

# RESEARCH

UDK  
(39-56)

*Mato Brautovic\**

## Cross promotion of online counterparts of the leading US newspapers

Case study of The New York Times and US Today

### Summary

This paper discusses the relationship between economic convergence and journalistic convergence. Economic convergence means businesses combine different media to take advantage of all the different properties. It is theoretically based on Convergence Continuum, which explains how to use different forms of media convergence and that the amount of cooperation and interaction can differ from partnership to partnership, depending on the needs of the partners. Apart from marketing value, cross promotion is a good indicator for determining the level of journalistic convergence. The purpose of journalism convergence is to produce higher-quality news, regardless of the delivery platform. This study examines cross-promotion practices at USA Today and The NY Times.

**Keywords:** economic convergence, journalistic convergence, cross promotion, The NY Times, USA Today

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# ISTRAŽIVANJA

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## Praksa *cross promocije* u online izdanjima vodećih američkih novina

### Studija slučaja New York Times i USA Today

#### Sažetak

U radu se razmatra odnos između ekonomske konvergencije i novinarske konvergencije. Ekonomska konvergencija omogućuje tvrtkama kombiniranje različitih medije s ciljem da najbolje iskoriste njihove značajke. To teorijski je utemeljen na Convergence Continuumu, koji objašnjava kako koristiti različite oblike medijske konvergencije, s tim što se načini suradnje i interakcije mogu razlikovati od partnera do partnera, ovisno o njihovim potrebama. Osim marketinške vrijednosti, *cross promocija* je dobar indikator za određivanje razine novinarskih konvergencije. Svrha novinarske konvergencije je proizvesti kvalitetnije vijesti, bez obzira na platforme. Ova studija istražuje praksu cross-promocije na USA Today i NY Times.

**Ključne riječi:** ekonomska konvergencija, novinarska konvergencija, cross promocija, NY Times, USA Today

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## Introduction

Professor Henry Jenkins from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology defines convergence as "an ongoing process, occurring at various intersections of media technologies, industries, content and audiences," Starting with this definition, we come to economic convergence, where different media businesses collaborate by taking advantage of all the different properties. For example, the formation of AOL Time Warner is a well-documented example of economic convergence (Kolodzy, 2006). The literature has shown many examples of economic convergence that focuses solely on the synergy of television, magazines, films and books. On the other hand, economic convergence in newspapers and their counterparts (web and mobile) has not been investigated.

In a paper published in 2003, Larry Dailey, Lori Demo and Mary Spillman defined the Convergence Continuum, which explains the evolution of convergence from its early stage in the form of cross promotion to the full convergence process. The continuum explains how to use different types of media convergence, and that "the amount of cooperation and interaction can differ from partnership to partnership, depending on the needs of the partners."

This study will examine the initial form of cross promotion, because it is used most often. According to research conducted by Dailey, Demo and Spillman (2004 and 2005), nearly half of media organizations in the United States have cross-promotion partnerships with organizations of other media types. Among all forms of media, newspapers most often use cross promotion. Research conducted by Anne Carrie Criado and Camille Kraeplin (2004) also showed that the cross promotion activities are reported by 26 percent of convergent newspapers. Also, it was found that the newspapers are better at "sustaining convergence partnership" than other media organizations.

"Cross promotion is a marketing effort that places the 'brands' of each information-sharing partner in the front of public information through its other partner." (Killbrew, 2005: 48) Simply put, newspapers promote the content of other media partners, and vice versa.

Media use cross promotion to (Dailey et al., 2003):

- Visually promote their partner by publishing or broadcasting its logo on a regular basis.
- Verbally promote content appearing in their partner's product.
- Encourage audience members to sample offerings available only through their partner.
- Allow reporters or commentators from one medium to appear in the other medium to briefly promote special projects or other content.
- Use news meetings to discuss ways to discuss the partnership (e.g., ways to promote the partner's content and to display their partner's logo).

