



News Agency Journalism in the Era of Digital Media Technologies

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ABSTRACT

The study examined news agency journalism in the era of digital technologies. Digital media technology has had a profound impact on the way news agencies gather and report news. With the advent of social media platforms and mobile technologies, news agencies can now reach a wider audience in real-time and receive immediate feedback on their reporting. The main objectives of this study were to find out new media technologies that have influenced news agency journalism in 21st century; ascertain whether new media technologies have influenced news agency journalism. The study adopted the qualitative research method, exploring existing scholarly opinions and related literature. The study found out that artificial intelligent and algorithms, social media technology , robotics and bots immersive virtual reality, blogs, vlogs and blog spot are the major new media technologies and innovations hat influence news agency journalism in the 21st century. The study also found that new media technologies have and to very great extent influenced news agency journalism in the 21st century. The study concluded that news agency journalism have been tremendously influenced and impacted upon by new digital technologies and innovations. New digital technologies have the status quo and disrupted the traditional news agency journalism practices. In addition, digital media technologies have enabled news agencies to collect data and analyze trends quickly, allowing them to produce more in-depth and accurate news stories.

INTRODUCTION

Technology has disrupted nearly every segment of society. Journalism is one profession that has been redefined by emergent digital technologies. One area of journalism so affected is new agency journalism. News agencies, also known as wire services are journalism firms saddled with the responsibility of gathering, writing and dissemination of news and reports from around a nation or the globe to newspapers firms, radio and TV stations, government agencies or other users or subscribers (Nwokeocha, 2022). News agencies do not traditionally publish news stories themselves, but supply news stories to subscribers who, by sharing costs, receive services they could not afford. There are basically three types of news agencies namely: national news agencies, regional or continental news agencies and transnational or world news agencies. Although there may other other minor classifications such as faith-based news agencies, specialised news agencies, etc.

News agency journalism plays a crucial role in the dissemination of news and information on a global scale. News agencies serve as important intermediaries between news sources and media outlets, providing reporting, research, and content that is used by journalists and news organizations around the world. According to Hanusch (2019), one of the key benefits of news agency journalism is its role in facilitating the flow of information across borders and cultures. News agencies play a vital role in gathering news from various sources, including on-the-ground reporters, government agencies, and eyewitnesses, and distributing this information to media outlets worldwide. This helps to ensure that news is reported in a timely and comprehensive manner, providing audiences with a diverse range of perspectives and voices on important issues.

Moreover, news agencies often have the resources and expertise to cover events and stories that may be difficult for individual news organizations to report on independently. By having a network of correspondents and reporters around the world, news agencies can provide in-depth coverage on topics such as international conflicts, natural disasters, and political developments, offering valuable context and analysis that helps audiences make sense of complex events (Rourke,&Bastos, 2018).

Journalism in the era of digital media technologies has undergone significant transformations, presenting both opportunities and challenges for news organisations and journalists. The advent of digital media technologies has revolutionized the way news is gathered, reported, and consumed, leading to a democratization of information and a blurring of traditional boundaries between journalists and audiences. One of the key advantages of digital media technology for journalism is the ability to reach a larger and more diverse audience. Digital platforms allow news organizations to disseminate news quickly and efficiently to audiences around the world, breaking down geographical barriers and connecting people across different regions. Social media platforms, in particular, enable news to spread virally, reaching a wider audience than ever before. This democratisation of information has empowered

individuals to participate in the news cycle, sharing their own perspectives and contributing to public discourse (Singer & Ashman, 2019).

Digital media refers to any media content that is stored or transmitted digitally, such as text, images, videos, and audio, and is accessible through electronic devices like computers, smartphones, and tablets. It encompasses a wide range of platforms and technologies, including websites, social media, mobile apps, and streaming services, that allow users to access and interact with digital content. Digital media has significantly transformed the way information is created, distributed, and consumed, shaping the media landscape and influencing various aspects of society (Manovich, 2021).

