(Reinventing) Editorial Illustration in Online News Media

Nanette Hoogslag
Royal College of Art
School of Visual Communication
info@hoogslag.co.uk

1. ABSTRACT

Editorial illustration, the illustration of magazine and newspaper articles has had a long tradition as a distinctive visual tool for navigation, engagement and reflection within news-publication. As the only alternative information and communication medium operating alongside text and news-photography, this type of image forms an essential agent for editorial opinion and the shaping of a bond between reader and paper.

Digitisation, fast computing, global networks and mobile reading platforms have meant that online publishing is now the driver of the newspaper industry. This transformation from print changed the structure of news distribution, news stories and audience expectations and has introduced a new style of content, content management and presentation. This in turn has had a major impact on the roles and positions of all the newspapers traditional constituents, and in particular that of the illustration.

It raises questions about the role and significance of editorial illustration and how the specific conditions of online publishing influences, in a negative way, the presence of the traditional format. At same time there are *digitally native* remediations developing, which hold the qualities of illustration yet adhere to the material, technological and semiotic laws set by the online platform, such as newsgaming, interactive documentary and data visualisation, but also within social media such as memes and Youtube contributions.

In my research project I am creating a case study presenting a so-called *data driven illustration*. This image, unlike data-visualisation does not visualise the data, but uses data, data dynamics and data attributes to illustrate a news story. It uses the technological possibilities of the computer, code, networks and screens and the authorship and approach of the illustrator to create a work, and will follow my definition of online editorial illustration, which my research will present.