

Transformation in the digital era: optimising social media for news coverage

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Abstract The development of communication technology also refers to the evolution of social media, which provides numerous benefits for its users. Journalists, in carrying out their work, have also undergone a transformation by optimising social media as an initial source of news. This research discusses the transformation of journalists in the digital era, focusing on optimising social media in covering news. The aim of this research is to analyse the use of social media by exploring the challenges and opportunities faced by journalists in utilising these platforms to obtain information, interact with audiences, and disseminate news swiftly and widely while adhering to the Journalistic Code of Ethics. This study is qualitative research employing a case study approach, with data collection methods involving in-depth interviews with journalists from various media outlets in Indonesia. The results of this research indicate, first, that the role of social media has evolved into a crucial element in modern journalistic practice. Social media, initially regarded as a social platform, has now become a primary source of information for journalists when commencing news coverage. The rapid dissemination of information via social media facilitates journalists' access to real-time data, the latest news, and public opinion. The Codes of Ethics serve as a guide to ensure that, despite information originating from social media, the verification process, objectivity, and balance of news remain paramount.

Keywords: digital era; journalism ethics code; journalist transformation; social media

INTRODUCTION

Media as a tool in the mass communication process is now continuing to transform to meet the diverse information needs of audiences (Batubara, 2014). Furthermore, at a more extreme level, communication technology significantly influences social life within society. L. Molyneux (2022) research, mentioned significant changes in the role of journalists; alongside the rapid development of social media, this means journalists must adapt to the changing media landscape and how social media has reshaped the way they work (Olsson, 2022). Journalists are faced with new challenges that require adaptation and the development of new skills. However, social media also offers opportunities to enhance the quality of journalism and strengthen the relationship between journalists and their audiences. The rapid flow of information, accompanied by the continuous repetition of narratives, has influenced people's perceptions and thoughts as readers of news.

Nielsen, R. K., & Radcliffe (2023), assert that news institutions have now adapted to the ever-changing social media landscape. By understanding these evolutionary developments, one can better appreciate the role of social media in shaping how news is consumed. The use of conventional media is gradually being overshadowed by the development of new media, which is also influenced by the massive growth in the number of internet users in Indonesia.

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According to data from the Association of Internet Service Providers in Indonesia (APJII), the number of internet users in Indonesia is projected to reach 221,563,479 users by 2024, out of a total population of 278,696,200 people. This indicates that Indonesia's internet penetration rate has reached 79.5%, with 64.3% of them being active social media users.

The sophisticated development of information and communication technology increasingly alters human thinking patterns. Additionally, changes in communication media content consumption patterns have occurred, making message delivery more accessible (Aziz, 2022). The use of simple media contributes to the popularity of social media among various groups. This situation also underlies the emergence of the phenomenon where everyone can create, disseminate, and consume the information they prefer. Newman (2023), highlights the importance of adapting to the changing media landscape and using social media effectively to reach and engage audiences.

The challenges faced by journalists in the current media transformation landscape are highly complex, particularly with the dominance of social media as a source of information and a news distribution tool. One significant issue is the existence of social media; although it provides rapid access to information, it also serves as fertile ground for the spread of misinformation and hoaxes.

Posetti, J., & Matthews (2018) state in their research that social media platform algorithms often prioritise viral content without verifying its accuracy. This places journalists in a difficult position, as they must thoroughly verify information, even though the sources often originate from social media, which may lack validity.

Meanwhile, in the digital era, speed is one of the main indicators of successful news coverage. Journalists are required to produce content quickly to avoid being outpaced by competitors. However, this pressure frequently conflicts with the fundamental principles of journalism, such as verification and accuracy. Vos, T. P., & Singer (2016) note that the use of social media as a source of information raises its own ethical dilemmas. Information originating from social media often lacks a clear or verifiable source yet is highly engaging. On one hand, journalists face the temptation to follow trends and distribute popular information; on the other hand, they must ensure that the information is correct and adheres to the journalistic code of ethics. Additionally, the use of social media often blurs the lines between personal and professional information, raising privacy concerns for both journalists and their sources.

