

Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union

THE FUTURE OF NEWS

in Asia and the Pacific

2024

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The **Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU)** was established in 1964. It is a not-for-profit, non-government, non-political, professional association with a mandate to assist the development of broadcasting in the Asia-Pacific region. It is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The ABU's 231 members serve more than half of the world's population. They include state, national and public service media organisations, private media and technology companies, digital content providers and international organisations and companies in related fields. The ABU provides tailored capacity-building and training in news, sports, programming and technology, the Asiavision news exchange, rights-free content, negotiated rights agreements, coproduction opportunities, consultancy services, a range of awards to promote excellence, and networking and information exchange events. It also facilitates international and regional media cooperation.

Asiavision (AVN) is the ABU's international video news exchange. It includes breaking and headline news, stories about global issues such as international relations, conflict, defence and security issues, economic and business news, stories on refugees, climate change and innovation, human interest stories and stories that reflect the perspective and culture of individual nations. ABU members who subscribe to Asiavision pay an additional fee for the right to use about 16,000 items a year on all platforms, unless otherwise specified, including reporter packages and reporter pieces to camera (PTCs). Advisories recommending the best available content are sent to members four times a day on weekdays (two on Saturdays and Sundays) and story alerts are sent via email and on WhatsApp for major breaking news. As of June 2024, there are 31 Asiavision members. They are: RTA & Ariana TV in Afghanistan, ABC Australia, BTV Bangladesh, RTB Brunei, CCTV China, Fiji-TV & FBC in Fiji, TVB Hong Kong, TVRI Indonesia, DD India, NHK Japan, KBS Korea, TDM Macau, RTM Malaysia, PSM & SS Media in Maldives, MRTV Myanmar, TV5 Mongolia, NTV Nepal, Pasifika TV New Zealand, ABS-CBN Philippines, Mediacorp Singapore, SLRC & MTV in Sri Lanka, Thai PBS & MCOT in Thailand, TRT Türkiye, TVTM Turkmenistan, MTRK Uzbekistan and VTV Vietnam.

The ABU works closely with external partners including United Nations organisations, departments and agencies. It is a member of the **World Broadcasting Unions (WBU)**. The WBU was established in 1992 and is the coordinating body for broadcasting unions around the world. The other members are the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), the African Union of Broadcasting (AUB), the Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU), the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the International Association of Broadcasting (IAB/AIR), and the North American Broadcasters Association (NABA). NABA acts as secretariat for the WBU.

The Future of News in Asia and the Pacific

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Compiled and edited by Deborah Steele

Designed by Nerina Rosli

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Foreword

*Ahmed Nadeem
Secretary-General
Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union*



2024 marks the 60th anniversary of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union and the 40th anniversary of our international news exchange, Asiavision.

It's an occasion to celebrate the foresight and wisdom of founding members and to applaud all those who have contributed to the success of both, often driven by their deep personal commitment to our mission of media development.

But it's also a time to look forward. Just as we have adapted to changes in technology, platforms, audience preferences and stakeholder expectations over the past 60 years, more change is coming and it would appear the pace of change is faster than ever.

It is in this context that I commend The Future of News report to you. It provides all members with insights, ideas and new perspectives. It celebrates the work and wisdom of some of the Asia-Pacific region's best thought leaders, as well as the views of international partners and leading academics. The report also includes the results of our Future of News survey.

The ABU is built on our members' commitment to sharing knowledge, exploring ideas and helping one another find solutions. The Future of News report demonstrates all these values at one of the most dramatic, challenging and exciting times in our history.

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Contents

Introduction	5
Why there is a future for public broadcasting - Thepchai Yong (Thai PBS)	7
Debunking, Pre-bunking and Appropriate Tech: Building a Solid Foundation for the Future of News - Kaori Iida (NHK)	9
The Future of Investigative Journalism - Hojoon Lee (KBS)	13
Broken News - Chevaan Daniel (Capital Maharaja Group)	17
More than efficiency: What can AI do for you? - Charlie Beckett (Polis Institute, LSE)	21
Interview with DD India Senior Editor & Journalist Sakal Bhatt	25
Is news important? - Edson C. Tandoc Jr (Nanyang Technological University)	31
A Philippine media giant's digital turnaround - Francis Toral (ABS-CBN)	33
The importance of high value, audience-first journalism - Justin Stevens (ABC)	37
Convergence and the future of media - Dr Semih Göncü (TRT)	41
Navigating new challenges - Murat Selvi, edited Mehboob Jeelani (TRT)	43
Ten New Directions of Audiovisual Content - Dr Bin Li (China Media Group)	47
The impact of celebrity culture and fandom on news - Dr Bertha Chin (Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak)	51
The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024: Snapshot	52
Embracing GenAI in news and current affairs - Ahmad Shafiq Mirza Bin Mansor (RTM)	53
New tools & climate change in the South Pacific - Ritika Pratap (FBC)	59
Maintaining values in a time of transition - Harry Lock (Public Media Alliance)	63
Innovative tools to restore media trust in the age of AI - Cédric Alviani (RSF: Reporters Without Borders). Includes key principles of the Paris Charter on AI & Journalism	65
Prioritising journalist safety - Elena Consentino (International News Safety Institute)	67
The United Nations launches Global Principles for Information Integrity	69

Introduction

Deborah Steele
Director
ABU News



The catalyst for this inaugural report on *The Future of News in Asia and the Pacific* is the unprecedented pace of change in the news industry and the range of factors driving change.

It would be easy to focus on generative AI alone. It has already resulted in extraordinary change from ChatGPT being used to research stories and draft scripts, through to the adoption of transcription, translation and text to video and audio tools and news-reading avatars. The capacity of GenAI to generate articles, videos, audio and images from a text description is breath-taking.

The explosion in GenAI content combined with elections this year in the world's three biggest democracies (Indonesia, India and the United States) and wars in Gaza and Ukraine, has heightened the problem of disinformation: falsified content that aims to deceive. Disinformation and misinformation, the unintentional spread of inaccurate information, threaten audience trust and the integrity of news services like never before. Already there are thousands of examples of disinformation, and while many are working on introducing content credentials and ways to verify what's real and what's not, the surge in GenAI content means it is a problem which is growing daily and evolving quickly.

There has been another set of announcements that could have even more impact on our industry – new climate records. In March this year, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said our planet was on the brink, with “sirens blaring” across all major indicators amid record temperatures on land and at sea. “Some records aren’t just chart-topping, they’re chart-busting,” he said. The result is a series of once unfathomable events. This year we have seen floods in Dubai and temperatures close to 50 degrees Celsius in Delhi. The Asia-Pacific region, home to 60 percent of the world’s population, is particularly susceptible and the impacts will be felt in politics, economics, international relations, food and water security, health, education and the way people live their lives. News leaders have to factor in coverage of a new set of major news events and possible newsroom relocation when planning and investing for the future.

The fragmentation of media, budget pressures, the changing relationship with social media companies, geopolitical shifts, the culture of fandom, gamification and growing risks to journalist safety are also impacting the future of news. The aim of this report is to highlight the range of issues, explore the implications and encourage discussion and innovation.

There's a parallel goal: to recognise and celebrate industry expertise in the Asia Pacific region, while also highlighting the importance of a diversity of voices and perspectives.

Thank you very much to our stellar ABU essayists for sharing your experiences, insights and wisdom: Thepchai Yong (Thai PBS), Kaori Iida (NHK Japan), Hojoon Lee (KBS South Korea), Chevaan Daniel (CMG Sri Lanka), Sakal Bhatt (DD India), Francis Toral (ABS-CBN Philippines), Justin Stevens (ABC Australia), Dr Semih Goncu & Murat Selvi (TRT Türkiye), Ahmad Shafiq Mirza Bin Mansor (RTM Malaysia) and Ritika Pratap (FBC Fiji).

The report is enriched by essays from three exceptional academics who are each recognised internationally for their thought leadership and research in this area: Professor Charlie Beckett, the founding director of Polis - a think-tank for research and debate on international journalism at the London School of Economics and a leading commentator of the impacts of GenAI; Professor Edson C. Tandoc Jr from the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, who researches audience behaviour and asks whether an appreciation of news equates to a willingness to pay for it; and Dr Bertha Chin, from Swinburne University of Technology in Sarawak, whose research into fandom helps explain the emergence of news influencers and why young audiences are turning away from traditional news sources.

Thanks too to our essayists from our international partners: Cédric Alviani (Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific Bureau), Elena Consentino (International News Safety Institute) and Harry Lock (Public Media Alliance).

Finally, thank you to all those who completed our comprehensive Future of News survey, especially those respondents who completed the survey at the Asiavision Coordinators' meeting in January 2024 and at the ABU's Pacific Media Partnership Conference in April 2024.

This report draws on the expertise and experience of many to help us all navigate the future of news in the Asia Pacific region in an era of rapid change and disruption.

Deborah Steele
Director of ABU News & Chair of the World Broadcasting Unions' News Committee
Editor of The Future of News in Asia and the Pacific

Why there is a future for public broadcasting

*By Thepchai Yong
Executive Advisor
Thai Public Broadcasting Service*

Thepchai Yong is the Executive Advisor of the Thai Public Broadcasting Service (Thai PBS), Thailand's first public broadcaster. In his 30 years in the media, Thepchai has held several key editorial positions, including news director of ITV, Thailand's first independent broadcaster, editor-in-chief of the Nation Multi-Media Group, and director general of Thai PBS. He was recipient of the Press Freedom Award from the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists in 1992 and the Media Leadership Award from the US-based Internews in 2009. He was also president of the Confederation of ASEAN Journalists and the Thai Broadcast Journalists Association.



Public broadcasters the world over are facing increasing pressure and hostilities. Their funding and independence are under threat. And in some places, their future is a big question mark.

The situation is even more challenging for public media in less-established democracies with a history of authoritarianism and intolerance for freedom of expression. The proliferation of social media, competing services, and changing media consumer behavior have been cited as among major factors for questioning the relevance of public media.

When people are already overloaded with news and information why would we want to spend tax-payers' money on public media? The question has been made more acute with the phenomenon of news avoidance and news fatigue. Yet, it's precisely within this complex media landscape that the significance of public media becomes more vital.

The traditional role of public broadcasting in providing reliable, unbiased information, educational content, and cultural programming to the public cannot be overstated. It's the role that earns international public broadcasters like BBC, DW and NHK the public's trust and which distinguishes them from their commercial counterparts.

But for the less developed countries which are fortunate enough to have public broadcasting, its role goes beyond keeping people informed and earning people's trust. Take the case of Thailand. It's the Thai Public Broadcasting Service, better known as Thai PBS, that stands out as an example of how public media can help contribute to the

integrity of public discourse as the country goes through its democratic transition amid political polarization and many social challenges.

It's no small wonder that public broadcasting has managed to have a foothold in Thailand. The broadcaster, financed with taxes on tobacco and alcohol, has come to symbolize the struggle for media freedom in Thailand – very much similar to the role played by public broadcasters in several other countries. It does so through its professional news reporting and educational programming that differentiate it from commercial broadcasters.

In the age of dumbing down content, Thai PBS covers not what is trending but what is important. And by upholding high journalistic standards and investing in investigative reporting, it distinguishes itself as a trusted information provider – something that is badly needed in the current volatile media landscape. In 2020-2023, Thai PBS was ranked as the most trusted media brand in Thailand by the Reuters Digital Report on global media organizations.

While commercial broadcasters see their audiences as consumers, public broadcasters see them as citizens. Considering public engagement to be one of its top priorities, it helps empower particular marginalized sectors of the society through programs and activities that enable them to make their voices heard.

Like many other countries, Thailand has had its fair share of political polarization. Both the mainstream and social media have knowingly and unknowingly played a part in widening the political gulf. Partisanship means that media outlets are willing to propagate certain political beliefs or help spread misinformation. It's times like this that the role of public media is most crucial. Being independent and unbiased, they can provide neutral space for people with opposing political views to debate and bridge their differences.