Apart from marketing value, cross promotion is a good indicator for determining the level of journalistic convergence. The purpose of journalistic convergence is to produce "higher-quality news in all the available formats: print, online and on radio and television." (Koldozy, 2009: 37) Journalistic convergence requires changes in the organization of medium, the mode of production and delivery of news. When it comes to newspapers, the most common form of journalistic convergence is publishing the contents of newspapers online. Media "are trying to ensure that the news they are providing is best suited for the audiences of each medium or format being used to distribute the news." (Koldozy, 2009: 37) The above strategy comes from the idea that newspaper readers want more context and detail to their stories. Therefore, we argue that cross promotion that is part of the article and refers to online video, Soundslides, chats and more, is journalistic convergence.

The aim of this research is to determine the extent to which newspapers use cross promotion, and in what ways. The hypothesis is that newspapers do not use the cross-promotion opportunities by promoting their web-based counterparts and that cross promotion is better used for less "serious" content.

## Methodology

For quantitative and qualitative content analysis, we selected The New York Times ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)) and U.S. Today ([www.ustoday.com](http://www.ustoday.com)) because they are the best-selling newspapers in the United States. The analysis includes national editions published from 2nd to 6th November 2009. This time period was selected because our pilot study determined newspapers routinely repeat patterns of using cross promotion throughout the week. The weekend is an exception because there is a difference in the content on working days, or as is the case with USA Today, no national edition is published. For this study, the newspapers and sections were analyzed through the work week.

The units of analysis were graphics and/or text which include any content that refers readers to online content.

## Research results

Content analysis included the 183 (N = 183) different instances of cross promotion found in the selected sections. There is no significant difference in the number of times the NY Times and USA Today (Figure 1) used cross promotion on a daily basis. The largest number of promotions took place on Friday (NY Times N = 23; USA Today N = 25) while the newspapers' number of promotions on the other days of the week ranges from at least 15 (N = 15) to a maximum of 19 (N = 19). The newspapers published an average 18.3 promotions daily. The coming weekend, when people have more time to consume media and the media are focusing more attention on cross promotion, can explain the increased number of promotions on Friday.

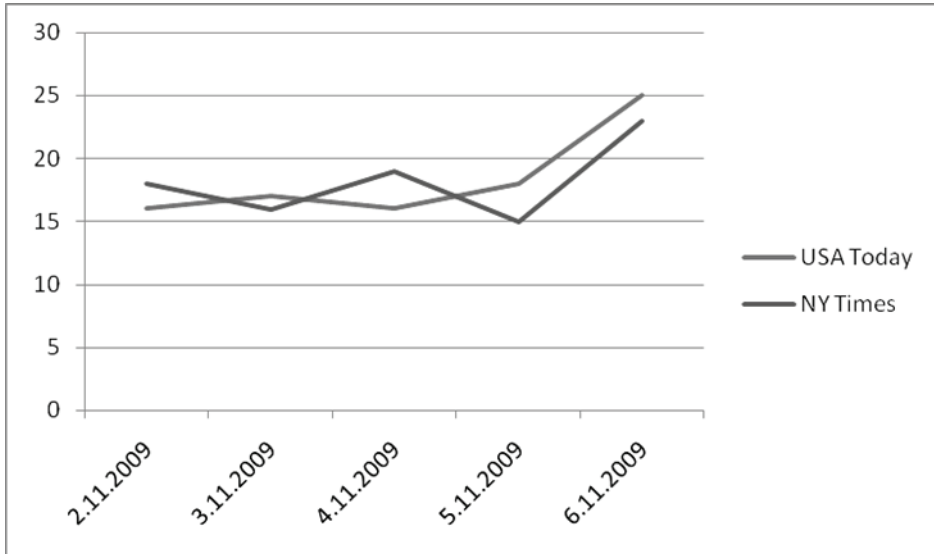


Figure 1. Number of published cross promotion throughout the week

This study also examined the place where the selected newspapers published cross promotion messages. USA Today (Figure 2) had as many instances of cross promotion in the main section of the newspaper as in the Money, Sports and Life sections. The only exception to the rule is on Friday, when USA Today published three times more cross-promotion messages in the Life section than in the other sections. The explanation in the previous paragraph about changes to Friday cross promotions before the weekend applies here, too.

