

Student media as a part of urban communication and an actor of inclusive place branding¹

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Abstract

The paper examines the participation of student media in inclusive place branding. Today, the territory is no longer viewed as a specific product, but as the place of interaction between different parties (authorities, businesses, residents, etc.). Inclusive place branding considers residents not just as brand ambassadors, but also as brand co-creators. This branding practice is consistent with increasing complexity of the city communication. Media and the variety of symbolic systems do not only construct the reality of the city, but also transmit socio-cultural experiences to the urban community. Not only various institutions (including official media), but also ordinary people participate in the symbolic exchange in the contemporary digital environment. The article presents the results of the study of 53 regular media projects created by students in 25 universities in 15 Russian cities. A content analysis of publications according to the degree of connection to the life of the territory (hyperlocal, local, regional, national themes) has shown that student media had already been involved in inclusive place branding practices.

Keywords

Student media, participatory journalism, inclusive place branding, place branding, urban communication studies.

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Introduction

Student and university media have traditionally been seen as a means of nurturing, educating and promoting the university, as a type of corporate media. This is partly due to the hyperlocal nature of such projects. In the meantime, such media can help with other tasks, enabling to develop urban communities, preserve local history, and strengthen local ethno-social brands. The latter is particularly important because the global communication space associated with the standardization of social practices is changing the intercultural and inter-confessional dialogue between local cultures and the question of the preservation and reproduction of ethnic mentality arises (Kesheva, 2016). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic in many countries (e.g. Smirnova et al, 2022; Stampouli, & Vamvakas, 2022; Spyridou, & Danezis, 2022) has actualized the development of regional tourism. The tourism industry faces the challenge of adapting to the world of VUCA – a world of instability, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. Youth initiatives in this field are assessed as relevant (Zamyatina, 2021).

Importantly, urban participation projects (i.e. those implemented with the help of citizens, activists, academics) are relatively inexpensive. At the same time, they increase residents' loyalty to the city and the authorities, strengthen identity, and produce long-term results (Bystrova, 2018). In addition, as the rapid transition to digital reality due to the pandemic COVID-19 has shown, some universities have been able to adapt quickly to the new environment and reduce the digital divide between students and teachers with different skill levels thanks to what is already in place (Gladkova, Ragnedda, & Vartanova, 2022). Similarly, university media projects can already have significant potential for inclusive place branding.

This paper hypothesizes that student media not only can participate in place branding, but are already doing so in some cases. The hypothesis is based on the following statements:

First, student media are part of complex urban communications. Involving them in social processes within the city depends solely on editorial policy.

Second, in today's technological environment, local and hyperlocal media are able to reflect not only official but also alternative views of citizens on local events. That is, in the context of multi-layered urban communications, city managers should use not only formal channels of communication but also informal ones, involving citizen journalists. Official structures sometimes cannot simply block the dissemination of undesirable opinions and images about a place or event. For example, during the Olympics in Tokyo in 2021, the

whole world became aware of the discontent of residents over its hosting during the pandemic and the rising incidence of COVID-19.

Third, the state has to find new forms of dialogue with young people in the context of the politic mediatization. It is young people who are becoming the driver of this process: they are interested in the socio-political agenda, ready to participate in decision-making on important issues and poorly receptive to the monological and vertical model of political interaction. The logic of social media has permeated politics, creating additional risks in the form of increased 'conflictogenicity' (Gureeva, 2020).

This paper examines the specifics of modern urban communications and mechanisms of inclusive branding of the territory based on the analysis of academic literature and different publications on this topic. Then, the empirical study of student media in 15 Russian cities with a population of millions was conducted to assess the potential of participation in place branding.

The city as the physical location and the space of communication

Attempts to make sense of life in big cities have been made since the early 20th century by Simmel (Simmel, 1903), Weber (Weber, 1922), and others. Although methodological reflection on urban communication studies began in the second half of the 20th century. For example, Deutsch described the city as a communication machine whose effectiveness is linked to the amount of contact it offers (Deutsch, 1961). The research direction has gone through several stages of development and is reflected in the popular concepts of the 'information city' and the 'digital city'. Since 2000s, scholars have stopped seeing urban space as two interrelated but separate parts (physical space and social communication space), recognizing its ambivalence. That is to say, the city is a hybrid and multi-layered space that accommodates diverse cultural and social practices and competes for a variety of resources, including material ones (Kvyat, 2014).

The convergence of mass communications with urban spaces has turned the city into a media architecture complex: the media map the city, making it accessible to perception, cognition and action (McQuire, 2014). Media and a variety of symbolic systems not only construct the reality of the city, but also transmit socio-cultural experiences to the contemporary urban community. Citizen communication influences the formation of collective and personal identity, shaping a particular image of place, including such components as a) historical memory, b) cultural heritage, c) global trends, d) state, regional and local politics; e) new communicative practices as a result of social activism

(Leontovich, 2020). The modern man, and above all the urban dweller, has become a *homo mediatius* – ‘a man of media’. Its “existence is shaped by the process of receiving, consuming and making sense of mediatized information, the media environment” (Vartanova, 2017).