One prominent definition of digital media comes from Roger Fidler, who describes it as "any digitized content that can be transmitted over the internet or computer networks," emphasising the digitisation and networked nature of digital media (Fidler, 1998). This definition highlights the importance of digital technologies in enabling the creation, distribution, and consumption of media content in a digital format. Another perspective on digital media is provided by Lev Manovich, who defines it as "media that is in a digital form and can be manipulated and distributed by computers" (Manovich, 2002). This definition emphasises the interactive and manipulable nature of digital media, highlighting how users can engage with digital content in dynamic ways, such as editing videos, sharing photos, or remixing music.

Digital media technologies have apparently disrupted the way news agency journalism was originally meant to work. New agencies were meant to gather, process and distribute news and information that media organisations, like newspapers, radio and TV stations, non-media organisations, and few individuals who subscribe to their services. In other words, they were meant to be news distributors, and not retellers. But the disruptive nature of digital technologies has changed this narrative, bringing the gap between news agencies and audiences. Moreover, news organisations and even individuals with the aid of technology can now reach and access news from far away sources which was not possible before the advent of digital media have. This makes experts begin to rethink the usefulness and rationale for news agencies based on the modern realities on ground. Again, digital media technologies have facilitated new forms of storytelling and multimedia journalism. Journalists now have access to a wide range of multimedia tools, such as videos, infographics, and interactive graphics, to enhance their storytelling and engage with audiences in innovative ways. This has led to a more immersive and interactive news experience for readers, allowing them to experience news stories through multiple sensory channels (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Again, the benefits of digital media technology is the democratization of information and communication. With the rise of the internet, social media, and mobile devices, individuals now have unprecedented access to news, entertainment, and social connections at their fingertips. This has empowered people to share their voices, perspectives, and stories with a global audience, bypassing traditional gatekeepers and intermediaries.

Digital media technologies have had a profound impact on the way news agencies gather and report news. With the advent of AI and algorithms, robotics and bots citizen journalism and crowd sourcing including user generated content, social media platforms and mobile technologies, the emergent digital technologies have disrupted and redefined the operations news agencies. These technologies have continued to blur the lines that made news agencies distributors of news instead of news retailers. With these technologies, audiences and news seekers around the world can access directly almost any news emerging from any part of the world. This was an exclusive preserve of news agencies before the disruption and / or emergence of these technologies. News agencies, in trying to keep up with the disruptions occasioned by technology have to devise means of survival. This entails why news agencies can now reach a wider audience in real-time and receive immediate feedback on their reporting. In addition, digital media technologies have enabled news agencies to collect data and analyze trends quickly, allowing them to produce more in-depth and accurate news stories (Wardle, &Derakhshan, 2017).

One notable example of the use of digital media technology in news agency journalism is the rise of citizen journalism. With the widespread availability of smartphones and social media platforms, ordinary citizens can now contribute to news reporting by sharing photos, videos, and firsthand accounts of news events. This has challenged traditional news agencies to adapt to the changing media landscape and incorporate user-generated content into their reporting (Hermida, 2013). Furthermore, digital media technologies have also enabled news agencies to diversify their storytelling techniques through multimedia storytelling. News outlets can now incorporate videos, podcasts, and interactive graphics into their news stories to engage their audience and provide a more immersive news experience. This has helped news agencies attract and retain a younger audience who prefer consuming news through digital platforms.

However, the use of digital media technologies in news agency journalism also presents challenges and ethical concerns. The rapid dissemination of information through digital platforms can lead to the spread of fake news and misinformation, which can erode public trust in news agencies. Additionally, the reliance on digital media technology for news reporting can lead to issues of privacy and data security, as news agencies collect and analyze large amounts of personal data from their audience. With these issues in mind, the study premise itself on news agency journalism in the era of digital media technologies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An Overview of Digital Media

According to Sambe (2013), digital media is a generic term for the many different forms of electronic communication that are made possible through the use of computer technology. It may include websites, streaming audio and video, chat rooms, email, online community, web advertising, DVD and CD Rom media, virtual reality environments, digital cameras, mobile computing, etc.