It's not unusual that even under democratically-elected governments, press freedom can still be under threat. And in countries with a shaky democracy like Thailand, commercial media outlets are often vulnerable to interference from political and business interests. Public broadcasters like Thai PBS, which doesn't depend on commercial support and is not answerable to any government bodies, are best positioned to hold those in power accountable. And in an era of information overload and the proliferation of fake news and disinformation, public broadcasters have a critical role in providing the society with reliable and truthful information.

However, to stay relevant in this new media landscape, public broadcasters need to adapt and innovate to serve the evolving needs of the public across new platforms to ensure a wider audience reach, especially among younger people. After all, its survival ultimately depends on the support it has from the public even if it faces pressure and hostilities from those in power.

Public broadcasting certainly has a future. As long as it upholds its fundamental principle of serving the public interest, it will continue to be an integral part of the media industry.

Debunking, Pre-bunking and Appropriate Tech: Building a Solid Foundation for the Future of News

By Kaori Iida
Director of Digital News Division
NHK Japan

Kaori Iida currently serves as the Director of the Digital News Division at NHK, Japan's national public broadcaster. Previously, she was the editor of NHK's flagship news program "News Watch 9" and before that, LA Bureau Chief covering everything tech. She was also the Senior Economic Correspondent in Washington, DC reporting on finance and trade policies and the anchor of NHK's nightly business news program.



History repeated itself after a 7.6 temblor struck Japan on New Year's Day. As was the case during the Great Kanto earthquake 100 years ago, false information spread instantly and widely.

On January 1, 2024, while many people were enjoying their very first day of the Year of the Dragon with friends and family, Japan was hit by a massive earthquake. It struck at 4:10 PM, and subsequent tremors took the lives of more than 240 people, reminding us of the vulnerability of our island nation.

As Japan's sole public service broadcaster, NHK immediately began airing horrific images from the epicenter in the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture. Transmitting such images was extremely important to show viewers outside the region the level of destruction, but we soon learned that many in the most hard-hit areas were not able to receive information through TV for days. That was because broadcasting equipment had suffered severe damage. The most vital tools for conveying trusted information were digital format news and old-fashioned radio. One lesson I learned personally was the importance of keeping things short and simple. Expecting evacuees to watch video on their smartphone was not realistic, given their anxiety over keeping their batteries from running out.

Tech – the good, the bad, and the ugly

Aside from alerting the public through push notifications about the most urgent news such as approaching tsunami, we used NHK's website and app to keep our audience up to date. Information concerning black outs, water shortages, and road blockades was of great interest, not only to the people in the affected area but to our audience nationwide, as many people were traveling inside and outside the area to celebrate the new year with family.

Twitter/X was also effective in reaching our audience. According to X CEO Linda Yaccarino, over 40 million people per day use X in Japan. That is one in three members of the population. Yes, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube are all important sources for many, but they are not as ubiquitous as X.

However, X was also a means for spreading misinformation and disinformation. We knew from the beginning that this was coming. Following the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, not as many people were using Twitter, but "fake" news spread far and wide. This included untrue and sometimes harmful advice concerning medical treatment to offset the effects of radiation from the Fukushima nuclear accident. This spread of misleading information inspired NHK to launch SoLT or the Social Listening Team in 2013. SoLT members, mostly students or other young people who follow social media, check feeds 24/7 using third-party AI tools. Once a member picks up doubtful information that might be newsworthy, they pass it along to beat reporters who specialize in a certain area. Reporters do what reporters are supposed to do, which is to contact their sources and verify the information along with their editors.

The following two pieces were among the false information – in Japanese and English - that we debunked through social media, our website and broadcasting.



Social media posts falsely claim quake "man-made" (January 2)

An NHK analysis of online data concerning the Noto temblor found 250,000 posts on the artificial earthquake hypothesis by the end of the second day. Some posts featured videos from past events, including a Meteorological Agency news conference about seismic activity following a North Korean nuclear test.



Fake SOS calls surge due to revenue-sharing incentives (January 5)

With the incentive to increase impressions on X, some people were willing to spread fake news about rescue requests. NHK verified in a subsequent article that these tweets were sometimes posted from a foreign country for monetization purposes. Such posts could affect rescue activities and lead to confusion during evacuations.

We also engaged in “pre-bunking” before things actually happened. On day one, we put out a story to call attention to false information regarding the earthquake and tsunami that people might see on their smartphones. During past reporting on gubernatorial elections, we found this approach to be effective. It’s much better to be prepared than to scramble to find credible information after the fact.

Interestingly, it wasn’t necessarily state-of-the-art generative AI images or footage that were trying to fool us. Images or videos from past earthquakes were more the norm. Another trend we noticed was the rise of imposter content regarding media organizations. Allowing NHK imposter content on geopolitical issues to go viral would create a nightmare, given the current tensions in East Asia.

The hardware challenge

As in so many other countries, for many people in Japan today, the smartphone is a more important device for consuming news than the TV. We must catch up with today's audience and meet them where they are. One unique challenge for Japan is the rapidly growing aging population. Almost 30 percent of the population is over 65. More than 10 percent is over 80. While many elderly people do use smartphones to video chat with their grandchildren, some are indifferent to new technologies. As a public service broadcaster, we must be mindful of the needs of two completely different cohorts. One has a limited appetite for watching TV and mainly obtain its information through smartphones. Another receives its daily information basically from TV. Having said that, whatever the device, the need to bring timely, trustworthy news to our audience will not change. I believe our strength, delivering accurate and independent news in a timely manner, is on fullest display when big stories break.

“Another trend we noticed was the rise of imposter content regarding media organizations. Allowing NHK imposter content on geopolitical issues to go viral would create a nightmare, given the current tensions in East Asia.”

Adding value, building trust

In a nutshell, the future of news is “trust.” Since debunking false news is like playing whack-a-mole, our top priority is to make our journalism products valuable enough that people seek them out on a daily basis. Large natural disasters test us to the limit and differentiate us from other media, especially when the effects are prolonged.

NHK launched radio broadcasts in 1925, against the backdrop of the Great Kanto earthquake when misinformation and conspiracy theories spread quickly. We will be celebrating our hundredth year in 2025. We need to remain a trustworthy news organization in order to stay relevant and to survive another 100 years.

The Future of Investigative Journalism

By Hojoon Lee
Reporter
KBS Korea

Hojoon Lee is a reporter at KBS in South Korea. He joined KBS in 2018, after working as a reporter for five years at SBS CNBC ('SBS Biz' now). He has reported about politics, economics, business, legal and social affairs, education, disasters and the environment. He was awarded the 'Lee Mun-ok Bright Social Award' by a whistleblower foundation in 2023. He has an economics degree from SungKyunkwan University.



Investigative journalism benefits society, but it's expensive.

I asked 15 reporters and media professors, most of whom have worked for an investigative journalism team, for their insights on the future of investigative journalism.

Most of them stated that total personnel across the investigative journalism field has fallen by about 30 percent, which is close to a terminal decline.

The main cause of this decline and the lack of support of investigative journalism is frankly due to the industry's unwillingness to provide critical or even conditional support to the field. They largely consider investigative journalism teams as being ineffectual and simply not producing results. This demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding in some ways.

Investigative journalism takes a lot of time to research and there is always the danger of reaching a dead end. This can be seen as inefficient, compared to other team results. Reporting in general is not doing well these days we can all agree, making it all the more difficult for company managers to assign reporters to the Investigative journalism team.

When there is a turnover in company leadership, the Investigative journalist team is particularly vulnerable due to our coverage of whistle-blowers. If the new leadership is reluctant to utilize or support Investigative journalism, it will make it more difficult to recruit and organize our personnel.

The media environment as a whole is not favorable towards Investigative journalism either. These days, the audience who follow the news cycle prefer short forms of reporting styles such as shorts or shorter articles. Print media is in trouble and TV is not far behind. YouTube, Instagram and TikTok are increasingly the primary source of news for

many and to compound our problems, are difficult platforms for investigative journalism stories to spread and gain traction.

So, since our industry as a whole is shrinking and our stories are being increasingly drowned out by new forms of media, companies increasingly feel they have no choice but to downsize.

When reporters cover elections or specific disaster situations, they can quickly produce quality articles and content on demand. Our field, however, cannot seem to produce nearly as many articles since our reporters require more research, and because of the nature of the reporting, time and effort to research all related areas of the news needs to be undertaken to ensure accuracy and therefore trust.

Another factor we struggle with is that people generally do not prefer to read up on heavy material such as crime, fraud, or systemic misconduct that can cause social upheaval. Much of our potential audience simply tends to tune out.

All of that being said, everyone who took part in this survey voiced the opinion that investigative journalism is very beneficial not only to society but to the media companies and personnel themselves. It trains reporters through extensive investigation and the research discipline required to successfully make an investigative report. Our reporting can define the identity of our parent media company. It is no exaggeration that Investigative journalism can break stories that define a company.

Those surveyed also stated that investigative journalism is vital in covering ongoing, unsolved problems including human rights violations, the environment and so on. These topics are very hard for reporters who work in daily news to report on. In contrast, investigative journalism can tell these stories and increase the visibility of various social agendas across civic society.

Additionally, our methodology has become somewhat popular across the field. For instance, total inspection skills are commonly used among many reporters nowadays. They are comfortable using this skill when conducting research. This might account in part for why some feel that shrinking the investigative journalism team is a foregone conclusion. This type of thinking is unfortunately common.

However, an organization or bureau of investigative journalism is essential for preparing the next generation of reporters. New skills and techniques are more vital now than ever. Coding can be useful for integrating and analyzing data. New techniques and new technology can take time to implement. But our teams have the ability to lead the field in developing new investigative skills in the long term.

Nowadays, there are companies focusing on investigative journalism. They could represent a new model. Reporters, however, continue to insist that legacy media companies are a better fit than other types of media organisations where it matters: resources.

Legacy media has well-trained personnel. They have experience covering from politics to popular culture. Legacy media can gather trained personnel from various bureaus and count on tried and tested methodology.

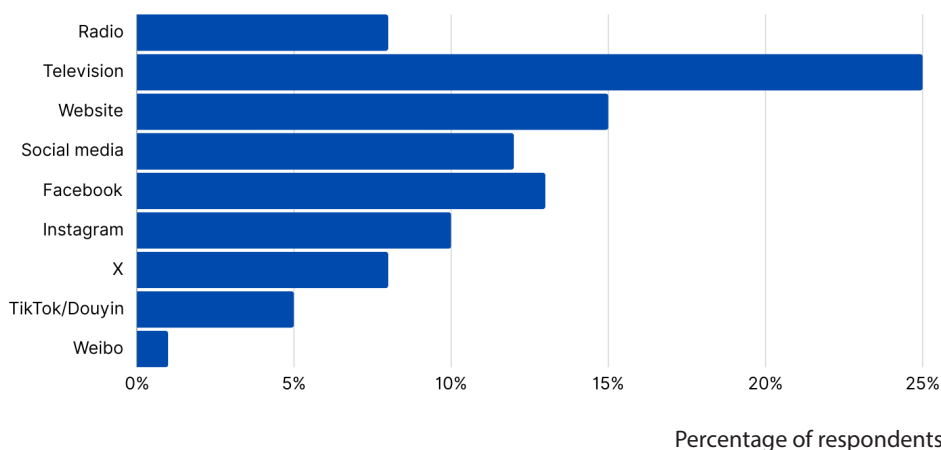
Public media reporters in particular emphasize that investigative journalism has a pressing need to distinguish its content in the future compared with other media. They say it could be somewhat difficult to keep an investigative journalism team because of inefficiency and costs. However, public media companies are funded by the state. So public media, must make Investigative journalism stories for the benefit of the public.

It is said that the press is a 'watch dog' employed to watch and safeguard society. Investigative journalism reports on corruption and abuse and speaks truth to power. Legacy media cannot surrender investigative journalism, no matter the expense, for the cost to the public would be far higher were it to disappear. It is, by its very nature, essential to a free society.

THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

Between January and May 2024, 50 journalists, producers and editors at ABU members undertook the ABU's Future of News survey. They were from 24 countries across the Asia-Pacific region, from Samoa to Mongolia, Indonesia to Nepal, and from the Maldives to Uzbekistan and Türkiye. The comprehensive 40 question survey was designed to explore perceptions about the issues driving change and how they are impacting on careers in journalism. The results are shared throughout this report.

What is the primary platform for your organisation's news output?



THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

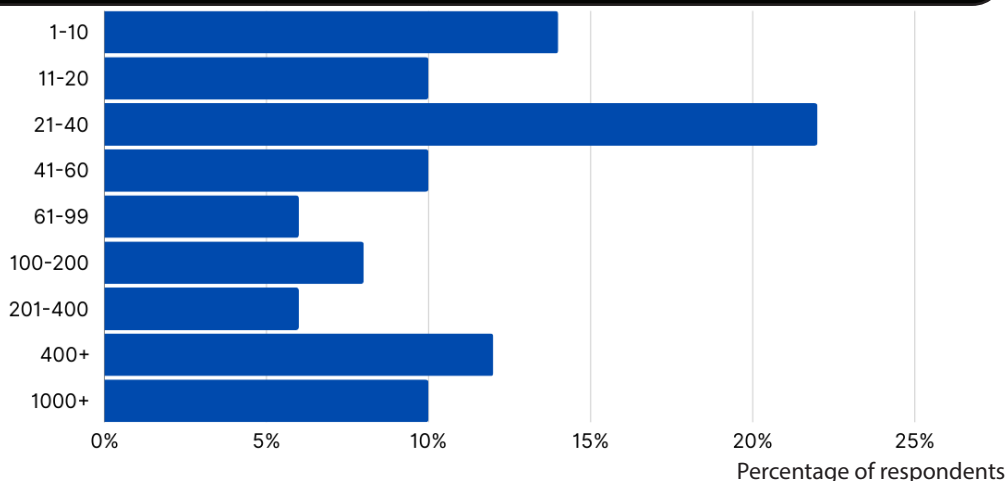
Do you think your organisation's radio or television audiences will increase in the next five years?



Do you think your organisation's digital and social media audiences will increase?



How many people work in the newsroom/s at your organisation?



Is your organisation likely to have more or less people in the newsroom in five years?



Broken News

By Chevaan Daniel
Group Director
Capital Maharaja Group

Chevaan Daniel is Group Director of the Capital Maharaja Group (CMG), one of Sri Lanka's largest diversified companies. He heads the group's media & music business, which is Sri Lanka's largest. He is also the leader of 'Gammadda', an award-winning grassroots movement that touches the lives of millions of Sri Lankans. Chevaan is a Fulbright Scholar, an Eisenhower Global Fellow, a UTC Fellow, and an Asia 21 Fellow. His work experience includes stints with NBC & MSNBC in New York. Chevaan is an internationally certified Swift Water Rescuer and a Global Ambassador for the Sri Lanka Life Saving Association. His passions include ancient Sri Lankan history and rock climbing.



"Rumour-mongers are the original fourth estate."

Yuval Noah Harari
Philosopher and Author of Sapiens

It's our ability to talk to each other, stupid.

Yes. That's what defines us. It's what led to us (Homo Sapiens) becoming dominant from amongst hundreds of species of Hominids. The ability to tell our friends that there is a lion around the corner. Or the ability to deceive our enemies by not telling them, that there's a lion around the corner.

Our aptitude to observe things for long periods of time, perceive patterns, make sense of them, and then communicate them in ways that make sense to the rest of the group, is the magic of humanity. And perhaps unlike ever before, this bedrock is being threatened by ferocious drilling into our ability to focus and perceive, by what we think, are tools we've created to make things better.

Ultimately, we are purveyors of relevance. There's a fine line between news and noise. And today, we are all quenching our thirst for relevance by poking our little heads into a Niagara of information. We are under an illusion that we are able to multitask and cope. But the truth is, it's all falling apart. We are placing ourselves and the people we are meant to serve under tremendous stress by punishing them with a barrage of information, without doing our job. It's time to shift mindsets.

For the past few decades, it has always been first and fast is best. News networks compete to break news, and grab the attention of audiences on TV, radio and now digital platforms. 'Attention Share' is the name of the game. It's a race to the bottom.

And I've been guilty of this as well. Don't get me wrong: being first is important. But never at the expense of trust. And trust, isn't limited to reporting based on fact. Trust, is the responsible truth. The blade of truth must be handed to people, and never flung at them.

This tightrope walk is becoming next to impossible today. The rules have changed. With digital and social media breaking the backbone of broadcast media, the race to be first will inevitably lead newsrooms to fall over themselves in a rush to remain competitive.

The art of news, is to be able to help people discern. Deeply. Its not enough to say that we, collectively, as newsrooms across the world, are able to deliver reliable news and information. That's far too shallow a responsibility for a profession charged with protecting people's right to know. And to 'know', means to understand. Not simply be told.

A deep and profound appreciation of the importance of the philosophy of slowing down the news, is a controversial position to take. Even foolhardy. But as we debate the extent to which AI will take over journalism, the real discussion must surely be on the depth of intellectual responsibility newsrooms around the world have, in protecting that one space that is almost uniquely human: our focus. If we aren't able to concentrate and help audiences make sense of what's happening around them, and instead pour our attention to anything and everything that's happening, simply because we have access to that data, then we run the risk of losing our hallowed status of being the guardians of human freedom. Because be certain of this: News, Means, Freedom.

Just think about it - we are, even today, limited only by what we don't know. If we are able to access information from the core of the earth for instance in real-time, and were able to somehow twist it to make it relevant to our present, then Voila! We have another thing to worry about: *Breaking News: the earths core reached record temperatures today (this, despite the fact that we don't really have records- hilarious, if it weren't serious).*

"Depth takes time. Depth, takes reflection", says Johann Hari in his seminal book *Stolen Focus*. I couldn't agree more. As we worry about AI, and big data and whatnot, let's also worry about the fact that news is a serious responsibility. It is not for the faint of heart and weak of mind. With all due respect, being an employee at a hospital doesn't make one a surgeon. So, access to news platforms doesn't make one a journalist. It's time to take back journalism. Not for some misplaced notion of self-importance. But because it is the panacea the world is looking for: LEADERSHIP that can communicate the truth. And that responsibility lies with **you and I**. We cannot afford to ride a wave, without understanding where the wave is taking us. Perhaps more than ever before, newsrooms around the world, have become places of global leadership. Because that's where the truth lives and is given life. And because newsrooms are the custodians of human liberty. And the scope of journalism has broken out of the peripheries of the past.

From a very human perspective, people just want to be happy. And that pursuit of happiness itself is lopsided. Without understanding the fundamental mechanism required to structure the pursuit of a purpose, happiness becomes elusive. Focus, then becomes humanity's greatest asset. Human consciousness cannot discern good from bad. It must be trained and taught to do so. And the celebrated peaks of happiness that we see on Social Media are but a fraction of the enormously wide chasms of despair that ordinary people need to crawl out of, every single day. So ultimately, it is a two-way street. Not only is it the responsibility of communicators to communicate, bearing in mind the weight of what it takes to guide millions of people towards a better place. But it is also the responsibility of every single person who now holds in the palm of her hand, arguably the most powerful device in all of human existence.

“The art of news, is to be able to help people discern. Deeply. Its not enough to say that we, collectively, as newsrooms across the world, are able to deliver reliable news and information. That’s far too shallow a responsibility for a profession charged with protecting people’s right to know.”

Karlie Noon and Kristal de Napoli, in their authorship of Sky Country, challenge the reader to try and understand the vast depth and breath of knowledge, as it was understood by ancient Aboriginal people. And this included being able to read the sky, by observing and unlocking the knowledge in the stars but also, in the significant dark spaces between. This is important. We never think about it for a moment when staring out into the night sky. We see stars, but never notice the darkness. Observe long enough, and even the darkness, begins to unlock itself.

Becoming true custodians of the truth, means taking time to slow down and take stock of the duty and obligation we all have towards our respective people and nations. A raging world filled with violence, wars, technology and ambition provides a distorted view of the crucible of leadership. Stillness, allows for clearer vision. Its not business as usual. We need to think inwards. I’m challenging each of you, to take that journey.

Because, there’s a lion around the corner, my friend.

THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

Do you think the effects of climate change will increase your organisation's emergency and disaster risk reduction coverage?

Yes
100%

A horizontal bar chart with a single blue bar representing 100%.

**How well does your newsroom cover major weather events?
e.g. cyclones, typhoons, floods, droughts**

Excellent
28%

Adequate
61%

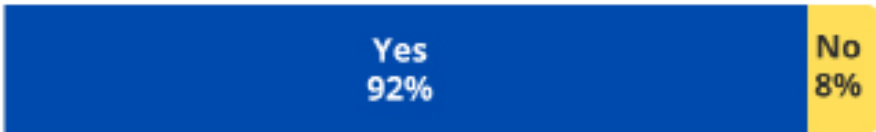
Basic
11%

A horizontal bar chart with three segments: green (28%), blue (61%), and yellow (11%).

Is your organisation helping audiences to understand global warming/climate change and how it will impact on their lives?

Yes
92%

No
8%

A horizontal bar chart with two segments: blue (92%) and yellow (8%).

Is your organisation encouraging audiences to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Yes
73%

No
27%

A horizontal bar chart with two segments: blue (73%) and yellow (27%).

More than efficiency: What can AI do for you?

By Charlie Beckett
Founding Director of Polis
London School of Economics

Charlie Beckett is a professor in the Department of Media and Communications. He is the founding director of Polis, the London School of Economics' international journalism think-tank. Professor Beckett is currently leading the Polis Journalism and AI project, supported by the Google News Initiative. It provides information, training and innovation fellowships to newsrooms around the world:
<https://www.journalismai.info/>



Another storm of technological change has started blowing through newsrooms around the world with the advent of 'generative' AI tools like ChatGPT. But for anyone with experience this is just the latest wave of upheaval. I started working in broadcast journalism in the late 1980s just when digital tools were starting to change how we gathered and produced the news and current affairs. As early as 1992 I edited the BBC's Election documentary on Avid. By the time I left ITN's Channel 4 News to join the LSE in 2006 we had the Internet, social media and mobile phones. At my leaving party I asked the managing editor to give me a rough percentage for the efficiency gains they had produced in the last few years. He said 'about 50% over the last three years'. It would not be crazy to expect similar results from artificial intelligence. But is efficiency enough?

Broadcasters have learnt in the last decade or so that terrestrial broadcast is now just one of their platforms. Most of the efficiency gains from digital have gone on filling the gap left by falls in revenue and in producing online content for online and social media. When I talk to media executives they are both frightened and hopeful about AI - especially generative AI. They know that tools like ChatGPT are competition for people's attention. Why go to a news organisation for information if you can just put in a prompt? But they also realise that these tools can make their staff much more efficient.

Generative AI is much more accessible than conventional AI. Anyone can write a prompt and create text, images or audio and video. Some AI applications will work for the news organisation as a whole, for example, a Chatbot that can answer readers' questions directly. Or it might be that an individual journalist can use Generative AI tools such as transcription or translation to save time. Generative AI also offers more creative and flexible potential use cases. For example, it can automatically reformat texts into audio, or add captions to a video.

I have been impressed with the way news organisations have approached Generative AI: a mixture of experimentation and caution. Most of the mistakes I have seen with AI are human error. Either using the technology in an inappropriate way or failing to keep the human in the loop. In the next year we will start to discover what use it is beyond the hype.

In the last decade technological change, along with other trends in society, have created a business challenge for news media. Newspapers were hit hardest and earliest but broadcasters now face the same existential threats. Jobs have been lost, some news organisations – especially local ones – have disappeared. But it is remarkable how many legacy news organisations have survived, usually by taking full advantage of the digital dividends. Many create more journalism than before and have more consumers, even with diminishing revenue levels. Survival is great, but is it enough?