It is essential to understand that journalism is not merely about writing news; it encompasses the art of a journalist's skills in covering actual and significant events (Fauzi, 2021). Journalism is a practice grounded in ethical responsibility, playing a vital role in society while adapting to technological changes, particularly in relation to social media. Journalists' ethical responsibilities involve the obligation to present accurate, fair, and unbiased information, while considering the impact of their reporting on the public.

The role of journalists in society is as gatekeepers of information, ensuring that the public receives news that is balanced and crucial for decision-making. Furthermore, social media has transformed the way journalists operate, expanding their reach and exposing them to new challenges, such as the spread of fake news (hoaxes) and pressure to adapt to the rapid pace of information. By understanding journalism in this context, we can better frame discussions about how digital transformation affects journalistic practices and responsibilities in the modern era.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, and even messaging WhatsApp, which are widely used for daily communication, serve as sources of information for their users. This illustrates how journalists are currently benefiting significantly from the presence of social media, where the world of journalism can no longer be separated from the role of social media. Journalists create their own official social media accounts to disseminate their journalistic products. The existence of social media empowers individuals to search for information from various sources and engage in discussions with others through message forums regarding posted information (Nugroho, 2020).

Journalism requires the media to serve as a forum for disseminating information contained in the news. Based on previous research by Nuraeni, Reni & Sigandi (2017) titled *The Role of Social Media in Journalistic Tasks: A Case Study of Bandung City Journalist Activities*, it was found that journalists in Bandung City use social media as initial data to research information and verify the authenticity and validity of the information obtained. They conduct verification and re-verification in the field by interviewing sources and visiting the crime scene directly.

Latar, Lemeishtrich (2015) states that journalistic activities have now been replaced by robots. Robot journalists could lead to dramatic changes in the work of human journalists and in newsroom operations. With instant access to new insights and information, their ability to craft stories and publish in seconds could render human journalists obsolete. Meanwhile, L. & L. C. S. Molyneux (2020), mentioned a misconception regarding journalists today who use social media, noting that social media is only one of the factors influencing journalism, alongside other factors such as economics and politics.

The platform facilitates various forms of engagement between journalists and audiences. According to Wahyuningsih, Titik, and Zulhazmi (2020), taking the case of the *Daily Radar Jogja*, state that Radar Yogya has made various efforts to optimise media use and face media competition through media convergence and appropriate strategies. This includes becoming active across various media platforms and providing a variety of advertising service options, as well as building a solid and synergistic team.

The focus of this article is on how changes in technology, particularly social media, affect the functions and work methods of journalists in reporting news. Social media has transformed the way journalists obtain information, interact with sources, and distribute news. On one hand, social media provides rapid and widespread access to information; on the other hand, it raises challenges related to information verification, the spread of hoaxes, and the potential loss of objectivity.

The formulation of the problem in this paper explores how journalists can optimise the use of social media as a tool in news coverage without disregarding the principles of the journalistic code of ethics. With these changes, are journalists able to maintain their professional standards, and what strategies do they employ to utilise social media as an initial source of information and a news distribution tool?

This phenomenon indicates that social media goes hand in hand with journalists' activities in formulating news. Panagiotou (2023) highlights how augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies are revolutionising the way we consume news. By leveraging this technology, journalists can create more immersive and in-depth storytelling experiences, allowing readers to 'feel' events as if they were present. In light of this, researchers will further investigate this topic. This is closely related to the research objectives, particularly analysing the role of social media in news coverage, identifying strategies for optimising social media by journalists, and exploring social media's impact on journalism's quality. Thus, this research seeks to address the challenges faced by journalists in the digital era, particularly in maintaining a balance between the efficient use of technology and professional integrity.

METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative in nature and employs a case study approach. Qualitative research, as noted by Craswell (2018), he explored central problems and phenomena that will subsequently be developed in greater detail. In this study, the case examined is how journalists utilise social media for news coverage and how this impacts their ethics and work processes.