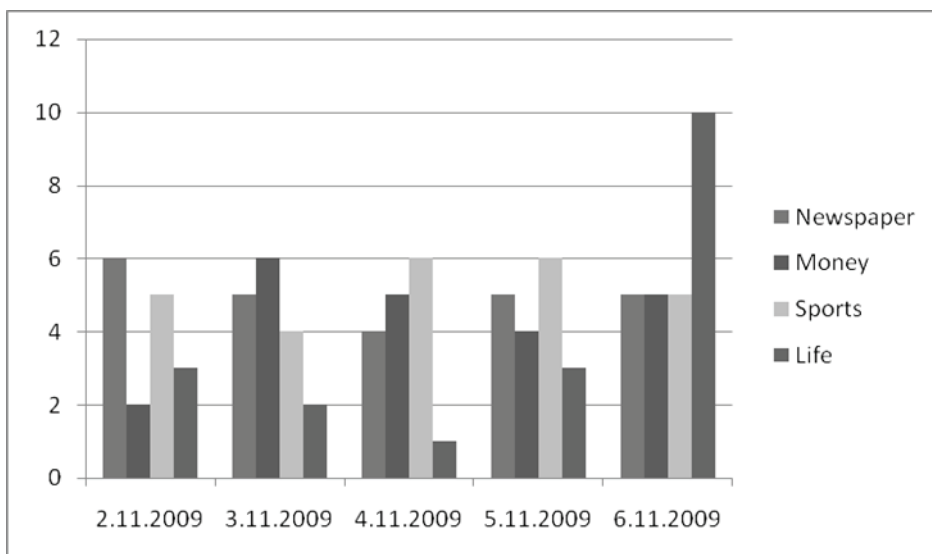


Figure 2. Cross promotion in USA Today, according to the days and place of publication

At The NY Times (Figure 3), cross promotion is most dominant in the "serious" part of the newspaper and the section on culture and arts. On the other hand, the number of published cross promotion messages in the Business and Sports sections is less than 50 percent of the newspapers' total. The trend of increasing the messages on Friday is established only in the Arts section, where the number of cross-promotion messages increased by more than 100 percent.

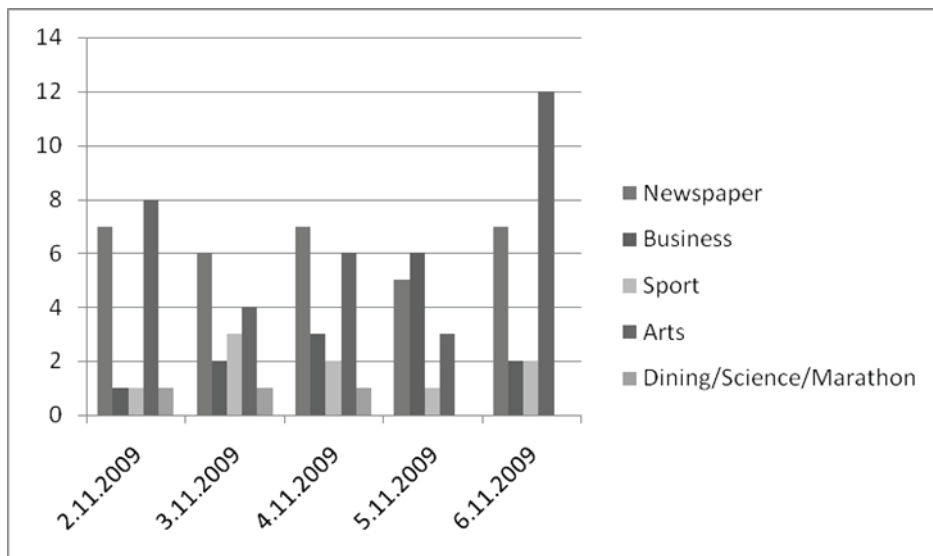


Figure 3 – Cross promotion in The New York Times according to the days and place of publication

It was found that there are five different models of (non) relationship between cross promotion and the place in the newspaper where the cross promotion is published. Thus, the analyzed media use cross promotion within the following parts of the newspaper:

- article
- similar content (section)
- specialized place for the promotion of web content
- specialized place for the promotion of print content
- Independent, not related to the content.