In the long-term we have choices about how we use new technologies like AI. You can use AI to create disinformation, click-bait or shallow commercial content. Just as you could use analogue technologies to produce low quality journalism or ‘churnalism’ in the past. Or you can use it to support worthwhile journalism that meets public service goals and stands out in the marketplace. AI can create efficiencies that give journalists more time and resources to do the journalism that uses human skills and values such as investigations, analysis, and empathetic stories.

AI can also help the consumers of news. At the moment we are all swamped by too much news. Much of it is irrelevant or even misleading or malicious. AI can help filter out misinformation, it can make fact-checking more efficient and it can personalise the news to optimise the consumer’s experience.

It is vital to know about the risks and limits of AI. Generative AI is not a truth machine – it is a language machine. It gives the appearance of intelligence, but it does not truly ‘know’ anything. It just predicts – with amazing accuracy – the right words. So, AI should never be left to create content on its own. Journalists have always had to make sure that the source is accurate and that the facts are verified. The same process has to take place with AI. AI is much better used to support journalists rather than to replace them.

We know that the Large Language Models (LLMs) that are used to train Generative AI tools can have inherent biases. The GenAI tools can make mistakes and even invent facts. The danger is that hard-pressed journalists will become too dependent on these tools. But if they are used well then that allows them to concentrate on the value they can add.

AI does not care about anything, it does not have ideals, values or emotions. It is not curious, it cannot witness the world. The best journalism has all those human qualities and that is the kind of journalism that will stand out in a world where AI does the basic information work. This is a moment when all journalists and news organisations should be asking themselves what is their mission? What is their business model? What is the point of their journalism? What do they do that no-one else does? In that sense, AI and Generative AI is a reality check that could lead to much more innovation.

AI is going to reshape journalism. The practice of journalism and the business model has already been restructured because of the Internet, social media and mobile telephony. Now AI technologies will disrupt it all again. So it is vital that individual journalists as well as news organisations pay attention to AI.

Firstly, **every news organisation needs to have a strategy related to AI**. They need to make sure that all their staff have basic information about AI. They will be using it in some way, so they should understand it. It doesn't have to be deep technical knowledge, just a practical and creative understanding of its limitations and potential. They have to be AI literate because it will be part of their working life, but also because AI will be part of many stories or issues in the world they report on. Reporting properly on AI is now a vital skill for all journalists.

Secondly, **assign responsibility in the organisation to research AI uses**, to explore how it might be applied, and to coordinate with people throughout the organisation in its implementation. Draw up guidelines, but then review them regularly with proper feedback from staff.

Thirdly, **experiment!** Try things out. And when you do start to use AI in earnest make sure that you review its impact and iterate the process. What were the real gains? Has it impacted on quality? What new things could we do?

Journalists are exhausted by change. Once again they are being asked to learn new skills and to work differently. Some roles will change, new roles will be created, some jobs might well be lost. But there is a paradox about AI. On the one hand it will be very useful in helping journalists be more effective. It will do a lot of the journalism labour. But the best hope is that it frees up time for journalists to do the extra human work. Efficiency will not be enough.

“AI does not care about anything, it does not have ideals, values or emotions. It is not curious, it cannot witness the world. The best journalism has all those human qualities and that is the kind of journalism that will stand out in a world where AI does the basic information work.”

THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY



Interview with DD India Senior Editor & Journalist Sakal Bhatt

Sakal Bhatt has almost two decades of experience in broadcast journalism in India and has been the prime-time face of a leading private channel. She is currently working for DD India – the external arm of national news broadcaster Doordarshan News - as a Consulting Editor. She is the recipient of the Prasar Bharati best anchor award and one of the most prominent faces of the national broadcaster. She has fronted a series of highly prestigious programs and broadcasts including National Conclaves, G20 India and national film awards. She has undertaken numerous international reporting assignments, conducted exclusive interviews and delivered ground-breaking documentaries. Sakal is a certified body combat instructor and ardent fitness enthusiast. Here, Sakal shares her thoughts on the future of news.



What do you think will be some of the key drivers of change in newsrooms in the next 10 years?

Sakal: In my opinion, the major drivers of change in news in the coming years will be:

- Amidst a sharply divided and polarised world, a more balanced approach in news
- Reduced response times to breaking news situations
- Swift cross checking, verification and vetting of sensitive material
- Quick turnaround of raw news going on air – fast-paced edits
- More live inputs from the remotest corners of globe
- More desk driven stories
- Maximum technology interface - enabling newsroom production

What do you think newsrooms should do to help prepare for that change?

Sakal: Advanced technology has to be in place along with highly motivated and driven newsroom teams and systems. It is very important to have systems in place where there is strong leadership and responsibility. Going forward, technology integration will play a critical role. Here, having a quick video edit interface integrated with the newsroom system software will enable a reporter or desk person to do a raw edit of the story and decrease dependency on video editors. It will also ensure more output/stories are carried by decreasing the response time to get the visually rich stories on air.

Some channels are also using software on phones to enable reporters to go live from any location, thus decreasing or eliminating dependency on live source and a camera person. This practice could be a game changer.

What do you think should be the key priorities for national broadcasters, as they respond to changing audience behaviours?

Sakal: National broadcasters' cornerstone is credibility and uncompromising authenticity. It is important to understand that given the mandate of national broadcasters, they must not fall into the rut of competition or be driven by market pressures. Audience changing behaviour is determined by fast paced news scenarios and developing news environments, plus a plethora of options just a finger click away. Amidst all these market dynamics, national broadcasters' priorities are also well defined. They are as follows:

- Representing all sections of society & diversity
- Unflinching & uncompromising commitment to credibility
- Give equal space to opposition & dissent
- Maintain highest levels of accountability as for national duty
- Ensuring integrity by not falling prey to fake news narrative
- Zero vulnerability to external power, lobbying or sensationalism
- Do not encourage rhetoric but report on facts

India has just held the world's biggest election and you reported from locations around the country for the national broadcaster. How is election reporting changing in India?

Sakal: Indian media in the last two decades has clearly been a force multiplier. In the political spectrum it has also emerged as a very critical pressure group and a watchdog. Election coverage is as humongous as the election exercise itself and has clear guidelines stipulated by the Honourable Election Commission of India. Election reporting is not only changing but only getting bigger and is evolving - hence its broadcasting has also become highly professional with technical nuances. I along with my team curated and moderated several people centric election shows across the length and breadth of the country. Covering elections from the field can be a very fascinating experience. Besides, it has always been a learning curve after covering at least three general and multiple assembly polls. Here are some of the outstanding features of Indian election coverage.



- High quality psephology-oriented discussion and discourse
- Micro coverage of key constituencies and candidates of all major parties
- Macro coverage of issues region wise
- Canvassing & campaign reportage
- More pro-people, less leader glorification
- Showcasing the diverse cultural milieu & regional diversity
- Leadership is grilled on questions that matter

- Political parties look to channels to drive their agenda for maximizing the reach of messaging

India is also known for having one of the world's biggest and most competitive media markets, and some of the world's most enthusiastic media consumers. What new trends are you seeing in the Indian news landscape?

Sakal: I feel Indian media over the decades has evolved into a gigantic industry with fat pay cheques while pushing the envelope when it comes to maximizing output. It has evolved into a template which in many ways has set the global agenda and news discourse.

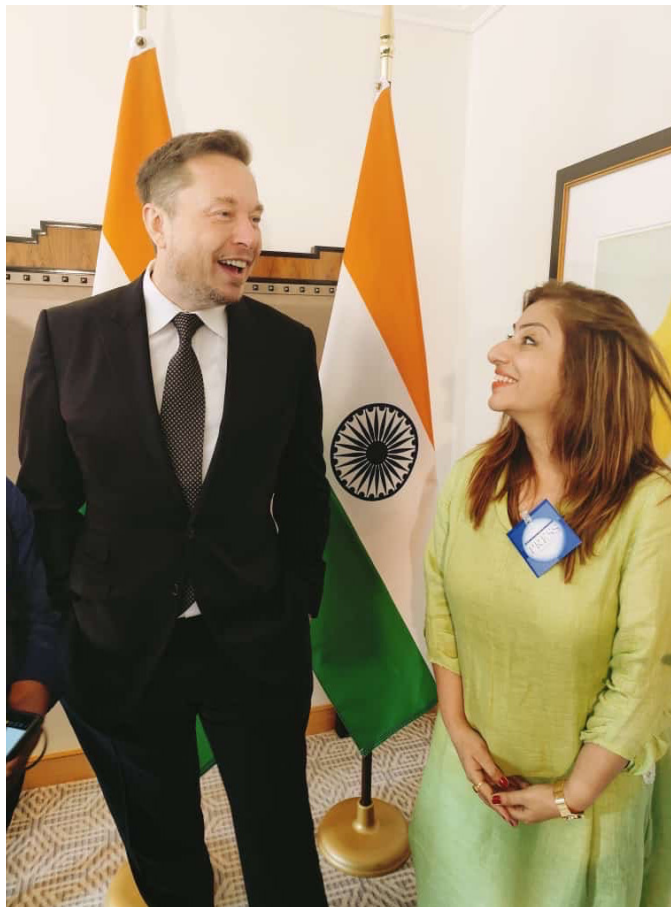
- The Indian news market caters to burgeoning demands and has not only grown vertically but horizontally across platforms
- Indian media has also been responsive to any reportage belittling India's stance, any lopsided view on domestic policy etc. Critical pieces devoid of facts or with twisted narratives find immediate response or rebuttal with facts
- More debates and interactive news discourse with varied elements and thought-provoking editorial lines and agendas define new age programming
- People-centric reporting has found good traction with the audience
- Augmented studio and graphics are the new normal

Aside from DD News, what are your favourite sources of news?

Sakal: Sorry to disappoint but not many. For ideas I turn to Al Jazeera; for programming or for news and current affairs, Reuters. I am not a big social media fan so I favour more traditional news sources

What would you like to see more of/and less of when you consume news?

Sakal: I think I would like to see more facts and news than views. I would like to know what is happening and why it is happening and how it would matter to me rather than being fed too much analysis and information. I would rather like to see or watch a conversation, candid and interesting but not



slugfest or shout fest under the guise of debate. I don't wish to see high decibel TV news prime-time shows, rather keep it simple and clutter free - not too much graphics and elements on screen. I as a consumer want news that is easy on the eyes and ears, and the heart too. As a consumer I would like to go big on travelogues too.

Would you recommend journalism as a career to a 21 year-old?

Sakal: Being self-driven and spirited is the key. Today's internet generation is well aware and smart enough to make diligent choices but I would put a lot of emphasis on training and skills, academic excellence that gives you intellectual bandwidth, a lot of focus on preparation and developing an in-depth understanding of the subject matter. There are no short cuts or substitutes to homework. One important rider - journalism may appear glamorous, power driven, recognition oriented and maybe some would think it will be their shortcut to fame - but that is definitely not the case. Remember that power comes with lots and lots of responsibility followed by satisfaction if you manage to be that one cut above the rest.

What advice would you give young journalists today?

Sakal: The advice would be to keep that fire in the belly and remember you do not owe it to anyone but your country first and then to your channel. Your body of work defines you and it should be devoid of any privileges or quid pro-quo or favours from any political or apolitical entity. Do not succumb to that pressure. I may sound sermonising but maintaining that is very, very important. You may have to make some important and difficult choices at a personal level that come with a cost. Here the advice would be to set very clear expectations for those who matter. Ensure you do not get swayed or compromised by glitz, glamor and power that comes with journalism and the recognition associated with it. I feel it is absolutely essential to know why you chose this profession and do not lose sight of that reason.

What do you think are the biggest threats to journalism in the next 10 years?

Sakal:

- Losing objectivity in reportage
- Inadvertently aligning with blocks/camps in Post Cold war era
- Self-censorship
- Pressure from political powers and lobbyists
- Containing or controlling information overflow
- Segregating real and fake narratives
- Quality vs. quantity

What do you think will be the growth areas in journalism in future?