The complexity of urban communications is determined by at least two circumstances. First, it is the heterogeneity of the communication environment itself. Media and a variety of symbolic systems (making themselves known in the layout, architecture, routes of people’s movement) define the character of individual urban spaces: public or private. In this way, they construct the reality of the city, help to establish and maintain (or destroy) social relationships, and maintain the cultural memory of the area (Kostromitskaya, 2021). ‘Nodal points’ arise artificially or spontaneously at the crossroads of communication flows. In the physical space of a city, such hubs are airports, subways, art clusters, and so on (Makarova, 2018). In media space, traditional media, popular websites, social networks and other communication platforms are becoming focal points. Here again, there is some division into public and private areas. There is an institutionalized segment (purposefully created and censored media space), a non-institutionalized segment – a naturally occurring uncensored audience space and a hybrid space – the internet (Pimenov, 2014). Some researchers also pay attention to the direction of information flows and the nature of the participants’ interaction. “Top-down” communication is created by the official, centralized media and the peculiarity of this flow of information is the aggressive strategies, conflicts and scandal aimed at attracting the attention of a wide audience. “Bottom-up” communication is created through interpersonal communication. Such communications are influenced by global media, but displays positive features as a way of counterbalancing the flow of negativity (Leontovich, 2019).

Second, modern city dwellers, as *homo mediatius*, do not just exchange a variety of information live or indirectly, but also create different images, meanings and practices and thereby change the urban reality. Cognitive, normative and value-based representations of reality are no longer conceivable outside of is no longer conceivable outside of communication, dialogue with the environment world. Continuous communication and interaction with different sign systems is necessary for humans to constantly update their ‘database’ of the surrounding reality in order to successfully interact with others within the same socio-cultural fields. The paradox is that an imaginary, fake, mediatized reality has become a tool for changing real life in society. This reality is no longer based on real things, but on people’s attitudes, on the interweaving of opinions

and assessments (Mansurova, 2010). The nature of the digital space encourages people to be socially creative. Individually or as part of a group, people create digital artefacts (e.g. digital content or their own digital identity), new practices of social participation (e.g. petition posting, independent investigations), and new norms and patterns (e.g. rules of online etiquette). Creativity becomes a tool for a user of the global network to tell others about him or herself, to engage, adapt and act in virtual space (Ustyuzhanyina, 2020).

We can conclude that the social creativity of ordinary residents, as well as their involvement in communication, has a marked effect on both the perception of the place where they live and on many processes of urban life. Public spaces in real or media environments, where citizens voice their opinions, participate in the creation of new norms and values, images of places are as important today as formal urban development institutions. Moreover, the traditional local press, as well as the new urban media, combining the principles of participatory journalism and simple communication of citizens in social networks, can be actors in urban development. At the same time, while the role of local media in urban development has been studied, student media have been hardly considered in this context. Although such media are created in important urban ‘hubs’ such as universities, which, like other urban communication hubs, accumulate flows of people and information and organize individual events or entire programs that contribute to the development of the city or region. Many universities today strive to generate social capital, university medical clinics, and free legal services for the public. Student and university media can be a venue for discussing urban development issues, broadcasting the cultural memory of an area, and fostering social relationships. Involving them in social processes within the city depends solely on editorial policy and position of the university.

Place branding: from a ‘commodity’ to an inclusive approach

Traditional place branding, in which a geographical place is perceived as a kind of commodity, emerged in the West in the 1970s as a tool for the growing competition between cities and districts (Kotler, 1993). In recent decades, more and more cities and territories around the world have turned to global market promotion as a way to develop because of a set of challenges related to increased competition. Boisen, Terlouw, Groote and Couwnberg highlight the following reasons for this process. First, in the context of late capitalism, city authorities are shifting from a managerial to an entrepreneurial approach. “This ‘entrepreneurial shift’ has brought the terminology, the concepts and instruments and the mechanisms of the corporate sector to the public sector;

and competitiveness is a chief goal of nearly all of these”. Second, the dominant neoliberal paradigm has brought a strong focus on competitiveness onto the agenda of many states. Third, in many countries central governments are delegating increasing responsibility for social and economic development to regional and municipal authorities. Fourth, “the idea of a growing global network of cities with new urban hierarchies wherein the position of any given city is perceived as much more volatile as compared to the one it holds within its national urban hierarchy” (Boisen, Terlouw, Groote, & Couwnberg, 2018).

Russian scholars have considered the technologies of creating territorial brands (Pankrukhin, 2006; Bazhenova, 2013; Vazhenin, & Vazhenina, 2008; Vizgalov, 2008). The practice of Russian regional branding and image-making of territories has been extensively studied and researched. However, in Russia regional branding in the 2000s became fashionable rather than a necessary tool of regional policy, and was predominantly focused on scientific justification of practical activities of territorial authorities in developing branding documents. This has led to formulaic solutions in territorial branding, when branding is reduced to the choice of corporate identity or a slogan. This is due both to the misperception of the territory’s brand as a ‘pretty picture’ for tourists, and to the eclecticism of approaches to the formation of the territory’s brand. The result is a mismatch between the brand and the regional policy. Today, the topic of place branding is once again gaining popularity among representatives of the authorities. This is due to the need to promote national and regional brands of goods and services, the ‘Made in Russia’ and ‘Export of Agricultural Products’ projects. And also, with such an international trend as the process of non-standard regionalization (Butova, Demakova, Kazakov, Ulina, 2019).

The marketing approach alone is not a one-size-fits-all approach, especially in place branding. Vanolo (2020) argues that for many skeptical academics, a place is a fictitious commodity: it cannot be produced for sale, it cannot be completely separated from people’s lives. Apologists for the commodification of cities take many things for granted, in particular the claim about the global competitiveness of territories. Kotler and others have been particularly straightforward in this respect. Later, they clarified that territory is a specific product. Still, there are important questions that have been explored not only within marketing theory, but also within sociology, critical studies in urbanism, etc. Among those is the following question is: is place branding the activity of city managers and special agencies, clearly following the ideology of competition and entrepreneurship, or should territorial branding also allow that other (even minority) actors create their discourses and practices, which eventually also

influence territorial brands and images? Vanolo emphasizes in this vein: in early 1990s, some foreign authors pointed out that branding and marketing of territory are definitely political objects, because they are closely linked to social conflicts, to problems of inequality, framing, exclusion and inclusion (Vanolo, 2020).

