



Vaasan yliopisto  
UNIVERSITY OF VAASA



# Disrupting the Media Scene Mediamaiseman levottomuus

## Final report



HELSINGIN  
SANOMAIN  
SÄÄTIÖ

Project name: Disrupting the Media Scene. Adopting emerging technologies as a vehicle for transforming the audience relationship and business models in journalistic media

Funded in: 2019

Grant sum: 150 000 euros

Other funding: none

Project started: 1.3.2020

Project closed: 28.2.2022

### **Project leader**

Mari K. Niemi, Research Director, E2 Research\*

\* At the start of the project Mari K. Niemi worked as the Director of University of Vaasa's research platform Innovation and Entrepreneurship InnoLab. She transferred to working as the Research Director of E2 Research at the beginning of 2021. She nevertheless continued as the research project's leader as planned.

### **Full-time researcher**

Ville Manninen, Researcher, University of Vaasa (InnoLab)

### **Other members of the research group**

Tanja Sihvonen	University of Vaasa (Communication), Professor
Heidi Kuusniemi	University of Vaasa (Computer Science), Professor
Heidi Hirsto	University of Vaasa (Communication), Assistant Prof.
Liisa Kääntä	University of Vaasa (Communication), Researcher
Kimmo Rautanen	Åbo Akademi (Experience Lab), Researcher
Klas Backholm	Åbo Akademi (Political Science), Researcher
Susanne Hägglund	Åbo Akademi (Experience Lab), Researcher

## Research Assistants

Johanna Kalliokoski	University of Vaasa (InnoLab)
Mattias Wingren	Åbo Akademi (Experience Lab)
Niklas Grönholm	Åbo Akademi (Political Science)

## Abstract

How does the rapid generation and adoption of new technologies shape the journalism-audience relationship and journalism's business models? Digitalisation and new technologies are upending the media scene: the roles of journalism's creators and consumers are blurring, and new monetization opportunities emerge. This interactive and interdisciplinary project engaged stakeholders in order to find solutions to the challenges wrought by the new situation. The overarching goal of the project was to support journalism in adapting to current disruptions and help it prepare for future ones.

The project was coordinated by the University of Vaasa's Innolab research platform, with Mari K. Niemi serving as the project leader. Åbo Akademi University conducted their share off the project independently, their work being led by Kimmo Rautanen.

## Project summary

The project was launched in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic's first wave in Finland, in March 2020. Its first task was to revise the original project plan to work around the changed conditions and available resources. Online workshops, interviews and a survey were chosen as the empirical methods. Further, the project would produce an international, peer-reviewed collection of topical research. Future of journalism, new technologies and changes in the audience-journalism relationship were chosen as the book's themes. The collection provides an internationally impactful, prestigious publication venue for Finnish scholars of journalism and media technology. This will encourage the continued study of the topic. Despite its internationality, the book has a particular emphasis on Finnish and Nordic experiences, which makes it a relatable (and applicable) survey of the state of the art for media business practitioners.

The University of Vaasa's InnoLab held three online events over the course of the project (on 7.9.2020, 9.4.2021 and 16.2.2022). Åbo Akademi University arranged a series of six online workshops in the Fall of 2020, which was attended by students of various secondary and tertiary level schools. In the Spring of 2021, InnoLab conducted an online survey for those working in the Finnish news media. Additionally, InnoLab collected a set of interviews (n=9) with media startup experts.

The project closed formally on 28.2.2022, but parts of it ran until later in the Spring of 2022. For example, the project's main publication, the *Futures of Journalism* collection, is expected to appear in print in late May. The project's closing seminar was nevertheless held, as planned, on February 16th.

The team has communicated throughout the project on its purpose-launched Twitter account, @Media\_Futures. Additionally, posts pertaining to the project have appeared on InnoLab's Facebook page and blog (InnoBabble). An analysis of the project's survey results has been published in the March 2022 issue of the journal *Media & viestintä* (45/1), and a popularized article on the study appeared in the *Kanava* magazine (2/2022). The project's main publication, *Futures of Journalism: Technology-stimulated Evolution in the Audience-News Media Relationship*, was published by the internationally renowned scholarly publisher Palgrave Macmillan on May 5th 2022. Lastly, a research utilizing the previously mentioned interview data was presented (presentation title "Eksponentiaalisen kasvun eetos ja journalismi sijoituskohteena") at the Median ja viestinnän tutkimuksen päivät conference in Turku, Finland 22.-23.4.2022.

We assess the project to have succeeded in meeting its goals fairly well, restrictive conditions considered. On a scale from 1 to 5, we place the project's success at 4.

## Publications

Backholm, Klas, Susanne Hägglund, Kimmo Rautanen and Mattias Wingren. 2022. What drives news choices and trust in journalism of young people? In Ville Manninen, Mari K. Niemi & Anthony Ridge-Newman (Eds.) *Futures of Journalism: Technology-stimulated evolution in the audience-news media relationship*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ikonen, Pasi, Jere Hokkanen, Turo Uskali, Ville Manninen and Heidi Kuusniemi. 2022. The Networked Utilisation of Satellite Images and Geospatial Technology in Journalism. In Ville Manninen, Mari K. Niemi & Anthony Ridge-Newman (Eds.) *Futures of Journalism: Technology-stimulated evolution in the audience-news media relationship*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Manninen, Ville and Mari K. Niemi. 2022. "Mahdollisuudet ovat kirjaimellisesti rajattomat": Uutismediassa työskentelevien näkemyksiä uusista teknologioista. *Media & viestintä*, 45(1).

Manninen, Ville, Mari K. Niemi and Anthony Ridge-Newman. 2022. Introduction. In Ville Manninen, Mari K. Niemi & Anthony Ridge-Newman (Eds.) *Futures of Journalism: Technology-stimulated evolution in the audience-news media relationship*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Niemi, Mari K. and Ville Manninen. 2022. Teknologinen kehitys haastaa journalismin uudistumaan. *Kanava*, 2022/1, 13-17.

Serada, Alesha, Jori Grym and Tanja Sihvonen. 2022. The Economy of Attention on Blockchain in the Brave Browser. In Ville Manninen, Mari K. Niemi & Anthony Ridge-Newman (Eds.) *Futures of Journalism: Technology-stimulated evolution in the audience-news media relationship*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sihvonen, Tanja and Torill Mortensen. 2022. Troll Logic as Challenge to Future Journalism. In Ville Manninen, Mari K. Niemi & Anthony Ridge-Newman (Eds.) *Futures of Journalism: Technology-stimulated evolution in the audience-news media relationship*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