Sakal: I think there will be more objectivity and in-depth conflict reporting. Comprehensive reporting from conflict and war zones with more safety measures and SOP's for reporters is the need of the hour. Very often than not the safety and security of the reporter gets compromised and I feel that is the aspect that we should deeply

look into. I also strongly feel that in the near future, artificial intelligence may play a very significant role but we need to keep some checks in place. AI can be leveraged to aid the quality of broadcasting and quick responses to breaking news.

Which organisations do you admire, for their future focused approach?

Sakal: In programming I really like the look and feel, feature format and ground reports of Al Jazeera and their template of conflict reporting because as someone who has reported from conflict and terror bastions, there is a lot to learn from it in terms of challenging field assignments. I do have some serious objections to the lopsided editorial line taken on India centric news and domestic politics which I feel is sometimes dealt with a lot of prejudice. My admiration for Al Jazeera is specifically on the production side, the studio set up etc for its sharpness and impact, its sleek and classy look.

In news, my go to agency is Reuters because of their news gathering and style of copy. The response time to any big breaking international news is phenomenal without compromising on the essence of news. What I also find highly professional is not only its accuracy but you get the big news makers and big news breaks mostly under one roof purely based on factual positions and not on rhetoric.

THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

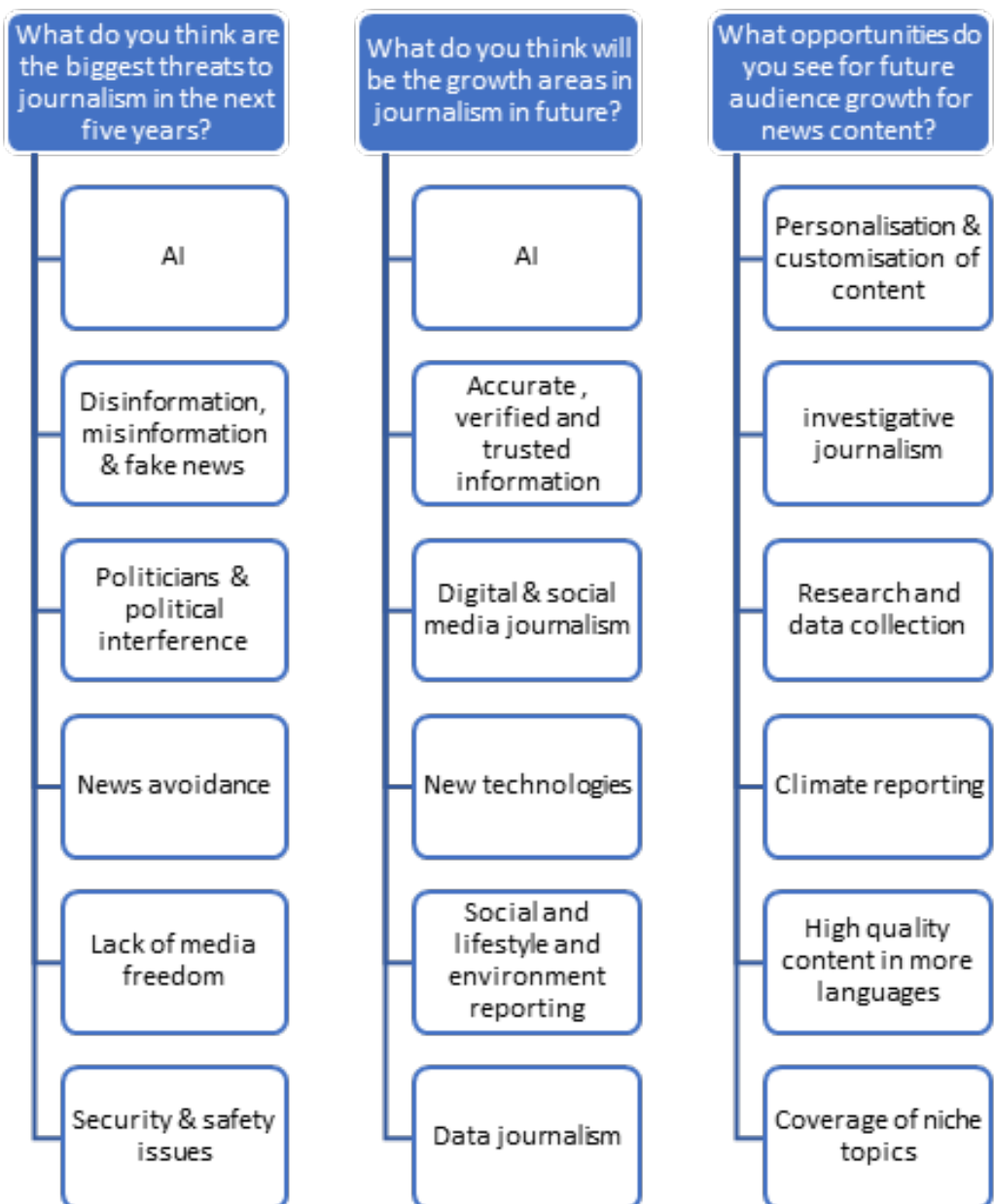
Is gender inequality an issue in your organisation?



Do you expect that to improve in the years to come?



THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY



Is news important?

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr

*Director, Centre for Information Integrity & the Internet
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore*

Edson is the founding Director of the Centre for Information Integrity and the Internet and the Associate Chair for Research. He is the Vice Chair of the Journalism Studies Division of the International Communication Association. He is also the author of *Analyzing Analytics: Disrupting Journalism One Click at a Time* (2019) and co-editor of *Critical Incidents in Journalism: Pivotal Moments Reshaping Journalism around the World* (2020). A former newspaper journalist, Edson has focused his research on the impact of journalistic roles, emerging technologies, and audience feedback on the news gatekeeping process. He also studies how changing news consumption patterns facilitate the spread of fake news.

News is important. It keeps people updated with facts that can help to guide their decisions and actions. This is even more important in a period marked by misinformation and disinformation.

The benefits of news go beyond the individual news consumer. News can also serve a watchdog function, keeping an eye on those in power and alerting the public when irregularities arise. It can call public attention to pressing social problems and demand for solutions.

But if news is important, why are so many people not willing to pay for it?

Producing quality journalism is not free—it requires resources, time, and trained professionals. With the lion's share of digital advertising going to tech platforms, many news outlets need to find other ways to sustain their operations.

But in many media markets, newspaper subscription numbers are decreasing as people move to online and social media platforms; digital news subscription isn't growing either.

In Singapore, for example, only 15 percent pay for online news, based on the Digital News Report in 2023. Norway recorded the highest proportion of online news subscribers at 39 percent.

Do audiences consider news to be important?

The Centre for Information Integrity and the Internet (IN-cube) at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore sought to answer this question in a national online survey we conducted in December 2022 involving about 800 adult respondents.

We found that most of our respondents consider news to be important.

When asked how important they would say news is, 34 percent said it is “important,” 39.6 percent said “very important,” while 15.8 percent said “extremely important.”

We also asked them to rate the importance of news to society and for themselves: 69.2 percent agreed that news is important to society, while 64.9 percent agreed that news is important to them personally.

However, only 14.5 percent of our adult respondents said they are “moderately likely” to pay for news and only 7.7 percent said they are “extremely likely” to do so.

This means we need to look at what they consider news to be important for.

For most of our respondents, the most important motivation for consuming news is for information—to keep themselves informed.

But beyond information, another important motivation for news consumption is for socialization—news gives them something to talk about with peers and it saves them from feeling that they are missing out.

Other respondents also turn to news for entertainment. However, of these three different motivations, only socialization and entertainment drive willingness to pay for news.

Turning to news for information is not related to willingness to pay for it.

And while our respondents consider news to be slightly more important for society than for themselves, perceiving news to be important for society was not related to willingness to pay for news either.

Instead, perceiving news to be important to oneself is positively related to willingness to pay for news.

This is an even more salient question for young adults, many of whom are exposed to news incidentally rather than intentionally—many of them see news only when they are scrolling on their social media feeds.

In interviews we have conducted with these young news consumers, we find various reasons for their lack of willingness to pay for news.

Many of them said they can easily get news for free, so they don’t see a need to pay for any subscription—and yet they also pay for subscriptions to video streaming platforms like YouTube or to professional social media platforms like LinkedIn.

They say it boils down to personal relevance—they will only pay for services that are relevant to their interests or their professional needs.

The question is, how do we make news consumers see news as personally relevant?

Back against the wall: A Philippine media giant's digital turnaround

By Francis Toral
Head of News
ABS-CBN Corporation

Francis Toral is the Head of News of ABS-CBN Corporation. She took on the role in January 2023 after 25 years as writer and producer of various news and current affairs programs.



May 5, 2020. 7:52pm. Millions of television sets tuned in to ABS-CBN when the Philippines largest network went black - 67 years of broadcasting cut short by a government-ordered shutdown. Congress, who has the power to grant licenses for broadcast operations, denied a renewal of the company's franchise.

As a result, more than half of our 11,000 employees were retrenched while grappling with the uncertainty of the pandemic. Most of our entertainment shows were cancelled. And of the ten news and current affairs programs, only one – our primetime evening newscast, 'TV Patrol' – survived.

But there was barely any time to grieve. Without the frequency and the airwaves, we had to lick our wounds fast. Despite its diminishing reach, ABS-CBN continued to air its programs on cable. We pitched our content to local and international distributors, and what was once unthinkable in the competitive media industry, we even forged partnerships with other television networks.

More importantly, we accelerated our pivot to digital as the platform that will bring our content to the mass audience and support our viability.

Shifting audience preferences

The Philippines is a Southeast Asian nation of over 7,100 islands. With a population of 110 million Filipinos, many living below the poverty line, television remains a strong force in our country. However, in the past four years, TV viewership has been on the downtrend. Mobile phones have become an extension of our hands. Currently, 97 percent of Filipinos access the internet through their mobile phones, and 69 percent use it to keep up-to-date with news and events. (**Source: We Are Social, Meltwater 2023 Data Report**)

To say that audiences have been blown away by what the digital space now conveniently offers is an understatement. Cocooned in their homes and tied to their gadgets for more than three years of COVID-19, their minds were opened to a constant and wide array of choices and experiences online – mostly entertainment and videos from content creators.

Now, where does that put News? Are we a dying industry? Are we adapting fast enough? Are we still relevant?

Surveys have shown that audiences online are reading less and watching more – but their choices and preferences have become difficult to fathom. The younger audiences – the future base of our viewership – say they want to watch news but in ways far different from what we, journalists, were used to producing. Born and raised with social media at their fingertips, the need to reach them has become our priority with shorter videos, less preachy reports, and easy-to-digest explainers.

Changing our products, not our values

As the leader of one of the Philippines' biggest news organizations, I have always told the team – we do not need to change our journalistic principles, but we do need to change our products. For what good is an excellent news report if no one cares to read or watch it?

Since the beginning of 2023, we have launched several short-form digital exclusives to complement our traditional primetime newscast. These digital-only news products – ranging from entertainment, crime and security, inspirational and feel-good stories – embrace new ways of producing and telling the story. Youtube has so far been a helpful partner in garnering millions of views and in bringing in much-needed revenues.

We have also invested heavily on audience data and research to chart our way forward in terms of gathering and producing news. As always, the audience is at the core of everything we do. For we know that where the audience is, our continued existence will follow.

For now, mainstream media remains the go-to platform for big breaking news, elections, wars, disasters, conflicts, and huge developments that impact the world we live in. For it is in the innate ability of journalists to deliver the news no matter what, to forge through courageously despite the dangers, and to counter fake news and hold those in power to account that will make journalism a necessary part of our daily existence.

I clearly remember an instance at the height of the pandemic. Then Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte famously said, "Just go to the gasoline stations, and then have some drops of petrol to wash your face masks, that's disinfectant. I am not joking."

Immediately, local and international news organizations picked up the story – and explained that petrol cannot be used as disinfectant. In many ways, that is what we are still here for. News media should use whatever is left of its influence and relevance, to

generate light amid the heat and be the voice of reason amid the noise. We should be the source of truthful and credible, useful and empowering information.

Mindset and culture change

Pivoting to digital – and in a more deliberate and purposeful way – should allow us to go on despite seemingly insurmountable challenges to our sustainability.