Contemporary scholars have called for a reconceptualization of place branding. In 2012, Kavaratzis suggested that the role of stakeholders should be reconsidered (Kavaratzis, 2012). The branding process is a process of co-creation (Vargo, & Lusch, 2004; Warnaby, 2009) and dialogue between stakeholders, among which residents play an important role (Kavaratzis, & Hatch, 2013; Zenker, & Seigis, 2012). Russian authors have also argued that it is not enough to create territory brands relying only on marketing tools. Zlotnitsky (2008) justified the need to include the system of social management of the territory in the region branding, the core of which should be a real rather than declarative social policy. Chechulin (2016) pointed out such a condition as the presence of political democracy institutions (including direct democracy) and a developed competitive market environment. At the territories with a low level of development of democratic institutions, the main marketing tool becomes GR, which is focused on building relations with the central government to obtain benefits and subsidies. However, once the activity of the territory's residents is awakened, that will help to attract private investments, as well as taxpayers' payments.

One of the main ideas within early approaches to place branding was to divide all stakeholders into two main groups: residents (internal community groups – staff) and non-residents (more diverse external community groups from investors to clients). Within corporate branding, the main focus is on external audiences. The same simplistic logic was used to develop the branding of places. Practice has shown nevertheless that corporate branding strategies are poorly suited to place branding. For example, branding is often understood as a process of reduction to a few key associations (see for example: Paris, the city of art and love). However, residents with more knowledge about their place of residence may disagree with simplified brands. Residents of an area are not just 'brand ambassadors', they are part of the brand itself and their activism can help the brand-building process as well as destroy it. For example, many of Berlin's brand ambassadors have a vested interest in increasing the visibility and relevance of their own projects, even if their projects may be irrelevant or less relevant to non-residents (Zenker, Braun, & Petersen, 2017). Branding a territory will only be successful if the key messages, the values conveyed by the

authorities through internal policies, are supported by the residents. That is, when the residents are co-creators of the brand. If there is no agreement on the values, the attitude towards the territory between the authorities and the residents, this can change the brand of the territory being created or destroy it. For example, the refugee crisis in Germany has not only created political problems, but also made the branding of the territory more difficult. The debate between the German chancellor and the leader of the state of Bavaria led to fears that the previously created brand 'Munich is colourful', reflecting the idea of an open and friendly city, might be reassessed in a negative way due to residents' fear of migrants (Vallster, von Vallpach, & Zenker, 2018).

According to Rebelo, Mehmood and Marsden (2020), the traditional marketing approach to territorial branding has the following shortcomings. First, it sometimes neglects many features of local history, culture, social practices, socio-political and environmental context, which ultimately leads not to an increase in the diversity of territories and their identities, but to an increase in monotony. Second, the branding of territories as a phenomenon associated with neoliberal ideology often reflects only the view of elites on a particular territory, which leads to grassroots protests. For example, in Hamburg, where marketing efforts were aimed at tourists and high-income residents, public protests arose under the slogan 'Not in our name!' against the city's branding. Such forms of protest illustrate well the degree of delusion of those officials who believe that territory branding is just a publicity stunt (Rebelo, Mehmood, & Marsden, 2020). The gradual understanding of the real role of residents has begun to be reflected in the new paradigm of participatory or inclusive place branding.

Participatory place branding approach was introduced by Zenker and Erfgen (2014). The authors highlighted the need to involve residents in the place branding process. Residents ought to be given the power to influence both the content and the goals of branding, but also to play an active role in the implementation of the place brand. "The process starts with Analysis, with the goal to capture key components of the place and to define a shared vision for the place. Stage two, Structure, deals with implementing a structure and guidelines for stakeholder participation in the place marketing, while stage three, Monitoring, handles the issue of how residents can be supported in implementing their projects and how the success of the initiatives can be measured" (Kilström, & Siljeklint, 2021). Scholars describe the importance of Place-based contextualization, Re-appreciation, Repositioning and Consolidation. First of all, residents should be

informed about the characteristics of the area, its potential and strengths, and involved in shaping visions for the future of the area. This process should lead to a consolidation of ideas, which should inspire active participation and shared responsibility and ownership of the place brand (Rebelo, Mehmood, & Marsden, 2020).

Within traditional branding, one can only work with those parties who have an interest and power in building a brand. Place branding has become a part of politics. According to Jernsand (2016), the five characteristics of inclusive place branding are evolutionary process, transformation, participation, plurality and democracy. The complex nature of place (city or territory) and the inclusive approach make it necessary to take into account different actors in the process, different representations of place and to use different methodological approaches in the brand building process. "Plurality and complexity are what makes places alive, unique and interesting. Allowing multiple identities to flourish contributes to a more authentic picture of the place, since fragmentation and non-coherency are what our society consists of..." (Jernsand, 2016).

The concept of inclusive branding is partly similar to that of patriotic journalism. The emergence of a new approach to place branding has a clear media and technology determinant. Residents' disagreement with both territorial branding practices and other social processes has occurred before, just not many people have noticed it. Today, in the context of a radically changed media landscape, the development of information and communication technologies and the emergence of new practices of media activity, it is becoming easier for residents to express their opinions. If previously the image of the regions was formed under the influence of information from the media (it was a media image), nowadays, due to the development of blogs, social networks, the 'online image of the territory' is becoming very important (Lashova, 2015). In the old offline marketing, the agenda was strictly dependent on the basic actors – governments, governors, etc. (Gavra, 2016). The social capital of the territory was monopolistically created by the institutions of power, monopoly brands, leaders of the territory. Today, under the conditions of online marketing, brands, reputations of territories have been corporatized in a special way: residents have redistributed these resources in their favor.