Data was collected through interviews with journalists (See Table 1), field observations, and an analysis of news content produced using social media as a source. The case study approach enables researchers to examine the social unit under study in detail, intensively, comprehensively, and in depth (Mulyana, 2013). This approach is also widely used for sociological research on society (Yin, 2015). It is anticipated that the case study approach will provide added value to the uniqueness of the phenomenon concerning the use of social media by journalists, which is currently very prevalent. Research data will be analysed using a process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Hidayat, E., Susilo, D., & Mujiono, 2023).

Data collection techniques involved in-depth interviews with three informants, namely journalists who typically work alongside the role of social media and actively use social media as part of their work processes. The informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, which allows researchers to selectively choose individuals who possess the qualifications and relevant experience related to the topic being investigated. According to (Patton, 2002), purposive sampling is a sampling strategy employed when researchers wish to select participants who have specific characteristics that can provide in-depth and pertinent

information. This method ensures that each informant has substantial knowledge and perspectives that can offer valuable insights into journalistic practices in online media.

Table 1. Informant Data

| No | Name (Initial) | Age | Media Type | Position |
|----|----------------|-----|------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | E | 51 | Online/Newspaper | Editor |
| 2 | D | 40 | Online | Media Owner/Journalist |
| 3 | W | 26 | Online | Reporter |

Source: Interviews with informants in the media industry, 2024

The selection of informants was based on specific criteria, including their positions within the media industry and their work experience. Informants E, D, and W represent various roles, ranging from editor to reporter, thereby creating a comprehensive picture of how journalists operate in the digital media landscape. This approach not only enhances the validity of the research findings but also ensures that the perspectives obtained reflect the realities and challenges faced by journalists today. (Creswell, 2018) states, purposive sampling can assist researchers in obtaining richer and more meaningful data.

The researchers assume that, when focusing on a very specific phenomenon—namely, the use of social media by journalists for news coverage—a small number of informants who are deeply involved with this phenomenon may be adequate. Because this topic is specific, those directly involved will provide relevant and in-depth data, which is more important than having a large number of informants.

Meanwhile, in conducting interviews, the researchers posed questions that concentrated on the informants' experiences in verifying information from social media, the challenges they faced in maintaining accuracy and speed, and how they balanced the pressures of content production with journalistic ethical codes. Additionally, the researchers made observations of the news coverage process in the newsroom or during journalistic activities involving the use of social media, specifically in searching for news via digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and X. Based on the analysis conducted and the combination of findings in the field, the researchers can describe the results in accordance with the research objectives, namely optimising social media in the news coverage process due to the media transformation in the digital era. Consequently, the results of the research are expected to have a significant impact both theoretically and practically (Sampurna, A., Indra, F., & Fandhy, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Social Media Goes Hand in Hand with the Work of Journalists.

New media, which in this case refers to social media, encompasses digital media that is interactive, meaning it facilitates two-way communication supported by computing devices. Denis McQuail (2010) defined new media as the use of technology, both hardware and software, for electronic mass communication, enabling audiences to interact with one another. In this evolving era, users can easily find the news or information they require.

Social media as new media serves as a clear example of this concept. Its characteristics include interactivity and support for computing devices. According to McLuhan, media act as an extension of the human senses, and in the context of new media, this emphasises the role of computer technology in transforming the way we communicate. (Milles, Marththew & Huberman, 2020) notes that one of the significant impacts of new media, particularly social media, is the ease of access to information. Users can swiftly locate the news and information they need through various social media platforms.

Social media and journalism in the digital era are closely intertwined, despite the increasing digitalisation in modern society. In carrying out their work, journalists acknowledge that the presence of social media has both positive and negative effects on their profession. In an interview with journalist W, he noted that social media significantly aids journalists in their duties in the current digital landscape. He elaborated that the speed of information published on social media helps journalists access up-to-date information.

"Sometimes, I am greatly assisted by information that first appears on social media. It is simply a matter of how a journalist verifies the accuracy of the information obtained from social media through interviews with relevant sources and direct reporting in the field" (W, 3 November 2023).

