



Understanding the roles of communities of practice in the media industry: the case of media workers in the Brussels-Capital Region

Sabri Derinöz (researcher), Geoffroy Patriarche (promoter),
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Media workers as communities of practice



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Media Clusters Brussels – MCB – is a collaborative and interdisciplinary research project of the Brussels-Capital Region involving three Brussels universities: VUB, ULB and USL-B. The aim is to analyse the many facets of the media industry in the Brussels-Capital Region and explore the development of clusters.

The *Projet de Plan Régional de Développement Durable / Ontwerp van Gewestelijk Plan voor Duurzame Ontwikkeling* for Brussels (2013), approved by the Brussels Regional Government on 12th December 2013, identifies the cultural and creative industries as one of the four key sectors of the metropolitan economy, and more specifically proposes a media city at Reyers as the first strategic cluster (Pôle Reyers) to develop. However, despite the fact that the Brussels Region is committed to fostering the development of the media sector, until now there has hardly been any empirical data available regarding the structure and dynamics of the media industry in Brussels. This project is aimed at creating socioeconomic value for the media industry in the Brussels Region and beyond by providing decision-makers with the in-depth knowledge they need regarding the media industry in Brussels, while accompanying the phases of implementation of the Pôle Reyers. The overarching research question is: How can the structure and dynamics of the media sector in the Brussels metropolis be enhanced to improve its social and economic roles?

MCB is divided into six **Work Packages**. Work Package 1 offers a general overview, definitions and common framework of the project. Work Packages 2 & 3 focus on Brussels media institutions by studying Brussels media clusters from a macro and socioeconomic perspective. Work Packages 4 & 5 focus on the media workers within Brussels from a micro perspective, and Work Package 6, on the communities the media workers form to create interactions and communities of learning from a meso-perspective. These three points of interest (i.e. media institutions, media workers and media communities), enable MCB to understand all of the dynamics of media clusters in Brussels.

More information on the Media Clusters Brussels project is available on the Website (www.mediaclusters.brussels)

The project is financed by Innoviris under the “Anticipate” programme (Prospective Research – Anticipate – 66 – 2014/2018).

Scope of this report

This report aims to provide **a better understanding of the roles of communities of practice (CoPs) for media workers in (and around) the Brussels-Capital Region**. It sheds light on who the CoP participants are, what topics they engage in, what the companies' approaches toward CoP are, and what the participants seek and learn in these kinds of shared learning initiatives.

This report is the third deliverable of **Work Package 6** on "Media workers as communities of practice", which is handled by PReCoM (Centre for Research on Communication and Media) at Université Saint-Louis – Bruxelles. WP 6 focuses on how and why Brussels media workers create CoPs in order to interact with each other, share knowledge and develop new practices. In order to do so, WP 6 adopts a meso-level approach, whereas other WPs adopt either a macro and socioeconomic perspective (WPs 2 and 3 on clusters and media companies) or a micro perspective (WPs 4 and 5 on media workers).

The next deliverables of WP 6 will be built on the findings of this report:

Deliverable 6.4 – Workshop for the presentation of findings to relevant researchers and stakeholders.

Deliverable 6.5 – End-Report: Future prospects and recommendations for fostering communities of practice in the Brussels media sector.

Key findings

How did we collect data on communities of practice (CoPs) for media workers in Brussels?

- This report is based on data gathered through a dedicated online survey and semi-structured interviews with media workers, and also uses insights from literature and previous Deliverables.
- The online survey was developed in collaboration with Work Packages 4 and 5 in order to gather data about media workers in and around Brussels. The survey questionnaire included a section focused on media-related events media workers may have attended, and communities and social networks in which they may share their experiences. The questionnaire was circulated from June 2016 to April 2017, reaching out to a total number of 577 respondents.
- Semi-structured interviews were carried out with media workers (n=5) who were recruited among the survey respondents for covering a wide range of situations that seem relevant to the understanding of differences that exist in Brussels' media world. The informants were invited to talk about their work practices, their on-going learning strategies and what they seek and learn in CoPs.

What are the on-going learning strategies used by media workers to stay up-to-date in their job after formal education?

- The massive changes in the media industry have led to more individualized media workers, who are increasingly less attached to only one company and who need to expand their skills in order to stay relevant in (or to be at the forefront of) their domain, and therefore stay employable.
- Media workers use a range of on-going learning strategies in order to stay relevant in their job, from more formal/institutional ones (lifelong learning programmes, trainings, R&D) to more informal ones (colleague mentoring, technological watch, tips sharing). They also attend public events for media professionals (including events organised by CoPs) and use social media to participate in communities and social networks.
- Certain strategies are very close to what we define as CoPs, such as virtual communities using Facebook groups, mailing lists, and communities that are not directly related to media work per se but are nonetheless relevant to media workers.

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What are the needs and opportunities of Brussels' media workers for communities of practice (CoPs)

- Media workers are very diverse, and so are their needs. What can influence their interest for CoPs and their possibilities to fulfil their needs through CoPs depends on a range of factors such as:
 - Their (sub-)sector(s), their job(s) and the task(s) that they carry out as part of their job(s) – with different transversalities and degrees of specialisation.
 - There is a tension between, on one hand, the needs of media workers for learning opportunities and, on the other hand, the requirement to dedicate (most of) their working time to the day-to-day priorities.
 - The companies' policies and priorities do have an impact on the possibility for, and motivation of media workers to participate in CoPs.
- While content production is often perceived as the highest priority, there are also supporting entities, facilitators and peripheral entities that play a role in the functioning of the media industry and also have specific needs for CoPs.

What are the benefits of communities of practice (CoPs) for Brussels' media workers, companies and sectors?

- Unlike more traditional learning environments, CoPs have more varied and adaptive formats that can bring quick and specific benefits to media workers:
 - CoPs allow solving problems, have access to certain expertise, share experiences and discuss problems that one can encounter.
 - CoPs support self-appreciation and self-development, foster the creation of knowledge and help to keep abreast of new trends, while allowing a quick spread of information in a more horizontal fashion.
 - CoPs help media workers get news ideas and be inspired, leading to possible innovations (which is becoming increasingly crucial) and new strategies.
 - CoPs are a perfect place for networking and for media workers' marketability, leading to potential collaborations with a large variety of profiles.
- The individual benefits for media workers seem to impact positively (directly and indirectly) the media companies and the media sectors.
- The benefits brought about by CoPs to Brussels' media workers, companies and sectors suggest that it is essential to better support them as part of a broader strategy for developing a media industry.

How can communities of practice (CoPs) be better supported in the Brussels media industry?

- **Recommendation 1. Gain a better understanding of the media workers' diverse and evolving needs for CoPs and similar initiatives.** It seems essential to find ways to identify better the needs of media workers. Those needs can be identified explicitly by media workers themselves, but also through a more proactive approach, analysing the evolutions of the media sectors while keeping abreast of what is done outside.
- **Recommendation 2. Do not forget the supporting and facilitating entities that can also benefit from CoPs and similar initiatives.** It is important to go beyond the core activity of mediated content production and take into consideration the supporting and facilitating entities as well as external ones that contribute to the functioning of the media industry.
- **Recommendation 3. Accommodate the work environment and culture to the creation of, and participation in, CoPs and similar initiatives.** It is essential to facilitate the environment of CoPs, to familiarise the stakeholders with the values of CoPs, and to develop incentives to better support CoPs. A kind of "CoPs culture" should be infused, whether it is by removing obvious barriers or through aligning key structural and cultural elements, which would benefit every stakeholder in the media industry.
- **Recommendation 4. Foster the dialogue between regional and community structures and initiatives that are (directly or indirectly) involved in the Brussels media sector.** The point here is to reach increased coherence and clarity as to the different policies and opportunities for CoPs, and to strengthen the relations between the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking media players in Brussels. This openness should expand beyond regional and even national borders.
- **Recommendation 5. Identify entities in charge of promoting and coordinating CoPs and similar initiatives, and organise the division of labour.** In order to better integrate (and benefit from) CoPs and similar initiatives as a lever of development of the Brussels media industry, the various responsibilities need to be better identified and coordinated. The role of *screen.brussels* might be further examined and maybe diversified in order to better encompass the promotion and coordination of CoPs, but other stakeholders (e.g. higher education institutions, public service media) should be considered as well.

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1. Introduction

In Deliverable 6.2 (Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017), we presented an overview of a range of media-related communities of practice (CoPs) that exist in Brussels' media industry, with a view to better understand the different kinds of CoPs as well as the different parameters that can be used as leverage to foster them and thereby support Brussels' media industry. Deliverable 6.2 mainly drew upon insights from interviews with CoP founders and/or organisers. In the present report, we address those CoPs from the perspective of the media workers themselves, as CoP participants. Our aim is to understand the roles of CoPs for media workers in (and around) the Brussels-Capital Region, who the CoP participants are and what they seek and learn in these kinds of shared learning initiatives. In order to do so, we draw upon quantitative data that was gathered through an online survey targeting media workers in the Brussels-Capital Region, as well as upon semi-structured interviews with media workers who were selected among the survey's respondents for covering a wide range of situations that seem relevant to understand the differences that exist in Brussels' media world. Our analyses also include inputs from our previous deliverables as well as from relevant literature. Ultimately, as a contribution to the Media Clusters Brussels (MCB) research project, this report aims to offer insights on one often-neglected aspect of media clusters – i.e. CoPs – that can be used by decision-makers to strengthen the Brussels' media industry.

Our approach to CoPs has been elaborated in Deliverable 6.1 (Plazy & Patriarche, 2015). There we used Wenger's work to define CoPs as "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger, 2006, p.1). Thus following Wenger, we took into consideration that CoPs are based on three characteristics: a common domain of interest, joint activities and regular interactions within a community, and a shared repertoire of resources creating the practice. We noticed that CoPs can be of different kinds (within or across organisations, self-driven or artificial, more or less virtual...) and develop through different kinds of activities such as after work meetings, workshops, or more informal meetings, gatherings or interactions. Wenger even says that CoPs "are everywhere. They are a familiar experience, so familiar perhaps that it often escapes our attention" (Wenger, 2006, p.3). Different researchers have observed and analysed a wide range of different entities that were all labelled as CoPs even if they were quite different (see Plazy & Patriarche, 2015, pp. 30-31). Hence we had to specify further the kind of phenomena that we wanted to study as CoPs. Firstly, we made the choice to leave out of our scope internal CoPs (inside a company or an organisation, closed to outside members) in order to focus only on cross-organisational CoPs. This choice was dictated by the overall perspective of the MCB research project, which focuses on media clusters in Brussels. From that perspective, we were

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more interested in the interactions and relations that develop between or across companies, rather than in dynamics occurring in a single organisation. Secondly, we also decided to focus primarily on communities that have face-to-face interactions between members. This was, again, because of the cluster perspective, which invites to take into consideration the geographical and topographical dimensions of the media industry. That said, virtual communities (i.e. communities that never meet face-to-face) were not completely left out of the focus of this research as we also had a look at the online communities and social networks in which media workers share their experiences.

In the next section of this report we outline our methodological design. We then present the research results, starting with an overview of on-going learning strategies among media workers and moving on with an in-depth analysis of communities and social networks where media workers share their experiences in. In conclusion, we use some key results in order to suggest a series of recommendations on how to develop media-related CoPs in the Brussels-Capital Region.

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2. Methodological design

The methodological design of the present study is twofold: a dedicated online survey among media workers in and around Brussels, and semi-structured interviews with media workers from different sectors who have attended events organised by CoPs.

2.1. A dedicated online survey among media workers

The online survey was developed in collaboration with work packages 4 and 5 in order to gather data on media workers in and around Brussels. Thus the questionnaire included not only questions about CoPs but also about media workers' skills, profiles, mobility practices and local attachment – in addition to general questions related to demographics, education, occupation, etc. The section of the questionnaire dedicated to CoPs was developed using the 7P framework that was conceptualised in Deliverable 1.1b (Komorowski, 2015b) and that we used in Deliverable 6.2 (Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017) in order to understand the dynamics of CoPs through the lens of (the relations between) the 7 parameters: place, proximity, pertinence, profile, path-dependency, policy and performance. The questionnaire was produced in French, English and Dutch, and was widely circulated from June 2016 to April 2017, reaching out to a total number of 577 respondents. The methodology of the survey is developed extensively in Deliverable 4.3a (Wiard et al., 2018b) and will consequently not be elaborated further here. Some specific points of attention need to be considered, though, in order to guide the reading of this report.

A first point of attention is how we operationalized CoPs in the survey questionnaire. Obviously, we had to use another term than "CoPs", which is a theoretical construct. We handled this in two different ways depending on the questions, and taking into consideration the limited space that we had in the questionnaire and the needs of the other Work Packages. Firstly, in some cases we referred to "**shared learning experiences in communities and social networks**" or "communities or social network you share your experiences in". With this expression we emphasised the collective aspect of learning that we were interested in. Not only communities that meet physically are included here but also virtual communities, which is indeed broader than our core definition reminded in the introduction. Secondly, in some other cases we used public events targeting media professionals as indicators of (our then-in-progress understanding of) CoPs, which corresponds to the co-presence dimension of our core definition of CoPs in the context of this research (cf. for instance Café numérique, Medialab session, etc.). It eventually appeared (see Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017) that not all the events that were listed in the questionnaire are

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indeed linked to CoPs as we defined them, that is why in the analysis we sometimes focus specifically on the events organised by CoPs proper. These **CoP events**, as we call them, are: AJPro, Medialab, Café numérique, VRT Sandbox/Creative circles, Brotaru, Storycode, BE.VR, Urlab, Open Techn Brussels, transforma bxl.

A second set of considerations relates to the data analysis. Although we managed to reach a large number of 577 respondents, the results can lose relevance when the data is cross-checked and the numbers get smaller. Also, although our survey seems to have a relatively balanced sample regarding the targeted population (see Table 1), it is unlikely that our sample provides a representative picture of Brussels' media workers. It can nonetheless give useful insight into our object of study, especially when the quantitative data is cross-checked with qualitative data (see 2.2). It should also be noted that when we provide a percentage of respondents in relation to a question, it is generally referring to the respondents of that very question and not to the whole sample. Moreover, some questions had multiple choices, meaning that the total number of responses (t=...) does not necessarily correspond to the total number of respondents (n=...) and that every choice can also have a different count: "n" respondents answered to question "X" that had multiple choices between "A", "B" and "C" but the number of responses for "A", "B" and "C" can be different than "n". We will provide clues throughout the text in order to avoid any confusion.

Variable	Category	Census (%)	Survey (%)
Gender	Male	57	57
	Female	43	40
Sector	Audiovisual	42	56
	Print	20	20
	New media	17	20
	Advertising	21	9
	Media in general	/	6
Situation	Employee	91	55
	Independent	9	23
	Business owner	/	11
	Intern	/	1
	Student	/	5
	Share holder	/	2
	Job seeking	/	4

Table 1 - Comparison between the survey sample and the census results (Wiard et al., 2018a)

2.2. Semi-structured interviews with media workers

As part of our methodological design, a selection of media workers were interviewed about their work practices, their on-going learning strategies and what they seek and learn in CoPs more specifically. A semi-structured interview guide was created in order to help us frame the conversation while giving enough liberty to the informants for bringing insights that were not previously anticipated. The interviews were focusing at first on the media workers' previous and current activities in the media sector as well as on the evolutions of the sector and/or job. We then tried to get an understanding of the know-how necessary in their position as well as the strategies that they are using (or might want to use) in order to stay relevant in their job. Afterwards, we went deeper into the methods used to stay efficient in their task(s), whether it is through formal (studies, external or internal trainings, etc.) or informal methods (self-learning, social networks, etc.). We finally addressed their learning experiences in communities before having questions specifically focused on CoPs as we define them. The 7Ps framework (see Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017) was used to structure the interview section focusing on CoPs. Questions were asked regarding what they were expecting in such events, what their experience was and what it brought (or not) to them. Finally, some questions were asked about the media clusters in Brussels (Reyers or other clusters, see Komorowski et al., submitted).

The selection of the informants was made on the basis of the survey: five media workers were selected in order to reflect a diversity of situations that seem relevant to understanding the differences that exist in Brussels' media world. Each of the sectors that were included in the project's definition of media in Deliverable 1.1a (Komorowski, 2015a) is represented in our selection of informants: audio-visual¹, print², new media³, advertising⁴ and media in general (some informants are fully devoted to one sector while others have a more hybrid profile). All the informants went to at least one CoP event that was listed in the survey questionnaire⁵ (between one and three), with two informants being (or having been) regular goers with an overall positive experience.

Our group of informants includes one woman and four men of various ages (two in the "18-34" category, two in "35-49" and one in "50-64"). Four of these

¹ The sub-sectors being TV, radio, recorded music and documentaries.

² The sub-sectors being newspapers, magazines and online content production.

³ The sub-sectors being website development, publication, content, etc.; social media production, management, etc.; Webdoc, transmedia docs and VR.

⁴ The sub-sectors being online advertising, public relations and corporate communication.

⁵ The informants indicated that they attended: Café Numérique, Medialab, Brotaru, VRT Sandbox/Creative Circles and AJPro.

