


**ЖУРНАЛИСТИКА**

**Branding Strategies in British Media:  
A Comparative Analysis of Online Platforms, Television and  
Radio Broadcasters**

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**Բրիտանական ՉԼՄ-ների բրենդավորման ռազմավարությունները. առցանց  
հարթակների, հեռուստաընկերությունների և ռադիոհեռարձակողների  
համեմատական վերլուծություն**

*Ղազարյան Կարեն Ա.*

*լրագրության ամբիոնի ասպիրանտ, Ռուս-Հայկական համալսարան (Երևան, ՀՀ)*

**Անփոփազիր.** Սույն հետազոտությունը ներկայացնում է բրենդավորման ռազմավարությունների համապարփակ վերլուծություն, որոնք կիրառվում են Միացյալ Թագավորության վեց առաջատար մեդիա կառույցների կողմից: Ուսումնասիրության կենտրոնում են բրենդի ձևավորման և պահպանման գործընթացները, թիրախային յարանի հետ հաղորդակցության մեթոդները, դրամայնացման մոդելները, ինչպես նաև հարմարվողականությունը թվային վերափոխման պայմաններին: Վերլուծության առարկան են երկու թվային լրատվական հարթակներ (The Guardian և The Independent), երկու հեռուստաալիք (ITV և Channel 4) և երկու ռադիոհեռարձակող (Absolute Radio և Smooth Radio):

Հետազոտության արդյունքներն վկայում են այն մասին, որ բրիտանական համատեքստում մեդիա բրենդի արդյունավետ զարգացումը հիմնված է հստակ ռազմավարական դիրքավորման, եկամուտների դիվերսիֆիկացված աղբյուրների, յարանի հետ ակտիվ հաղորդակցության և հետևողական թվային ինտեգրման վրա: Եթե առցանց հարթակներն ընդգծում են խմբագրական ինքնավարությունն ու անհատականացված բովանդակությունը, ապա հեռուստաընկերությունները ձգտում են համատեղել գանգվածային գրավությունն ու թեմատիկ բազմազանությունը: Ռադիոհեռարձակողները իրենց բրենդային քաղաքականությունը հիմնականում կառուցում են հուզական ներգրավվածության և ունկնդիրների երկարաժամկետ հավատարմության վրա: Հետազոտությունը ցույց է տալիս, թե ինչպես են բրիտանական մեդիա բրենդերը հարմարվում հատվածական և մշտապես փոփոխվող թվային միջավայրին՝ միաժամանակ պահպանելով իրենց մրցունակությունն ու կայունությունը:

**Հանգուցաբառեր և բառակապակցություններ՝** մեդիա բրենդավորում, Մեծ Բրիտանիայի մեդիա դաշտ, յարանի հետ հաղորդակցության ռազմավարություններ, թվային նորարարություններ, եկամուտների դիվերսիֆիկացում

**Стратегии брендинга в британских СМИ:  
сравнительный анализ онлайн-платформ, телекомпаний и радиовещателей**

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**Аннотация.** Настоящее исследование представляет собой всесторонний анализ стратегий брендинга, применяемых шестью ведущими британскими медиаструктурами. В центре внимания находятся процессы формирования и поддержания бренда, методы взаимодействия с целевой аудиторией, модели монетизации, а также адаптация к условиям цифровой трансформации. Объектом анализа выступают две цифровые новостные платформы (The Guardian и The Independent), два телеканала (ITV и Channel 4) и две радиостанции (Absolute Radio и Smooth Radio).

Результаты исследования свидетельствуют о том, что эффективное развитие медийного бренда в британском контексте опирается на четкое стратегическое позиционирование, диверсифицированные источники дохода, активную коммуникацию с аудиторией и последовательную цифровую интеграцию. Если онлайн-платформы делают акцент на редакционной автономии и персонализированном контенте, то телевизионные вещатели стремятся сочетать массовую привлекательность с тематическим разнообразием. Радиостанции же

выстраивают свою брендовую политику преимущественно на основе эмоциональной вовлечённости и долгосрочной привязанности слушателей. Исследование демонстрирует, каким образом британские медийные бренды адаптируются к условиям фрагментированного и постоянно меняющегося цифрового ландшафта, сохраняя при этом свою конкурентоспособность и устойчивость.

**Ключевые слова и словосочетания:** брендинг в СМИ, медийный ландшафт Великобритании, стратегии взаимодействия с аудиторией, цифровые инновации, диверсификация доходов

## INTRODUCTION

In contemporary media ecosystems, branding extends far beyond promotional activity—it encapsulates the very essence of a media organization's identity and its perceived value by the public. A robust brand cultivates credibility, enhances recognizability, and fosters enduring relationships with audiences, ultimately contributing to organizational viability and market strength. As digital technologies reshape consumption patterns, both legacy and digital-native platforms are compelled to recalibrate their branding frameworks to stay pertinent.

