



Call for Papers

#emmahub: Zagreb 2026

Managing Media with and for Young People: Creators, Organisations and Audiences

12–13 November 2026

Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Since 2003, the European Media Management Association (emma) has brought together scholars and practitioners interested in how media organisations are managed. Our newest initiative, #emmahub, offers a unique space for exchange between research and practice on current challenges in media industries. In 2023 (at the University of Warsaw), we studied the media's managerial response to the war in Ukraine; in 2024, we moved to Macromedia University in Berlin to investigate media created by and for migrants; and in 2025, we visited Bilgi University in Istanbul to map media management among content creators. This year's #emmahub, hosted by the University of Zagreb, continues and deepens the discussion of the latter topic by focusing on youth.

The idea behind the emmahub 2026 in Zagreb entitled “Youth and Media: Content Creators and Information Authorities” is to discuss how young people (ages 16-30) consume media in general as well as how they create content on social media, “the main gateway to information for young people” (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022). A large body of research shows that young people tend to rely heavily on social media for news consumption (e.g., Newman et al., 2025; Battle et al., 2024; Perišin et al., 2021). According to the latest Reuters Digital News Report, 54% of those aged 18-24 and 50% of those aged 25-34 use social media as their main source of news (Newnam et al., 2025). Various research also demonstrates that young people show “weaker connection with news brands’ own websites” (Newman et al., 2023: 10), “receive most news items incidentally” (Battle et al., 2024), and “often pay more attention to influencers or celebrities than they do to journalists” (Newman et al., 2023: 10) which leads to influencers now playing “a significant role in shaping public debate” (Newnam et al., 2025). Recent research has identified “certain factors like male gender, being politically engaged and ascribing opinion leader functions” to social media influencers that “make youth more likely to use them as a main source of political information” (Harff and Schmuck, 2025: 855). Peers have also been identified as “providers of news” (Russmann and Hess, 2020: 3184). Still, a lot of young people tend to avoid the news. As Pew Research Center’ study shows, only “15% of young adults say they follow the news all or most of the time” (Forman-Katz et al., 2025). There are many reasons for news avoidance – a survey conducted in Croatia identified two main reasons for news avoidance among young people: the first one being that the topics covered by traditional media generally do not include young people, and the second is that they find the way these topics are presented boring (Blažević et al., 2022). Another identified problem is a general distrust in media, including social media, regardless of it being their main source of information (Blažević et al., 2022).

In view of such findings, it is important to discuss ways in which young people can be encouraged to vocalize their needs and desires regarding media content as well as to discuss the ways in which they can be assume the role of media managers; i.e. be encouraged to create and distribute their own media content. This touchpoint runs in three interconnected dimensions when young generations become 1) media employees (not only as journalists), 2) part of media audience and 3) content creators. The presented approach allows us to study the “youth and media topic” through the perspective of human resources (how to recruit, hire, and manage young employees), marketing (how media adapt their business models - including their products, brands, distribution, payments, etc. - to reach younger audiences) and influencers phenomena (who can be treated as modern media managers, as they organise production, build brands and communities, select platforms, analyse audiences, negotiate commercial partnerships, manage revenue streams, and make editorial and ethical decisions). Such a diverse take on youth in media management leads us also to a broader and more universal take on generation-induced transformations resulting in new patterns of trust, attention, participation, and engagement.

Topics and Questions

We kindly invite contributions that study youth and media management in these three interconnected perspectives. Guiding questions include (but are not limited to):

1) Media employees (not only journalists)

- How do young professionals develop managerial roles and capabilities in media?
- How to manage young employees in media organisations?
- How can media organizations motivate Gen Z to work in media professional environments?
- How to balance work and life balance among Gen Z (resilience, well-being, mental health, etc).

2) Media audiences

- How do established media organisations change (in terms of strategy, products, brands, communication, distribution, etc.), to address young audiences?
- How is young audience researched (measured), segmented, engaged, retained, and converted into members, subscribers, customers, or communities?
- How do platformisation and algorithms influence managerial decisions in youth-oriented media?
- Are there any tensions (organisational and ethical) regarding young audiences?

3) Content creators

- How do content creators manage their own media brands, production, partnerships, communities, and revenues?
- How do platformisation and algorithms impact managerial decisions in content creator-led media?
- How do content creators balance profits and ethics (from advertising to fake news)?
- How do youth as audiences engage with media content created by influencers? And what could be the implications for the future of media production?
- How do content creators consider their role within the media industry?