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informants are Belgians and one is from outside of the EU. Three live in Brussels, one in Flanders and one in Wallonia (four have French as their mother tongue and one Dutch). All have a higher education degree of minimum four years (four from a university or equivalent, one from an institute higher vocational educational) in a range of fields of study including journalism (3), human sciences related studies (3), business management (2), art (1) and engineering (1).

Regarding their work status, two informants are freelancers, two are business owners (of one and two companies), and two are employees (working for a public institution, one with a short-term contract and the other with a long-term contract). They started working in the media industry from the late 70's to 2010. They have experienced working for a range of small and large companies such as the two Belgian public broadcasters, different newspapers, screen.brussels, a VR company, a transmedia production company and an advertising company. Their past and present jobs consist not only in content production (mainly audio, text and interactive multimedia, video less often) but also in technical support, managerial and business work, and policy development, therefore covering a wide range of tasks (see Table 2).

Tasks	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	Total
Production of media content	X	X	X	X		4
Diffusion of media content	X		X	X		3
Management of media content	X	X	X	X		4
Sales of media content	X		X			2
Sales (general)	X					1
Client relations	X		X			2
Public relations	X					1
Administration (HR, legal, finance, etc.)			X			1
Business management	X		X			2
Research				X		1
Other:						0
Technical development or maintenance					X	1

Table 2 - Main tasks that informants (I) are involved in at work

Description of the informants' profiles:

Informant 1 (I1) is a businessman who was hired to develop public policies in order to support Brussels' media sector (and particularly the audio-visual) and the Region's economic development more generally. Subsequently, he⁶ worked on the development and the structuration of the sector. After a few years, he

⁶ For the description of the informants, the gender was randomly chosen as masculine but does not necessarily reflect the actual gender of the informant.

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created his own business in the new media sector and was lately hired for a business job related to new technologies.

Informant 2 (I2) has a long experience in the media industry, where he started working over 30 years ago. He worked mainly for radio stations, in regional (Flemish) and national (Dutch-speaking) public broadcasters, as content producer or editor-in-chief. In the 2000's, he worked on transmedia strategies for several years and went back as a radio host afterwards.

Informant 3 (I3) started as a freelance journalist in the 90's and quickly evolved toward developing websites for several print media. He was then in charge of the growing of digital edition of a newspaper. In the 2000's, as a freelancer, he started to develop new types of productions using new media (transmedia doc, webdocs). He created his own structure to produce that type of content (mostly editorial content but also fiction) as well as "traditional" communication jobs (e.g. PR). He kept strong links with journalism.

Informant 4 (I4) is a journalist. He worked for years mostly – but not only - for a national French-speaking newspaper as a "fake self-employed", doing daily coverage as well as long-term investigations. In this context, he worked abroad several times. He now works for more specialised print media and aims to support his own long-term investigations by finding a part-time job that does not create conflict with his job as a journalist. He's doing mainly written work but he also uses audio-visual content as well as new media (web-docs, etc.).

Informant 5 (I5) has a technical profile. This engineer worked on post-production for around 15 years for a French-speaking public broadcaster and now he is in a software development team for the same company.

3. Staying up-to-date in one's job: overview of on-going learning strategies among media workers

Over the last years the media industry has been going through massive changes, leading to more competition and less resources available for the whole production process (from content production to supporting tasks). Media workers become more individualised, facing precarious labour and willing (and/or being expected) to train and expand their skills (Deuze, 2016). In that context formal higher education might be perceived by media workers as too limited. For instance, I4 (who is a journalist) points out that the skills developed at the university were not enough to effectively deal with the required tasks as a media worker. He thinks that the university offers sufficient training for press journalists, providing an overview of key issues, critical thinking and general knowledge, but it does not put enough emphasis on necessary technical skills, information search, self- and time-management, search for funding and freelance constraints ("how to live with the job", so to say). I4 also points out that the one-month internship done during his formal higher education was not enough to learn field practices. Another informant, who has a technical profile (I5), says that developers sometimes realise that they need to improve their knowledge and skills when they meet competitors or consultants ("everything goes well as long as we do not compare with what is done elsewhere").

There are a large variety of strategies used by media workers to stay up-to-date in their jobs after formal higher education. Therefore there are other ways to learn, receive and share knowledge and new practices than in schools during classes or lectures. We will briefly explore these different strategies below, starting with the more formal/institutionalised ones and continuing with more informal strategies. Those different strategies to stay relevant can have some characteristics of CoPs, either as we define them (see the introduction) or as they are defined by other researchers (who could for instance include in their definition virtual-only CoPs or very micro CoPs within a single company).

3.1. Lifelong learning, training and R&D

A first strategy of on-going learning pointed out by our interviewees is to join lifelong learning programs organised by educational institutions and other institutions such as professional associations. For instance, I4 followed a 6-month certification at IHECS Academy focused on investigative journalism. The

instructors were investigative journalists with different approaches and used practical cases as part of their teaching. The students had to come with their own investigation project, on which they worked during their 6-month learning, and the instructors were supervising these investigations. It was every evening at 6 pm, which was not really compatible with journalists' workflow (9am to 9pm), says I4. This approach has some similarities with AJPro's workshops for journalists (that I4 followed as well), which aim to train journalists in a wide range of domains, whether is it technical, content-oriented or related to personal and professional development (e.g. cybersecurity, web scraping, long formats). AJPro is also a place for meetings and exchange of practices and experiences, which led us to consider it as CoPs (for more details, see Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017). According to I4, the AJPro workshops have different schedules and durations, which can help respond to the different needs and journalists work conditions. They are also financially accessible.

Another strategy to stay up-to-date in one's job is to attend training sessions organised by one's media organisation. Trainings offered inside companies are often linked to the company's objective. For instance, I4's employer organised some training sessions on digital-related skills and team management, at a time when the newspaper was in a restructuring process. According to I4, every time internal trainings are offered, it is when the employer thinks that some changes have to occur within the organisation. Nevertheless, they also refund some AJPro's trainings when requested by the worker. At RTBF, trainings are mostly oriented towards content production. For example, RTBF Academy invites specialists to explain the new habits of media use and their impact on content production. At VRT, trainings can be organised by the HR department or other departments can request specific trainings. When I2 was a producer, there were some technical training linked to software's usage as well as new technological practices. When he worked as a manager, he had some specific trainings linked to management. Besides that, there are not so many trainings, except on a few occasions on technological aspects, interactivity and participation, and the use of social media. I2 specifies that in VRT, as well as RTBF, every other year there is a whole day for every collaborator to engage in reflexive thinking on what has been done and what has to be done in the future.

Other training sessions are organised outside one's company, including by non-media organisations. According to I4, his company does not organise sufficient or relevant trainings internally, hence he has to go elsewhere. He actually has to take his own time and money to follow trainings that are important to him such as journalists' security training from a private security company, as well as trainings from Croix Rouge (BEPS, rescuer) and CTB (Coopération Technique Belge). Also, screen.brussels organise trainings. In some respects, the interviewees are also critical about internal training programs. I2 stated that the training offering has strongly diminished since the 90s (not only internal

trainings). Other informants say that the offer does not always correspond to their needs or that their job does not leave them enough time to attend such sessions.

Inside a company, different kinds of R&D initiatives can also support the media workers in staying up-to-date on media content production. Regarding RTBF, for instance, I5 talks about an E-RTBF section that stays updated on everything related to the Web and shares its knowledge with workers. There is also a R&D section for television that exchanges with the developers. Someone is also hired to make a monthly benchmark of every new working format on the audio-visual market, and a reporting event opened to all RTBF workers is organised every 3 months. About VRT, I2 mentions an “analysis & research division” that can feed them with studies.

3.2. From colleague mentoring to technological watch and tips sharing

Other strategies of on-going learning rely upon more informal relations and practices among media workers. In I4’s past newsroom, there was a (non-formal) mentoring system through which early-career journalists – thanks to the help of an experienced one – learn various practices and knowledge such as what an editorial line is and how to follow it, how to keep updated on news, how to create a contact database, etc. He, himself, mostly learnt through this mentoring system over more than 5 years. He also had the opportunity to learn journalistic practices (as well as other tasks such as team and communication management) with a parallel job that was directly related to what he was doing as a journalist.

Internet is a good source of information for most of our informants. It can be used for technical support, for instance through tutorials found on the Internet (I3 & I5), or to learn best practices, for instance in relation to social media (I2). The Internet can also be used for technological watch (I3 & I5). I3 explains that he is doing a technological watch using Google alerts and some specific keywords in addition to receiving newsletters from competitors and sector associations, and following people that he knows in the sector who share information. I4 also follows some colleagues that he considers being good references.

Both informants I3 and I5 also do technological watch going to events such as yearly big events linked to technology (I5), drinks organised by stakeholders like BECI or screen.brussels, or festivals, lectures, workshops, etc. (I3). To stay up-to-date, some also look at what competitors do (I2 & I5) or what colleagues do, and are attentive to people’s changing behaviour regarding media consumption. I5 also participates in “technoparties”: every month, for about two hours, someone of the team presents technology that they want to understand better (they vote for the technology to be presented). Sometimes they also invite companies to present their products (but, obviously, they do not give a critical

point of view). Another form of sharing is creating user groups for a specific technology or specific software that allow the group to have more impact when they demand something to the company that created it (often a big multinational that is hard to reach otherwise).

I4 also describes tips that are shared by journalists who are supportive to each other, giving information on where to go and reducing costs by traveling together. Practices or “hints” can also be shared randomly among media workers’ networks. I4’s network is formed mostly of journalists in Brussels, mainly the ones with whom he worked at a moment (or who was in the company), or people he knew during his studies. I5 notices that developers never work specifically on media at school (this comes later) which could limit the network and the possibilities to exchange on that particular topic. He also says that any form of event that can bring similar companies together, such as the ones done by EBU (European Broadcasting Union), can be really interesting because it allows sharing practices in informal discussions with colleagues from other public broadcasters.

3.3. Public events for media professionals

At some point in the survey the respondents were given a list of various public events targeting media professionals – some of which being organised by CoPs as we define them – and were asked whether they knew, had heard about or had attended these events. We also gave them the possibility to add similar events they had attended but which were not provided in the list. This list was established on the basis of our then-in-progress understanding of CoPs, which emphasises a proximity parameter (referring to joint activities in physical copresence and membership commitment; for more details, see Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, pp.10-12) that turned our attention to those kinds of events where media professionals actually meet and interact with each other, in copresence.

The survey results indicate that most of the respondents do not either go or know about these events (see Figure 1). A few of them are only known by more than 30% of the respondents (Café Numérique, AJPro and Medialab Session). The events attracting the larger proportion of respondents are AJPro (13,59%), Medianet (10,07%), Brussels Press Club (8,75%), Medialab session (8,38%), Café numérique (8,31%) and VRT Sandbox (6,99%), the other events reaching less than 4% of attendance. When asked about how long they have been attending these kinds of events, a majority of respondents answer that they were attending them for more than 5 years (52%), with the proportion decreasing along with the duration (22,4% for 3-5 years, 17,60% for 1-2 years and 8% for less than a year).

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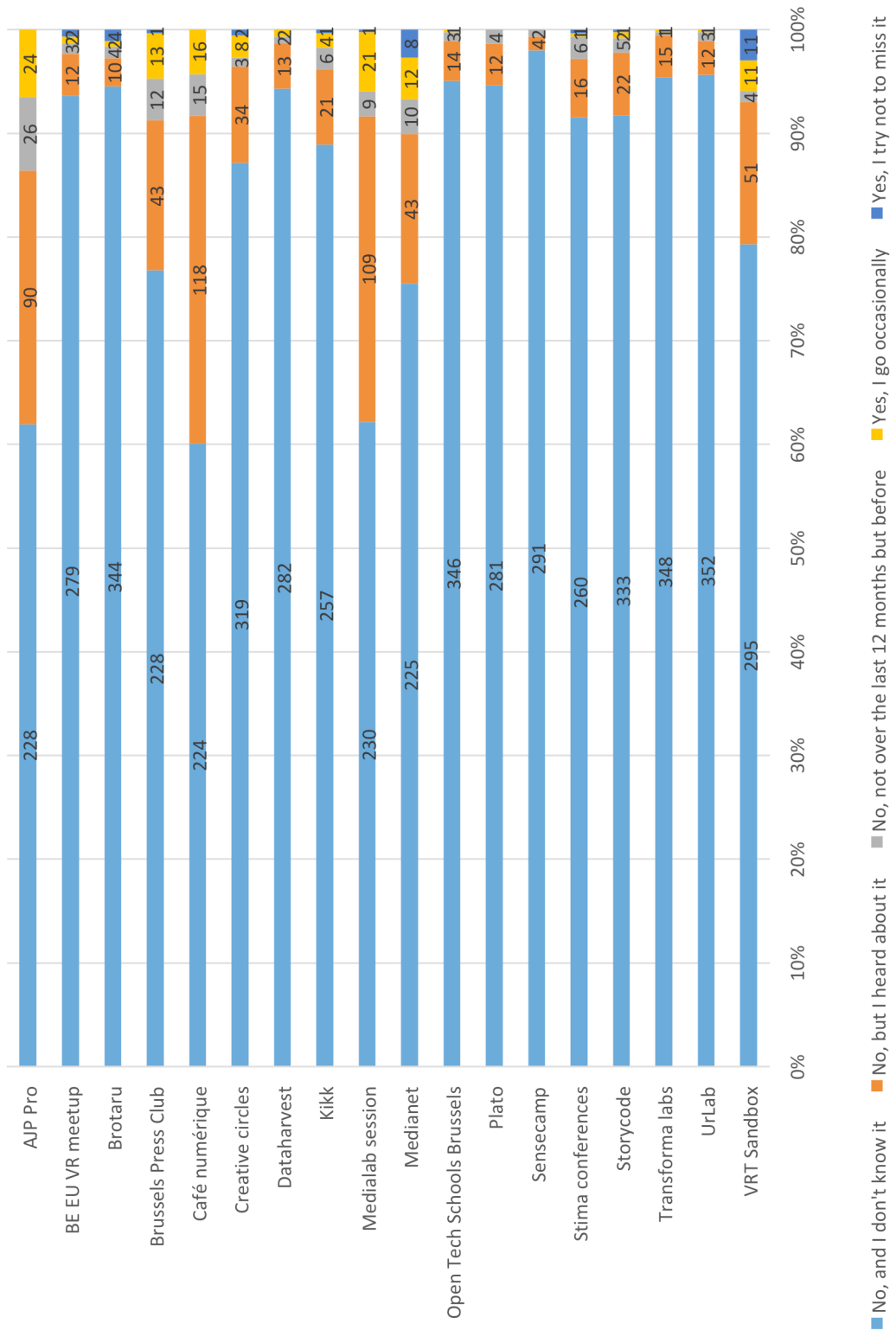


Figure 1 - Respondents attendance at any of the events (n=373)

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Starting from this list, we aggregated the events that are organised by CoPs as we ended up defining them⁷. These include Café Numérique, Medialab, StoryCode, Brotaru, VRT Sandbox/Creative Circles⁸, Transforma, Open Tech Brussels, Urlab, AJPro and BE.VR. For the purpose of the analysis, we also grouped our respondents into three categories: those who never participated in a CoP event (“non-participants”), those who declared to have attended at least one of the CoP events on at least one occasion (“attendees”), and those who declared trying not to miss at least one of such events, without specifying which event(s) (“regulars”). Figure 1 shows the numbers for each CoP. Overall 71,54% of the respondents never went to a CoP (274), 24,02% went to at least one CoP while trying not to miss it (92) and 4,44% said that they were trying to be regular to at least one CoP (17).