Current research on the role of social media in the promotion of territories shows that resident messages (as a part of word-of-mouth marketing) and other user-generated content are gradually becoming the primary and influential sources of information for non-residents (tourists) and have a noticeable impact on the competitiveness of particular territories. Although the roles of

residents in social media differ. For example, in the spring of 2017, a study was conducted in Japan on how residents of the Japanese city of Onomichi, whose landscapes attract many filmmakers and anime creators, represented their city on the social network. The city has faced economic hardship and a shrinking population, so boosting its tourism appeal was part of the area's development strategy.

Researchers identified four roles of residents on the social network: 1) 'contributors', i.e. those who write everything about the city, 2) 'photographers', i.e. those who post photos of the city, poems, etc., 3) those who write about their hobbies (and often hobbies were directly related to Onomichi), 4) 'retweeters', i.e. those who engage in reposting of other's posts. It turned out that co-tweeters were the most active: they felt that their knowledge about Onomichi helped them gain respect for the city, and that their sense of attachment to their territory made them more active in introducing the city to the outside world than those who took one of the other three roles (they promoted the city unintentionally). Although, as problems in some parts of Europe show, residents may also see tourism development as a negative factor, provoking 'touristophobia' in them (Uchinaka, Yoganathan, & Osburg, 2019).

Thus, the change in place branding, away from the traditional marketing approach towards inclusive branding, correlates with a deepening understanding of the complexity of urban communications. This is reflected in a rejection of ready-made brands in favor of dialogue, co-creation with the residents. In this context, it is important to look for actors who are actively involved in mass communication processes and processes of social creativity, including young people.

Methodology

Young people, especially students, are one of the social groups that can be involved in inclusive branding programmes. First, students are involved in socialisation processes, exploring urban spaces and territorial communications. They, like other young people, are active users of many social networks and messengers. Secondly, educational and scientific organisations can provide good technical, organisational and even financial support to media activists (funding of student trips, involvement in research and grant activities), as they are interested in strengthening their own position at local, regional and sometimes national level. Thirdly, student-generated text and audio-visual material as part of projects can be disseminated both through social media and become part of the content of conventional media.

Russian universities already have experience in creating similar media products, less in the popularisation of science and more in the popularisation of local history. However, regular student media in terms of participation in inclusive branding of the territory has not been specifically addressed.

In order to study the potential of student media projects to promote territories, the following framework was defined.

1. A student media or media project is created by students pursuing a degree in journalism. Practice-oriented training for journalists allows for the expectation of regular media output and a degree of freedom from the corporate university agenda. It is difficult to teach practical journalism by writing only about university life.

2. The media of universities located in Russian cities with a population of more than 1 million people were taken into consideration. Obviously, such cities have a saturated information field and there may be exclusive topics, poorly covered by the professional media.

According to the website vuzopedia.ru, as of January 2022, 52 universities teaching journalism were found. Of these, 23 universities are located in Moscow, 7 in Saint Petersburg and 22 universities are located in the remaining 13 cities with a population of a million. The official websites of the universities, the pages of journalism departments, as well as the accounts of the universities on YouTube and VK were also studied. The main objective was to search for students' media and media projects, their profiles or mentions on them. These social networks were chosen as the most popular in the 18-30 age group, according to the Public Opinion Foundation in March 2021. Those media and media projects that continued to be produced regularly in 2019 were taken into account (in 2020, student media may not have been produced due to restrictions related to COVID-19 measures). The results were found in 25 out of 52 universities with journalism as a field of study. Of these, 11 are located in Moscow, two in Saint Petersburg and 14 in 13 regional cities with a million inhabitants.

The next step was to examine the content of the media projects. For this purpose, a content analysis was conducted of the material created by the student media projects for the autumn semester 2021-2022 of the academic year (i.e. from 1 September 2021 to 31 January 2022). If there was no publication activity during this period, the last semester when materials were posted was considered. Print publications were examined using websites and/or publicly available DPF versions of publications. For video content, materials in YouTube and VK accounts were studied. For the analysis of materials of student radio stations accounts in VK social network were used.

The method of continuous sampling was used. Due to the difference in technological and organisational conditions of the student editorial offices, all types of publications within the project (i.e. podcasts, videos and text posts) produced by the editorial office were taken into account. Reposts from other publishers were excluded from the sample, as well as duplications of own publications (both repetitions within the same platform and duplication of the same content on different platforms). In a few cases where it was not possible to determine the exact dates of publication, a conclusion on content was made on the basis of an analysis of a few random publications.

As the sample consisted of material that differed fundamentally in both genre and method of production, the topic of the publication was chosen as the unit of analysis. Thus, all the published materials in print media were considered. In TV and radio pieces both the whole programme (e.g., interview, topical talk show, review) and separate stories within newscasts were used as units.

Due to the fact that the purpose of the study was to examine the integration of student and university media in informing their audiences about life in the city and region, all content found was categorised according to four categories.

1. Hyperlocal content (H). This category included all topics related to university life: all events of student and academic life associated with the university regardless of scale and status (university, nationwide, international), as well as lectures delivered by university representatives and guests on campus, interviews with university scientists and students.

2. local content (L). this category included events related to city life (including other universities in the city) held on the territory of the city regardless of scale and status; interviews with city residents, thematic materials about interesting places in the city and historical characters.

3. Regional content (R). This category included all topics related to the events within the region (oblast, krai, republic), residents of other territories of the region outside its capital.