## ON THE WEB

Articles on these developments are at [nytimes.com/business](http://nytimes.com/business).

**CISCO SYSTEMS** and EMC formed a joint venture called Acadia to sell their data center equipment to businesses. *ASHLEE VANCE*

**UBS, THE BIGGEST SWISS BANK**, reported a fourth consecutive quarterly loss, but it said business was improving. *JULIA WERDIGIER*

**THE EUROPEAN UNION** said the bloc would be out of recession this year and revised its forecast for growth in 2010 upward. *DAVID JOLLY*

### FINANCE

**SUCCESSION AT ISSUE** The Finger family of Texas, a large Bank of America shareholder, filed a notice with regulators calling on Kenneth D. Lewis, the bank's chief, to recuse himself from any involvement in the choosing his successor.



*LOUISE STORY*

[nytimes.com/dealbook](http://nytimes.com/dealbook)

### ECONOMICS

**EDUCATION BENEFITS** Almost every country with a high level of education has remained a stable democracy, an economist writes.

*EDWARD L. GLAESER*

[nytimes.com/economix](http://nytimes.com/economix)

### PERSONAL FINANCE

**COMBATING ID THEFT** Credit freezes may help protect against identity theft better and more cheaply than credit monitoring.

*RON LIEBER*

[nytimes.com/bucks](http://nytimes.com/bucks)

### ENVIRONMENT

**CLIMATE CONTROL** A California company has developed a device that monitors homeowner habits and the weather to control heating and cooling. *TODD WOODY*  
[nytimes.com/greeninc](http://nytimes.com/greeninc)

### TECHNOLOGY

**CELLPHONE RIVALS AT&T** has filed a lawsuit claiming a map in a commercial for Verizon Wireless misleads consumers about coverage. *SAUL HANSELL*  
[nytimes.com/bits](http://nytimes.com/bits)

**POST-DVD ERA** Best Buy is taking another step to get ready for the day when the home video business shifts online with a deal to stream movies from CinemaNow.

*STEVE LOHR*

[nytimes.com/bits](http://nytimes.com/bits)

### AUTOMOBILES

**CARBON OFFSETS** Toyota has gone to extreme lengths to offset the carbon dioxide emissions at a plant in Toyota City, where it builds the Prius hybrid.

*STEPHEN WILLIAMS*

[nytimes.com/wheels](http://nytimes.com/wheels)

Picture 1 - An example of a specialized place for cross promotion of online content in The NY Times

Both media have dominant models for the placement of cross-promotion messages: as part of the articles and as part of similar content (section). However, in USA Today, a significant amount of cross promotion was unrelated to the content (N = 24), while there is no cross promotion situated in a specialized place for the promotion of print content. At The NY Times (N = 47), the dominant model is publishing cross promotion as a part of the article. An explanation for that is a greater level of journalistic convergence at the NY Times.