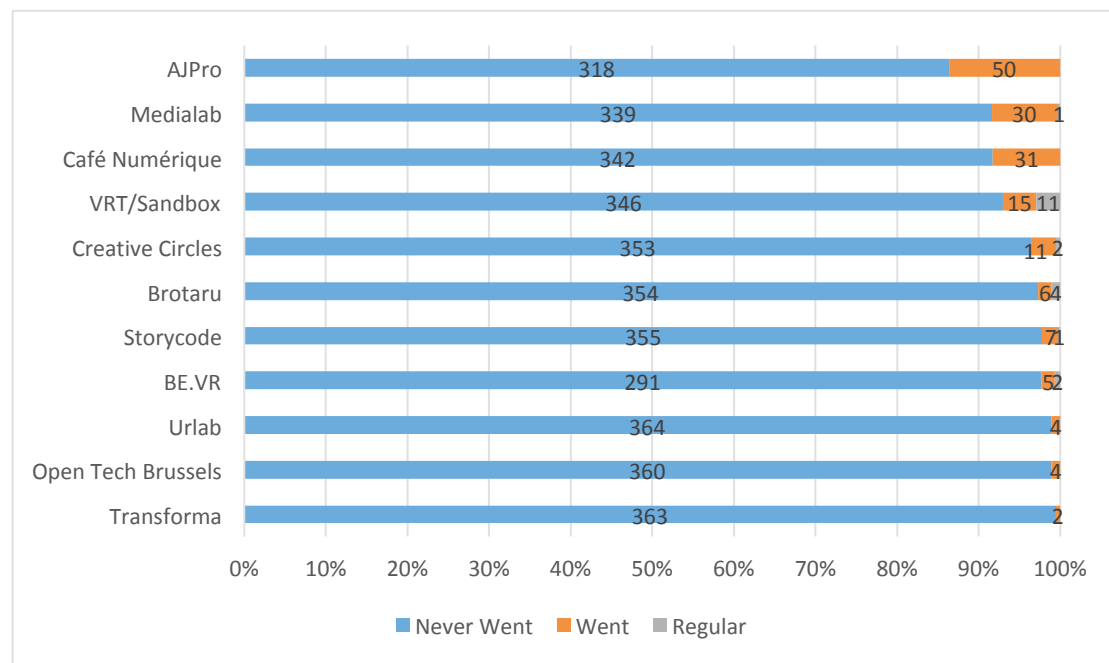


Figure 1 – Participation in events organised by CoPs according to our definition

If we look at the CoP attendance *during the last twelve months* before answering the survey, the numbers drop to less than 30 respondents for every CoPs (see

⁷ See Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, p.4 (see also pp.9-10): “We decided that in order to be relevant to our research, communities of practice need to cut across several media organisations; be open to participants “from outside”; have face-to-face interactions between members (not only online communities); have a defined domain relevant to a media cluster (creating new content, new ways to produce media etc.); be a somewhat lively community (committed members, regular activities); develop a shared practice through joint activities (regular interaction, use of tools to share knowledge, etc.); and be potentially relevant to [Brussels’] media professionals working in the identified clusters.”

⁸ VRT Sandbox and Creative circles – which actually correspond to a single entity – were proposed separately in the questionnaire; therefore, it cannot be possible to merge the responses at this point.

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Figure 2). Because of the very low numbers, this sub-sample will not be used for further analysis.

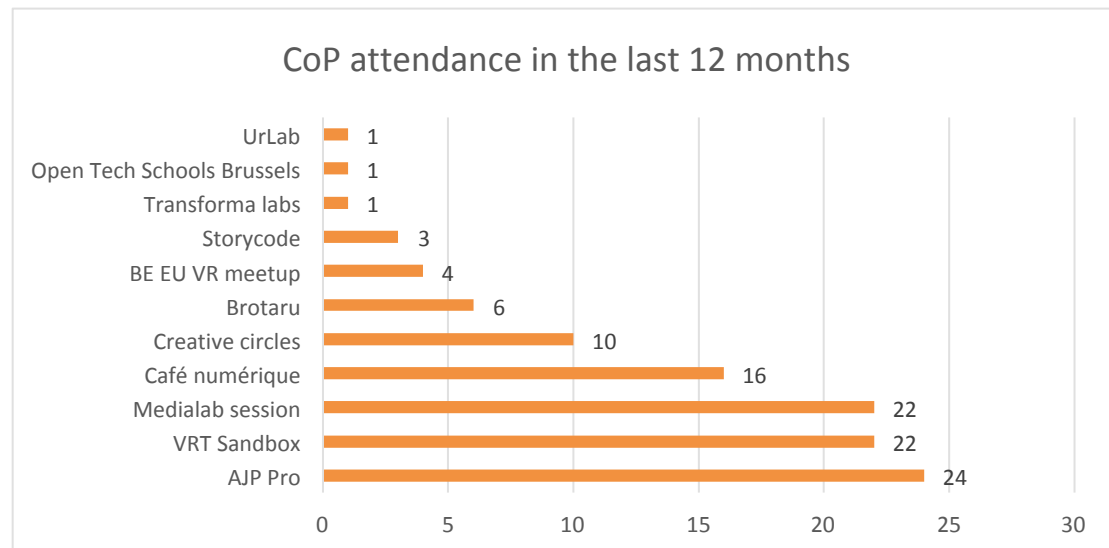


Figure 2 - Participation in events organised by CoPs according to our definition (in the last 12 months)

Regarding the number of CoPs in which people participated, our data indicate that one third of the respondents went to at least two CoPs (37,61% of the respondents who went to at least one CoP). The respondents that are participating in different CoPs seem more likely to be regular attenders, trying not to miss a CoP, but the sample is not solid enough to reflect strong trends in this respect (11 out of 41 versus 6 out of 68).

Regarding the places of the CoP events in which the respondents participated (see Figure 3), a big part was in the city centre (89 answers), then Reyers (48), Louise and the Canal (35 for both), followed by Schuman, ULB/VUB, Flagey, Gare du Midi and Parvis de Saint-Gilles, while some respondents cite a variety of other locations such as Woluwe-Saint-Pierre or outside of Brussels. To some extent, the survey results cover the significant media clusters that have been found in Brussels, around the public broadcasters at Reyers, at the European Quarter, in Flagey/Etangs-Porte de Namur and at the canal⁹ (Komorowski et al., submitted). One of our informants states that he does not care about the event's location as long as it is interesting enough.

⁹ The CoPs analysed in Deliverable 6.2 were often happening in the city centre and in the south and southeast of the city, with some close to the canal and one (VRT Sandbox) in Reyers.

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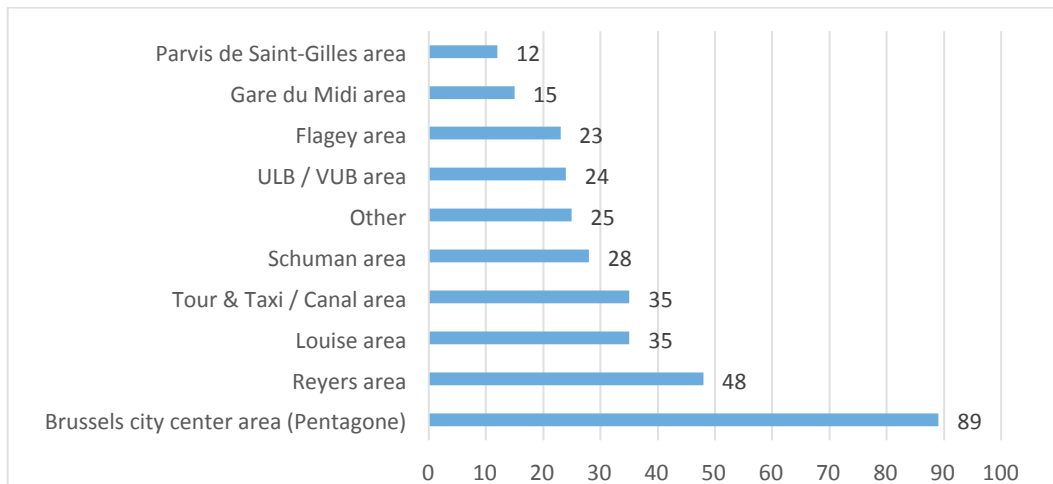


Figure 3 - Areas of the Brussels Region where the listed events (or similar) in which the respondents participated (last 12 months) are usually located (n=150)

Most of the respondents indicate that the usual venues of CoP events are a conference venue (98) or the office of a company or an institution (86). Afterwards come universities and higher educational institutions (mostly VUB, ULB, UCL and IHECS), bars, co-working spaces, places outside of Brussels (mainly in Flanders), or in the office of an association (one third of the respondents specify that it was AJP). The items "home", "a place outside of Belgium" (with Paris and Amsterdam being regularly cited), "a Fab lab/hackerspace" and "other venues" reach less than 20 occurrences (see Figure 4).

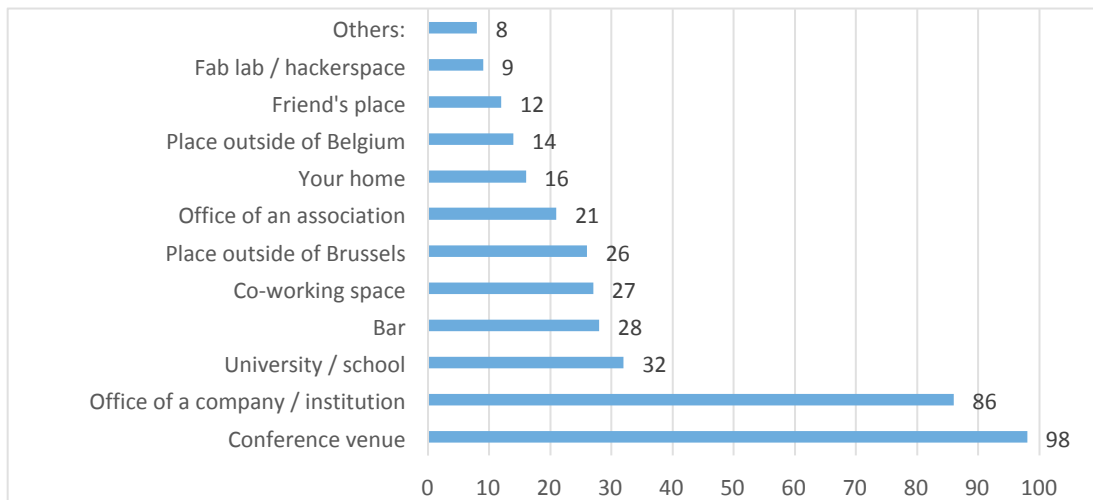


Figure 4 - Usual venues for the listed events (or similar) in which the respondents participated (last 12 months) (n=161)

In relation to the question "How often do you experience the following suggestions in the communities or social network you share your experiences in?" one of the statements that the respondents had to consider was "it is easy to get there". Overall the responses suggest that media workers do not face major limitations for accessing communities and social networks: the large majority

(83,33%) declare that it is sometimes (47,88%), often (26,67%) or always (8,79%) easy to go there (n=330).

3.4. Social media and online communities

We tried to understand more precisely the respondents' use of Internet regarding shared learning activities in communities and social networks. Obviously, virtual communities are relevant here, as highlighted in Deliverable 6.1 (Plazy & Patriarche, 2015): the members of virtual communities (almost) never meet face-to-face, but they are connected through their passion with the help of social media. Also, virtual communities can be global in scale. The kind of online activities overviewed here are not limited to virtual communities though and also include other kinds of social learning dynamics that all imply using the Internet and social media specifically.

When asked about their social media usage and online communities (no reason specified), almost 4/5 of the survey respondents indicate using Facebook at least once a week (see Figure 5). YouTube is said to be used by almost 90% of the respondents (59,64% at least weekly, 19,80% monthly and 9,90% less than once a month) while Meetup.com is (almost) never used by 92,58% of the respondents. Some respondents mention another social media, especially Instagram (26 respondents).

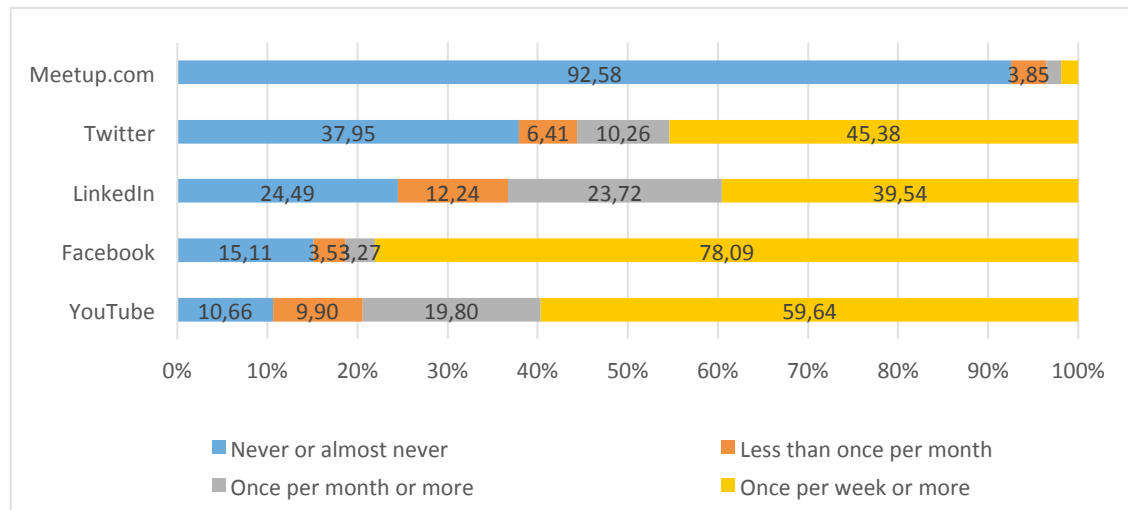


Figure 5 - How frequently respondents use the following media platforms (in %) (n=397)

Media workers do have very different reasons for using online platforms (see Table 3). Facebook seems to be used mainly for private reasons (87,46% of the 343 respondents who answer the question about their reasons for using social media), but also, decreasingly, to be aware of upcoming events (62,39%), to follow news and trends in their field (57,14%) and to promote themselves or their company (51,90%). For about one third of the respondents, Facebook is also relevant for creating networks, sharing and learning new practices, and seeking advice, help and contacts. Twitter is mostly used to follow news and trends in the

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field (51%), then to promote oneself or one's company (37,90%). LinkedIn is used to create networks (60,06%) and for self or company's promotion (38,19%), as well as to seek advice, help and contacts (33,82%). YouTube is mostly used for private reasons (65,89%) but also to follow news and trends (30,61%) and share and learn new practices (30,61%). The results regarding the small number of respondents using Meetup.com might suggest that this social media is mostly used for private reasons (5,25%) or as a means to stay aware of upcoming events (3,21%) or to create networks (2,62%).

Platform	Private use	Being aware of upcoming events	Following news and trends in your field	Creating networks	Promoting yourself and/or your company	Sharing and learn new practices	Seeking advices, help and contacts
Facebook	300 (87,46%)	214 (62,39%)	196 (57,14%)	131 (38,19%)	178 (51,90%)	117 (34,11%)	119 (34,69%)
Twitter	112 (32,65%)	104 (30,32%)	175 (51,02%)	97 (28,28%)	130 (37,90%)	90 (26,24%)	67 (19,53%)
LinkedIn	99 (28,86%)	48 (13,99%)	93 (27,11%)	206 (60,06%)	131 (38,19%)	54 (15,74%)	116 (33,82%)
YouTube	226 (65,89%)	23 (6,71%)	105 (30,61%)	18 (5,25%)	51 (14,87%)	105 (30,61%)	45 (13,12%)
Meetup.com	18 (5,25%)	11 (3,21%)	6 (1,75%)	9 (2,62%)	2 (0,58%)	5 (1,46%)	2 (0,58%)

Table 3 - Reasons for using online platforms (% of respondents, n=343)

The involvement in online communities is mostly of a spectator kind of activity, with 61,37% of the respondents reading what is posted but not really contributing to the conversations (see Figure 6). 47,12% of the respondents post occasionally in some kind of conversations. Only about one sixth of the respondents declare posting very frequently in all kinds of conversations (15,62%) or initiating topics or starting threads (17,81%) while 13,15% of the respondents declare expressing different opinions and creating debate. Less than one third of the respondents spend a lot of time on these platforms (29,59%). Overall, these results suggest that the life of such online communities depends on the active contribution of a minority of users.

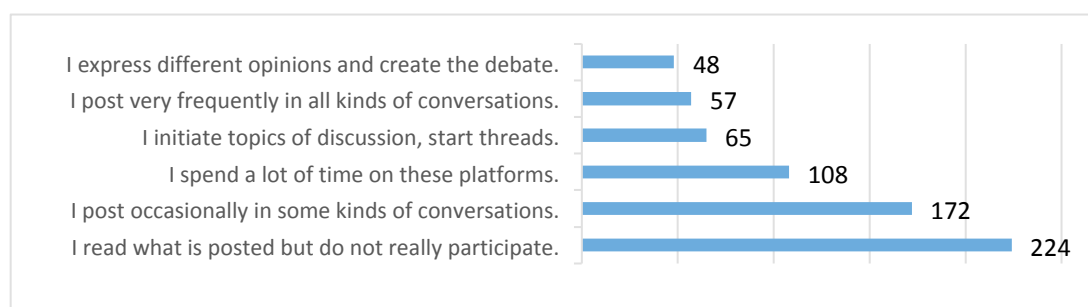


Figure 6 - What respondents usually do within these online communities (n=365)

Our informants describe different sorts of online communities or social networks (depending on, for instance, technology, scope and purpose) for media workers. According to I4, there are online exchanges of resources and experiences inside companies, for example through emails (who did what, what are the pros and

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cons, how to fix things, etc.). Other exchanges take place with colleagues outside of the company who have similar work ethics and practices. There are also mailing lists through which journalists are in touch with each other all around the world. Mailing lists can help people work together or access information from other countries. Facebook groups are also mentioned by our informants as relevant platforms for media workers. There, they share information about foreign travelling (avoiding dangerous roads, etc.), contacts, etc. These groups are international. Some are very technical and/or specialised on topics such as web-docs or data journalism. In these groups, people introduce concrete problems and look for solutions. Their participation is mostly driven by specific needs. In some cases, however, the group (like the one on data journalism) is fed daily by specialists. These people work on the topic everyday so they can keep the community alive. According to I4, it depends on people's motivation and level of expertise. The groups also organise from time to time some lectures, workshops or training sessions (paid, or informal and free). I4 also describes a Facebook page for journalists that indexes the possibilities to have funding (e.g. international grants, financing for freelance journalists, etc.). It happens that people develop projects together in order to find funding. I4 also mentions a cryptogroup on Google Plus and a mailing list supported by AJP, but they do no longer work because only a few people were interested in these. I5 notices that most developers exchange a lot on GitHub. Nevertheless, his team does not publish anything on it because their products are specific and therefore, do not interest a large audience (and they do not have the time to make it more "industrial"). Thus they use GitHub mostly for retrieving information. They do not organise Facebook groups, or only for a very specific product usage.

