation of audiovisual consumption patterns. The exploitation of hearing data's<sup>3</sup> will be based on a descriptive analysis of observations in order to approach the practices and techniques developed by the operators to take advantage of the potential offered by the DSM. The goal of this approach is the monitoring and the creation of a corpus of emissions on DSM (radio programs) their genesis, evolution and dynamics.

We rely on this analysis on four main private radio stations: Radio Cap, Rabat CHAINE INTER, Radio 2M and Radio Aswat. The choice of these four operators is motivated by their nationwide coverage and homogeneity of their programming. These radios deal geographies, highlighting the individual and social and cultural experiences. Indeed, radio is intended as a tool and social communication that encourages the participation of the various categories of the population. This raises the question of the constitution meeting spaces including through networks.

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<sup>2</sup> Age, purchasing power, gender, regions...

<sup>3</sup> CIRAD numbers for radio audience.

## 1. Radio against digital masses

Radio is a medium that is closest of the three functions: educate, inform and entertain. Added to this is a dimension of proximity that allows public involvement. In this sense, the production of radio programs often leads to explore or deepen specific topics and try to enrich the general culture.

Abraham Moles already noted in 1963 that "the radio for 30 years, has just explored the field of possibilities defined styles or types of production, and she just define his vis-à-vis the role of television, even without achieve completely. He still, he seems to be defined as a communication field, as a permanent and optional connection of the individual and society". Private Radios, specially, are trying to find new niches that can boost the hearing system and optimize its economic system.

Beyond traditional media goals, the radio offering is characterized by a range of possibilities in terms of social communication through its power to trigger attitudes and reactions on both the individual and collective, without going into course polemics on limited or unlimited effects of mass communication theory H. Laswell and P. Lazarsfeld.

These discussions will be continued with the digitalization of radio that enabled the optimization of spectrum and the emergence of new uses linked to the consumption of varied and available programs such as music, etc. In this sense, the radios streaming on the Internet have increased the connection modes related to individual mobility (Smartphone's, tablets, music players, etc.). The webcast, for example, allows radios to overcome the technical and economic constraints of wireless networks. However, the auditor should have an internet subscription for enjoying podcasts and streaming.

As on TV, we must speak of the "Leader's consecration" according P. Leroux and P. Riutort, which could serve as immigration analysis based profiles facilitators DSM. The radio enters an era of interaction as noted Blandine Schmidt "*radios offer different ways for listeners to show on the air. They can intervene live on the air through a telephone hybrid, after a selection made with the standard. Then, a delayed response is possible by leaving a message on the answering radio or other relevant issue*"<sup>4</sup>.

## 2. Evolution of the Moroccan media context

According to the 2015 statistics, 6 out of 10 residents (aged 11 years +) listen to the radio every day, weekdays as on weekends. The average 15.7 million are connected each day from Monday to Friday, only slightly less on Saturdays and Sundays (15.5 million).

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<sup>4</sup>Blandine Schmidt, La radio au service de ses auditeurs, GRER, en ligne : [http://www.grer.fr/upload/articles\\_en\\_ligne/La\\_radio\\_au\\_service\\_de\\_ses\\_auditeurs.pdf](http://www.grer.fr/upload/articles_en_ligne/La_radio_au_service_de_ses_auditeurs.pdf).

On weekdays, a listener listens to his favorite programs for nearly 3 hours each day (on average 2h47min). He divides his time listening between stations 1 and 2. The radio listening in all regions affects nearly 64% of urban and more rural in two (52%).

The radio plays the new media consumption patterns: it is increasingly "mobile". Nearly a listener in three (28.2%) listening on his mobile phone (40% in 11-24). Traditional radio still remains the first listening support (59%). Radio is a very mixed media. It is listened to by 49.7% of men and 51.2% women.

The number of Moroccan private radio stations is around 22 radio services, national or multi-regional area. The authorization of new radios is linked to a media landscape largely untapped at regional level. After 2008, the regulator of the Moroccan audiovisual remedied this situation by allowing multiple radios and refusing new televisions.

We then noticed a new phenomenon of audiovisual production and proliferation on the web DSM accessible. The legislation is still lagging behind in this area. The established private radios will not miss this opportunity to explore a new medium capable of reaching large numbers of young, outside the airplay.

It is now common that social networks do about them and adopt a multifunctional dimension that pervades the social, economic and also political. They exist before the Internet but with the arrival of the latter continue to play a very important role that these groups or organizations, connected by social interaction they maintain, easily communicate through Internet animated by a natural need to invest in the relational field. This attitude is especially supported by the expansion of collaborative technologies that continue to become commonplace. Social networks then settle on the Internet. They invest almost all fields of social life, forming virtual communities.