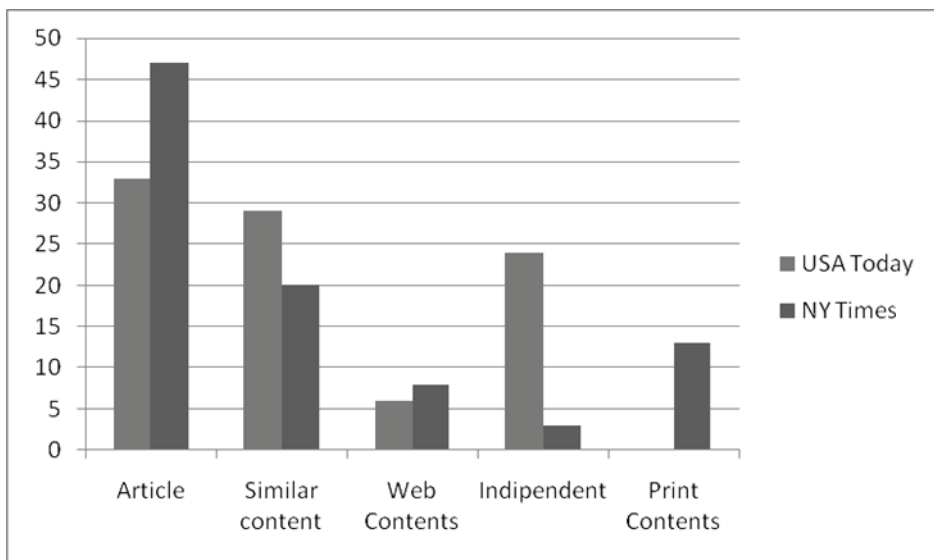


Figure 4 –The relationship between cross promotion and place of publishing

Our previous data (Figure 4) further clarifies the functions of cross promotion. From the analysis, it can be seen that except for an update of articles (USA Today N = 33, NY Times N = 47), cross promotion specifically promotes online content platforms (USA Today N = 17, NY Times N = 16) and sections (USA Today N = 42, NY Times N = 28). From these data it is obvious that The NY Times is more focused on journalistic convergence, while USA Today is more focused on economic convergence in the form of promoting (marketing) online content.

From the previous data we also can see the following strategies of cross promotion:

- Upgrading and overcoming limitations of the media

- Promoting content on other platforms (in the case of our online platform)
- Using content and journalism forms from other platforms

In the first case we can talk about convergent journalism, where editors and journalists, because of limitations of the print medium, place the content online. These limits are the limited space, the impossibility of reporting in real time, and the amount of time that passes from the production of papers to the distribution of the newspapers to end users. and the opportunities offered by the online platform, such as interactivity and multimedia.

## Vaccine video uses humor to ask a serious question

What's up with the egg technology?

By Steve Sternberg  
USA TODAY

Former U.S. senators Bob Graham and Jim Talent aren't afraid to break a few eggs to make a point: Why, they ask, if we're not flying propeller-powered planes, pounding manual typewriters or watching Elvis gyrate on black-and-white TVs, are we still using eggs to make flu vaccine?

All of the above — the senators fumbling eggs, the prop planes, the typewriters and Elvis — appear in a video made to dramatize their concern about why 21st-century drugmakers are using 1950s technology to make a potentially life-saving vaccine.

It's anything but an idle question for Graham and Talent, who lead the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism. If medicine can't react quickly enough to stop the spread of flu, Graham asks, what will happen when, not if, someone re-

leases a biological weapon? "We think the threat is real. We want to take steps to reduce our vulnerability," says Graham, whose group predicted that someone would release a bioweapon somewhere by 2013.

Despite the gravity of the subject, the video was designed to be "light-hearted and entertaining," says commission director Kendall Larsen, who created it with Hollywood veteran Jay Lavender, who wrote the 2006 hit *The Break-Up*.

"We wanted people to pass it around and talk about it," Larsen says. "We didn't want to make an Army training film."

The short film's focus is on why H1N1 vaccine wasn't available before children returned to school. Today, two months into flu's resurgence, vaccine remains in short supply. About 30 million doses are available for 150 million people at high risk of complications.

One reason shortages exist is that the H1N1 virus doesn't grow as well as hoped in eggs, an approach developed in 1930s for flu research and later adapted to vaccine production. Newer methods that involve growing



Calling fowl: Bob Graham, left, and Jim Talent want to know why the USA continues to use a 60-year-old production method to make the H1N1 vaccine.

At [health.usatoday.com](http://health.usatoday.com)

Watch the commission's flu vaccine video.