The digitalisation of media is also evident in the increasing number of media outlets using social media as a marketing platform for their journalistic products. Informant D further explained that the existence of social media is immensely beneficial for marketing (product marketing) for the official media itself. This has led official media, which have transitioned from print media to television, radio, and online media, to compete in creating their own official social media accounts on platforms such as Facebook, X, and TikTok in order to reach audiences from various demographics.

"The existence of social media now assists in terms of marketing (product marketing) for the official media itself. As a result, many official media outlets, ranging from television and radio to print and online media, are creating official social media accounts on platforms such as Instagram, X, and TikTok" (D, 3 November 2023).

The significant number of government agencies and public figures who are currently active on social media also influences journalists' sources of information. This implies that journalists must be adept at using and managing social media to obtain accurate information from trusted sources. Furthermore, the conversations that frequently occur on social media platforms require journalists in this field to remain connected to online networks.

When maximised, the use of social media by journalists can foster more intimate relationships with other social media users. This can stimulate discussions on trending topics, engage with matters of interest to the media audience, and facilitate collaboration with others operating in the same field. Conversely, social media also enables publications to extend journalists' reach to media consumers. The presence of official social media accounts belonging to these media outlets increases the potential for a wider network of readers. Journalists thus enjoy an expansive reach by sharing news in the form of engaging content on social media (Harrison, J., & Kaye, 2022). The emergence of digital platforms, social media, and data analysis tools has significantly impacted the way journalists work.

For instance, Instagram has now become a complementary platform for journalists, allowing them to share information immediately following an event. Social media in journalists' work enables them to receive direct feedback from readers regarding the information they have created and shared. Moreover, the digital environment is inhabited by diverse groups of people who enrich the online space with unique perspectives. This diversity, closely linked to social media, is beneficial not only for journalists but also for individuals seeking to ask questions and learn about culture, experiences, and a range of opinions.

Social media as new media is a clear illustration of this concept. Its characteristics include interactivity and support for computing devices. According to McLuhan, media serve as an extension of the human senses, emphasising the role of computer technology in transforming the way we communicate. Fuchs (2013) states that one of the significant impacts of new media, particularly social media, is the ease of access to information. Users can swiftly locate the news and information they require through various social media platforms. Additionally, TikTok has emerged as a significant medium in the publication of news and information. Laurer (2023) indicates that social media platforms, especially TikTok, are becoming serious new competitors to traditional news media. TikTok, with its short and interactive video format, has successfully attracted the interest of many users, particularly the younger generation.

According to Kolodzy (2022), the digital era has brought significant changes to the world of journalism. Journalists must adapt to the ever-evolving media landscape, adopt new technologies, and develop new skills to remain relevant. The new theory of media today focuses on the role of digital technology in altering the way information is communicated and distributed. Instagram, as a digital platform, facilitates the rapid dissemination of information immediately after an event occurs. This contrasts with traditional media such as newspapers or television, which have limitations of time and space in news distribution. In this context, Instagram transforms the way journalists operate by allowing them to publish content in real time, thereby expediting the news dissemination process and providing the opportunity to directly access a wider audience.

According to Denis McQuail (2010) in *Interactive Communication Theory*, social media, including Instagram, allows for direct feedback from the audience, creating a two-way communication channel between journalists and readers. Within the framework of interactive

communication theory, this fosters active dialogue that enriches the reporting process through audience participation. The audience is not merely a recipient of information but also a participant who can offer opinions, critiques, and perspectives that are readily accessible to journalists (MacGregor, 2022). Social media has fundamentally changed the way news is covered and introduced new challenges for journalists.

This notion is further supported by research from Kharabsheh, R., & Abdallah (2022), who assert that social media facilitates direct interaction between journalists and audiences. Journalists can respond to comments, questions, and critiques in real time. These interactions enable journalists to forge closer relationships with their audiences and gather valuable feedback.