Moroccan youth are major consumers of the Internet and DSM. Social networks are exploding on the canvas and could be the space where the Moroccan youth shared enthusiasm, indignation and deal frankly hitherto considered taboo themes.

Social networks and enable groups and associations (women's movement, human rights) once considered speechless, share an overview of a common future, to organize into networks and to adopt a new form of management social conflicts with new forms of citizen protest actions.

This new virtual social scheme puts on the carpet crucial current issues namely the credibility of the information, the responsibility of disseminating, or just that orchestrates this virtual frame both abundant and seeking information and entertainment. Also it must be specified networks have first existed as a technical unit to occupy thereafter the sphere of relations, it is very difficult to deny became close relationship between computer networks and human networks that they are social, occupational, or recreational policies.

### 3. RSN component of the digital strategy of private radios

As we have already mentioned, the approach of this study is to begin exploratory work that will enable us firstly to establish an empirical corpus of all private radio stations have adopted digital as a strategy to reach the maximum hearing. Secondly, it will be a question of highlighting the implications, especially economic, of this digital strategy. So we chose a normal period (excluding religious festivals or sporting or political event) for two months, from the April the first to the 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2015, to monitor websites of all private radio stations.

At the descriptive level, we noticed that about 40% of private radio stations have at least one account NSR of which 90% are Facebook accounts. This reflects a fairly standard configuration of the Moroccan radio landscape with an overall more dominant presence on the air rather than on the Web.

However, the thematic focus and target audience may explain media strategies. Indeed, radios that highlight a media strategy DSM further target young people with musical programs, talk show, opening antenna, youth leaders and growing societal limits, etc.

With the establishment of audience measurement mechanisms, competition between the different radio stations has increased highlighting the generalist stations rather than thematic radios for youth. Thus, we conducted interviews with officials and webmasters programming radios have opted for a DSM strategy.

These we explained that the establishment of a digital strategy, they said, two major explanations. First, it is an alternative channel and response to a form of consumption rather traditional radio (mostly public radio) with the professional and social categories (PSC) less attractive to advertisers at household, craftsmen, etc. The second explanation provided by radio professionals is more subjective since they refuse a kind of mimicry in journalism and media practice. Thus, these private radio stations have decided to invest the sphere of DSM trying to initiate a proactive approach based on the creation of a new audience enjoying the proliferation of mobile platforms since 2012.

Based on the fact that a broadcast Simulcast<sup>5</sup> is authorized by national regulations, those responsible for these private operators decided to add at first videos of their flagship programs and the most important guests. Having circumvent the regulations and after testing this new media technology is without response from the regulator or authorities, private radio stations have seen open technical and journalistic fields blank.

This new situation made for professionals as a second sector liberalization which has longer need to license or approval to do television or image, but it is enough that a brand image (radio) a host and a web connection to develop different content.

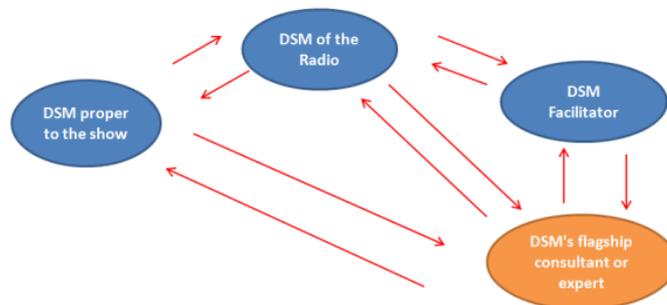
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<sup>5</sup> The same content on the air than on the Internet at the website.

That said, the issue of content regulation is again in the sights. In Morocco, whether for radio Broad lyrics are subject to regulation (77-03 Act or communication Act), then what could be the control for an image broadcast by a radio channel on a web? And DSM are platforms that provide event coverage videos or discussions trays with non-conventional formats or on the regulatory side (the animators gestures are not mastered, the camera movements are not supposed be of good quality, etc.) or on the level of form. As a result, the landscape is faced with distortions in control concepts and audience measurement for qualitative and quantitative levels.

According to officials of the regulation, it is clear that the law that regulates the audiovisual sector in Article 13<sup>6</sup> states that "subject to a license in the manner laid down in this title, settlement and / or operation of networks for the dissemination of audiovisual communication services, including: terrestrial, satellite, cable networks for the distribution of broadcasting services and other technical mode". In this context it's unclear. For legal explanations at the regulation of audiovisual media as to the regulation of telecommunications, web space considered alongside other channels such as free spaces whose complexity can affect expected results.

Our study allowed us to conclude that 90% of NSN radios with digital strategy obey a quadripartite scheme. It connects four dimensions: radio (pivot element), the lead animator (challenger), the flagship show (the object) and the guest or the guest expert (variant).