4. National content (N). This category included all events and topics about life in Russia (including national holidays), as well as student and academic events in other regions of the country, if the authors of the material did not focus on the participation of university representatives in the event, but on the event itself (i.e. covered it objectively, detaching from corporate identity).

5. Other. This category included materials that either did not have a sensitive territorial affiliation (for example, an interview that there is procrastination, a story about youth slang, and so on), or related to international events (for example, film premieres, a story about world famous writers, about the directions of science), as well as materials of an artistic nature.

Such a classification does not allow taking into account all aspects of the interaction of university media with the external environment. For example, publications about university scientists that fall into the category of 'hyperlocal content' can be intended not only for the internal public, but also for the external one: for residents of the city, students and researchers from other regions. However, such a separation allows you to find those projects that consciously participate or can participate in the place branding.

Data was also collected on the integration of student media projects into the mass-media flows of the professional media: information about the placement of materials on the air of city and regional TV and radio companies and on their websites.

Results

A study of open-source data found student-generated media at only half of the universities where journalism training takes place (25 out of 52). Of these, 11 are located in Moscow, 2 in Saint Petersburg and 14 in 13 regional cities with a million inhabitants. The results are presented in *Tables* and . Perhaps there are more projects in reality, but there is no information about them on the pages of the websites of departments and faculties of universities, as well as their publics on social networks.

In total, 30 student media outlets and regular media projects were found in 13 regional universities, and 23 in 13 metropolitan ones (Moscow and Saint Petersburg). A problem arose with the classification of HSE projects (the HSE Media Centre and the Media Communication in Education Project Learning Laboratory): the projects exist as professional ones, are created by hired specialists, and it is extremely difficult to find out whether the students themselves are directly involved in them.

Table 1

**Student media in Moscow and Saint Petersburg universities,
journalism programmes**

City, in descending order of population	University	Student media/media project (with direct link if available)	Social media with a media account	Content created in in the autumn semester 2021 (or the last six months of the project operation / the latest issue of print media)		Integration with the professional media environment
				Total number of original materials	Content type: H - hyperlocal; L - local; R - regional; N - national	
Moscow	The Litchin Humanitarian Institute for Television and Radio Broadcasting	Film and Television Institute (GITR) Channel https://www.youtube.com/user/gitrmtv	YouTube	64	H - 34 L - 9 R - 4 N - 0 Other - 17	None
Moscow	Lomonosov Moscow State University	Mokhovaya 9 TV channel https://vk.com/mohovaya9_msu	YouTube	90	H - 49 L - 19 R - 2 N - 2 Other - 18	None
Moscow	Lomonosov Moscow State University	Radio Mokhovaya 9 https://radio_mohovaya9.tilda.ws/ https://vk.com/radiomsu9	VK	226	H - 12 L - 24 R - 33 N - 70 Other - 87	None
Moscow	Lomonosov Moscow State University	The online edition of Journalist Online https://journalonline.msu.ru/	None	47	H - 5 L - 19 R - 10 N - 9 Other - 4	None

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Moscow	Lomonosov Moscow State University	Science Journalism Lab portal http://sciencemedialab.ru/	YouTube, VK	33	H-22 L-5 R-1 N-4 Other-1	None
Moscow	Lomonosov Moscow State University	Projects in English by the Department of Media Linguistics http://www.journ.msu.ru/smi/proekty-na-angliyskom-yazyke.php	None	42	H-6 L-5 R-3 N-7 Other-21	None
Moscow	Moscow Humanitarian University	Newspaper Proba Pera (PDF) https://mosgu.ru/journalist/periodicheskie-izdaniya/	None	43	H-16 L-4 R-1 N-1 Other-21	None
Moscow	Moscow State Pedagogical University	The 7th Workshop https://vk.com/sedmayam	YouTube, VK	94	H-18 L-37 R-10 N-15 Other-14	None
Moscow	Moscow University of Finance and Law	MFUA TV (YouTube channel) https://www.youtube.com/@MFUAVideoblog	YouTube	30	H-27 L-0 R-0 N-0 Other-3	None
Moscow	National Research University Higher School of Economics	HSE Media Centre* https://mc.hse.ru/	YouTube	?*	?*	None
Moscow	National Research University Higher School of Economics	Design and Training Laboratory for Media and Communication in Education* https://cmd.hse.ru/education/	VK	?*	?*	None
Moscow	National Research University Higher School of Economics	The Vyshka online publication** https://theyvshka.ru/		53	H-7 L-18 R-7 N-16 Other-5	None

Moscow	National Research University Higher School of Economics	HSR Radio** https://vk.com/highschoolradio	VK, Telegram	5	H-1 L-0 R-0 N-0 Other-4	None
Moscow	Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration	Journalism Department video channel https://www.youtube.com/@migsuchannel	YouTube	31	H-29 L-0 R-0 N-0 Other-2	None
Moscow	Russian State University for the Humanities	ZhuRnal workshop https://www.rsu.ru/media/journalchik/	None	16	H-11 L-2 R-0 N-0 Other-3	None
Moscow		STC RGGU video channel https://www.rsu.ru/media/stk/	YouTube	61	H-46 L-6 R-1 N-1 Other-7	None
Moscow	Russian State Social University	Orthodox Media Centre https://vk.com/epmrssu	VK, YouTube	24	H-23 L-0 R-0 N-0 Other-1	None
Moscow	Kosygin Russian State University	The voice of the WGU (Youtube channel) https://www.youtube.com/@user-0161d8hy8j/videos	YouTube	38	H-34 L-3 R-0 N-0 Other-1	None
	Peoples' Friendship University of Russia	RUDN University https://www.youtube.com/@rudn_university	YouTube	66	H-63 L-0 R-0 N-3 Other-0	None

St. Petersburg State Institute of Film and Television	Kit TV (YouTube channel) https://www.youtube.com/@KIT4TV	YouTube	11	H-7 L-1 R-0 N-0 Other-3	None
	St. Petersburg State University TV and Radio Channel MOST http://jf.spbu.ru/1_linia/	YouTube	167	H-106 L-50 R-2 N-7 Other-2	None
St. Petersburg State University	St. Petersburg State University Television and Radio Channel (radio) http://jf.spbu.ru/radio/	None	? ***	H / L ***	None
	The First Line Information Portal https://1-line.spbu.ru/index.html	None	32	H-6 L-10 R-1 N-3 Other-12	None

* The media exists as a professional, created by employed professionals, identifying an active role for students is difficult.