Meanwhile, the Theory of Social Construction of Reality, as posited (Berger, Peter L., & Luckmann, 2011), is also relevant to the current existence of Instagram as a medium. According to this theory, reality is constructed through social interaction and the exchange of information. With the diversity present on social media, journalists can gain insights into different viewpoints and life experiences from their audiences. This aids journalists in developing a richer and more inclusive understanding of the issues they cover, while fostering more personal interactions with their audiences. Eskiadi, Loanna (2024) notes that today's news media industry is increasingly shifting towards using more immersive technology in conveying news. Immersive journalism itself is a form of journalism that allows the audience to genuinely feel the experience as if they were present at the scene.

Social media is the Initial Source of Information for News Reporting

Social media is often perceived as an effective means of rapidly acquiring news topics. Even in this digital era, news sources can be easily accessed without the necessity of going directly to the field. For instance, news regarding government activities can be directly quoted from the official website or social media page of the relevant agency, where the information is guaranteed to be accurate. Nielsen, R. K., & Radcliffe (2023) state that social search, which allows users to seek information directly on social media platforms, is becoming increasingly popular due to its speed and convenience compared to traditional search engines.

Researchers assess that the accuracy of news obtained from social media or official government agency websites necessitates careful verification, even though these sources often provide information rapidly. It is crucial to ascertain the veracity of information by cross-checking through other sources, ensuring that content possesses proper context, and employing credible media to avoid the dissemination of fake news. This process helps ensure that the information received is both accurate and reliable.

Buchheit, R., & LaLonde (2022), in their study, found that social media platforms have become indispensable tools for journalists, serving both as sources of news and channels for disseminating information. This shift necessitates a reassessment of journalistic standards and practices to maintain credibility and accuracy in reporting. The transformation of communication media typically arises from a complex interplay between various felt needs, competitive and political pressures, alongside numerous innovations and technologies. One aspect that encompasses media transformation theory is media convergence.

Digital media enables and stimulates the development of modern media, which includes the convergence of telecommunications, data communications, and mass communications (Borchardt, 2023). Integration and differentiation are hallmarks of convergence (Jan van Dijk, 1999). In this context, integration is understood in two ways: firstly, as a combination of telecommunications infrastructure, data communications, and mass communications; and secondly, as a combination of sign systems and data types. All these forms of integration drive the concentration of media companies, culminating in community networks (network society), which represent a combination of communication at the interpersonal (micro), organisational (meso), and community (macro) levels.

Through social media, journalists can easily discover reporting ideas by investigating topics that are widely sought after or deemed interesting to the public. News encompasses all forms of reporting results, published either orally or in writing, originating from the realities of everyday life. Additionally, all information must be new, considered significant, and of interest to a broad audience. Willard G. Bleyer (Daulay, 2016) asserts that the primary function of reporting is to inform or report incidents or events to the public.

A journalist, E, explained in his research that social media serves as the primary or initial source of information for journalists. This information subsequently becomes the basis for journalistic work. The veracity of the information acquired from social media requires further scrutiny by consulting the relevant parties. For example, when a corruption issue involving a government official arises, the truth must be verified to ascertain whether the act of corruption occurred. Similarly, if a fire breaks out in a particular area, journalists are obliged to confirm the accuracy of the information by visiting the incident location directly.

"For journalists, social media serves as the primary or initial source of information. This information then becomes material for journalists in carrying out their journalistic work. Information on social media needs to be verified in a journalistic manner by journalists" (E, 4 November 2023).

This aligns with W's perspective, which elucidates how individuals using social media often share events occurring around them. Information disseminated via social media is conveyed more swiftly than the rate at which journalists spread news. For instance, updates regarding traffic jams and flood disasters in a particular area can be accessed very quickly and easily through posts made by social media users. However, on the other hand, journalists wishing to quote news from social media must also ensure the completeness of the news and assess whether it is susceptible to hoaxes.