Livingston (2002) defines digital media by its technology (interactivity, digitalization, and convergence); service (delivery of Information, entertainment, political participation, education, commerce) and textual forms (genre hybridity, hypertextuality and multimedia). Again, Wikipedia (2011) describes digital media as content available on-demand through the internet, accessible by all digital devices, usually containing interactive user feedback and creative participation and also community formation around the media content. Most technologies described as new media are digital media, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, and interactive. Some examples include the internet, websites, computer, multimedia, video games, augmented reality, CD Roms and DVD.

Also, Manovich (2003) defines digital media by using the proposition :

1. Digital media are cultural objects which use digital computer technology for distribution and exhibition.
2. Digital media is the mix between older cultural convention and newer convention of data presentation and manipulation sensations. Digital media is also digital data manipulated by software just like any other data. An example is the ability to alter color, contrast, depth of field and tone of digital photographic images.

News Agency: An Overview

A news agency, also known as a wire service or news service, is an organization that gathers, writes, and distributes news to media outlets around the world (Tumber & Webster, 2016). These agencies play a crucial role in the journalism industry by providing timely and accurate information to the public. News agencies typically employ journalists, reporters, and editors who are tasked with collecting information, writing news stories, and distributing them to subscribing media outlets.

One key function of news agencies is to provide a centralized source of news for media organizations that may not have the resources to conduct their own reporting. By publishing news stories on a wide range of topics and events, news agencies help to keep the public informed about local, national, and international developments. They also play a significant role in shaping the news agenda by determining which stories are covered and how they are framed.

Despite their importance, news agencies have faced criticism for various reasons. One common criticism is their potential for bias in reporting. News agencies may prioritize certain stories over others based on their own agendas or affiliations, leading to a lack of diversity in coverage and a skewed representation of events. Additionally, news agencies have been accused of relying too heavily on official sources for news stories, which can limit the range of perspectives presented in their reporting (Tuchman, 2018).

News agencies play a crucial role in the dissemination of information to the public, but they are not without criticism and challenges. One of the main criticisms of news agencies is their potential for bias in reporting. The selection and prioritization of news stories by news agencies can be influenced by their

own agendas, leading to a lack of diversity in coverage and a skewed representation of events (Waisbord, 2014). Additionally, news agencies are often criticized for their reliance on official sources for news stories, which may result in a lack of critical analysis and independent reporting (Örnebring, 2014). This reliance on authoritative figures can limit the breadth and depth of news coverage, ultimately affecting the quality of information available to the public.

Furthermore, news agencies have been criticized for contributing to sensationalism and click bait journalism in an effort to attract viewers and increase revenue. This focus on sensational headlines and dramatic stories can detract from more substantive reporting and may mislead the public by prioritizing entertainment value over accuracy and relevance (Nossek, 2016). Despite these criticisms, news agencies continue to serve as important sources of information for media outlets around the world. They are instrumental in providing timely news coverage and facilitating the flow of information across different platforms. However, it is essential for consumers to be aware of the potential biases and limitations of news agencies and to critically evaluate the information they receive from these sources.

News Agency Journalism Practice

News agencies play a significant role in journalism practice by providing a centralized source of news content to media outlets around the world. These agencies collect, write, and distribute news stories on a wide range of topics, helping to keep the public informed about local, national, and international events. While news agencies are vital for the dissemination of information, their journalism practices are not without criticism. One key criticism of news agency journalism practice is their potential for bias in reporting. News agencies may prioritize certain stories or viewpoints over others based on their own agendas or affiliations, leading to a lack of diversity and balance in news coverage. This bias can influence the framing of news stories and impact the public's understanding of complex issues (Waisbord, 2000).