** Media is created by students from different specialisations and several universities.

*** Content analysis was not carried out due to the inability to determine the dates of creation of the submissions. The availability of the content type was determined by randomly sampling a few published programmes.

Table 2

Student media in Russian regional cities with population over one million people, journalism programmes

City, in descending order of population	University	Student media/ media project (with direct link if available)	Social media with a media account	Content created in the autumn semester 2021 (or the last 6 months of the project's operation / the latest issue of print media)		Integration with the professional media environment
				Total number of original materials	Content type: H (hyperlocal); L (local); R (regional); N (national)	
Novosibirsk	Novosibirsk National Research State University	TV FW NSU (YouTube channel) https://www.youtube.com/@user-pz4wm3tu2z	YouTube	10	H – 6 L – 4 R – 0 N – 0 Other – 0	None
		Radio Cactus NSU https://vk.com/radiocactus	VK Yandex	88	H – 39 L – 8 R – 0 N – 1 Other – 40	None
		Mesto Vstrechi – Siberia magazine https://mesto-vstrechi.org	None	36	H – 4 L – 17 R – 3 N – 1 Other – 11	None

Student media as a part of urban communication
and an actor of inclusive place branding

Ekaterinburg	Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B. N. Yeltsin	Yeltsin UrFU Faculty of Journalism (YouTube channel) https://www.youtube.com/@user-bo4th6cj4l	YouTube	4	H-3 L-1 R-0 N-0 Other -0	None
		Underwood newspaper (PDF) https://urgi.urfu.ru/ru/student/underwood/	None	12	H-7 L-3 R-0 N-0 Other -2	None
Kazan	Kazan Federal University	UNIVER TV https://universmotri.ru	VK, Telegram	457	H-283 L-39 R-42 N-64 Other -29	Separate broadcast TV channel integrated with cable operators
		https://vk.com/univertvhd	VK	?*	H / L / R*	Has its own FM channel*
	Russian Islamic Institute	Radio Umradio https://vk.com/ufmradio	YouTube, VK, OK	77	H-22 L-22 R-8 N-4 Other -21	None
		Shakird newspaper http://shakird.ru/	None	210	H-22 L-29 R-59 N-54 Other -46	None
	Islamic portal http://www.islam-portal.ru					

Nizhny Novgorod	Lobachevsky Nizhny Novgorod State University	The newspaper Zhurfact (PDF) http://www.fil.unn.ru/studentam/zhurfakt/	None	37	H-15 L-2 R-0 N-0 Other - 21	None
Chelyabinsk	South Ural State University	SUSU TV (website and YouTube channel) https://www.tvr.susu.ru/	YouTube	289	H-239 L-8 R-8 N-12 Other - 22	Broadcasting TV channel in the online environment; cooperation with GTRK Yuzhny Ural
		SUSU Radio https://www.tvr.susu.ru/	VK	32	H-15 L-9 R-0 N-0 Other - 8	None
Omsk	Dostoyevsky Omsk State University	TV program PO_SETY https://vk.com/po_sety	YouTube, VK	13	H-2 L-4 R-0 N-0 Other - 7	The programme is broadcast on Channel 31
		Omsu TV journalism laboratory (website and YouTube channel) http://tv-omgu.ru/	YouTube, VK	8	H-2 L-2 R-0 N-0 Other - 4	None
		Faces of Modern Russian Studies http://phil.omsu.ru/6223	None		N**	None

Student media as a part of urban communication
and an actor of inclusive place branding

Rostov-on-Don	Southern Federal University	SFU Student Media Centre SFEDUMEDIA https://vk.com/sfedumedia	VK	93	H-68 L-10 R-0 N-229 Other-9	None
		A media project about poetry Prosodia https://prosodia.ru	None	283	H-2 L-0 R-0 N-231 Other-52	None
Ufa	Rostov State University of Economics (RINH)	Rinhbourg magazine https://vk.com/rinhburg	VK	157	H-98 L-10 R-0 N-1 Other-48	None
		Student publication Repost (PDF + website) https://repostmagazine.mystrikingly.com/	VK		H / L***	None
Krasnoyarsk	Siberian Federal University	TV SFU (website and YouTube channel) https://tube.sfu-kras.ru/tv-sfu	YouTube, VK	71	H-21 L-31 R-13 N-2 Other-4	None
		TV project Siberia through the Eyes of Foreigners *** https://www.youtube.com/@user-bm9pw9to3r	YouTube	2	H-0 L-0 R-2 N-0 Other-0	Outlets aired on Channel 7 (trk7.ru)