This study seeks to analyze the distinguishing features of branding strategies employed by prominent British media organizations. It focuses on three media types:

**Digital news sources (The Guardian and The Independent)**, which embody innovative, reader-oriented models aligned with modern consumption habits.

**Television broadcasters (ITV and Channel 4)**, which navigate the dual objectives of wide demographic appeal and thematic differentiation.

**Radio stations (Absolute Radio and Smooth Radio)**, which leverage nostalgia and emotional engagement to foster loyalty.

The investigation aims to address the following key questions:

1. How has digital transformation altered branding strategies in British media?
2. What methods of audience interaction are prevalent across various formats?
3. In what ways do British media brands maintain relevance amid global competition?

## METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative comparative approach, incorporating:

- **Content analysis** of promotional materials, editorial frameworks, and corporate communications.
- **Comparative study** of audience interaction mechanisms and financial models.
- **Case study evaluation** of media responses to technological disruption and shifts in consumer behavior.

Through this multi-method design, the study elucidates how British media entities reconfigure their branding practices in response to digital innovation while preserving core identity values.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Branding within the media sector is increasingly viewed as a multifaceted process integral to organizational sustainability. It encompasses not only marketing but also audience perception management, trust-building, and long-term strategic differentiation. Scholarly perspectives underscore the dynamic and adaptive nature of branding in light of technological advancement and audience fragmentation.

Lucy Kueng (2017) [1, pp. 45-67] emphasizes the iterative character of media branding, suggesting it must evolve in tandem with digital disruptions. She posits that successful media entities maintain equilibrium between editorial integrity, audience engagement, and financial viability.

In a complementary analysis, Robert Picard (2002) [2, pp. 88-102] highlights the economic imperatives underpinning branding, advocating for income diversification through advertising, subscriptions, sponsored content, and user-driven contributions. This approach supports both fiscal resilience and editorial independence.

Gillian Doyle (2013) [3, pp. 134-156] identifies differentiation as essential to market survival, particularly in an oversaturated digital space. Her work stresses the need for distinctive value propositions, whether through specialized reporting or niche audience targeting.

David Hesmondhalgh (2019) [4, pp. 210-235] contributes a sociocultural lens, framing branding as a tool for shaping collective narratives and public discourse. Media brands, he argues, carry the responsibility of reconciling commercial ambitions with cultural stewardship.

These theoretical contributions form a critical foundation for this study's evaluation of branding across digital, broadcast, and audio formats in the UK.

## BRANDING STRATEGIES ACROSS MEDIA PLATFORMS

In an environment defined by rapid technological shifts and changing audience behavior, branding emerges as a pivotal determinant of media success and engagement retention. Distinct media platforms pursue tailored branding techniques that reflect their institutional values, user expectations, and strategic priorities.

### 1. DIGITAL PLATFORMS: TRUST, AUTONOMY, AND INNOVATION

1.1. The Guardian [13]: Championing Reader Support

**The Guardian** has pioneered a reader-supported revenue model, deliberately eschewing paywalls in favor of voluntary contributions. This reinforces its commitment to independent journalism, free from commercial or political interference.

**Branding features:**

- Emphasis on investigative depth and critical analysis, particularly regarding socio-political and environmental themes.
- Strong digital presence via podcasts, interactive graphics, newsletters, and social media dialogues.
- Transparent funding appeals that strengthen trust and align with the outlet's public interest mission.

This model secures financial continuity while solidifying **The Guardian's** identity as a principled and globally relevant news source.

1.2. The Independent [14]: Digital Expansion and Global Outlook

**Core branding strategies:**

- Algorithm-enhanced personalization offering tailored user experiences.
- Global network of contributors providing transnational perspectives.
- Multipronged monetization strategy involving ads, content partnerships, licensing, and paid subscriptions.

This framework enables **The Independent** to remain agile and competitive in an algorithm-driven media marketplace.

2. TELEVISION BROADCASTERS: MAINSTREAM REACH AND PUBLIC VALUE

2.1. ITV [15]: Mass Entertainment and Commercial Integration

As the UK's leading commercial broadcaster, **ITV** specializes in entertainment-centric content designed for wide appeal.

**Branding pillars:**

- Flagship reality formats and televised events (e.g., **Love Island, Britain's Got Talent**).
- Blended advertising strategies incorporating product placements and sponsor tie-ins.
- Social media amplification through platforms like TikTok and Twitter.

These components secure audience engagement and enhance commercial viability in a competitive broadcast market.

2.2. Channel 4 [16]: Innovation with a Social Agenda

Channel 4 differentiates itself through content that emphasizes inclusivity and progressive narratives.