The profession of journalism currently necessitates the use of social media; hence, individuals in this field must be adept at utilising technology that aids in simplifying their work. The use of social media indirectly contributes to making journalists' tasks more manageable. The advantages of social media, particularly in terms of the rapid circulation of information, surpass the speed at which information is covered by media offices, thereby making social media the initial source of information for news reporting.

Borchardt (2023), in the journal titled *The Impact of Social Media on News Production: Opportunities and Challenges*, explains how the integration of social media into news production presents opportunities for enhanced audience engagement and real-time updates. However, it also necessitates the adoption of new strategies to ensure accuracy and manage the influx of user-generated content. This is essential to guarantee the quality and authenticity of the information provided to the wider community.

Changes in the media business have also significantly influenced the use of social media in journalistic activities. In other words, social media offers economic benefits to media companies, being viewed as a valuable alternative for increasing a company's revenue. Furthermore, the role of the Code of Ethics for journalists and mass media is crucial in determining the viability of a press entity. Journalistic ethics comprises fairness, accuracy, freedom of responsibility, and constructive criticism (Daulay, 2016), as elaborated below.

Fairness: From the research findings, we found that although social media provides rapid access to information, accuracy and honesty remain significant challenges. Data indicates that information gathered from social media is often not properly verified, which presents the potential to spread inaccurate news. In response to this challenge, journalists need to ensure that any information published has undergone a rigorous verification process and has been checked by trusted sources. This process guarantees that the news presented remains fair and does not mislead the public.

Freedom of Responsibility: This research identifies that journalists' freedom to obtain and disseminate news from social media must be accompanied by a sense of responsibility. The data shows that although journalists have the liberty to choose their news sources, it is essential for them to adhere to applicable ethical norms to ensure that the news they convey is not only accurate but also responsible regarding its impact. Journalists must apply ethical principles at every stage of news reporting to avoid disseminating information that could lead to confusion or negative consequences within society.

The Essence of Press Freedom: Research findings demonstrate that press freedom allows journalists to access various sources of information, including social media. However, this freedom must align with an awareness of the impact of the information conveyed. Research reveals that the freedom to access and disseminate information must be balanced with a responsibility to ensure that the information shared makes a positive contribution to society and

does not incite conflict or problems. Journalists must be mindful of the potential impact of news on the public and act with integrity.

The Journalism Code of Ethics Remains the Guide for News-Making

To improve the quality of reporting, it must, of course, be accompanied by the quality of media human resources, one of whom is journalists. To ensure this quality, each journalist must currently undertake the UKW test (Journalist Competency Test). Every piece of news distributed in the media cannot be divorced from the rules that must be adhered to by media practitioners as a basis for reporting. Article 5 of the Journalistic Code of Ethics outlines how news must be published with the principles of balance, accuracy, thoroughness, precision, and completeness. Furthermore, the news must also be published fairly. Journalists must prioritise accuracy in their reporting. By fulfilling all these criteria, a journalistic work can be deemed to satisfy the elements of being newsworthy (Kusumaningrat, 2012).

As explained by informant D to the researchers, this competency test is necessary to ascertain whether journalists are genuinely skilled in the field of journalism. Suppose a journalist's competence has been tested. In that case, they will know and be able to discern whether the information they are disseminating is appropriate for public distribution, as well as ensuring compliance with the Journalistic Code of Ethics. Journalistic competence is typically obtained through training, such as fact-checking training, anti-hoax training, and other related programmes.

"Journalists now also have to take the UKW (Journalist Competency Test) to determine whether they are competent in their field" (D, 3 November 2023).

Informant E also noted that the Journalism Code of Ethics serves as standard rules for journalists that must be adhered to. This is because the Journalism Code of Ethics governs how journalists search for, obtain, and circulate news. The Code is closely linked to the responsibilities of journalists. While fast reporting is essential, accuracy based on data and facts is even more critical. Solely prioritising speed can potentially lead to doubt and ambiguity in the news being published.

"Fast reporting is necessary, but the most important aspect is that it is accurate according to data and facts. It cannot be merely about speed, as this can create doubt and ambiguity" (E, 4 November 2023).