4. Media workers' participation in CoPs: a multifaceted experience

While the first part of this report aimed at providing an overview of different learning strategies among media workers, this second part is focused on CoPs and aims to shed some light on the following four questions, using insights from the survey and the interviews:

- Who are the CoP participants in the Brussels media industry?
- What are the domains covered by CoPs in the Brussels media industry?
- What are the media companies' approaches toward CoPs?
- What are the benefits of CoPs for the Brussels media industry?

4.1. Who are the CoP participants?

This sub-section is mainly based upon the survey data in order to ask whether the CoP participants have a profile that is different from the one of the respondents who never participated in one of the CoPs that were listed in the questionnaire. As a reminder, the following events are considered as indicators of CoPs: AJPro, Medialab, Café numérique, VRT Sandbox/Creative circles, Brotaru, Storycode, BE.VR, Urlab, Open Techn Brussels, transforma bxl. In what follows, "CoPs attendees" are respondents who declare having attended at least one of the CoP events on at least one occasion; the "regulars" are those who declare trying not to miss at least one of such events (without specifying which one); "participants" is a broad category that includes *both* attendees *and* regulars. It should also be reminded here that the more the data is cross-analysed, the lower are the numbers, resulting in weaker results that need to be considered cautiously.

4.1.1. Gender, age, education and declared skills

Regarding gender, 76,87% of the female respondents never went to a CoP, which is quite higher than male respondents (68,10%). Moreover, only 0,68% of the female respondents was regular to at least one CoP (versus 6,90% of the male respondents).

Regarding age, the respondents were grouped into three age groups: 18-34, 35-49 and 50-64. The younger the respondents are, the more likely they seem to participate in CoP events, but the results are still pretty close (respectively 31,50%, 27,27%, 26,72%).

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Although the numbers are low for many categories¹⁰, it seems that there is a link between the level of study and CoP attendance: the higher the degree, the higher the share of CoP participants (see Figure 7).

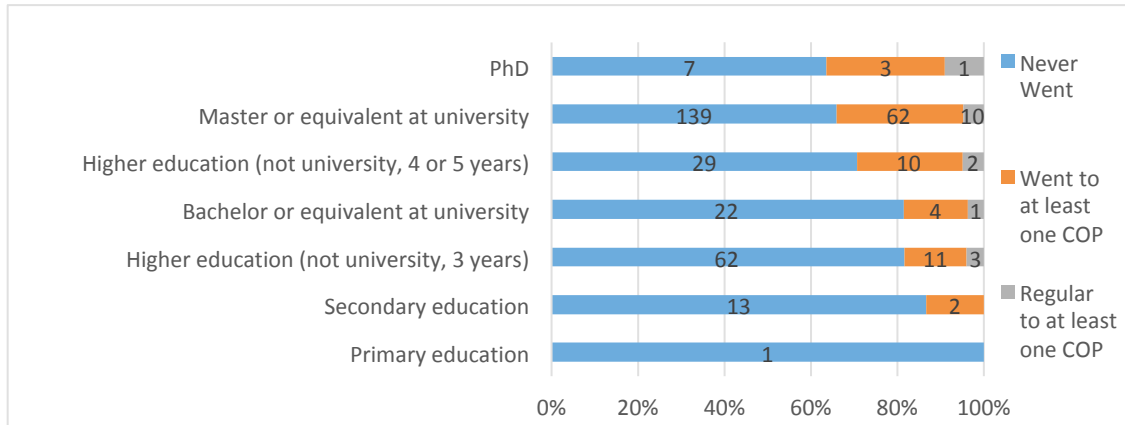


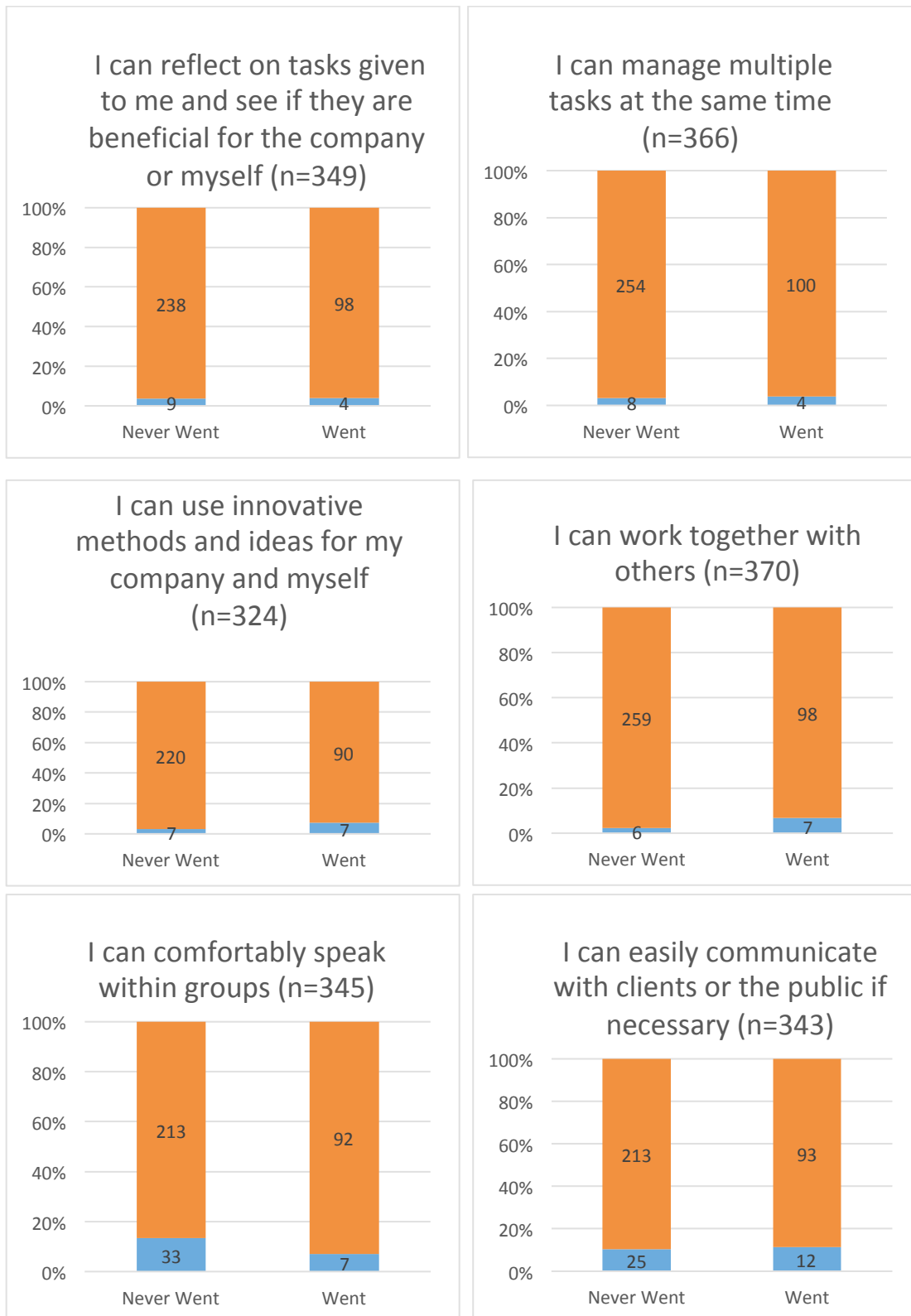
Figure 7 - CoP participation in relation to the level of education (n=382)

We examined whether there is a difference in the declared skills between the participants and the non-participants in CoP events (see Figure 8). Regarding self-management skills and creativity, 7,22% of the respondents who participate in CoP events disagree with the statement that they can use innovative methods and ideas for their company and themselves, while only 3,08% of the non-participants disagree with this statement. Regarding social and communication skills, 6,67% of the CoP participants disagree with the statement that they are able to work together with other people versus 2,26% of the non-participants. On the opposite, the non-participants are only 7,07% saying that they can comfortably speak within a group versus 13,41% of the participants. The non-participants are also less likely to disagree that they can speak the languages required by the description of their job (8,37% versus 14,71%). Concerning IT skills, the participants agree more often to have such skills than the non-participants: 22,92% of the CoP participants declare that they can do programming (versus 17,15%) and 78,72% that they can use advanced computer software such as editing software, design software or data visualisation software (versus 70,89%). Overall these results suggest that there are indeed some differences between participants and non-participants in terms of declared skills, but it is difficult to make sense of them as for certain kinds of skills the CoP participants feel less competent than the non-participants, while it is the other way round for other kinds of skills.

¹⁰ More than half of the respondents have a Master's Degree or equivalent (Wiard et al., 2018a).

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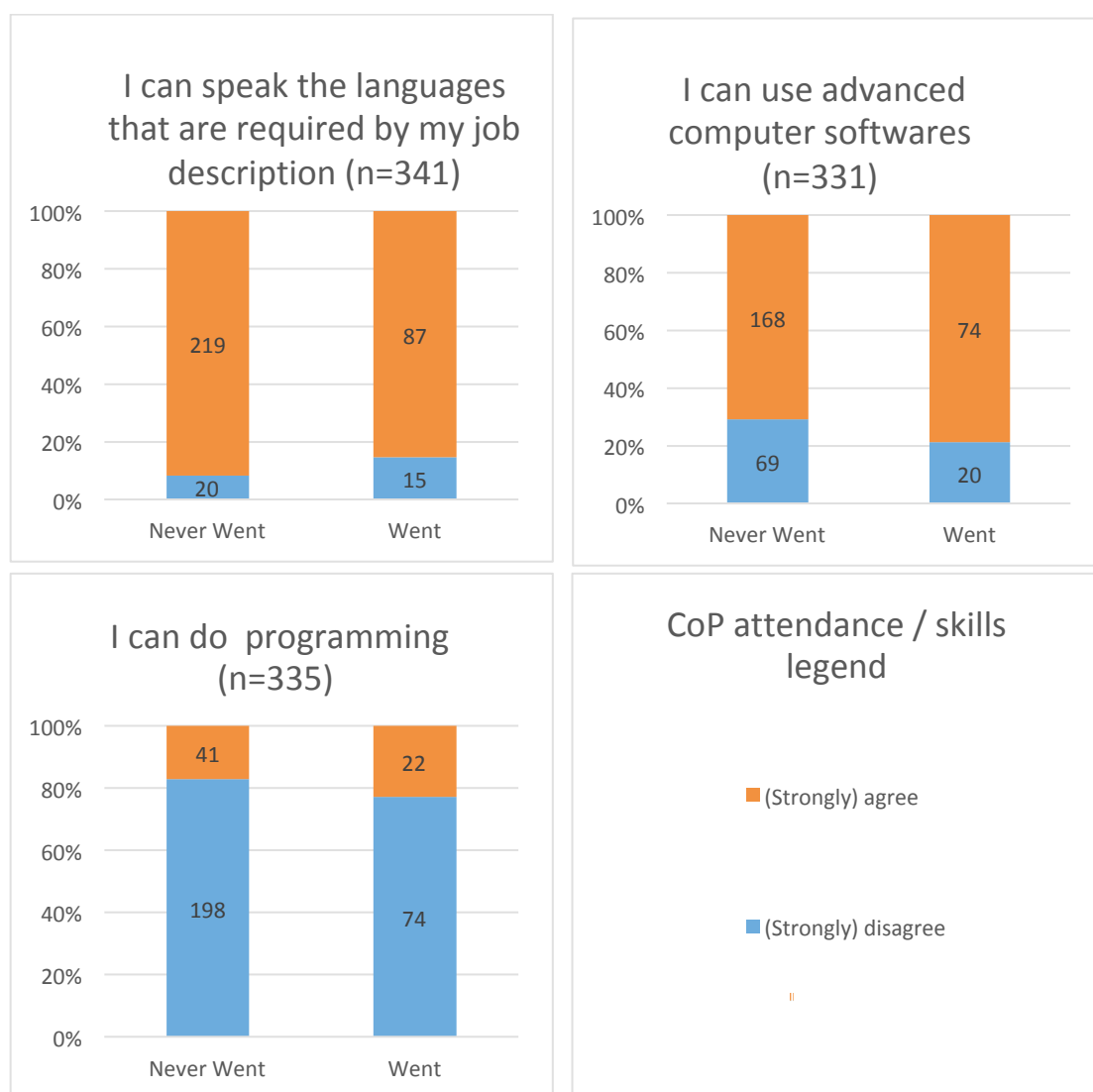


Figure 8 - CoP participation in relation to self-declared skills

4.1.2. Home place, work place, language and nationality

The region where one lives seems to matter for CoP participation in Brussels. Indeed, it is among the media workers living in Brussels that the share of participants is the highest (32,33%). Moreover, those who live in Flanders are proportionally more inclined, than respondents living in Wallonia, to participate in CoP events (24,73% versus 18,18%).

The region where one works also seems to matter, as 32,21% of the respondents who have their main office in Brussels are participants, while it is the case for only 12,50% of the respondents who mainly work in Flanders. Wallonia's numbers are too small here to be presented (only 10 respondents working mainly in Wallonia responded to the CoPs part of the survey questionnaire).

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The stronger the knowledge of French, the more likely it seems that the respondents participate in CoP events (see Figure 9). This progression cannot be seen with the other languages. The respondents with Dutch as mother tongue seem to be even less prone to go to CoPs compared to those who have a lesser knowledge of that langue: 78,95% of them never went to a CoP event, versus 67,08% of the other respondents.

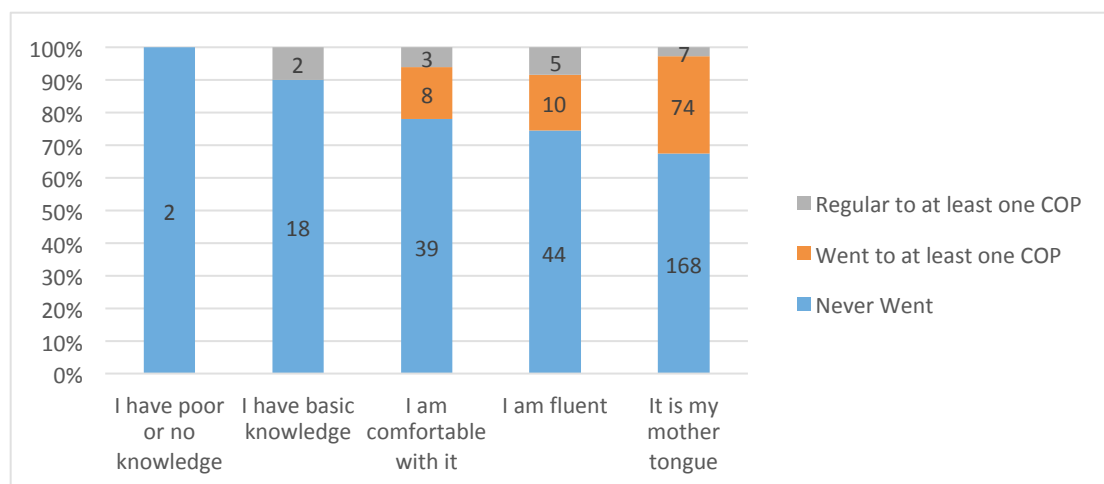


Figure 9 - CoP participation in relation to the knowledge of French (n=380)

Belgians seem to be slightly more attending than people from other nationalities (29,08% for 25,56%). Furthermore, out of the 17 respondents who are regulars, 16 are Belgians.

In Deliverable 6.1 (Plazy & Patriarche, 2015, p.27) we were wondering whether there is a kind of “Brussels spirit” among CoPs that cut across the linguistic communities or if language is prevalent in the way CoPs organise themselves. In our survey, we found that the respondents working in Flanders or speaking Dutch are less likely to attend the CoP events that we have listed in our questionnaire than those who live or work in Brussels and speak French. The overall picture that emerges out of the survey is that CoP participants in Brussels are mostly French-speaking media workers, a large part of them coming from Brussels (Walloons do not seem that active in Brussels-based CoPs), while Flemish equivalents are to be found mostly in Flanders (e.g. Medianet Vlanderen’s events¹¹), VRT Sandbox being one exception. It should be noted, though, that this might depend on the significance of either the French or Dutch language in a

¹¹ “MediaNet Flanders [...] unites more than 60 companies that are actively engaged with content and innovation in the media. It is the most representative and strongest network of Flanders in the media sector. MediaNet brings companies and governments closer together to tackle the problems and challenges of a rapidly evolving and ICT-driven media market.” (<https://www.medianetvlaanderen.be/en/about-us/goals>, retrieved 30 May 2018).

given sector (certain sectors, like print and audio-visual, are more dependent upon French or Dutch than others).