Understanding that the audience has changed, and continues to change, should keep us on our toes to continue providing products that will cater to their needs.

Accepting that we are no longer the sole source of news and information – with millions of content creators and the emergence of generative AI – is key to our survival.

In the 2023 Global News Forum in Sarawak, Malaysia, one of the panelists during the AI discussion was asked, “Will AI ever replace journalists?” His answer, “If we are not exceptional enough.”

Quite a bitter pill to swallow, but a challenge nonetheless. Newsrooms, including ours, have been exploring and adapting generative AI as a means to push our journalism forward. It can be used in a positive way, but for now, as there are more questions than answers, it may be prudent to take a step back and see really where this new tool will take us.

Each year, the Reuters Institute releases a report on the future of journalism. It predicted another challenging year ahead – with AI, lay-offs, news disconnection, and diminishing revenues. The report quoted Lea Korsgard, Editor-in-Chief of Zetland in Denmark, “It’s really depressing. I worry that journalism as a business has been too slow to reorient and rethink its role and purpose. People don’t miss journalism. But journalism miss people.”

For ABS-CBN, it took a crisis, a tragic moment, a catastrophic shutdown for us to really seriously pursue and embrace digital as a means to reach more audiences. We chose to view this seismic shift as a much-needed wake-up call.

The reality is journalists are competing with millions of content creators -- and viewers, faced with limitless choices, must have a compelling reason to choose News to be an essential, fundamental part of their daily lives.

No ifs or buts, no time to waste. We must face this change.

THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

Do you offer work placements for journalism students?

Yes
83%

No
17%

Do you recruit university students on graduation?

Yes
83%

No
17%

Do you think journalists are influential?

Yes
96%

No
4%

Do you think journalists should be impartial?

Yes
91%

No
9%

Do you think journalism is becoming a more dangerous profession?

Yes
61%

No
39%

The importance of high value, audience-first journalism

*By Justin Stevens
Director of News
Australian Broadcasting Corporation*



Justin oversees the ABC's news teams, located in eight capital city newsrooms, 58 regional newsrooms and 12 overseas posts, and all its digital, audio/radio and video/TV news and current affairs. This includes the ABC NEWS website, app and social channels; continuous news services ABC NEWS Channel and ABC NewsRadio; the eight state and territory 7PM NEWS editions, 7.30, Four Corners, Australian Story, News Breakfast, Q+A and Foreign Correspondent; audio programs AM, PM and The World Today; youth news Behind the Scenes and BTN High; the Asia-Pacific Newsroom; and regional radio. Previously Justin was Executive Producer of the ABC's national nightly current affairs flagship program 7.30. He joined the ABC in 2006 as a producer on programs including 7.30 and Four Corners. His work has been recognised with Logie and AACTA awards and Walkley nominations.

For audiences, independent journalism is more important than ever. For media organisations, it's more challenging than ever to do it successfully. As we negotiate these challenges in coming years, all news outlets face a stress test of our ability and resolve to either hold firm and stand out as trusted sources for the public, or risk ourselves becoming part of the problem.

Seismic shifts in technology and audience behaviour, which have been gathering force for years, are severely disrupting the global media landscape. On the plus side, the public has access to more information about news events and issues than ever before. On the flipside of that, the information ecosystem is being overrun by misinformation, disinformation, clickbait, conspiracy theories, opinion, rumour, propaganda and fakery.

At its best, social media provides forums for the public to coalesce around similar viewpoints and share perspectives. At its worst, it creates polarised silos and opinion echo chambers and diminishes the virtues of kind, thoughtful and pluralistic debate.

The media have a critical role to play in ensuring the public has trusted and authoritative information they can turn to and rely on. It must add value to the conversation rather than telling people what they already know, or don't need to know, and amplifying the noise they're already fatigued by and increasingly tuning out.

“While misinformation and disinformation proliferate on social media sites the companies behind them threaten to turn off the tap on legitimate news services at any time. The worst-case outcome is if social media abandon legitimate news and let fake news proliferate unchallenged.”

Here lies the opportunity for independent news organisations.

Media researchers observe two clear audience trends: news avoidance and decreasing trust in big media.

According to the 2023 Reuters Digital News Report, which tracks news fatigue, the proportion of Australians who say they avoid news at least “often, sometimes or occasionally” is 69 percent – above the global average of 63 percent.

Women and young people are the most likely to actively avoid news, as well as people who are culturally and linguistically diverse and who live in outer suburban areas.

To combat this, news teams need to better engage the public with high value journalism. Audiences are savvy and have high expectations of what a good digital experience is: highly personalised and tailored to their needs and interests, with content that is original, relevant and authentic.

We need to offer a broad range of news stories and topics that are relevant and useful to all audience groups. We need to tell stories in more constructive ways. We need to ensure our stories are on the platforms audiences are using – primarily digital and often third-party platforms. We need to utilise the formats that make the most of those platforms – mobile short-form video is transforming the way we absorb and relay information and communicate.

The nature of information is changing at pace – faster than the media industry generally is tracking. The rise of generative AI will see the proliferation of deep fakes and bad faith actors utilising the new technology in toxic ways to even further diminish trust in institutions. People will increasingly not know what or who to believe.

Fostering media literacy is crucial so trusted news organisations can help educate younger people and the general public about how to distinguish between real and fake news.

While misinformation and disinformation proliferate on social media sites the companies behind them threaten to turn off the tap on legitimate news services at any time. The worst-case outcome is if social media abandon legitimate news and let fake news

proliferate unchallenged.

While the rise in generative AI offers opportunities, for example with accessibility and storytelling enhancements, even the most minor misstep by a news outlet has the potential to further erode public trust.

Public trust in media, as well as institutions and government generally, has already fallen to historical lows. The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer found 45 percent of Australians believe the nation is more divided today than in the past. The rich and powerful were identified as a major dividing force (72 percent), followed by hostile foreign governments (69 per cent) and journalists (51 percent). To replay that last point: Half of those surveyed think journalists are responsible for this high level of division.

The ABC remains Australia's most-trusted media organisation, and one of its most trusted institutions overall. In the most recent data, 79 percent of Australians aged 18-75 years say they trust or highly trust the information they are provided by the ABC. This is significantly higher than all other media institutions and information providers.

In comparison, the percentage of Australians who trusted internet search engines was 69 percent, commercial radio stations 60 percent, commercial TV stations 58 per cent, newspaper publishers 58 percent and Facebook 32 percent.

Keeping the audience's trust and providing them with quality public interest journalism and content they want to turn to, instead of avoid, are the key challenges we are facing in the coming years.

Maintaining trust hinges on journalism not telling people what to think or cherry-picking facts to support a pre-determined agenda, but instead impartially distilling and clarifying the key information, providing the relevant context, supplying fact-based analysis, and allowing people to make up their own minds.

ABC NEWS has developed an editorial strategy that looks to the next three years and beyond called Audience-First News. It focuses on every single team making high value journalism that is relevant to people, delivering it to audiences where they are, engaging the community and fostering a culture of always thinking of the audience first.

Given the perfect storm of challenges we are facing, it would be easy to feel despondent about the future of quality independent news. But the news business has always faced challenges and survived doomsayers who for decades have predicted journalism is in a death spiral.

Every challenge presents opportunities to serve the public even better. For the ABC, that service will be built on the same values our journalism has consistently embodied for more than 90 years: accuracy, impartiality, excellence and independence. Good news teams will always rally around what technology can't do: Giving a voice to the voiceless; bearing witness as the world's major news events unfold; and holding the powerful to account.

THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

Do you think you will have the same job in five years' time?

**Yes
64%**

**No
36%**

Are you involved in producing news for social media?

**Yes
63%**

**No
37%**

Do you think your organisation understands changing media habits?

**Yes
89%**

**No
11%**

Would you recommend journalism as a career to a 21-year-old?

**Yes
89%**

**No
11%**

Do you feel confident about the future of journalism in your home country?

**Yes
76%**

**No
24%**

Convergence and the future of media

*By Dr Semih Göncü
Advisor to Director
TRT World*



Göncü holds a PhD from Istanbul University, specializing in Occidental Discourses on Social Media. Additionally, he possesses two Master's degrees—one from the University of Westminster in Media and Development, and the other from the Department of Radio, Television, and Cinema, where he focused on cinema. His expertise extends to academic contributions with published papers on social media, new media, and cinema in reputable international and national journals. He has authored book chapters, adding to his scholarly portfolio. Professionally, he has served as a News Producer at TRT World, the international news channel of Turkish Radio Television (TRT) Corporation broadcasting 24/7 in English, for two years. He has been recently promoted to Advisor role to the Director of TRT World.

Undoubtedly, a myriad of determinants is exerting influence upon the trajectory of media and its prospective evolution. Nevertheless, one of the pivotal conceptual underpinnings crucial to the future of the media landscape is arguably the concept of convergence. This salient notion, notably popularized by distinguished media scholar Henry Jenkins, delineates the amalgamation or integration of disparate media platforms, technologies, and modalities of communication.

The advent of digital technologies has precipitated the convergence of disparate media forms within the domain of broadcast journalism. Traditional television broadcasting now harmoniously coexists with online platforms, podcasts, and social media channels. Therefore convergence not only did it affect mediums as well as television broadcasting but also news narratives. They are no longer constrained to a solitary medium; rather, they are propagated across a myriad of platforms, including television, radio, websites, and social media. This multifaceted dissemination underscores the evolving landscape of contemporary journalism, wherein information seamlessly traverses diverse channels.

The prospective trajectory of media suggests a continued trend of convergence, contingent upon a diverse array of factors. The particular form this convergence assumes will be shaped by a confluence of influences. Notably, the ascent of innovative technologies such as virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and augmented reality is anticipated to play a substantial and transformative role in delineating the forthcoming landscape of media. In this regard, as technological progress persists, the way news is presented may undergo significant transformation through immersive experiences by means of virtual reality and augmented reality. It is essential for news organizations

to adapt to these shifts in order to stay relevant and effectively meet the changing preferences of their audience.

Furthermore, the convergence marks a transformative era for broadcast journalism, confronting established norms while broadening the horizons of news distribution. Embracing the multifaceted nature of modern media, broadcast journalists find themselves maneuvering through a constantly evolving landscape, necessitating adaptability, ethical responsibility, and a profound comprehension of audience engagement. For example, ethical considerations in media convergence encompass a spectrum of issues. The seamless dissemination of information across diverse platforms introduces apprehensions about the accuracy of content, given that stories may undergo adaptation or repurposing for different mediums. Convergence has engendered a discernible blurring of demarcations between professional journalists and citizen reporters. Social media platforms have conferred upon individuals the capability to expeditiously disseminate news, a trend further embraced by news organizations through the integration of user-generated content. The expeditious propagation of information across digital platforms introduces challenges to both accuracy and verification. Within the ambit of convergent media, ethical considerations attain heightened significance, particularly concerning the judicious utilization of user-generated content and the imperative to safeguard individual privacy.

Last but not least, as a result of convergence, the escalating prevalence of participatory culture, as underscored by Jenkins, renders media literacy increasingly imperative for the future of media audiences. The burgeoning trend wherein audiences evolve into active participants through diverse mediums, notably exemplified by the ubiquity of social media, accentuates the significance of cultivating media literacy. The escalating significance of media literacy in the evolving and nascent media landscape underscores the imperative for concerted efforts from both academic circles and media outlets. As the contours of this landscape continue to take shape, the proactive encouragement of media literacy education within academic spheres becomes paramount. Concurrently, media entities bear a shared responsibility in actively contributing to this process. For instance, media outlets can assume a proactive role by prioritizing transparent reporting practices that meticulously distinguish between factual news reporting and editorial opinions. Moreover, these outlets can contribute to public education initiatives, disseminating information that elucidates the intricacies of media literacy, and exerting due diligence in ensuring communicative clarity.

The future of news: Navigating new challenges

Written by Murat Selvi
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Digitalization of journalism has posed a wide range of challenges to preserve the factual foundation of news, but with the chronic outbreak of disinformation, the need for good editors and reporters on the ground has arisen like never before.