Track the flu in your region with our Swine Flu Central interactive map.

flu virus in cells are licensed in Europe and China but are still about a year or two away from use in the USA, says William Schaffner, a flu expert at Vanderbilt University. Genetically engineered vaccines also are in the works.

Schaffner says the new approaches may help shorten the time needed to make vaccine, now about six months, but no one knows how much. The new approach could, however, reduce the risk that a lethal bird-flu pandemic will simultaneously wipe out chickens and our ability to make vaccine.

What's most worrisome, says Gigi Gronvall, a flu vaccine expert at the University of Pittsburgh Center for Biosecurity and the commission's scientific adviser, is that "flu vaccine is state-of-the-art. We couldn't get a vaccine out for any other disease as quickly as flu."

Larsen says a breakthrough is needed. "We need the capability to go from bug to drug in 24 hours. That may seem like a preposterous idea, but in 1950, putting a man on the moon would have seemed goofy."

### Cat of stricken Iowa family comes down with swine flu

By Tony Leys  
The Des Moines Register

DES MOINES — A 13-year-old cat in Iowa has become the first of its species to come down with a confirmed case of H1N1 flu, officials said Wednesday.

The cat was brought to Iowa State University's veterinary college, where tests confirmed that it had the new flu virus, the state health department said.

"Two of the three members of the family that owns the pet had suffered from influenza-like illness before the cat became ill," says Ann Garvey, the state's public health veterinarian.

The cat and its owners have recovered. Officials say that to prevent illnesses from spreading between humans and pets, people should wash their hands before and after handling animals. "Animal-to-human transmission is very rare," says health department spokeswoman Polly Carver-Kimm. It's much more likely for an animal to catch an illness from a human, she says.

The American Veterinary Medical Association says the virus has been found in pigs, birds and ferrets, but this was the first confirmed H1N1 case in a cat.

Picture 2 - An example of journalistic convergence in USA Today

Promotion of content has its basis in the theory of economic convergence. To increase the number of users online, print editors and journalists are using graphic and text to point newspapers' readers to content that is published online. Typically, such content is not related to any article, but thematically linked to the section where such promotion is published.

In its Contents section, on Page A2, the NY Times promotes content from the online platform. In the Business section, there is a section on the web where they promote similar thematic content published online. In addition, the NY Times advertises a particular type of content (usually it is video content) in certain areas of the paper with no

logical connection between the themes of the video and the newspaper section. Similarly, USA Today uses the front cover of the newspaper and its sections to promote online content. These promotions are combined with promotions for the mobile platforms. In the Sports section there is a special feature Weblines where they promote the online content.

It is established that the purpose of the promotion is to promote individual content sections or the entire platform. It was not possible to determine which strategy was used to select which content would be promoted, as the approach changed over the five days of analysis. and it is possible that this is depend on a level of education and awareness of editors on duty.

In the last of the three strategies mentioned above, print editors and journalists use content from the online platform and publish it in the newspaper. Usually, the content of blogs from the online platform is published in the newspaper.

Analysis determined that newspapers are promoting these kinds of online content in their print versions:

- Videos
- Articles
- Photo and Soundslides
- Questions and answers
- Online archives
- Discussions
- News Packages
- Original documents
- Opinions (blogs and columns)
- Chats
- Quizzes
- Info graphics
- Databases
- Live results

Figure 5 shows that USA Today promotes content such as info graphics and databases, while the NY Times is focused on multimedia

(video, photo and news packages). The NY Times continues to stimulate discussion with readers, while that kind of content is unknown in case of USA Today. Both papers contain cross promotion referring to two or more types of online content (NY Times N = 14; USA Today N = 12).