This overall picture is reflected in the interviews. Overall, the informants point to the difficulties brought about by the division of power into communities and regions and Belgium's institutional complexity that lead to poor collaborations. According to I2, who is a Flemish media worker, although their office is in Brussels, their actual work area is Flanders – and indeed most of the audio-visual production companies are located in Flanders. The way they work would not change if they were located in Antwerp or Gent. Even if they are based in Brussels, they only rarely exchange with other Brussels-based media (except with personal contacts). Similarly, I3 says that French-speaking media workers only rarely collaborate with Flemish media workers. Moreover, according to him, there is a kind of structural separation between what is done in Brussels and what is done in Wallonia. I1 also speaks about the difficulties to have a joint policy between Wallonia and Brussels, pointing out that sometimes the first is taking advantage over the second when collaborations are being developed. For him it is a long-term problem: investing in the city is a way of developing the whole media industry across the regions, but some try to grant the funding for only one region's benefit. According to him, a culture based on subsidies cannot generate money and become self-sufficient, which will lead to everyone being poor in the end.

In some situations, people do not hesitate to go to events outside of Brussels. It is the case for example of I3 and I5, the latter noticing that most of the events that can interest him are either in France or in the Netherlands. It is reflected in the survey's responses regarding the venues of the events, with those who select "a place outside of Belgium" (see Figure 4, p24 Figure 3) regularly naming Paris and Amsterdam. This international dynamic is nuanced by I2 who points out that Flemish media are not particularly connected to or inspired by the Netherlands, while internationally, the French-speaking community seems to be mostly connected to other French-speaking media (for instance France), which means that there are actually two different cultural contexts cohabiting in Brussels.

4.1.3. Sectors of activity and work tasks

If we now take a look at the sectors in which CoP participants are working, it seems that CoP events attract proportionally more respondents working in new media (56%), or for more than one sector (39,25%), than respondents working for the print (27,91%) and the audio-visual sectors (20,37%). The shares of regulars follow the same trend (see Figure 10).

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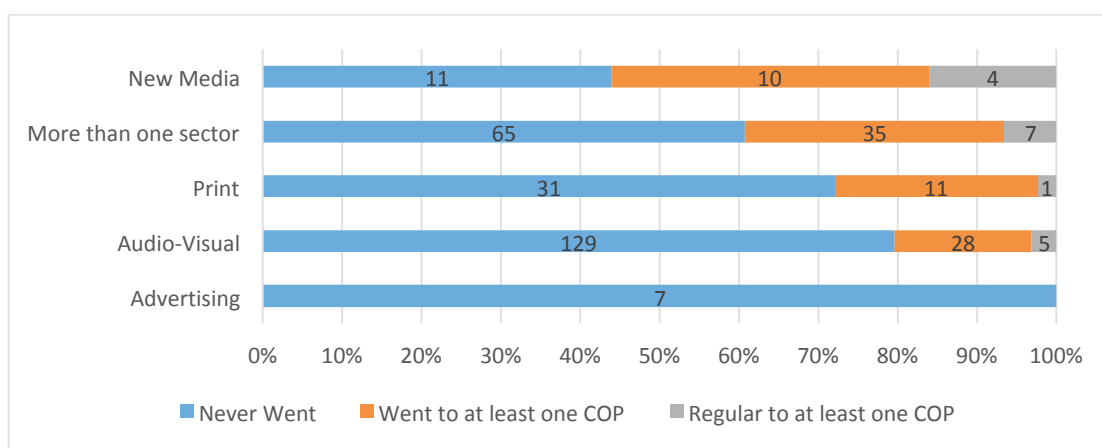


Figure 10 – CoP participation in relation to the media sector (n=344)

Media workers are involved in multiple sectors but they also carry out a wide range of tasks, both collectively and individually, and these should be taken into account in order to understand why CoPs are what they are and why media workers participate (or not) in them.

Our respondents were asked about what they do at work and had to select the main tasks in a list of items¹². Overall 64,73% of the survey respondents declare doing at least media content production while around 30% of them declare doing management (30,86%) and/or diffusion (27,84%) of media content. The other tasks that were listed in the questionnaire, going from administration to sales, are done by less than 20% of the respondents (with a marked decrease, see Wiard et al., 2018a).

If we now look at CoP participation in relation to the tasks carried out by the survey respondents, some interesting differences can be noticed. About one third of the respondents who produce content are CoP participants (31%, see Figure 11). Among the participants who produce content, one can see differences depending on the formats they produce at work: CoP events seem to attract proportionally more people who produce interactive multimedia (28/61) and images (graphic design with 21/48 and photography with 20/52) than people producing more traditional formats such as text (57/153), audio (25/71) and video (30/114). Regarding the genres of produced content, the respondents that produce informational ones participate proportionally more in CoP events than the respondents producing other genres, with 33,83% (56/160 of “news/current affairs” and 34/106 of “non-fiction/documentaries”) versus 23,53% (4/14 of “others”, 17/62 of “cultural”, 11/50 of “entertainment” and 8/44 of “promotional”). Out of 118 respondents declaring that they are members of the AJP (mostly journalists), 48 are CoP participants (43 of them at least in AJPro

¹² I.e.: production of media content, diffusion of media content, management of media content, sales of media content, sales (general), client relations, public relations, administration (HR, legal, finance, etc.), business management, research, technical development or maintenance, and other.

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events). Finally, the respondents who answered having two or more main tasks are more likely to participate in CoP events than those who selected only one main task (31,63% versus 24,69%).

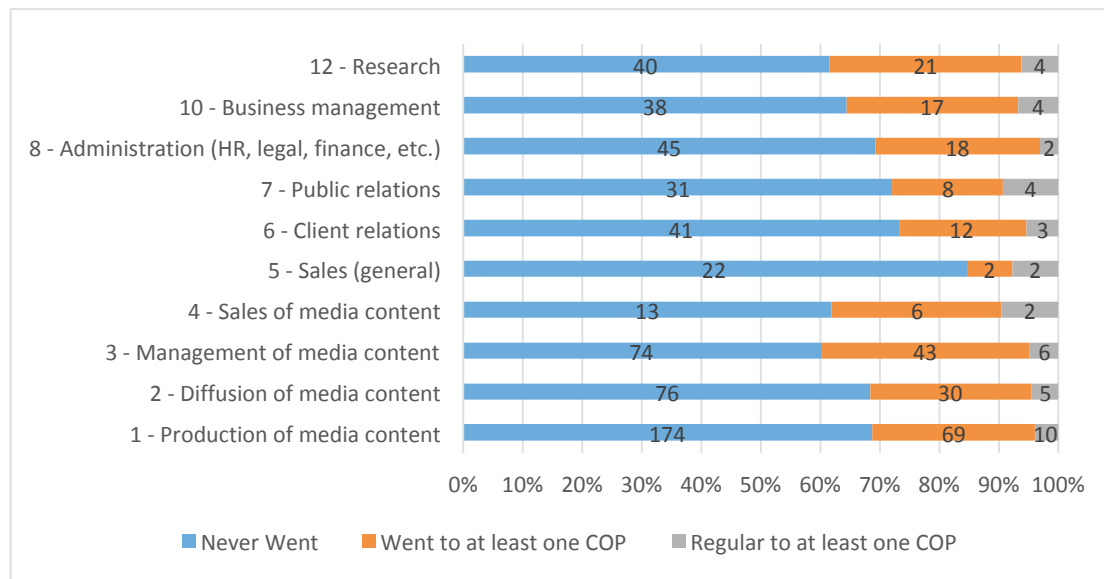


Figure 11 – CoP participation in relation to the respondents' main work tasks

Content production is the core activity of the media industry and as such is often seen by employers and workers as a priority (for example, I5 is observing that kind of priority at RTBF). This might be one reason why content production is relatively well covered by CoPs compared to other tasks. As we will see below, when asked in which, out of a list of topics, they participate in shared learning experiences in communities and social networks, most of our respondent refer to content production, while business/law, soft skills or marketing-related topics gain only little interest (see Figure 12, p.40). According to I3, these kinds of communities and social networks are bringing a lot to media content producers, whether it is for screenwriting or developing new editorial models.

On the other hand, the interviewees stressed that their day-to-day work often impedes them from participating in CoPs or similar initiatives. According to I4, daily news coverage is too demanding and does not give the possibility for journalists to take the necessary time to stay sharp in their job, working from early in the morning to late in the evening. Because of the limited time¹³ (and money) available, I4 is prioritising technological trainings over more content-oriented trainings, although these would be interesting as well. I5 would like to dedicate half a day per week to stay updated but there are no specific allocations in the planning, which is full of core activity tasks. According to him, the timings

¹³ The respondents who produce news/current affairs every day or almost every day are proportionally more inclined to work more than 42 hours per week than the other respondents (28,06% of them versus 19,75% of the other respondents).

weren't as tight when he was working in post-production, but now there is always a project going on as they develop everything. Consequently, they barely go to events because of the limited time available. He does keep updated outside of the office via the Internet while using public transports or at home. Similarly, as a radio host, I2 also says that he goes to events such as VRT Sandbox only for personal reasons, not for "structural" or "organisational" reasons. According to him, it is because of the day-to-day constraints of a radio show and also because of the small size of the team, which is a consequence of the changes in the media sector over the last few years and the little (if any) margin to experiment, to develop new visions, the priority being the day-to-day work. If there was more time, it could be possible to meet people and invest in that kind of events. He also thinks that the training offer has strongly diminished since the 90s.¹⁴

The informants highlight that the significance of the day-to-day tasks in their work life leaves little room for developing long-term plans. Our informants mention this in relation to newspapers (I4) and the radio (I2), but also in relation to software development, I5 emphasising the fact that his team, composed only of developers, does not have/take time to go to events and stay up-to-date. In their department, they do not have someone with the tasks of connecting with companies or developing projects. I5, with his more hybrid like profile (not a pure developer, making more analysis), is a bit of a free agent, which gives him the possibility to take time to connect, go to events and think about strategies. He adds that if one wants more collaboration, one has to accept that production work will be reduced and that more people from outside - such as students - will need to be integrated in the team and that it is highly unlikely to happen. I4 notices that not investing oneself enough in the core activity is poorly considered by colleagues and the hierarchy. There is always a sort of pressure for journalists to use the maximum of their time in the newsroom, for producing content.

In opposition to departments or media workers dedicated to the core activity, some media workers have a "higher level" job, relating to the business side of media work and implying a more long-term view. According to the survey, the respondents who declared as main tasks business management (n=59) seem to be proportionally more likely to participate in CoPs than those who did not select that task: 35,59% (including 6,78% of regulars) versus 27,16% (including 4,01% of regulars). I2 notices that there is a difference between the moment he was working on more strategic aspects and the moment he was working as a radio host: as a manager or a strategist, more time is allowed/taken to go to events and to keep updated with "visions", ways of working and ideas for policy development. Similarly, I3 emphasises the importance of having business

¹⁴ According to the survey, three quarters of the respondents prefer events to be scheduled during working hours while the remaining quarter prefer them to happen outside of them. In other words, it seems that most of the respondents consider that participating in events is fully part of their work and should consequently be made possible during the working schedule.

information (as well as technical updates) as a business owner. He states trying to dedicate about 10% of his working time to training. Both interviewees notice that in these positions, CoP events are relevant opportunities for networking and finding key contacts, among others to find funding.

Certain tasks seem to require direct solutions to very concrete needs. In that context CoPs can provide relevant support, offering opportunities for trial & error or sharing ideas and experiences. According to I3, it is likely to be the case for specific jobs such as game development. It is something that was already noticed in Deliverable 6.2 in relation to the Brotaru meetings, which allow direct feedbacks on projects that can be handled during the event (see Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, pp.26-27). However, I3 does not think that his web developer would need to meet and exchange with other web developers in events. According to him, more specialised trainings on the use of a programming language would be more helpful – but I5 has a different opinion: such a topic is not specific enough for fruitful CoP events. I5 notices that there are in fact not a lot of events dedicated to web development in Brussels. In the case of specific software like the one they were buying while he was working in postproduction, most of the time the seller would also organise dedicated trainings¹⁵, and therefore CoPs wouldn't have been relevant in that context.

Finally, it is worth noticing that the diversity of tasks carried out by media workers is not only noticeable on a global level but also individually. The survey results show that there is an average of 2,37 main tasks carried out per person¹⁶, with more than the half (56,38%) of the people who select at least one of the tasks listed who actually have selected two or more tasks (Wiard et al., 2018a). The individual diversity of tasks is also pointed out by our informants. For instance, I3 remarks that media workers have several simultaneous profiles because they cannot make a living as only journalists or VR producers, so they can be at the same time a cameraman and a VR producer or a scriptwriter and a copywriter, which leads to a lot of hybrid profiles. According to him, this kind of hybridity is also due to the fact that the media industry is evolving quickly and continuously: people can switch from "traditional" audio-visual production to IT-oriented sectors (games, VR), or from journalism to a more business-oriented job (like he did). Nevertheless, he also nuances by saying that some people in

¹⁵ It only rarely happens now that he is in software development because their needs require external experts.

¹⁶ The size of the company might influence the division of tasks, with bigger companies having specialised departments for certain tasks, such as the "high level" ones, while smaller companies needing more hybrid media workers. When we compare the number of tasks done by the respondents who work in companies that have less than 50 employees with the number of tasks done by the respondents in larger companies, we can see that, in the small ones, 41,82% of the respondents select only one or two tasks (with 58,18% who selected more than two tasks), while companies of more than 50 employees have 72,56% of respondents choosing only one or two tasks (27,44% more than two).

institutions like RTBF or screen.brussels have a rather monolithic profile. I2 also notices that the media industry is evolving quickly with new technologies and that it is hard to anticipate the next business models that will work according to new audience practices. The individual diversity of tasks could be a factor encouraging one's participation in a diversity of CoPs, even (or especially) those that are related to more peripheral tasks.

4.1.4. Work status, type of contract, year of career start and average income

It seems that CoP participation does not differ among media workers in terms of work status: for both employees and freelancers, about 24% are attendees and 5% are regulars. A similar trend can be found among business owners (25% and 4%), although the numbers are smaller. Thus overall it doesn't seem that CoP participation is related to one's work status. It should be noted, though, that for journalists who do daily news coverage the work status can impact their ability to participate in CoPs. As pointed out in Deliverable 6.2 (Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, p.32), those working as freelancers or "false self-employed" can face difficulties in finding a fitting moment for participating in CoPs. In this respect our survey data shows that the respondents who work every day on news and who are employees (n=97) are more likely to work in a "traditional" 38-42 hours schedule (68,04% of them, with around one fifth working more and one tenth working less) while those who are freelancers (n=40) seem to have more variable average paid hours, with only 17,5% of them in the "38-42" hours schedule, 35% of them working less hours and 47,5% working 43 hours or more (35% of the daily news freelancers even working 48 hours a week or more). Thus having variable and extensive schedules can impede participating in CoPs, as is also suggested by I4: according to him, the offer of skills development opportunities for journalists does exist and responds to the needs, the problem is rather the lack of time, the lack of money and the bad working conditions that are hardly compatible with CoP participation.

Regarding the types of contract, there seems to be a small difference between the respondents who have short-term contracts and those who have long-term contracts: 73,33% of temporary contract holders have never been to a CoP event versus 68,67% of the permanent contract holders (2,67% of regulars versus 9,64%). This result suggests that a more precarious status can influence one's participation in CoPs.

Respondents who started their career after the year 2000 are a little more likely to participate in CoP events than the other respondents (32,19% of them versus 25,96% for those who started their career in 2000 or before). One hypothesis could be that CoP events is something that emerged and developed quite recently

in the media industry, but we lack a more historical perspective to make a strong claim about this.

If we compare people who declare having an average income of maximum 2000€ with those who declare earning more, there is a small gap with the first ones being a bit more likely to participate (30,46% versus 27,43%). Out of the 13 respondents who declare earning 0 to 500€, 8 participated in a CoP.

4.2. What are the domains of shared learning experiences in communities and social networks?

Wenger emphasised the importance of having a shared domain of interest to develop a CoP, as well as shared competences and a certain level of expertise that distinguish the CoP from other people (Wenger, 2006). As pointed out in Deliverable 6.2 (Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017), the domains of interest in the media industry can be very diverse, corresponding sometimes to a (sub-)sector (e.g. virtual reality with BE.VR) or to a job (e.g. TV producers with Plan TV, journalists with AJPro), but a domain can also be transversal, cutting across professions or domains (e.g. transmedia storytelling). Even in the CoPs that have a specific target, there are actually a large variety of worker profiles involved, which sometimes change over time, sometimes not, depending, among others, on the objectives of the CoP (attracting new audience for example) or its degree of specialisation.

In the present study, we were interested in the domains or “topics” in which media workers participate through shared learning experiences in communities and social networks. We were also interested in the relation between these topics and the sectors in which media workers are active: do the topics correspond to the sectors or do media workers get outside of the perimeter of their main sector through their participation in communities and social networks?