News production is undergoing dramatic changes as digitalization transforms the media landscape, leading to an information explosion. The rise of independent content creators, who often disregard ethical boundaries in reporting, has resulted in a diverse range of communication techniques being employed to inform audiences. This trend raises a crucial question for media experts: What is the future of news?

While the news industry has long grappled with chronic issues such as editorial biases, racism, economic dependencies and corporate loyalties, producers are now facing additional pressures from the digital realm. Debates about the positive and negative outcomes of digitalization persist in the global media industry, yet news gathering remains a significant force in shaping social perceptions.

Before digital media became dominant, a few media outlets operating from Western countries enjoyed a monopoly over facts. What a regular news consumer would consider gospel truth often turned out to be nothing more than a sensationalist claim made with a tabloid approach for someone directly connected to the news.

Digitalization opened a parallel reality, compelling many media outlets to introspect, make amends, or risk losing unquestioned credibility in the eyes of their audience. On the other hand, with the proliferation of independent content creators, journalism has also become a race for clickbait. This transformation, driven by economic concerns as well, has sometimes led to a complete disregard for traditional understandings of what news is supposed to be within its ethical boundaries.

Breaking monopoly

Concepts like democratizing access to information online have become even more relevant, disproving knee-jerk prophecies that the end of journalism is near. While grappling with the harsh reality that many platforms we once revered have devolved into mediums of disinformation and manipulation, fostering polarization, the digitalization of news has heightened the necessity for redeeming factual journalism. This involves re-implementing several editorial checks and balances: fact-checking, editing, and proofreading before disseminating news among mass readers.

Given the 24/7 information flow, which often blurs contextual aspects of visual or written content, professionals who draw attention to fundamental issues and offer a perspective with contextual integrity are essential. This approach is crucial for creating a healthy public opinion and safeguarding the “public interest,” expressed as one of the key pillars of news media. Journalism grounded in truth and contextual backstory becomes feasible with the establishment of more journalism schools, providing undergraduate and graduate programs. A journalist with proper training and an inclination to report facts with honesty and fairness plays a pivotal role in combating disinformation in the age of digital media.

Another challenging aspect involves safeguarding the morality of the news. News ethics can only be upheld by establishing best practices rooted in journalistic principles, prioritizing the public interest, and pursuing the truth. The shift towards digital journalism, while reducing the demand for print publications, has expanded the audience significantly, allowing a few technology giants to act as gatekeepers of information and manipulate the flow of news. This issue can be addressed through legal regulations.

In the most recent example in Gaza, we are confronted with abject hypocrisy, where the most influential and established global media organizations reduce the loss of Palestinian lives at the hands of unhinged Israeli occupation forces into a binary, assigning equal weight to Israel, the aggressor, and Palestinians, the victims.

To challenge such binaries, which are a byproduct of deep-seated prejudice against the Global South, especially Muslims, it has become essential for new and upcoming media organizations, such as TRT World, to provide profound insights and rigorous journalism to their audiences. This enables them to distinguish between disinformation and facts.

Therefore, news stories written with nuance can also prove effective in combating polarization and allow people to have empathy towards people suffering in armed conflicts. It will also help them make informed electoral decisions in time of elections as many unscrupulous elements on social media are repeatedly spreading fear for political reasons.

Not everything is doom and gloom, While the changes brought about by technological developments pose new challenges, they also bring new opportunities. News media remains essential for societies to develop a clear and comprehensive understanding of

events, to provide appropriate, healthy, and balanced responses and to make the right choices. Journalists and media organizations that seek to strengthen the voice of truth have a serious responsibility to understand and address the challenges and opportunities of the digital age. This is important because it has the potential to shape not only the future of journalism but also the future of society.

Edited by Mehboob Jeelani
Executive Producer, TRT World

Mehboob Jeelani is an Executive Producer at TRT World. An award-winning journalist from India, Jeelani has covered politics, business, and technology for prestigious publications such as Fortune, The Caravan, New York Times, and Dissent. He holds an M.A. in journalism from Columbia University, New York.



THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

Why don't more people want to be journalists?

competitive media exposure family pressure
mainstream media people low pay
old media power salary media freedom shift work
social media media apps risk media literacy
bad reputation job insecurity lack of financial support
for university

Why do you think people leave your newsroom?

deadlines company and the newsroom offer at private channel
work in newsroom work hours pace work job offer
lack of work ethics Pay hard
Better opportunities salary Pressure of work
Not enough pay Coz of the pay people Better offer
poor management job opportunities
disenchanted

THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

If you were CEO of your organisation, what change would you make to help future-proof your newsroom?

- Better understand how to use and apply AI
- I would upgrade the technology and mechanism of news producing
- Training, training, training focusing on cutting-edge concepts and tools
- Invest heavily into digital journalism and implement innovative techniques to disseminate information as that is where the majority of the audience will get news from in the next three to five years
- I will run hire and fire. Arrange training and welcome changing trends
- My goal would be to have discussions on changing media habits
- Practicing safety journalism
- Include Gen-Z in decision making
- Try to get more qualified staff
- Use social media as a communication channel
- More technology and better working conditions for employees
- Provide training on important skills for staff
- More human interest stories rather than political stories
- I would focus more on social media and AI
- Write and produce more simply, but not necessarily shorter
- Secure our protections against governmental interference in news
- Divide newsroom into vernacular business units
- Enhance the capacity of the journalists and upgrade with equipment that suits the modern day trend
- Encourage multi platform abilities
- To hire young people that have the passion for journalism
- Better pay
- Stop TV and focus on online media platform
- Train existing journalists to adapt to the changes and teach more of digital media.
- Give journalists creative freedom
- Use Gen Z more
- Better integration of platforms (TV, radio, digital, social media)
- I would focus on integrating advanced technologies and investing in continuous training for our staff to future-proof our newsroom. This includes adopting AI-driven tools for data analysis and content creation, enhancing our digital presence, and ensuring our team is well-versed in the latest multimedia storytelling techniques

Ten New Directions of Audiovisual Content

Enabled by Text-to-Video AI Like Sora

By Dr Bin Li

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Li Bin, Senior Editor and Director of the New Media Research Department of the Innovation and Development Research Center of China Media Group, is a dedicated researcher in media convergence strategy. He is among China's "Leading Research Talent in the Broadcasting and Internet Audiovisual Industry" and the sixth-batch "Top 10" researcher in radio and television, having completed six national key projects and won numerous awards for publications including TV Media Convergence Reform. In 2022, he spearheaded the design of the "Smart Monitoring and Analysis System of Sensational Media Convergence Products". In 2023 he led the analysis of the "Impact of AI Products such as ChatGPT on Mainstream Radio and Television and Related Countermeasures". Li Bin holds a PhD in management.



Text-to-video AI like Sora has proven capable of producing videos based on human language. Working off simple text descriptions, it can generate high fidelity videos up to one minute in length. The emergence of such text-to-video AI has sparked global discussions that have rocked the film and television industry and transformed content creation. It is expected that Sora will give rise to various new forms of programs. This article attempts to analyze ten foreseeable directions for content innovations.

Virtual reality programs

Text-to-video tools like Sora can be used to generate virtual reality scenes and characters for various content products from short videos created with text prompts to movies, animations and short dramas produced entirely by AI.

China Media Group has recently launched a number of programs created with help of generative AI, including China's first text-to-video AI animation series Poems of Timeless Acclaim, the first AI-dubbed English-language mini-documentary On the Trail of the

Chinese Dragon, and AI-generated mini-feature programs such as Chinese Mythology and Classic Stories. In Chinese Mythology, AI tools added wings to imagination and transformed classic mythological stories and imageries into stunning visuals that illustrate the values and spirits of the Chinese culture. Classic Stories is an animated series based on books of history, literature, agriculture, tea studies, and medicine presented by avatars of well-known TV personalities, shedding light on various aspects of the Chinese civilization.

CMG Mobile has launched an ambitious mini-drama project that encourages the use of AI to profile an array of Chinese cities to showcase their urban development, cultural traditions, tourist attractions, people, historical sites, and folklores. The initiative is expected to greatly enhance public knowledge and reputation of these Chinese cities.

Real time interactive video programs

Viewers using Sora can be authorized to co-create storylines and revise story endings to enhance exciting participation. Real-time interactive programs like this offer viewers a more immersive viewing experience, which will greatly increase audience retention.

Text-to-video AI like Sora may further enable real-time interaction between hosts and viewers on gaming platforms where viewers can participate in decision-making and activate real-time conversation with the hosts. This heightened level of involvement allows viewers to participate as if they were virtually there inside the games for a more authentic and interactive learning or entertainment experience. Such a co-creation process is equally suitable for producing expedition and travel programs, as well as those that require visual reconstruction of historical scenes.

Highly customized content delivery

Personalized news services become possible where themes, content and anchors can be tailor-made according to individual needs and preferences. The process from text to audiovisual production and delivery can be completely automated.

An AI-UGC ecosystem is on the horizon where large amounts of personalized short videos, short films, MVs, and short-form animations are generated by AI. CMG Mobile, for example, has dedicated a web-channel called "Lenses of AI" to solicit and showcase video content generated with the help of AI under five designated themes: Chinese mythology, literary classics, beautiful China, sci-fi, and lifestyles. The best works will be featured in the "CMG Mobile AI Gala Evening" and other CMG programs.

Special visual effects

Sora and other AI tools can help generate visual art works on a whole new level. The minute-long videos generated by current test-to-video AI tools are close to rivaling computer-generated imagery. AIGC technology can effortlessly create what would take special effects artists and animators a huge amount of time and effort to accomplish, greatly reducing spendings on set construction, hiring actors and postproduction. It

wouldn't be long before filming on location, postproduction and special effects become unnecessary or even obsolete.

Simulation of historical events and educational content

Generative AI can well be used to simulate historical events and visualize scientific theories, etc., rendering related content more vivid and apprehensible. It can also be widely used to create virtual classrooms, laboratories, and other environments for more immersive learning experiences. Video courses and feature films that once required on-site filming and demonstrations by people will be replaced by AI. Cooking shows, for example, can now be made without wasting ingredients.

Scenario and prospect simulation

Text-to-video AI will become widely applicable in simulating natural disasters, urban planning, traffic flow and other real-life situations to provide visual support for decision-making. Visual presentations of future scenarios and prospects can be easily constructed based on text inputs. Content thus generated can be commonly used in documentaries or educational films, as well as for forums, government meetings and policy discussion programs.

Real Life and virtual hybrid programs

Real-life visuals can segue into AI-generated videos seamlessly and vice versa, which is a useful approach in special effects production for feature programs, documentaries, movies, and TV dramas. It can also enable interactions between animated characters and humans. Virtual hosts can be used for TV interviews or talk shows, changing styles and approaches according to guests and topics.

Multi-language dubbing and subtitling

AI is already capable of completing translation and subtitling tasks not only much faster than people but in highly cost-effective fashion.

Creative advertising and brand promotion

There are immense possibilities for creative advertising using tools like Sora, which can help to drastically shorten the production chain from scripts to impactful videos. Different virtual scenes, characters and storylines can be devised in an instant according to specific branding needs and enable real-time interaction with different demographics.

Digital humans as short video personalities

Large Language Models (LLMs) can be deployed to create and train virtual anchors capable of interacting with the audience in real-time. This will reshape the entire circle of internet influencers, infusing new viewing experiences and business models into the short videos sector.

Increased access to generative AI tools can, besides helping social media bloggers and content product teams create their own avatars, equip them with the “mind and soul” (content) unique to their social media accounts to communicate with viewers, thus freeing up time for humans while improving audience retention. Content and service robots thus created can be immensely useful in providing customized information service, serving as AI assistants in specific fields of need. A social media account sharing maternal knowledge, for example, may well become a 24/7 helpline for mothers and babies. For content consumers, digital humans are their information butler. For content creators, LLM trained AI agents can become a viable alternative for human labor. A team of four people with 10 such agents may have the same productivity as a conventional team of 100.