We will be happy to welcome submissions addressing:

- Generational change, succession, and organisational culture in media organisations
- Career paths, skills, labour conditions, and managerial development of young media workers
- Transformation of legacy media brands, formats, and distribution for younger markets
- Public-service and local media strategies for serving young audiences

- Management of authenticity, credibility, responsibility, and commercial pressure
- Strategy and innovation in media products designed for younger audiences
- Revenue diversification, monetisation, sponsorship, and platform dependence in media addressing to youth people
- Community management, loyalty, and participation among young audiences
- Audience research, segmentation, analytics, and insight generation concerning young people
- News avoidance, relevance, trust, and their implications for media strategy
- The use of automation and AI as managerial tools in production, distribution, analytics, or personalisation
- Creator-led media businesses and creators as owner-managers
- Personal branding, portfolio management, and professionalisation of content creators
- Production management, workflow design, outsourcing, and collaboration in creator enterprises
- Ethics in content creating

Goals of the Event

Our two-day lasting event will consist of round tables with media practitioners and especially workshops. The idea of the latter one is to strengthen youth-related research within media management by connecting organisational and strategic perspectives that are often discussed separately. It will bring together researchers to compare concepts, methods, cases, and professional experience. We would like to identify emerging research problems and develop a clearer understanding of how youth is reshaping media work, media organisations, media products, creator businesses, and audience management. Hopefully, it will be also a kick-off for new research topics and plans, like papers and grant applications.

DAY 1

Official Welcoming
 Round Table with Media Practitioners
 Coffee Break
 Workshop: presenting the concept
 Lunch / Coffee Break
 Workshop: Goals and research questions
 Seminar with JOMBS editor-in-chief

DAY 2

Round Table with Media Practitioners
 Coffee Break
 Workshop: Methods
 Lunch / Coffee Break
 Workshop: preparing a final presentation
 Coffee Break
 Plenary: the results, a summary & publication opportunities
 An informal party

The event will be structured around three workshops. While submitting, you will be asked to choose one topic on which you will work with your colleagues:

Workshop A – Young People as Employees and Employers?

This workshop focuses on young people as media employees, team leaders, and decision-makers. It welcomes submissions on youth career development, their managerial and leadership skills, organisational culture, intergenerational relations, working conditions in traditional and emerging media organisations.

Workshop B – Managing Media for Young Audiences

This workshop refers to the ways how media organisations develop their strategies, products, brands, distribution, and business models when addressing young audiences. You may also choose it when you are interested in how young audiences are measured, segmented and engaged.

Workshop C – Content Creators as Media Owner-Managers

Here you will study the topic of “creators as media managers”. The focus is on editorial work, production planning, brand and community management, platform strategy, partnerships, professionalisation, ethics, monetisation, and the tension between creative identity and business development.

Why Participate?

Apart from international cooperation, networking, studying relevant topics during a unique academic gathering, we also offer publication opportunities for selected papers resulting from #emmahub.

They include:

- Special issue of “Journal of Media Business Studies” (only for emmahub participants)
- Special section in the “Medijske studije - Media Studies” (only for emmahub participants)

The proposed publications will focus on the managerial implications of young people’s changing roles in the modern media ecosystem. Further information regarding the submission process, timeline, and editorial guidelines will be announced after the workshop.

Who Should Participate?

The #emmahub welcomes contributions from:

- Scholars in media management, media economics, journalism studies, communication, and digital media
- Media managers and professionals from established and emerging media organisations
- Content creators, creator managers, producers, and platform-based entrepreneurs
- Founders of digital-native, local, niche, and community media
- Audience, product, marketing, strategy, and innovation specialists
- Doctoral and early-career researchers

To apply, please submit

- a 300–500 words abstract outlining the proposed contribution. It should include goals, research questions, brief description of the methodology, estimated outcomes and contribution to theory and practice of media studies, and minimum five references.
- Your short biography (100 words) including affiliation and contact information.
- Information about the workshop (A, B, or C) you would like to participate in.

We are happy to let you know that #emmahub is fee-free event. However, active emma membership is required to participate. Please follow this link: [Register - emma - European Media Management Association](#)

Submission Timeline

Deadline: September 30, 2026

Notification of Acceptance: 15 October 2026

Preliminary Program: 20 October 2026

Workshop Dates: 12–13 November 2026

Contact

Please submit your abstract or send questions to:

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