When asked about the topics in which they participate through communities and social networks (the respondents had to choose in a list of topics), they most often check the broadest categories, i.e. “media in general” (73,84%) – although only 6% of the respondents declare working in the media sector in general – and “audio-visual in general” (57,49%) – which indeed corresponds to the biggest media sector (42% of the media workers according to the MCB census, 56% of the survey respondents¹⁷) (see Figure 12). The audio-visual sector is also represented in two often-selected topics: “TV/movies” (52,59%) and “audio-visual production” (51,5%).

¹⁷ For more details about the MCB census, see Deliverable 4.2a (Wiard & Domingo, 2017). A detailed overview of our survey sample can be found in Deliverable 4.3 (Wiard et al., 2018a).

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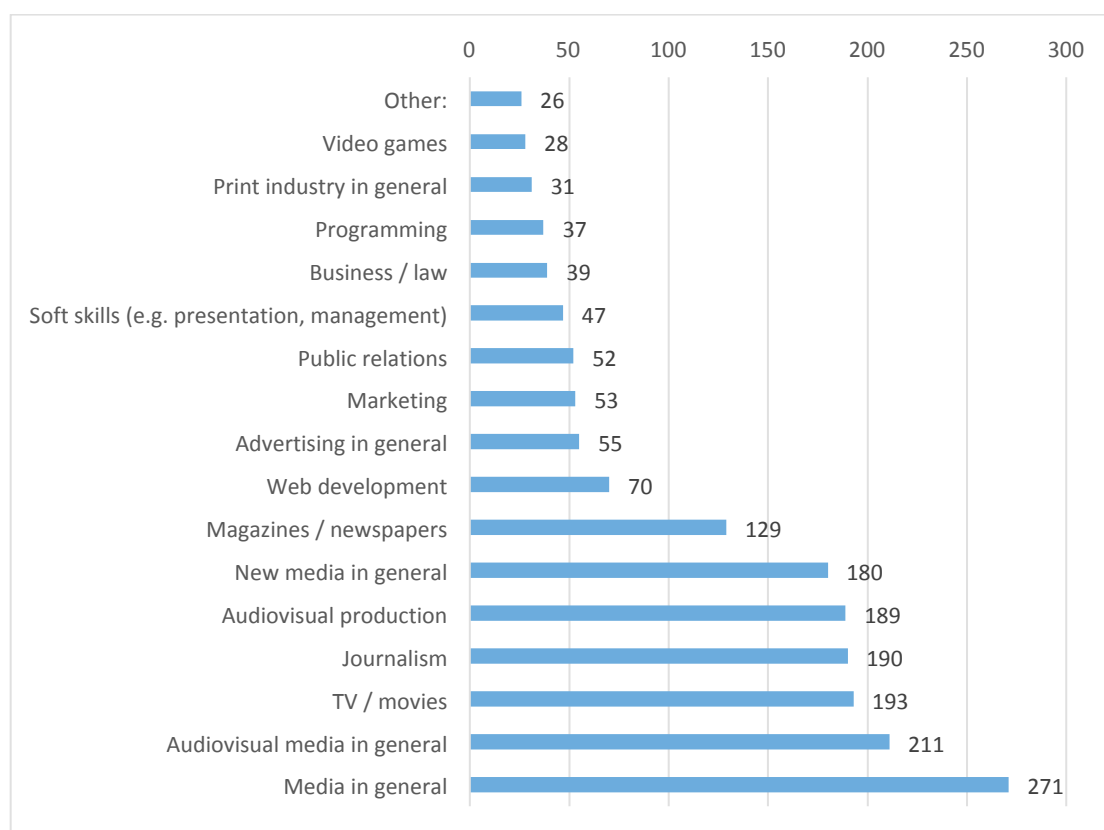


Figure 12 - Topics of shared learning experiences in communities and social networks (n=367)

Smaller sectors such as advertising are less represented in the topics of communities and social networks ("advertising in general", "marketing" and "public relations" count for about 14-15% each, while the sector counts for 21% of Brussels media workers according to the MCB census and 9% of our sample). This is also the case for more niche sectors such as video games (7,63% of respondents who selected topics picked "video games"). Let us notice that "print industry in general" is a topic that only interests 8,45% of the respondents, while 35,15% of them are interested in magazines/newspapers (the print sector counting for 20% of media workers in both the MCB census and our sample). The topic "new media in general" receives much attention (49,05%) while the sector represents only about 20% of Brussels' media workers according to the MCB census as well as in our sample. Those who check the category "other" express a wide range of topics with only a few occurrences, whether in technical fields (IT, sound recording) or not (politics, art, news, feminism, etc.), some of which being not directly related to media.

What is the relation between the media workers' sector and the topics covered by the communities and social networks in which they share their practices and experiences? Our data shows (see Table 4) that two thirds of the new media respondents, half of audio-visual respondents, one third of advertising respondents and only a bit more than one tenth of print respondents are

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interested in their own sector (48,72% of the print respondents are interested in magazines and newspapers, though). If we look at the workers in the audio-visual sector, who form a highly homogenous group¹⁸, they are mainly interested in topics related to their sector such as "audio-visual in general" (52,16%), "audio-visual production" (47,22%) and "TV/movies" (46,30%).

Topics	PRINT sector	AUDIO-VISUAL sector	NEW MEDIA sector	ADVERTISING sector
Media in general	79 (67,52%)	169 (52,16%)	73 (64,04%)	24 (46,15%)
Journalism	80 (68,38%)	100 (30,86%)	54 (47,37%)	10 (19,23%)
Magazines / newspapers	57 (48,72%)	61 (18,83%)	33 (28,95%)	9 (17,31%)
Print industry in general	14 (11,97%)	13 (4,01%)	11 (9,65%)	3 (5,77%)
Web development	20 (17,09%)	33 (10,19%)	36 (31,58%)	8 (15,38%)
Video games	7 (5,98%)	12 (3,70%)	14 (12,28%)	2 (3,85%)
New media in general	44 (37,61%)	102 (31,48%)	71 (62,28%)	19 (36,54%)
Audiovisual production	25 (21,37%)	153 (47,22%)	44 (38,60%)	17 (32,69%)
TV / movies	29 (24,79%)	150 (46,30%)	44 (38,60%)	17 (32,69%)
Audiovisual media in general	34 (29,06%)	169 (52,16%)	54 (47,37%)	17 (32,69%)
Marketing	9 (7,69%)	24 (7,41%)	20 (17,54%)	7 (13,46%)
Public relations	14 (11,97%)	26 (8,02%)	19 (16,67%)	8 (15,38%)
Advertising in general	8 (6,84%)	27 (8,33%)	28 (24,56%)	17 (32,69%)
Programming	3 (2,56%)	21 (6,48%)	17 (14,91%)	3 (5,77%)
Soft skills	5 (4,27%)	26 (8,02%)	18 (15,79%)	5 (9,62%)
Business / law	11 (9,40%)	27 (8,33%)	11 (9,65%)	3 (5,77%)
Other:	6 (5,13%)	15 (4,63%)	6 (5,26%)	2 (3,85%)

Table 4 - Topics of shared learning experiences in communities and social networks in relation to the media sector (% of sector members)

Although the respondents participate in topics that correspond to their sector, it should be noted that they are also likely to be interested in other sectors, which might be a logical consequence of media convergence and increasing interconnections in the media industry. Our data suggests that in every sector there is a wide interest for media in general and for audio-visual topics more specifically. This last observation could be interpreted as a consequence of the

¹⁸ 70,68% of the respondents who work in the audio-visual sector do not select other sectors.

pre-eminence of the audio-visual sector in Brussels' media industry. This is reflected in our sample, which has a big part of respondents working for the different sectors who also work for the audio-visual sector¹⁹: it is a bit of a chicken-and-egg situation. New media is also a domain that interests many media workers across sectors. This is a common subject of discussion among our interviewees: every "traditional" sector or job has to acquire some new media related knowledge, whether it is social media, interactivity, production of visual content for radio hosts - while the core activity of radio did not change over years²⁰ (I2) - or audio-visual production for print journalists publishing on the Web (I4). As explained by I2, journalists are expected to be "multiplatform" or at least to be able to work for two types of media. We have seen above that there are not many people in our sample who work in only one sector, with the exception of the audio-visual sector. When we analyse the sectors in which those who do everyday news or current affairs work (n=126), 38,10% of them work for more than one sector²¹, which makes it the biggest group of that category, respondents making everyday news in audio-visual only counting only for 32,54% of our sample.

Respondents who work in the advertising sector seem equally interested in the advertising-related topics and the audio-visual, new media and "media in general" topics, which seems logical since they are strongly connected to the other sectors for their advertising activities (only 19,23% of the respondents who work in advertising declare working for that sector only). Outside the print sector, the other sectors seem relatively poorly interested in topics related to the print industry, with the exception of the new media respondents who are a bit more interested in magazines and newspapers (28,95%). Print seems also strongly connected to journalism, with 68,38% of the respondents of that sector being interested in this topic. Yet journalism does not seem to interest only journalists. About only one third of the respondents who declare participating in "journalism"

¹⁹ 57,69% of advertising respondents, 50% of new media respondents, and 29,06% of print respondents. Only 18,56% of the respondents work only for one sector which is not audio-visual (Wiard et al., 2018a).

²⁰ According to I2, the context has changed in some respects, but regarding content production, it did not. Nevertheless, apart from the core aspects of radio show, there is an increasing focus on visual content and interactivity in the radio sector. Interactivity becomes part of the everyday routine, which was not the case before. Technology helps them develop interactivity (something that they were already trying to do before) and pushes them to provide more visual content.

²¹ Versus 28,22% of the other survey respondents. There are three main combinations that appear in those who selected multiple sectors: new media & print (9,52% of the respondents who do news everyday), Audio-visual & print (7,94%) and audio-visual & new media (7,14%).

(51,77%) also declare being a journalist²² when asked about their job title (36,84%). Journalism as a topic also interests media workers who wrote “editor in chief” or “reporter” as job titles (small group) as well as workers who mentioned a job title that has nothing to do with being a journalist, e.g. producer, director, student, etc. (larger group).

Another result of the survey is that new media and advertising workers are paying more interest than the workers of the other sectors in topics dealing with other media. I3 stresses the necessity in these two sectors to stay constantly up-to-date. For advertising, it may be logical due to the fact that they are inherently connected to the other media. The fact that new media workers pay attention to a broader diversity media might be the consequence of no real possibilities for them to have a solid career only within that sector. I3 underlines the fact that new media content production is not a well-structured sector although it works with its own logic that cannot be compared to other media processes. He thinks that a structuration of the sector is necessary to allow more professionalization in the future²³. Similarly, I1 emphasises the importance of feeding a structuration process that would strengthen the media industry in general. In its current situation the media industry is too heavily dependent on subsidies, and because the competition for national subsidies is a focal point, the media industry does not really aim to reach out outside of the Belgian market. A better structure would allow expansion beyond the national market and facilitate “coopetition” instead of straight competition. I3 also points out the limitations due to the small size of the market and the necessity to gain international recognition. According to I1, it is the role of a structure such as screen.brussels to strengthen the sector for everyone in the chain, and CoPs can be one way to achieve this (see below the sub-section about the benefits of CoPs).

The audio-visual sector, which is the largest sector in Brussels²⁴ and a driver for the whole ecosystem according to I1, is more homogenous and self-centred. At the same time, as highlighted above, audio-visual topics attract a lot of media workers from other sectors. I1 is also underlining the difficulties due to the fact that some big audio-visual players produce mostly internally, avoiding sub-contracting and therefore limiting the development of the whole chain of production²⁵. According to I2, there is also a growing importance for these big

²² This category only includes the people who wrote (at least) “journaliste” or “journalist” in their job title.

²³ Let us notice that our survey data does not show evidence of more short-term contracts or more freelancers among new media workers compared to other sectors.

²⁴ 828,14 million EUR out of 1.699,57 million EUR total net added value produced in Brussels media sector and 10.174 media workers out of 27.500 media workers in Brussels, including employees and independents (see Komorowski, 2017, p.50).

²⁵ The Brussels media sector is characterised by a small amount of big companies (only 17 enterprises create around 50% of total net added value of the industry)

groups to develop their media as a brand. You do not only do radio but also social networks, video, events, etc.; it's not just about "broadcaster to listeners", but also (and increasingly) about serving a community through different means. This new positioning blurs the lines between the different media or sectors and even opens up new approaches to media (e.g. media as brands), which also contributes to (re)defining the topics and contours of CoPs.

The degree of specialisation seems to be a critical issue for CoPs. On one hand, people have to find a common ground in order to share and develop new practices. The more a CoP is specialised (e.g. AJPro and Brotaru for the more specialised), the less distant the participants are from the core profile (see Deliverable 6.2). On the other hand, when a CoP gets too specialised, it becomes difficult to gather enough people willing or being able to meet and learn together. It is something that is acknowledged by one of our informants in Deliverable 6.2 about the "data-crypto parties" that face difficulties to reach out to new people outside of the core group (Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, p.35), something that is also noticed by I4. There is ultimately a self-selection in CoPs based on expertise or passion for a topic (Wenger, 2002). I5 illustrates the difference in terms of expertise needed with the example of software development: the kind of software that they create is more down to earth than, and not as ambitious as, the ones presented in VRT Sandbox's Media Road for instance²⁶, which has more ambitious projects "such as replacing journalists with robots". The same goes for smaller players who – because of their limited resources – are not specialised enough for certain kinds of collaborations.

A final observation about CoP topics is that not all topics need to be directly related to media in order to be relevant for media workers. Among the "other" topics that the respondents could mention in the questionnaire, one can see that the topics and events were really diverse and that some of them are not directly related to media at all but could indeed be interesting for media workers. For instance, I3 highlights more "high level" trainings about "how to have money from sponsors/philanthropists", which, according to him, is also necessary for producing audio-visual or more broadly media content. As another example, VRT Sandbox, while focused on "media technology", also attracts people that are not

as well as a large amount of smaller companies or one-man operations (Komorowski, 2017, p.40).

²⁶ "Coordinated by the European Broadcasting Union, the MediaRoad project aims to support the transformation of the European media sector by building an ecosystem for innovation involving diverse media associations, public service media organisations, commercial radios and broadcasters, media workers' organisations; academic research institutes and innovation centres, independent producers and SMEs" (see <http://www.mediaroad.eu/mr-about>, retrieved 31 May 2018).

directly working in the media industry but share a common interest in technology (see Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017).

4.3. What are the media companies' approaches toward CoPs?

As part of this study we were interested in the media companies' approaches toward workers' participation in CoPs – as literature shows that the policies of organisations in this regard are critical in terms of fostering or impeding the creation of, and participation in CoPs (Wenger, 2006). This question was addressed in the survey as well as in the interviews. When asked about the approach of their employer or company toward shared learning activities in communities or social networks, about one third of the respondents (n=107) state that their employer is interested and wants them to share what they have learned with co-workers and supervisors²⁷ and a bit less than one quarter (n=76) consider that their employer or company does not care (see Figure 13).

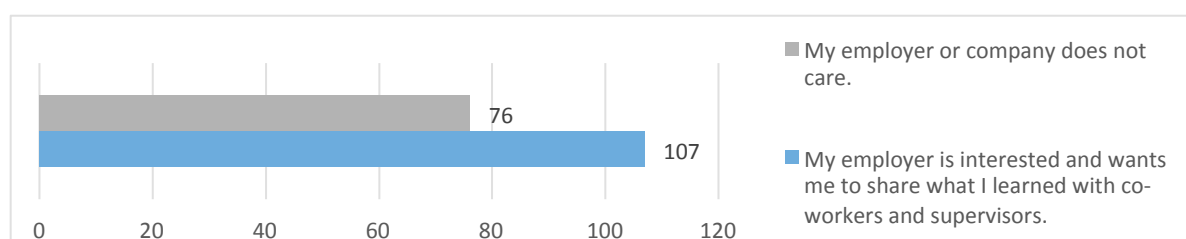


Figure 13 – Employers' approach toward the communities or social networks respondents share their experiences in (n=345)

Moreover, 84,08% of the respondents declare that their company or their job allows them to go sometimes (39,64%), often (25,23%) or always (19,22%) to communities and social networks. The attendance counts as working hours for one quarter of the respondents (87), it is required but not compensated for a bit less than one quarter (76), and for a few respondents the attendance gets compensated in non-monetary ways (25) or counts as paid overtime (9) (see Figure 14). For 76,72% of the respondents who participate in communities and social networks, it is sometimes (57,61%), often (14,03%) or always (5,07%) easy to find the time to attend events when they want to (n=335).

²⁷ 30,94% of the respondents working in public companies versus 26,29% of those working in private companies.