**Figure 1.** *Diagram of multidimensional relations private radios Through the RSN (made by the authors)*

This pattern was largely met by webmasters of private radio stations creating a competitive situation on the web-sphere. In terms of monitoring and awareness, private radio stations concerned consider that the landscape has experienced two real

<sup>6</sup> Traduction from the original legal text in french : « font l'objet d'une licence, dans les formes fixées par le présent titre, l'établissement et/ou l'exploitation de réseaux pour la diffusion des services de communication audiovisuelle, notamment par : voie hertzienne terrestre, satellite, réseaux câblés de distribution des services de communication audiovisuelle et par tout autre mode technique ».

winners in this situation: guests or experts (variants) and entertainers (challenger). Moreover, some of these people have benefited from the success of their DSM as a springboard to create web TV, responding to a growing need for information, interactivity and immediacy.

**Table 1.** Top 5 DSM post the best audience figures

Type	DSM specifications
Music and young	The HIT RADIO is thematic Radio station (music) for youth. It refers to the DSM of its flagship presenter MOMO on Hit Radio totaling more than 600,000 followers on facebook
Football "sport"	MARS Attack, a show that brings together all football fans and that can touch all Moroccan clubs and seeks freely gave the floor to all stakeholders. It totals more than 500,000 followers facebook
Religion	Taking advantage of media outlets on a multitude of private radio stations a profanation of religious discourse created an account on Facebook for young (Sheikh Sar = 320,000 followers). This media experience allowed him to create a hybrid alternative format that is both WebTV and Web radio. These allow it to consolidate the number of followers.
Food Art	Cooking show on Radio 2M (public radio funded more than 96% advertising) on RNS Choumicha that return on its Choumicha TV Web TV = 77,000 followers but has more than 10 million viewings meals videos
Medical & Health	MFM is a private network that Radio offers a program with an expert who offers treatments with traditional medicine or unconventional with over 50,000 on Facebook follower. The expert receives the official page of the issue to the replay. So he proposed ordinances on its page and asks listeners to go to his office. (Radio Broadcast was banned by the regulator. However, she continued on the Web.

#### 4. What impact on the audience?

According to telecoms regulator (ANRT) and the inter-center audience measurement (CIRAD), radio online consumed more than 40% of total listening in 2015. This gives confirms the motivations of the radios web strategy to a multiplatform presence.

The web as free space allowed the writing services to burst their editorial policy for standard service (wave and simulcast) and web (considered unconventional). Thus, we found in terms of the impacts, four main observations. First, the genesis and development of web pages and DSM of the main radio programs broadcasts advertising and various announcements to boost marketing and digital advertising.

Second, the emergence of concepts monetization by marketing services of private radio stations of the concept of followers among advertisers and agencies in communication. This new dynamic is strongly correlated with the ease of boards by Google, Facebook and YouTube via their tracking tools. According to one of webmasters that we interviewed, *"marketing strategies for media platforms like ours that are, at once, the limited territorial level (class of hearing) and economic (mainly SMEs<sup>7</sup>) experience the real strategies and orientations of internet giants. When we believe that we innovate, we realized that we endure the vectors of the Titans"*.

Third, digital advertising currently accounts for 10% of the overall advertising volume with about 50 million Euros. Advertising carried between web sites and pages DSM represents less than one third of total advertising turnover of digital media. This also means a development of derivatives and related products (tee-shirts, glass, event sponsorship) statement on DSM page and on web pages.

In last place, 40% of managers of private radio stations interviewed reveal that they recommend and highlight the marketing potential of their radio DSM, animators and the most emblematic programs to convince advertisers to target slices ages (11 to 35 years).

## Conclusion

In response to the question originally established development DSM potentials are felt on a sphere. The impact of the DSM can be noted in brand awareness by allowing their owners to outsource a brand image expressing the presence on the web-media-sphere.

Also, it is also about an effect of unconventional self-promotion under the governing law of the sector. The Echo of Radio programs are reappointed to a web-sphere (DSM) to have a new life (contact B-to-B) with the animators, experts, etc. Thus, it allows gauging the "efficiency" of attraction of the facilitator as well as of experts and guests (doctors, notaries ...) which subsequently enjoy the effects of ads and knowledge that provide the traditional media.

Trying to invest a landscape constantly changing, the mercantile greed pushes certain audiovisual operators to invest in the field of power DSM with the aim to achieve the positive growth trend despite the economic, legislative and institutional rigidities.

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<sup>7</sup> Small and Medium Enterprises.

In terms of access, dissemination on the Internet, based on social networks, in addition to terrestrial broadcasting, has increased public exposure to radio, due to the wide variety of reception arrangements available, in the street with his Smartphone or at home on his tablet. DSM extends the concept of the real community radio communities encouraged by listening or collective intervention.

This trend could accelerate in the coming years thanks to the development of connected objects and listening continuity capabilities on all devices.

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