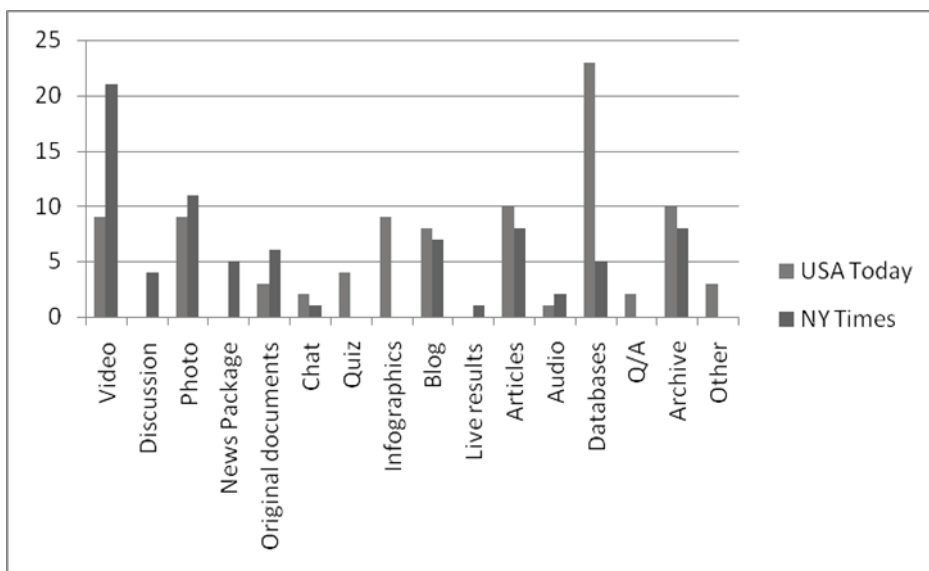


Figure 5 – Types of promoted content

Beside journalistic content, newspapers are promoting weather forecasts, calendars of cultural events, advertising, tv-listings, stock market figures and entertainment content (crossword puzzles, comics, etc.).

In terms of the subject of content (Figure 6) that is cross promoted, there is a difference between USA Today and The NY Times. The NY Times is focused on the cross promotion of cultural (N = 34) and political (N = 27) content, while USA Today focuses on sports (N = 27) and economics (N = 22) content.

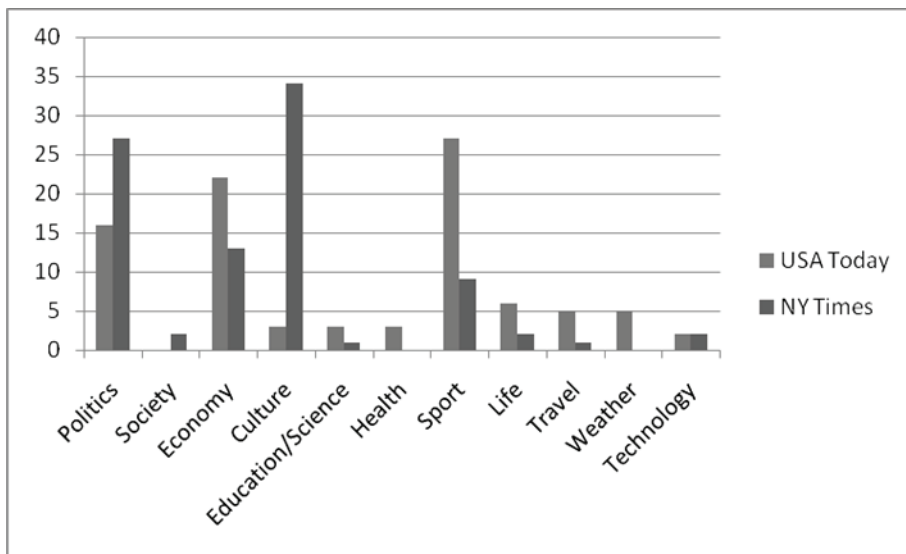


Figure 6 - Thematic comparison of The NY Times and USA Today







Cross promotions can have five different :

- Graphics and/or text label that is online content
- Graphics showing type of promoted content
- Headline
- A brief description of contents
- Link to the content

In the case of the NY Times, more than two-thirds of the cross promotions (N = 83) contain all five of the elements. At USA Today, approximately one-third (N=36) of the cross promotions have all five elements.. has A third (N = 30) of cross promotions at USA Today have no graphics and/or text label that says “Online.” USA Today’s remaining cross promotions varied in style. This shows that USA Today has no set style for cross promotion.