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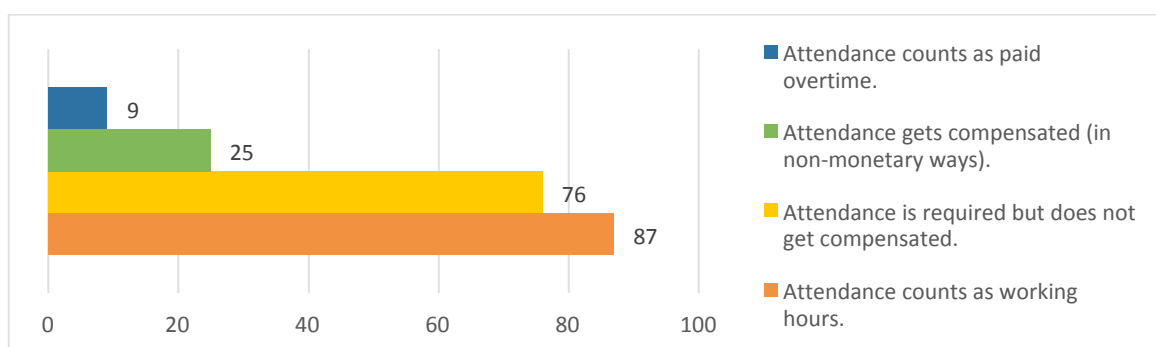


Figure 14 - Compensation for attendance in the communities or social networks respondents share their experiences in (n=345)

Overall the survey data suggests that the media companies' attitude toward shared learning experiences in communities and social networks is ambivalent: on one hand, only one third of the respondents say that their employer wants them to share what they have learned with co-workers, which suggests that there is no marked interest in CoPs from employers, but on the other hand a large majority of respondents declare that their company or their job allows them to go to such events, which suggests that media workers do not face major limitations from their company's policy.

This last observation is nuanced by the interviews, though. Indeed, the informants point out several limitations from their organisation, which are said to not understand the needs of media workers and/or to not consider on-going learning as an added value. I4 highlights that he had to pay most of his trainings that were not directly in line with the company's vision (internal trainings were oriented towards management and digital related skills). For example, says I4, if certain employers do not understand the point with data journalism, therefore they will not decide to invest in it. Journalists who decide to train in data journalism would therefore be left to themselves and would have to invest personal time (and money) in it while the job is already intensive work. Yet I4 acknowledges the significance of on-going learning: it improves work practices and encourages people to question themselves about their ways of working in the newsroom. The problem is that, even if they train outside of their working hours, they can still be restrained by their hierarchy when they want to use what they have learnt: according to I4, there is a short-sighted view due to difficult economic times, which leaves little space for developing one's skills and practices. The priority is to deliver a newspaper every day, which is already quite difficult with a limited set of resources.

Similarly, I5 finds it difficult to find relevant internal trainings since most of the ones proposed are not linked to technical skills and are more focused on content creation²⁸. He only had one 5-day training in the last 5 years. Every year himself

²⁸ For example: how to use a camera/iPhone to shoot a video or how to create web content.

and his colleagues make a list of the trainings they would need but they rarely get it although there is a budget for trainings. He also points out the difficulties to convince the hierarchy to adopt a more open attitude towards external players, kind of similar to VRT Sandbox that he sees as an example to follow. This points to the fact that the organisations' approaches toward on-going learning are related to the broader economic (and competitive) context, which makes collaboration with competitors a bit of a problem. For instance, even though he was a freelancer, I4 was not allowed to sell papers to the direct competitors – which he did and caused the end of his collaboration with his main employer. Also I5 thinks that it is difficult to exchange with private competitors when you work for a public company, not only because of the competing aspect, but also because there might be some issues in sharing public goods with private companies.

Another insight from the survey is that shared learning experiences in communities and social networks might be more valued in public companies or institutions than in private companies. Indeed, 18,29% of the respondents working in private companies respond that their employer or their company does not care about their participation in communities and social networks while only 13,67% of those working for a public company choose that statement. This difference is also visible in terms of workers' participation in CoP events. There is indeed a small difference between employees working for a private company and those working for a public institution/company – no matter their size –, with the first category counting 73,81% of respondents who never attended a CoP event, versus 68,18% for the second category. Furthermore, public institution/company employees have more regulars than private companies, with respectively 8,18% and 2,38% of the respondents trying not to miss one or more CoP events. Similarly, in opposition to private companies, public institutions or companies seem more likely to let their employees participate in communities and social networks ("My company or job allows me to go"), with only 12,50% of the respondents choosing "never" (versus 18,35%) while 22,92% choose "always" (versus 13,76%) and 34,38% "often" (versus 28,44%).

4.4. What are the benefits of CoPs for media workers, companies and sectors?

In his seminal work on CoPs, Wenger (2002) identified several benefits of CoPs along several dimensions: for the members and for the organisations, both in the short and long terms. For the members, being in a community can, in the short term, help them face challenges, allow them to access expertise, increase their confidence, make them have fun with colleagues and provide meaningfulness to their work. In the long term, CoPs support their personal development, increase their reputation, feed their professional identity, expand their network and

increase their marketability. For the organisation, the benefits of CoPs include, on the short term, problem solving, time saving, knowledge sharing, synergies across units and resources reusing. On the long term, CoPs help organisations to increase their strategic and innovation capabilities, to keep abreast of new developments, and to keep and attract talents (see Plazy & Patriarche, 2015, p.17).

In the present research we were interested in the benefits that media workers, media organisations and media sectors can get from CoPs. With Wenger's work in mind, this issue has been addressed in both the survey and the interviews with media workers, in addition to the insights gained from the interviews with CoP founders and/or organisers (see Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017). While the interviews with media workers were intended to uncover the different kinds of benefits gained from CoPs, the survey had a more quantitative angle, as the respondents were asked how often they did experience different statements related to the performance of the communities or social networks they shared their experiences in. As part of the analysis this question has been cross-analysed with the data on CoP events attendance, which allowed us to compare the performance of communities and social networks depending on whether the respondents participated in CoP events or never went to such events. We will first present the results concerning media workers, and then we will proceed with the results for media companies and media sectors.

4.4.1. Benefits for media workers

CoP events allow media workers to **solve problem** and have **access to a certain expertise**. There is indeed a very concrete aspect in the needs that are experienced by media workers. Media workers who are facing direct problems that might be solved by trial and error could benefit from direct feedbacks within CoPs. I3 explains that the need to learn concrete practices in a sector where the environment is evolving constantly (e.g. the use of social networks) was one of the reasons why he went to events such as those organised by CoPs. I4 also points out the importance of getting responses to practical aspects as a must. According to the CoP organisers interviewed in Deliverable 6.2, most CoPs that target a specific job (AJPro, Brotaru, VRT Sandbox, Plan TV) seem to have participants who find the help they need and the expertise they seek (Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, p.59). In the survey, the respondents were asked whether they can find help or expertise in the communities and social networks they share experiences in. Most of them respond that it was the case sometimes (53,29%), often (26,95%) or always (3,89%), with only 15,87% who never experienced that statement. When we compare the responses depending on the respondent's participation in CoPs, we see a clear difference between the non-

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participants, the attendees and the regulars²⁹, with the benefit of finding help or expertise being more frequent among those who go to CoPs (see Figure 15). This suggests that media workers who seek help or expertise might find those by attending (regularly) CoP events.

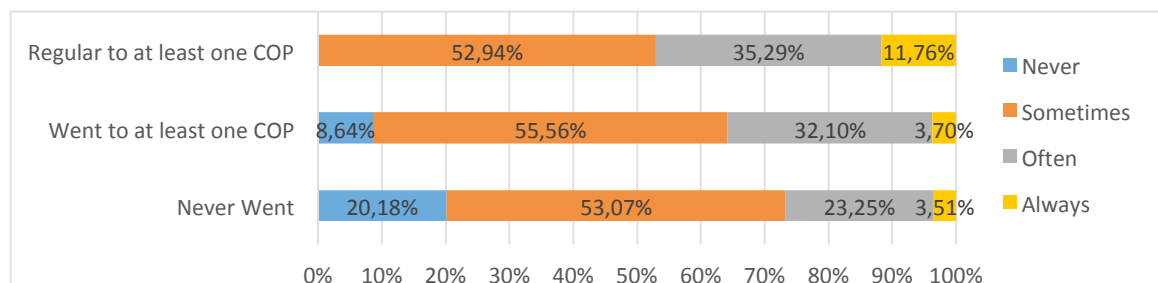


Figure 15 - "I find help or expertise" in the communities or social networks, in relation to the participation in CoP events (n=326)

CoPs are places for finding information but also for **sharing resources and practices and addressing problems that one can encounter**. This is something that is pointed out by most of the survey respondents: they feel that in "the communities or social networks your share your experiences in" they can indeed share experiences sometimes (47,15%), often (30,93%) or always (5,41%). Only 16,52% of the respondents never experience that statement. The same observation as above can be done: the more people are participating in CoPs, the more they feel that they can share their experiences among communities and social networks (see Figure 16). The fact that many respondents declare sharing their experience although only a small number use social media actively in order to initiate topics (see Figure 6, page 26) might suggest that CoPs actually make a difference here compared to online communities and social networks. In other words, it seems that the "live" and "copresent" aspects of CoP events are supportive of a more active and open way of sharing resources and experiences.

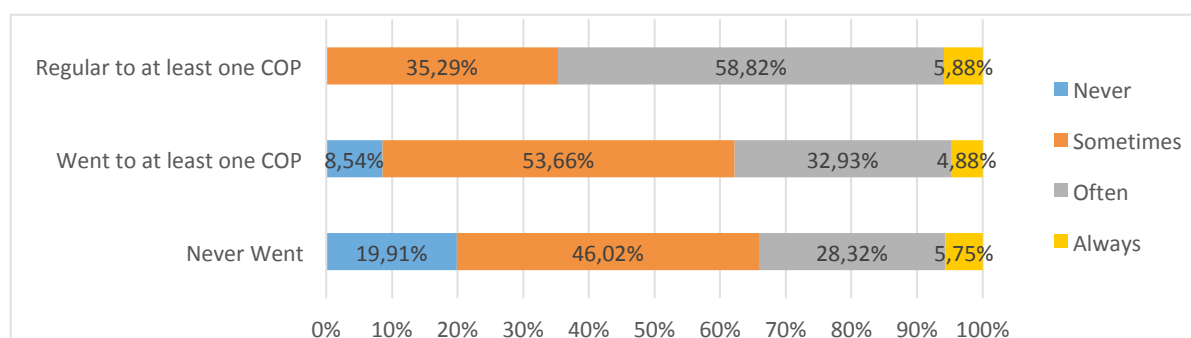


Figure 16 - "I can share my experience" in the communities or social networks, in relation to the participation in CoP events (n=325)

²⁹ It should be noted, though, that the numbers for regulars in the next six graphs are rather low (n=17).

As pointed out by Wenger, CoPs support **self-appreciation** and **self-development**. Thanks to CoPs, people have fun with colleagues and get the feeling of achieving meaningful work. This is reflected in the survey: a large part of the respondents who had shared learning experiences in communities and social networks enjoyed their time. Moreover, it seems again that this feeling is related to one's degree of participation in CoP events: the respondents who participate in the CoP events that are listed in the questionnaire are more likely than the others to enjoy their time in communities and social networks (see Figure 17).

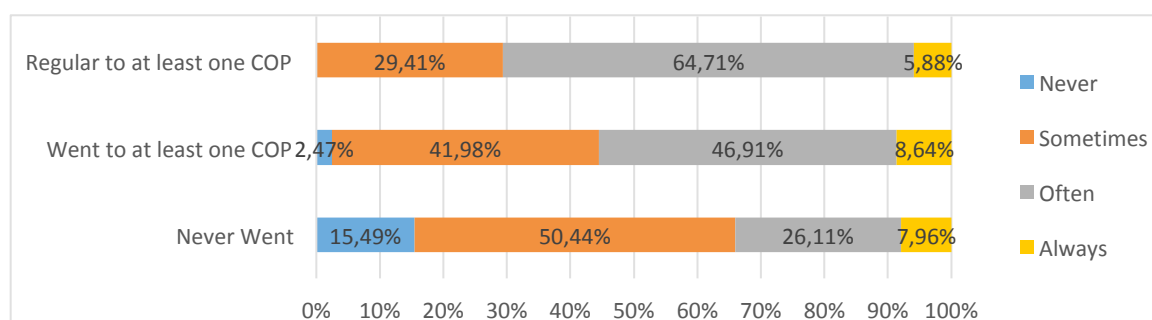


Figure 17 - "I enjoy my time" in the communities or social networks, in relation to the participation in CoP events (n=324)

CoPs are important places for storing and creating **knowledge** as well as for media workers to **keep abreast** of new developments. They allow a quick spread of information in a more horizontal direction (see Plazy & Patriarche, 2015, pp.12; 15-16). CoPs "can preserve histories of learning as living practices, not just books and databases" (Wenger 1998, p.251), more like natural knowledge processes (Wright, 2005). I3 points out the necessity to stay up-to-date as a critical issue, which might be hard to deal with because "it goes in all directions". He sees CoPs as helpful means to keep more easily updated, whether it is for technical or business-oriented information. This benefit of CoPs was already highlighted in Deliverable 6.2: organisers of events such as Café Numérique, Plan TV, VRT Sandbox, Brotaru or AJPro also believe that CoPs help participants (and themselves) to stay up-to-date in their field (Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, p.59).

At the same time, joining CoPs allows people to get news ideas and being inspired, leading to possible **innovations** and new **strategies**. When asked if they get new ideas and get inspired thanks to their shared learning experiences in communities and social networks, the survey respondents who went to CoP events (and the regular participants even more) are more likely than the other respondents to respond positively (see Figure 18)³⁰. Innovation and creativity (in

³⁰ At the same time, we have seen above that the respondents who went to CoPs are more likely to disagree with the statement that they can use innovative methods and ideas for their company and themselves, in comparison with those who never attended (see Figure 8, p.30). But this is not necessarily in

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respect to both technologies and business models) become increasingly crucial for media companies as well as media workers. I2 points out that, even for more “traditional” media such as radio, they still need to follow the changes but also – and more importantly – to be in the forefront of innovation, which can be for instance developing interactivity with media users. I5 feels that “as long as they are staying in the department, they don’t feel late about technology”, but as soon as they encounter the “outside world”, they get a sense of their backlog, “even in the ways of thinking technology and the ways of working”. Being impermeable to external inputs might lead to a slower pace regarding technological development. I3 sees events such as those that exist in CoPs to be a good source that brings added value in terms of innovation.

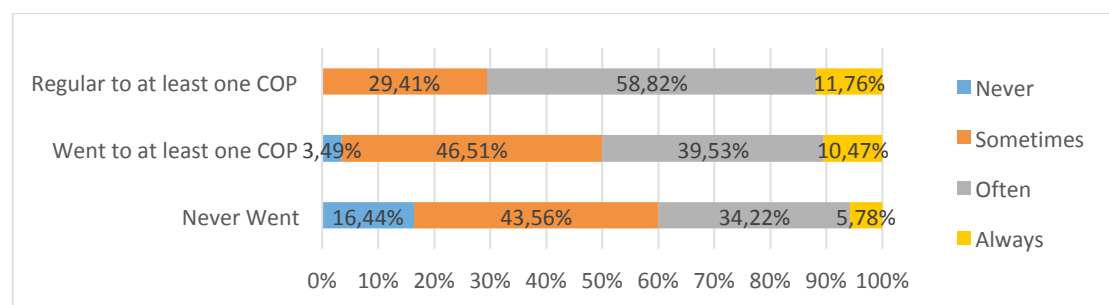


Figure 18 - "I get new ideas and inspired" in the communities or social networks, in relation to the participation in CoP events (n=328)

Besides, CoPs provide media workers with opportunities for expanding their **networks** and developing their **marketability** as well as finding synergies and developing **collaborations**. They offer great value thanks to the diversity of the participants’ profiles, backgrounds and jobs, opening up to different networks and potential collaborations (see Plazy & Patriarche, 2015, p.9). This indeed appears in the survey results: the respondents who went to the CoPs that were listed in the questionnaire (especially the regulars) are more likely than the other respondents to go to communities and social networks in order to network (see Figure 19). I3 sometimes goes to events because he needs to reach someone in particular. He also points out that it is easier to meet and exchange with people when both have a common concern. It is harder to connect with people at networking-only events. According to some of the CoP organisers interviewed in Deliverable 6.2, those events bring especially efficient networking (BE.VR, transforma bxl, Plan TV, Brotaru, AJPro, Creative Circles) and the organisers can benefit from greater recognition and legitimacy (Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, p.59). Some organisers also noticed that the events could lead to collaborations between participants (transforma bxl, Plan TV, BE.VR, see Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, p.23, p.25 and p.32). I3 also points out that events

contradiction with what precedes, as the respondents who go to CoPs might also be the ones who are aware of their weaknesses and therefore under-estimate their capacity to use innovative methods and ideas for their company and for themselves.

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such as Café Numérique could help from time to time to develop collaborations. Those events can be, for example, a good opportunity to find people who might fund projects linked to content production. IS also notices that some connections are made during events, which might lead to further collaboration, although there is often no follow-up because of lack of time.