**Key branding dimensions:**

- Commissioning of unconventional, issue-driven programming.
- Heavy investment in on-demand and multiplatform accessibility.
- Mixed funding model balancing public service obligations and commercial revenue.

This approach reinforces Channel 4's identity as a disruptor committed to public interest and creative innovation.

3. RADIO: EMOTIONAL CONNECTION AND CULTURAL CURATION

3.1. Absolute Radio [17]: Music Fidelity and Subcultural Alignment

**Absolute Radio** curates its identity around musical authenticity and genre loyalty, particularly rock.

**Brand elements:**

- Presenter-led programming that fosters familiarity and listener rapport.
- Cross-platform content including live sessions, podcasts, and app-based services.
- Revenue diversification through events, sponsorships, and subscription tiers.

The station's strategy supports community-building and distinguishes it within a crowded audio landscape.

3.2. Smooth Radio [18]: Comfort Through Familiarity

**Smooth Radio** adopts a nostalgic tone, providing a calming and emotionally resonant listening experience.

**Strategic highlights:**

- Carefully selected playlists featuring soft rock and classics designed to evoke memory and emotion.
- Reduced commercial interruptions enhancing listener comfort.
- Brand loyalty cultivated through soothing content and minimal disruption.

This emotional branding model enables **Smooth Radio** to maintain deep connections with its core demographic.

DATA VISUALIZATION: BRANDING PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS  
Comparative Branding Table

| Platform               | Brand Identity                              | Engagement Strategy   | Revenue Model                                       | Audience Loyalty |
|------------------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| <b>The Guardian</b>    | Independent, mission-driven journalism      | Podcasts, data-driven reporting, direct reader contributions              | Voluntary reader funding                            | High             |
| <b>The Independent</b> | Digital-native with global orientation      | AI-based content personalization, partnerships with global correspondents | Subscription plans, licensing, sponsored content    | Moderate         |
| <b>ITV</b>             | Broad-based commercial entertainment        | Popular reality shows, active interaction on social media platforms       | Hybrid model: advertising and subscription          | High             |
| <b>Channel 4</b>       | Public service with progressive positioning | Digitally targeted content, youth-oriented formats, social narratives     | Public funding combined with commercial advertising | Moderate         |
| <b>Absolute Radio</b>  | Authentic musical curation                  | Presenter-led programming, live events, cross-platform presence           | Premium subscriptions, brand sponsorships           | High             |
| <b>Smooth Radio</b>    | Nostalgic and emotionally driven            | Classic music playlists, minimal advertising interruptions                | Traditional advertising and selective sponsorships  | High             |

**Analytical Commentary**

The comparative assessment highlights how each British media brand articulates a distinct identity, engagement approach, and economic model tailored to its platform characteristics and audience demographics. The Guardian and ITV demonstrate the strongest brand recognition, supported by sustained public trust and mainstream appeal, respectively. Meanwhile, Absolute Radio maintains high audience loyalty by cultivating an emotionally resonant listening environment within a clearly defined musical niche.

This analysis affirms that successful branding in contemporary media depends on strategic alignment between editorial vision, audience interaction, and financial structure. In an increasingly fragmented and competitive media environment, these factors collectively determine long-term relevance and resilience.

**CONCLUSION**

This research reaffirms the pivotal role of branding in determining the strategic positioning and long-term viability of contemporary media institutions. The analysis demonstrates that branding practices vary considerably across media formats, shaped by the specific demands of each platform, the preferences of their respective audiences, and broader market forces.

Digital news outlets such as **The Guardian** and **The Independent** exemplify a model centered on editorial integrity, dynamic user engagement, and multi-channel revenue structures. Their branding strategies are closely aligned with the expectations

of a digitally literate audience and a competitive, fast-evolving information environment.

Television networks, in turn, illustrate divergent branding philosophies. **ITV** capitalizes on popular entertainment and integrated commercial partnerships to maintain broad appeal, while **Channel 4** has established a distinctive identity through its emphasis on socially relevant narratives and its commitment to inclusive, public-interest programming.

In the realm of radio broadcasting, brand loyalty is cultivated through emotional connectivity and curated content strategies. **Absolute Radio** positions itself around musical authenticity and genre specificity, whereas **Smooth Radio** relies on nostalgic familiarity and uninterrupted listening experiences to retain its audience.

Looking ahead, the continued relevance of British media brands will depend on their ability to adapt branding frameworks to shifting consumption behaviors and technological advancements. The integration of AI-based personalization, experimentation with diversified revenue models, and sustained investment in digital engagement are likely to be critical success factors. Strategic branding, when executed with clarity and consistency, will remain a defining attribute of media competitiveness in the digital age.

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