There is a significant challenge for journalists in adhering to the Journalism Code of Ethics, particularly in online media, where they face direct demands for reporting speed that differ from those experienced by journalists working in print media. Journalist W explained that he has always endeavoured to apply the Journalistic Code of Ethics in every story he writes. This is typically achieved by ensuring that the names and roles of sources are not conflated with the content being reported.

Borchardt (2023) noted that journalism offers considerable potential to enhance efficiency and personalisation in news delivery. However, it is crucial to balance innovation with ethical considerations. By taking appropriate steps, news organisations can harness algorithmic technology while upholding journalistic integrity. One example of this is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The advantages of social media in terms of the speed of information circulation surpass the speed of information coverage by media offices, making social media the initial source of information for reporting. McCabe (2023) stated that AI aids the journalism process by automating repetitive tasks such as data analysis, content curation, and even certain aspects of reporting. This enables journalists to devote more time to in-depth investigative reporting. Meanwhile, Shishkin (2023) highlighted the importance of navigating the ethical challenges posed by AI-generated news while capitalising on its potential benefits.

Overall, the principles outlined by Rosihan Anwar reflect basic values that resonate with the dynamics of journalism on social media today. Instagram is a tool that allows journalists to continue their search for the truth, adapt to changing times, make meaningful contributions, and maintain their freedom in carrying out journalistic duties. Social media, such as Instagram, facilitates direct and real-time access for journalists in their quest for the truth. Information can be shared and vetted by journalists immediately after events occur, enabling them to pursue the truth quickly and accurately. With direct participation from the public, who can provide

responses or even direct evidence on social media, journalists can carry out fact-checking more effectively and transparently.

Furthermore, journalists' use of Instagram represents an adaptation to changing times, particularly in the context of digitalisation and developments in information technology. By not waiting to be "mastered" by technology, journalists active on social media demonstrate their ability to utilise new tools to convey information more efficiently, in line with modern society's media consumption patterns. This strengthens the position of journalists in the digital era. The use of Instagram allows journalists to share important information with a broader audience directly, without the filtering or limitations of traditional media. The information shared can reach the wider community instantly, providing a faster and more relevant impact on human needs, such as sharing important news, emergency information, or crisis guidance.

Tandoc, E. C., & Johnson (2022), state that social media has become an integral part of the news production process in digital-native news organisations. Social media has not only changed the way news is discovered and produced, but it has also strengthened the relationship between journalists and audiences. However, it is crucial for news organisations to use social media responsibly and ethically to maintain journalistic quality. Instagram provides a platform for journalists to voice their views and share information without always submitting to censorship or pressure from third parties. Despite the challenges associated with content moderation on digital platforms, journalists can still leverage this freedom to deliver independent news and perspectives. In this context, social media serves as a tool to advocate for and maintain press freedom in the digital era. However, alongside these advantages, social media also has weaknesses that media transmitters of information must consider, particularly regarding gatekeeping. Lewis, S. C., & Usher (2022) note that social media has enabled anyone to become a content producer, including news. This has led to an explosion of unfiltered and often inaccurate information, eroding the traditional authority of journalists as gatekeepers of information.

CONCLUSION

Social media can indeed assist media practitioners, particularly journalists, in obtaining information. However, beyond merely seeking information, journalists are required to possess specific competencies related to intellectual acumen and skills that just no one can perform. It is important for the media to prioritise speed in reporting; however, what is more crucial is how journalists can ensure that the news reflects the value of facts and data as existing reality. Therefore, it is vital for a journalist to thoroughly verify data and facts.

Journalists also adhere to a journalistic code of ethics in carrying out their duties. As Article 3 of the Journalistic Code of Ethics states, journalists are required to re-examine information, provide balanced reporting, and refrain from mixing opinions with facts that could lead to negative consequences. Furthermore, in their writing, journalists must also apply the principle of the presumption of innocence towards the individuals being reported on. This ensures that when an error occurs in the reporting, no party suffers a loss from the media's journalistic product.

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