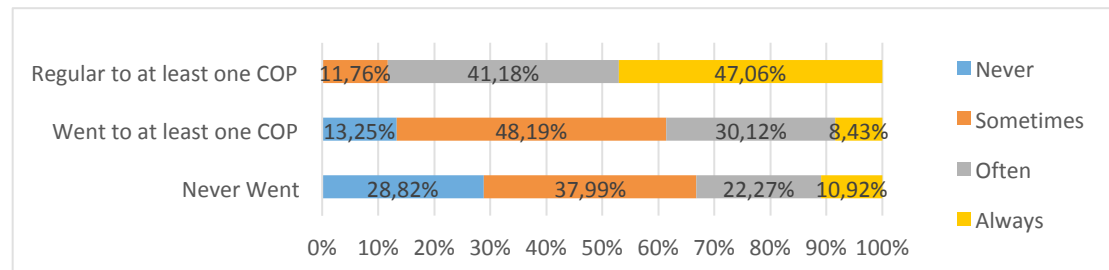


Figure 19 - "I go to network" in the communities or social networks, in relation to the participation in CoP events (n=329)

4.4.2. Benefits for media companies and media sectors

Overall, the survey results indicate that CoPs do offer a range of benefits to media workers as individuals. As highlighted by Wenger (2002), CoPs can also provide benefits to organisations. Because of space limitation, it was not possible to address this issue extensively in the survey, but it was included as one statement in the question about how often the respondents experience different situations in communities and social networks. Thus when asked if either the respondents' job or company benefits from their shared learning experiences in communities and social networks, once again those who went to the CoPs events that were listed in the questionnaire respond more positively to that statement than the respondents who never attended CoP events (see Figure 20). In Deliverable 6.2, we also noticed that according to our informant VRT benefits directly from VRT Sandbox, whether in terms of innovation, accessing new technology at low cost, being ahead of competitors or increasing its visibility (Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, p.59).

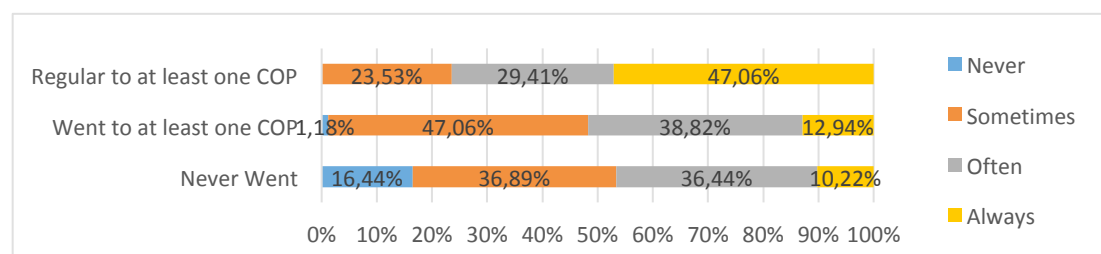


Figure 20 - "My company or my job benefits from" the communities or social networks, in relation to the participation in CoP events (n=327)

At the sector's level, we have seen in Deliverable 6.2 that certain CoP leaders were noticing manifest improvements of their sector thanks to CoPs, especially a

better organisation (BE.VR, Brotaru, Plan TV) or an increased quality (AJPro) (Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, p.43). The improvement of the media sector is also noticed by the media workers who were interviewed for the purpose of this report. According to I3, CoPs energises the sector, foster progresses. If everyone is meeting with each other, the whole sector benefits from it. He sees the structuring of the sector as a necessity, taking as examples webseries, webdocs and transmedia documentaries that have their own logic (budgets, etc.) and could benefit from shared learning initiatives and a better organisation of the field – although he also stresses the competitive dimension, which refrains from sharing information and experiences (cf. also Derinöz, Plazy & Patriarche, 2017, p.17).

Another insight of this study is that respondents from more “traditional” sectors (audio-visual and print) seem less likely to go to CoPs than the respondents working in the new media sector. This can actually lead to different interpretations. It might be that CoPs are better suited for fast-changing sectors like “new media” rather than for “traditional” sectors. Or it might be that new media CoPs are not known enough among the “traditional” sectors, although these are changing as well and might benefit from new media CoPs. Yet another interpretation would stress the lack of CoPs for “traditional media”, as if these didn’t have specific needs that also need to be addressed.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The aim of the study presented in this deliverable was to gain knowledge on the characteristics of CoPs in the media industry of the Brussels-Capital Region, using data from an online survey and semi-structured interviews, and integrating insights from our previous deliverables as well as from the scientific literature. We intended to shed light on the variety of needs of Brussels' media workers as well as on the strategies they (might) use to stay relevant in their job. Amongst those strategies, we focused on CoPs and more broadly shared learning experiences in communities and social networks, and on the benefits for media workers that are brought about by CoPs. In this concluding section, we will briefly sum up some key results and suggest a series of related recommendations in order to strengthen CoPs and thereby the media industry in Brussels, especially mediapark.brussels as a major policy development in the Region.

The massive changes in the media industry lead to more individualised media workers (Deuze, 2016), who are increasingly less attached to only one company and who need to expand their skills to stay relevant in (or to be at the forefront of) their domain and therefore employable. As noted by our informants (a majority has a university background), the skills developed during formal education need to be complemented – for instance, with trainings on the more technical or business/managerial aspects of content production, or in very specialised areas (e.g. developers do not have a media specialisation). The informants also pointed out a wide range of on-going learning strategies among media workers, including lifelong learning programmes, internal training sessions, R&D, knowledge sharing systems, mentoring, technological watch through the Internet or media-related public events, online social networks, etc. Some of these strategies do correspond to our core definition of CoPs in this project, while others only partly correspond to it (e.g. virtual CoPs using Facebook groups, mailing lists or forums).

Our data shows strong hints that the respondents who participate in CoPs get substantial benefits from them. CoPs allow discussing and resolving problems, accessing expertise and sharing practices. They support self-appreciation and self-development, foster the production of new knowledge, and help to keep abreast of new development while allowing a fast spread of information in a more horizontal direction. CoPs help media workers getting new ideas and being inspired, leading to potential innovations (in terms of practices, technologies, strategies, etc.), which is indeed becoming increasingly crucial. They serve as perfect places for networking and for developing one's marketability, leading to possible collaborations with a large variety of profiles. These benefits for media workers as individuals actually infuse directly or indirectly into the performance of

companies and sectors, which means that CoPs are worth considering in any policy project – such as mediapark.brussels – that aims at developing the media industry. We therefore would like to use the research results presented in this report to provide a series of recommendations on how CoPs could be better integrated into such projects. In Deliverable 6.2, we did already provide some suggestions on how to support CoPs in Brussels' media industry; what follows is a continuation, with an emphasis on how to make sure that CoPs actually meet the needs of media workers.

Recommendation 1: Gain a better understanding of the media workers' diverse and evolving needs for CoPs and similar initiatives.

Our analyses show that media workers are very diverse and that their needs and domains of interest are equally diverse, depending on a wide range of factors. If the media sectors or sub-sectors have obviously their specificities (with some that stay relatively stable over time, such as radio), there are also cross-sector collaborations as well as mixed formats not limited to a single sector (e.g. transmedia storytelling). Some sectors also attract attention from people who do not directly work for them, whether it is the audio-visual sector, which is preeminent in Brussels' media economy, or the new media sector, which is attracting a lot of attention, probably because of the evolution of the media landscape (i.e. media convergence, on-going technological changes, new business models). At the same time, though, it seems that the new media sub-sectors are currently not very strong and structured enough for media workers to only work in these, which also influences the kind of needs that media workers might have.

As a first recommendation, we consequently suggest that it is crucial to develop ways of identifying the media workers' diverse and evolving needs. These needs can be very diverse, some being specific to jobs or sectors while other are linked to specific tasks. Media workers' needs can also cut across sectors, jobs or tasks, or be more or less specialised. Altogether, the complexity and the evolutions of the media industry lead to a large variety of profiles amongst Brussels' media workers, who are likely to be working for different sectors. Some jobs have specific needs (e.g. journalism) but it also appears that really different media workers might share similar types of tasks, sometimes more technical or linked to the business side. Some necessities need very concrete responses ("trial & error"). Even when sharing the same kind of task, some media workers can still be prevented to exchange together because of their level of specialisation that can lead to different needs.

In the ever-changing media environment, it is sometimes hard to guess what the future imperatives are to stay at the forefront of the innovation. In that respect CoPs are able to quickly fulfil a series of needs thanks to their varied and adaptive formats, in opposition to more traditional (and institutionalised) learning structures. Those needs can of course be identified explicitly by the media workers themselves, but also through a more proactive kind of monitoring,

analysing the evolutions of the media sectors and the changes in work practices and environments, and developing visions of the future of media (in their diversity) while keeping abreast of what is done outside. From that perspective, the data collected for the purpose of the present study, and presented in this report (as well as in Wiard et al., 2018a), can of course be used for addressing additional questions that are not in the scope of this report. More generally, the MCB research project was an important move toward a better understanding of Brussels' media landscape, but lots of questions still need to be addressed, including - but not only about - CoPs.

Recommendation 2: Do not forget the supporting and facilitating entities that can also benefit from CoPs and similar initiatives.

The media industry is not only about producing mediated content, although this job/task is often much valued, but also depends strongly on other kinds of activities, even though these are sometimes perceived as more peripheral. Thus beyond the core media entities that contribute directly to the production and publication of the mediated content delivered to the final consumers, there are supporting entities or facilitators and other peripheral entities, and even external entities that belong to another sector in a strict sense, which all have a direct or indirect effect on the production process and should thus be considered as well in any analysis or policy development of the media industry³¹. Hence a second recommendation is to take into consideration those supporting or facilitating entities in any initiative that would aim at supporting CoPs in the media industry. From the same perspective, it would be beneficial for the entire media industry to enlarge and strengthen the connections between CoPs and educational institutions (universities and higher educational institutions), with a view to develop relations that would feed each other and ease the development of (informal) shared learning initiatives.

Recommendation 3: Accommodate the work environment and culture to the creation of, and participation in CoPs and similar initiatives.

Our research results suggest that there is a conflict between the needs of media workers (for on-going learning) and the day-to-day priorities (i.e. allocating most if not all of their time to the core activity). Certain jobs (and certain companies) do not allow the possibility for media workers to expand their skills the way they think they need to. They have to find time (and sometimes also money) outside of their working schedule to do so – which is easier for media workers who do not face job precariousness. It seems that “higher level” jobs, which imply longer-term views (e.g. business related jobs), give more time (or at least more flexibility) for on-going learning. Those constraints are at least partly linked to the policies (or lack thereof) of companies with regards to their employees' on-going

³¹ For more details on the different “circles” constituting MCB's definition of the media industry, see Deliverable 1.1a (Komorowski, 2015a, pp.20-21).

learning. Companies' priorities impact on the possibility for media workers to stay relevant in their job, since they can for instance require a strict focus on the core activity and promote short-term results, or invest resources in listening to their employees' needs and supporting initiatives that would respond to them. The economic crisis and the small size of the market might have a direct impact on the way companies behave regarding their employees' skills as well as the way they see their relations with other companies.

Because of this broader context, changes might be difficult to implement. Still, we would like to suggest as a third recommendation to accommodate the work environment and culture to the creation of, and participation in CoPs and similar initiatives. The issue of awareness seems critical here: media stakeholders in Brussels should become aware of the strategic significance of CoPs and similar initiatives for the development of the media industry in the region. According to Wenger (2002), one means to increase this awareness is to conduct workshops with workers and managers in order to discuss the implications of CoPs or helping people to better appreciate the self-defined and self-managed aspects of CoPs. In order to overcome the problems that were identified, Wenger also says that there should be an articulation between a strategic value proposition and a need to leverage knowledge³².

Another issue is to motivate media workers in participating in (or even coordinating) CoPs. According to the literature, one way of doing this is to offer incentives. For instance, companies could value more their workers' participation in CoPs by recognising the new knowledge and practices gained within the company. Companies could also count as working hours the time devoted to the preparation for, and participation in such events, or they could provide logistic help, like giving access to meeting rooms or provide administrative support to CoP leaders (see Plazy & Patriarche, 2015, pp.28-29). Encouraging the emergence of CoPs is also a matter of creating emulation around the CoPs that exist – giving them increased visibility, thereby strengthening them and ultimately inspiring new ones. Wenger points out that finding sponsors, valuing the work of CoPs and publicising their successes are key factors in this respect. Wenger recommends as well to have a few pilot communities going as soon as possible that will create examples and allow people to learn by doing. Identifying potential leaders to gather a core group for the launch process and encouraging them to take responsibility for sharing their knowledge are other potential strategies for encouraging CoPs. Of course, all this implies a broader debate on the current market constraints that prevent people from exchanging with direct competitors (small market, struggle for few subventions, difficulties for coherent

³² Wenger identified five ways to encourage CoPs inside organisations: educating the workers, providing support, "get going", encouraging the members of communities and integrating the community inside the organisation (see Plazy & Patriarche, 2015, pp.17-18).

policies in a federal state, etc.) and on how to develop a more “coopetitive” approach, as suggested by one of our informants (I1).

In general, we would say that the media industry in Brussels should aim at developing a kind of “CoPs culture”. While our core understanding of CoPs in the context of this research is quite specific, CoPs can actually have dozens of shapes, from regular exchanges at the coffee machine to more official events organised by a professional association. A wide range of social configurations implying the creation of resources through shared practices might be considered as (similar to) CoPs to different extent. CoPs can thus be seen as a kind of culture that has to be infused and nourished in Brussels media clusters – especially mediapark.brussels –, which could benefit all the stakeholders involved, from policy makers to companies and workers. Wenger recommends integrating CoPs in the way the organisation works, whether by removing obvious barriers (in terms of time constraints for the workers, for instance) or aligning key structural and cultural elements (Wenger, 2002). We suggest that the same reflection can be applied to a whole media cluster such as mediapark.brussels. Openness within and outside the cluster seems to be a key element here. Some informants are indeed concerned about the fact that geographical concentration could lead to too much homogeneity (or a too weak diversity) (I4) or prevent media people to meet and interact with people who do not work in media (I2), which is indeed a risk to consider.

Recommendation 4: Foster the dialogue between regional and community structures and initiatives that are (directly or indirectly) involved in the Brussels media sector.

Although it might seem quite far from media workers’ day-to-day concerns, the linguistic and institutional complexity of Belgium (and indeed of Brussels) has been pointed out by our informants as an issue for creating and participating in CoPs. Mediated content production is linked to language and culture, and thus to the communities (not the regions). Brussels as a place for shared learning experiences in communities and social networks does not seem to be that relevant for Flemish media workers. While French-speaking media workers are more likely to participate in CoPs in Brussels, they complain about the difficulties to find common goals or visions between Wallonia and Brussels, and to develop joint policies that benefit both regions. Policies and funding schemes are attached to either regional or community governments, depending on their respective responsibilities, potentially creating confusion and inconsistencies. As a fourth recommendation, we thus suggest to foster the dialogue between regional and community structures and initiatives that are involved (directly or indirectly) in the Brussels media sector, with a view not only to reach increased coherence and clarity as to the different policies and opportunities for CoPs, but also to strengthen the relations between the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking media players in Brussels, as openness/interconnectedness is a key success factor of

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CoPs and indeed of clusters (Wenger et al., 2002). Importantly, this openness/interconnected should not be limited to the Brussels region, as media workers can also benefit from initiatives and structures beyond regional and even national borders (e.g. virtual communities, European events and structures) (on the internationalisation of CoPs, see Komorowski et al., submitted).

Recommendation 5: Identify entities in charge of promoting and coordinating CoPs and similar initiatives, and organise the division of labour.

Throughout this report we have seen that a multitude of entities are (potentially) involved in, or at least concerned by, CoPs and similar initiatives: media workers and organisations of course, but also policy-makers at different levels (federal, regional, and community), higher educational institutions, professional associations, etc. In order to better integrate (and benefit from) CoPs and similar initiatives as a lever of development of the Brussels media industry, the different responsibilities need to be better identified and coordinated. In this respect, the role of screen.brussels, as a key regional player in the audio-visual sector, might be further examined and maybe diversified in order to better encompass (certain aspects of) the promotion and coordination of CoPs (promotion is especially important, as many survey respondents do not know most of the CoPs events listed in the questionnaire). Screen.brussels could be a relevant structure for identifying the needs of Brussels media workers through the monitoring of Brussels' media clusters and prospective analyses. Screen.brussels could also play a stronger role as an environment facilitator. Yet, since it is targeting the audio-visual sector, it might be worth considering whether similar structures have to be established for the other sectors as well (depending on the strategic policy option of prioritising the audio-visual sector versus developing a broad, generalist media industry in Brussels; see Komorowski et al., submitted). Other Brussels-based entities are also relevant for promoting and coordinating CoPs. We think of higher educational institutions that offer media-related programs. It might be worth exploring further how these institutions could better connect with, and be involved in CoPs, in a kind of win-win relationship. There is also a potential role to play here for the two public broadcasters (RTBF and VRT), as key players of mediapark.brussels, which could indeed become a major area for media-related CoPs in Brussels, to the benefit of all the stakeholders involved.

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