Krasnoyarsk	Siberian Federal University	Popular Science TV project**** https://www.youtube.com/@user-bm9pw9to3r	YouTube	10	H-0 L-1 R-1 N-1 Other-7	Outlets aired on Channel 7 (trk7.ru)
Krasnoyarsk	Siberian Federal University	School of Inter-Ethnic Journalism project**** https://www.youtube.com/@user-bm9pw9to3r	YouTube		H / L / R****	None
Krasnoyarsk	Siberian Federal University	Belka Radio https://vk.com/ifiyakraadio	VK	50	H-12 L-11 R-1 N-2 Other-24	None
Krasnoyarsk	Siberian Federal University	Online publication Krasnoyarsk Underground https://krasmetro.media/	VK	297	H-58 L-190 R-15 N-27 Other-7	None
Voronezh	Voronezh State University	The Faculty of Journalism at VSU (YouTube channel) https://www.youtube.com/@user-ji1ng3hz9j	YouTube	46	H-13 L-17 R-2 N-0 Other-14	None
	Voronezh State University	Radio Navigator https://vk.com/radionavigator	VK	47	H-20 L-15 R-3 N-3 Other-6	Repost on a Russian portal https://mediauniversity.ru/

Perm	Perm State National Research University	University-TV / HochuVuniversity (YouTube channel) https://www.youtube.com/@user-sf6of3kh6f	YouTube	97	H-2 L-37 R-0 N-1 Other-57	None
	Perm State National Research University	PiPerm, a student magazine about the city and urban youth http://pi-perm.ru/	None	26	H-2 L-22 R-0 N-0 Other-2	None
	Perm State National Research University	The Stories of Perm https://vk.com/arhiv_lpkn	VK	6	H-0 L-6 R-0 N-0 Other-0	None

* Content analysis was not performed due to the lack of direct links to radio programs. The conclusion about the content type is based on the group data on the social network VK (not supported since 2019) and the description in the description of the UNIVER TV group on the social network VK.

** Content analysis was not carried out due to problems with access to video files of the project. The content is classified as national based on the description of the content of the project on the faculty website.

*** Content analysis was not carried out due to the lack of publication dates for materials on the site. The type of content was determined based on familiarity with several random materials.

**** The project materials are published on the YouTube channel TV SFU, it is not possible to allocate their exact number for content analysis due to the lack of labeling. The content type is defined based on a random sample.

Discussion

Content analysis made confirmed the hypothesis that student projects of journalism faculties can participate in territorial branding, since the authors of such media are interested not only in life inside the university, but also outside it. In the materials of UNIVER TV (Kazan) 283 out of 457 thematic content units (that is, approximately 60%) were associated with the life of the university, and in Chelyabinsk 239 out of 289 units (that is, approximately 70%) were associated with university life. This is due to the fact that these media are semi-professional (in addition to students, content is created here by full-time employees) and perform the functions of corporate media. At the same time, other media projects created content mainly about life outside the walls of the university. This is, for example, the Islamic portal (Russian Islamic Institute in Kazan), where out of 210 thematic units only 22 turned out to be hyperlocal, 29 local, 59 regional, 54 national. This is the online publication *Krasnoyarsk Underground*: out of 297 units, 190 were devoted to the life of the city, 15 lives of the region and 27 lives of the country. This is the online publication *Prosodia*, where 231 out of 283 units covered events in the country.

At the same time, it is difficult to draw an accurate conclusion about the degree of involvement in the coverage of the life of the city and region of those projects that, in more or less different degrees, represented different types of content. In the fall of 2021, restrictions on events were introduced in Russia due to the COVID-19 pandemic, universities were transferred to distance learning. The absence of events could not but affect the content of student media. The same circumstance is probably associated with a significant amount of content classified as 'Other'. In the context of a shortage of events, student media made materials about world events, and on the so-called distracted topics. The general trend was also the shortage of content about the life of the region. This can be explained by two reasons. First: a significant part of the regional events is associated with large cities. Second: student media do not have the means to organize trips to other settlements of the regions.

During the study of media projects, a difference was also noticed between the media in Moscow and Saint Petersburg on the one hand, and other cities on the other hand. Firstly, universities in both Russian capitals (i.e. Moscow and Saint Petersburg) show less diversity in terms of type and content of student media than the regional ones. In Moscow, student TV/video channels operate in eight out of 11 universities, online and print (PDF) editions in five, radio in two. In Saint Petersburg, television media are available in two universities, and online publishing and radio in just one. In regional universities, there is

regular video production in ten universities out of 14, online and printed (PDF) publications in nine universities and radio in five.

Secondly, student media and media projects of regional universities are more oriented towards external audiences, while those in the capital are more oriented towards internal ones. This may be due to the fact that many student media outlets at regional universities were created before those in the capital. Most media from regional universities appeared in the late 2000s and early 2010s, while projects in metropolitan universities continued to appear in the late 2010s. Regional student media outlets were either initially set up as online media or quickly acquired social networking sites. This means that the media in regional higher education institutions have a great deal of sharpening potential.

Thirdly, only regional universities have detected the integration of student media into the professional journalistic environment of the city. In Chelyabinsk, South Ural State University has been broadcasting *YUrGU TV* since 2004 and collaborates with the Yuzhny Ural State Television and Radio Company. Chelyabinsk State University has been producing a programme called *POSETY*, which has been broadcast on *Channel 31* since 2012. *UNIVER TV* has been operating as a full-fledged channel in Kazan since 2012, it is broadcast by local cable operators and is available online. *Ufmradio* radio broadcasts on the FM band. In Krasnoyarsk, Siberian Federal University's *TV SFU* has been airing programmes *Siberia Through the Eyes of Foreigners* and *Popular Science* on *Channel* since 2020.