Another criticism of news agency journalism practice is their reliance on official sources for news stories. By relying heavily on government officials, corporate spokespersons, and other authority figures for information, news agencies can inadvertently perpetuate a narrow and sometimes biased perspective on news events (Schudson, 2003). This reliance on official sources can limit the range of viewpoints represented in news coverage and hinder critical analysis of important issues. Despite these criticisms, news agency journalism practice plays a crucial role in the media ecosystem by providing an essential service to media outlets and the public. By gathering and disseminating news content efficiently and effectively, news agencies help to ensure that timely and accurate information is available to a wide audience. However, it is important for news agencies to be transparent about their reporting practices and to strive for impartiality and diversity in their coverage to maintain the public's trust and confidence.

News Agency Journalism in Digital Age

In the digital age, news agencies are facing a myriad of challenges and opportunities in their journalism practices. The evolution of digital technology has revolutionised the way news is gathered, reported, and disseminated, presenting both benefits and drawbacks for news agency journalism practice. In digital age, news agencies have the ability to reach a global audience instantly through online platforms and social media. Digital tools and platforms have enabled news agencies to deliver news content faster and more efficiently, breaking news in real-time and engaging with audiences in new and interactive ways. This has expanded the reach and impact of news agencies, allowing them to connect with audiences around the world in ways that were not possible before (Hermida, 2012).

However, the digital age has also brought about challenges for news agency journalism practice. The rise of social media and citizen journalism has blurred the lines between professional journalism and user-generated content, raising concerns about the accuracy and reliability of news sources (Westlund, 2013). News agencies are now competing with a myriad of sources for audience attention, forcing them to adapt their practices to stand out in a crowded media landscape.

Moreover, the digital age has also raised questions about the sustainability and business models of news agencies. The shift towards online and digital platforms has disrupted traditional revenue streams for news agencies, leading to layoffs, budget cuts, and challenges in maintaining quality journalism (Pickard, 2019). This has raised concerns about the long-term viability of news agencies and their ability to uphold journalistic standards in an increasingly competitive and fast-paced digital environment.

News Agency Journalism in the Era of Digital Media Technology

News agency journalism in the era of digital media technology has evolved significantly compared to traditional practices. With the rise of digital media platforms, news agencies have had to adapt to new ways of gathering, presenting, and distributing news to a wider audience. Tuchman, (2018) states that there are some key points to consider when discussing news agency journalism in the era of digital media technology:

1. Instant news updates: Digital media technology allows news agencies to deliver real-time news updates to their audience. Social media platforms, websites, and mobile apps provide a means for news agencies to disseminate news quickly and efficiently, keeping the audience informed of the latest developments.
2. Multimedia storytelling: Digital media technology enables news agencies to incorporate multimedia elements such as videos, images, and interactive graphics into their stories, making the news more engaging and informative for readers. Multimedia storytelling helps capture the attention of the audience and enhance their understanding of complex issues.
3. Data-driven journalism: With the help of digital tools and technologies, news agencies can collect, analyze, and present data in a more

meaningful way to their audience. Data-driven journalism provides readers with deeper insights into various topics and helps them make informed decisions based on factual information.

4. Audience engagement: Digital media technology allows news agencies to engage with their audience through comments, forums, and social media interactions. This two-way communication helps news agencies build a loyal following and create a sense of community among their readers.
5. Challenges of misinformation: While digital media technology has made it easier for news agencies to reach a wider audience, it has also opened the door to the spread of misinformation and fake news. News agencies need to be vigilant in verifying sources and fact-checking information to maintain their credibility in the era poses challenges in ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the information being shared. Adapting to these changes and using digital tools effectively can help news agencies thrive in the evolving media landscape. of digital media.

However, news agency journalism in the era of digital media technology has brought about significant changes in the way news is gathered, presented, and distributed. While digital media technology presents new opportunities for news agencies to reach a larger audience and engage with readers in innovative ways, it also.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a qualitative analytical research method, focusing on the collection and analysis of literature and expert opinions from various sources. These sources include books, scholarly journals, and credible online articles. This method allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth review of the collected data, with the aim of identifying patterns, themes, and emerging concepts within the existing body of literature. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative analytical research relies on the interpretation and critical analysis of relevant sources to provide a broader understanding of the research topic.