Table 3- USA Today's icons

Icon	Meaning	Example
	Video	 <b>More online</b> ▶ Chat online with James R. Healey at 2 p.m. ET today at cars.usatoday.com. ▶ E-mail testdrive@usatoday.com. ▶ Go to cars.usatoday.com to hear Healey's comments on the Honda CR-V, see more photos, compare vehicles, find previous Test Drive columns and get information on pricing, incentives, crash-test scores and more.
	Audio	
	Photo	
	Quiz	
	Other	

There is a big problem with cross promotion that uses links that refer users to the content online (Figure 7). The analysis found that two-thirds of links lead to the home page of the online platform or to sections such as Sports, Business, Culture, Life, etc. As these sites often change, there is a great chance that a user who came the next day would not find the content he or she wanted. Therefore, newspapers should use permanent links to refer directly to the content. Though newspapers could not market the online platform as a whole by doing this, they would prevent users from being disappointed, which is a much bigger problem.

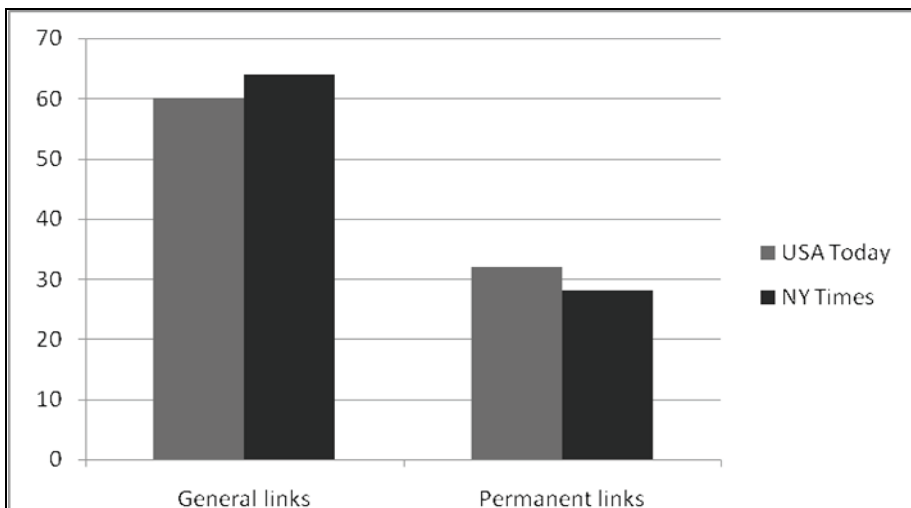


Figure 7. Types of links that lead to the content on the online platform

## Conclusion

Cross promotion is not only an indicator of economic convergence. Cross promotion is used to provide news that best suits each audience or media format. The hypothesis proposed in this paperSet is only partially proven correct. The analyzed media used cross promotion significantly, but we noticed differing practices. The NY Times is more focused on journalistic convergence, while USA Today largely practices economic convergence.

The number of cross promotions and their weekly distribution in each paper are not significantly different. Most of the differences that were noted can be explained by different conceptions of media and medium audiences. The NY Times focuses on a "serious" audience, so their emphasis in the use of cross promotion is for "serious" content. On the other hand, USA Today aimsto promoting content such as sports, life, travel, etc.

There is a noticeable difference in the newspapers' styles of cross promotion. The NY Times insists on using one form, and USA Today uses several different styles, which leads to inconsistency. However, USA Today enhanced its visual approach by using graphical icons that can be explained by tradition of newspapers.

In conclusion, we can say that both newspapers use media cross promotion in an experimental way, as is the case with other areas of convergence. Unfortunately, a small number of activities in modern journalism are based on scientific research.



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