Furthermore, a study of student media and media projects revealed that not only they have the potential for inclusive branding, but that they are already actively involved in it. This is evidenced by the number of media projects purposefully created to highlight or promote the local history, culture and image of the region. At the same time, the activity of regional universities in this direction is higher than that of those in the capital. A few interesting projects can be mentioned here:

1. YouTube channel *The 7th Workshop* actively covers the events of the creative life of Moscow, sometimes concerns socio-political topics. Of the 94 thematic content units, 37 are classified as 'local content', ten as 'regional', and 15 as 'national'.

2. *Islamic portal* (Russian Islamic Institute in Kazan). The portal focuses on events from the life of the Muslim world not only in Kazan and the Republic of Tatarstan, but also in Russia and abroad. Interestingly, out of 210 thematic content units, more than a half are associated with the life of the republic (59 units) and the country (54 units), while only 22 topics were associated with the life of the university.

3. Online publication *Krasnoyarsk Underground* (Siberian Federal University) is similar to the Novosibirsk edition: students cover events that take place in the region. Of the 297 content items, 190 are related to the life of the city and 15 to the life of the region.

4. The magazine *Mesto Vstrechi – Siberia* (Novosibirsk National Research State University) tries to highlight cultural life in Siberia. 20 content items out of 36 are related to the life of the city and region.

5. The YouTube channel of the Faculty of Journalism of Voronezh State University actively covers not only the life of the university, but also the city. Of the 46 content items, 17 are linked to the city. These are interviews with citizens, as well as documentaries.

6. The YouTube channel *Hochu V universitet* (Perm State National University) also pays a lot of attention to the life of the city: out of 97 thematic units, only two are associated with the university, 37 are local content, the rest are creative and thematic works of students classified as ‘Other’.

7. TV project *Siberia through the Eyes of Foreigners* (Siberian Federal University) introduces the viewer to how Siberia is perceived by visiting foreign students. The program was released on one of the city TV channels.

8. School of Inter-Ethnic Journalism project (Siberian Federal University) is a series of student interviews and stories with representatives of different religions and nationalities who live in the Krasnoyarsk region.

9. *PiPerm*, a student magazine about the city and urban youth can also be considered a local project: out of 26 content items, 22 cover city life.

In addition, two more projects supported by journalism departments can be considered as projects that participate in national branding:

1. *Prosodia* media project on poetry (Southern Federal University in Rostov-on-Don) introduces readers to events in Russian literary life, highlights the lives and work of famous poets, and publishes poems by contemporary authors. In this case, 231 out of 283 content items are coverage of literary life in Russia, 52 are news about world literature.

2. The project *Faces of Modern Russian Studies* (Dostoyevsky Omsk State University) is an academic project aimed at a narrow audience. In this case, students and teachers introduce viewers not even to local heroes, but to prominent Russian philologists.

Thus, our study showed that student media and media projects can participate in inclusive place branding. However, it should be understood that the quality of such participation, as well as the degree of involvement depend on many factors. This includes the level of professional skills of the authors and curators, the

funding of the project, and the awareness of the need for student participation in branding on the part of both the university administration and the region. For example, the greatest involvement of student media in the region's image-making processes can be seen in Kazan. There, university television not only promotes the university, but also meets the needs of its residents (for example, it fulfils the educational function of journalism).

Conclusion

The complexity of urban communications correlates with a deep change in place branding: there is a departure from the traditional 'commodity' relationship to the territories. That is being replaced with inclusive place branding, which manifests itself in a rejection of ready-made brands in favor of dialogue and co-creation with the residents.

In these circumstances, it is important to look for actors who are actively involved in mass communication processes and processes of social creativity. One of local communication actors can be university media. Previously, university media have only been considered in two capacities. On the one hand, such media have either been seen as a kind of corporate media, whose main function has been to organize internal communications and form a favorable image of the organization in the external environment. On the other hand, they were seen as a means of educating young people and as a kind of educational tool. This study hypothesised that university media can perform another important function: to engage in place branding.

The idea that university media can perform such non-traditional functions correlates with current research of local media, including non-institutional media. Firstly, authors note the high activity of the youth in expressing opinions on current socio-political issues (Gureeva et al, 2022). Of course, the content and forms of political participation have by now undergone a substantial transformation. Media activism among young people include the leisure context of activity: the activity takes place in free time and is associated both with the search for satisfaction from consuming a certain type of content (Gureeva, Dunas, & Muronets, 2021). Secondly, media philosophy researches emphasizes growing interest in local and unique events, people in an evolving digital reality: everything related to topos, region, local territory and local culture is preserved within the framework of an increasingly universal media reality (Savchuk, 2013 : 87). While at the end of the 20th century interest in local and community media was predominantly expressed by European and American researchers (e.g. Heinz, 1980; Howley, 2005), today such studies are found everywhere (e.g. Das, 2021).

The work showed that modern student media exist in a complex system of urban communications, where not only official institutions (for example, authorities, institutionalized media), but also ordinary residents can be facilitators of the development of the territory. Meantime universities are one type of territory 'hubs' where the flows of information and people constantly intersect: applicants, students, scientists, various visitors to university events. University and student media projects can cover not only the internal life of the organization, but also meet the various needs of residents of the city or region in which the organization operates. This is relevant in the context of transformation research the process of transformation of syncretic communicative and cultural memory in the digital environment (Simons et al, 2021). It is also relevant to investigate the participation of student media in the construction of meanings in the context of the robotization of journalism (Zorin, 2018).

We believe that student media can be seen as possible creators of territorial branding. In the context of the complexity of modern urban communications, city officials cannot independently, without the participation of residents, create a full-fledged and viable place brand. At the same time, the residents themselves, without organizational and resource support from the authorities and businesses, will also not be able to complete this task.

Further research in this direction could be devoted to a more detailed consideration of the factors of such participation, including financial, organizational, and creative conditions which are required to increase the participation of university media in the promotion of territories.

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