Through this approach, the researcher thoroughly examines various theories and perspectives found in the literature and academic works. This process enables the integration of different ideas, which are then synthesized into a comprehensive analysis. Additionally, this method offers flexibility in exploring various relationships and interactions between different concepts, which might not be captured through quantitative methods. As a result, the study can produce deeper insights while also highlighting gaps in the existing literature, making a significant contribution to future research development.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Have new media technologies influenced news agency journalism in the 21st century?

New media technologies have greatly influenced news agency journalism in the 21st century. For example, the introduction of Artificial Intelligence has redefined news circulation both locally and internationally. It is gradually

replacing human functions in traditional journalism such as collection, collation, processing, packaging, design and distribution. AI is employed to enhance news firms' service delivery, mostly in areas, environment or context not suitable for human journalists (Singh, Mishra and Sagar, 2013). The employment of AI base reporting has orchestrated a new wave of journalism practice that has put news agency in a state of "infocalypse" (Schick, 2020; Fayoyin, 2021).

Robots and bots have also influenced news agency journalism. According to Odediran (2021) robotic reporting is disrupting the global journalistic terrenes and threatening to take over task traditionally performed by human journalists. Blogs, vlogs and blog spots have also influenced news agency journalism. With the web blogs, the news echo system becomes pluralized with plenty sources which exploit the medium as a personal journal about on news worthy topics. There are many web blogs delivery news contents including foreign news and media organizations that hitherto depended on news agencies now rely on this blogs to get their news as alternative sources leading to a drastic reduction of subscriptions formerly enjoyed by news agencies.

What are the new media technologies that have influenced news agency journalism in 21st century?

The major new media technologies that have influenced and reshaped news agency journalism in the 21st century include the internet, social media networks, AI, citizen journalism, vlogs, blogs, robotics, augmented reality, etc. the internet happens to be the mother of these technologies and innovations because it is upon its soil that other media technologies emerge and evolve. Corroborating this perspective, Bielsa (2008) aptly states that the blurring of the boundaries and markets of the news agencies and other media is mirrored in the multimedia spaces inaugurated by the internet which are the beginning of the 21st century has transformed the field of global news more radically than the penny press that created modern journalism in the 19th century.

CONCLUSION

Technology has disrupted the practice of journalism generally and news agency journalism (NAJ) in particular and there is no going back on it. The various innovations that come with modern media technologies have redefined and reshaped the model of news agency reporting. The niche which news agencies once had has since been blurred or eroded by technology. The seeming monopoly once enjoyed by these organisations is gone. And news agencies have got no option but to brace up and immerse themselves into the new media technologies in other to remain relevant. News agency journalism in the era of digital media technologies have both advantages and challenges. On the one hand, the immediacy of digital media technology allows for real-time reporting and dissemination of information around the world. This can enhance transparency, accountability, and public engagement with news. Additionally, the speed at which news is circulated can lead to errors and inaccuracies being spread unchecked.

Overall, news agency journalism in the era of digital media technologies requires a critical approach from both journalists and consumers. Journalists must uphold ethical standards, fact-checking, and verification processes to ensure accurate and reliable reporting. Consumers, on the other hand, need to be vigilant in verifying the sources of information and critically evaluating the credibility of news agencies. Only by working together can we navigate the complexities of digital media technologies and ensure that journalism remains a cornerstone of our democratic society.

News agencies should completely embrace technology as it is the only way of survival in the 21st century. As subscriptions decline owing to alternative sources, news agencies should devise new ways of generating revenue which much must be technology-driven and they must diversify their operations in order to survive the seeming onslaught of digital media technologies.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

The researcher realizes that, given the limited knowledge and skills of the researchers themselves, there are still many shortcomings in terms of language, writing, and presentation form. Therefore, the researcher expects constructive criticism and suggestions from various parties in order to make the article better.

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