In short, the widespread application of AI tools like Sora will give rise to new forms of content programs and production models in entertainment, education, and advertising, offering more diverse audio-visual experience and ushering in a more digitalized and “smarter” media business from production to consumption.

Powerful as they are, present generative AI tools like Sora, which OpenAI described as the “simulator of the physical world”, still have many flaws in their ability to understand and re-present the physical world. Compared to existing post-production and visual optimization solutions, current AI technology falls short in complex artistic delivery such as nuanced aesthetic expression in scriptwriting, the development of sophisticated storylines, atmospheric visual production and human emotional simulations. Art comes from real life. It is the labor and activities of daily life that generate works with substance and soul-touching emotional power. AI cannot replace human creation or judgement. And last but not least, uncontrolled use of AI will cause copyright, moral and quality concerns and therefore, requires timely and effective supervision and regulation.

“Personalized news services become possible where themes, content and anchors can be tailor-made according to individual needs and preferences. The process from text to audiovisual production and delivery can be completely automated.”

The impact of celebrity culture and fandom on news

*By Dr Bertha Chin,
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Dr Bertha Chin is an academic whose research intersects fan and celebrity studies, a field within the discipline of media and cultural studies. She is senior lecture in Media and Communication at Swinburne University of Technology (Sarawak, Malaysia). She has published extensively on topics that include transcultural fandom, fan labour, subcultural celebrity, anti-fandom and fan-producer relationships in the media entertainment industry. She is currently researching the intersections of Hollywood media representations of East and Southeast Asians, transcultural fandoms and celebrity cultures. She is co-editor of *Crowdfunding the Future: Media Industries, Ethics and Digital Society* (2015, Peter Lang) and *Eating Fandom* (2020, Routledge). She is co-Editor-in-Chief for the journal, *Popular Communication*.



In November 2023, Chilean-American actor Pedro Pascal, who was named Entertainment Weekly's 2023 Entertainer of the Year and one of TIME's 100 Most Influential People of 2023, received backlash from fans on social media over his apparent silence on the conflict in Gaza. On Twitter/X, fans argued that he should have used his platform to spread awareness about the conflict, and that as a child of political refugees, he should be doing more to stand on the 'right' side of history. A few months later, singer-songwriter Taylor Swift is accused of being a 'psychological operation' created by the US military to use her celebrity status to endorse Biden and thus, hand electoral victory to the Democrats. A poll conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute found that 1 in 3 Republicans in the US believed that Swift is involved in the covert government psychological operation, CNN reports.

In online fandom, Pascal is known as the 'Internet's Daddy', a term generally understood to define a celebrity beloved by the Internet as a whole, while Swift is likely the biggest superstar in the world in the current zeitgeist. Fans pressuring Pascal to reveal his position on the Gaza conflict and the conspiracy theories surrounding Swift does not merely suggest that we are a celebrity-obsessed society. It signals something more complex; that celebrities hold immense power in influencing and informing our understanding of global geopolitics. Our dependence on social media for activities

such as social interaction and news gathering have also changed our perception of, and relationship with celebrities.

Social media platforms like Twitter/X, TikTok and Instagram are easily accessible, and its ability to reach and potentially mobilise millions of fans and audiences in a short span of time meant that celebrities themselves are utilising these platforms, cutting off their dependence on traditional entertainment media, and thus, sharing this symbolic space with fans. Of course, this space is also shared with non-fans, who may react differently to celebrity postings at large. However, for a generation of fans – mostly youths – seeing their favourite celebrities sharing intimate, albeit curated, moments from their private and professional lives are now normalised. As such, social media becomes a space where celebrities also perform their social and political activism, using the platforms to advocate for, and raise awareness for their personal causes as well as their political beliefs.

Of course, it is simplistic to merely assume a celebrity's charismatic social media presence will influence the ways young people view and understand world news. Academics and journalists need to consider why today's youths are turning to celebrities to inform them of geopolitics and news rather than traditional news organisations. Is this an erosion of trust with traditional institutions like the news media, or is it the way news are presented and delivered? Certainly, social media has played a crucial role in this changing role, between fans and celebrities, but also between youths and traditional institutions.

The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024

The digital news report was released on 17 June. Here are some of the key findings:

- There has been a significant decline in the use of Facebook for news and a growing reliance on alternatives including private messaging apps and video networks. Facebook news consumption is down 4 percentage points, across all countries, in the last year.
- News use across online platforms is fragmenting. YouTube is used for news by 31% of the global sample each week, WhatsApp by 21%, while TikTok (13%) has overtaken Twitter (10%), now X, for the first time.
- Video is becoming a more important source of online news, especially with younger groups. Short news videos are accessed by 66% of the sample group each week, with longer formats attracting 51%.
- Only 22% of respondents identify news websites or apps as their main source of online news – down 10 percentage points on 2018. Younger groups are showing a weaker connection with news brands than in the past.
- There is an increasing audience focus on partisan commentators, influencers, and young news creators, especially on YouTube and TikTok.

For more information:

<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2024>

Embracing the future: Generative AI in news and current affairs

*By Ahmad Shafiq Mirza Bin Mansor
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Ir. Ts. Ahmad Shafiq Mirza Bin Mansor, accredited by the Board of Engineers Malaysia (BEM) and the Board of Technologies Malaysia (MBOT), is a seasoned professional with 18 years of experience in telecommunications and broadcasting. He has been involved in both local and international projects, focusing on sports, news, and current affairs. He also active in NGO activities, sharing his expertise through the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), the Institute of Engineering Malaysia (IEM), and local academic institutions. He played a key role in establishing broadcast standards in Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) for News and Current Affairs content and distribution. His contributions have earned him several prestigious awards from RTM, ABU, and ABP+ for his insightful write-ups, marking him as a significant figure in his field.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming industries worldwide, and the broadcasting sector is no exception. RTM the national public broadcaster of Malaysia, is harnessing the power of AI to revolutionize its operations and enhance viewer experiences. This article explores how RTM is integrating AI into its services, including the significant impact of generative AI, and the implications of this technological shift.

Approaches to Utilizing AI and Machine Learning

RTM employs two primary approaches in utilizing AI and machine learning services to enhance its operations and viewer experience:

Creating Direct Impact to Increase Viewership

RTM is injecting new elements into TV and radio production through AI to directly impact and increase its viewer base. By leveraging AI, RTM can innovate in content creation, providing more engaging, personalized, and high-quality programming that attracts and retains viewers.

Enhancing Work Efficiency, Quality, and Quantity While Optimizing Operational Costs

AI serves as a powerful tool for RTM to boost work efficiency and productivity. By automating repetitive tasks, improving content quality, and enabling higher output volumes, AI helps RTM optimize operational costs and streamline its processes.

Enhancing Content Production

One of the significant ways AI is benefiting RTM is in content production. AI-powered tools can automate various aspects of production, from scriptwriting to video editing. Natural Language Processing (NLP) algorithms assist in generating scripts, while AI-driven video editing software can handle post-production tasks, ensuring faster turnaround times without compromising quality.

The Impact of Generative AI

Generative AI, a subset of AI focused on creating new content, is having a profound impact on RTM. This technology can generate high-quality text, images, and even video content, offering unprecedented opportunities for creative expression and efficiency. Here's how generative AI is shaping RTM's operations:

Automated Content Creation

Generative AI models, such as GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer), can create scripts, news articles, and other textual content. This capability allows RTM to produce more content in less time, maintaining a consistent output without overburdening its human staff.

Enhanced Visual Effects

Generative AI can also produce visual effects and graphics. This technology enables RTM to create visually stunning content, from virtual sets to special effects, enhancing the overall production quality and viewer engagement.

Creative Collaboration

Generative AI acts as a creative partner for content creators. By providing suggestions, generating story ideas, and offering new perspectives, AI can stimulate human creativity, resulting in innovative and diverse programming.

Cost Efficiency

By automating routine and repetitive tasks, generative AI helps RTM reduce production costs. This efficiency allows the broadcaster to allocate resources to other critical areas, such as investigative journalism and high-quality programming.

Deploying AI in News and Current Affairs

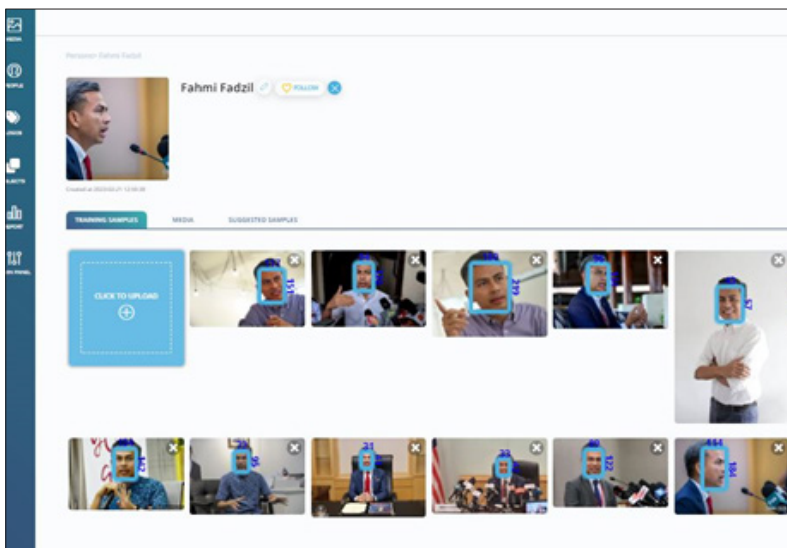
Since 2022, RTM News and Current Affairs has deployed AI and machine learning applications for its News Digital Archive (ADiB) System. This includes:

Multi-Language Audio to Text Transcription

Automatically transcribing audio content into text in multiple languages, enhancing accessibility and searchability.

Face, Object, and Logo Recognition

Identifying and tagging individuals, objects, and logos in video content, streamlining content management and retrieval.



AI Tag by generating new searchable video material by compare Sample photo and video footage Ingest.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)

Automating the organization, storage, and retrieval of media assets, significantly reducing manual effort.

Statistical Data Analysis

Utilizing a Business Intelligence module for comprehensive data analysis, enabling data-driven decision-making.

Additionally, since 2023, AI services have been integrated between RTM's Mobile Journalism (MOJO) Kit, News Room Computer System (NRCS) and Teleprompter System. This research and development (R&D) includes enabling voice command functionality

as an alternative teleprompter remote control, providing journalists with hands-free operation and enhancing their efficiency in the field while script approval status updated online in real time from Wisma Berita, Angkasapuri.



RTM R&D, AI Voice Command Control were showcase and demonstrate ABU Digital Broadcasting Symposium 2024 in Royal Chulan Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

Improved Audience Analysis

Understanding audience preferences is crucial for any broadcaster. AI enables RTM to analyse vast amounts of data from various sources, including social media, viewer ratings, and online interactions. This analysis helps RTM to understand trends, measure audience engagement, and make data-driven decisions to enhance programming.

Enhancing News Reporting

In the realm of news reporting, AI is a game-changer. RTM leverages AI to gather and analyse news from around the world swiftly. AI-powered tools can monitor global news sources, social media, and other platforms to identify breaking news and emerging trends. This capability ensures that RTM can deliver timely and relevant news to its audience.

Additionally, AI-driven transcription services enable RTM to provide multilingual news content, catering to Malaysia's diverse population. This inclusivity enhances RTM's reach and relevance across different linguistic and cultural groups.

Future Prospects

While maintaining its current AI approach, RTM, especially in News and Current Affairs, is looking forward to applying more AI services. To achieve effective and optimized operations, RTM plans to use AI for generating automated new content to blend into existing operations. This includes deploying AI avatars for sign language interpretation in news production and public service announcements (PSAs). Additionally, RTM aims to utilize AI-powered tracking and high-speed rendering technology to reframe ultra-high-resolution video, enabling optimized multi-camera production.

Quality still a top priority, content compliance is a critical aspect of broadcasting, especially for a national broadcaster like RTM. AI tools can assist in monitoring and ensuring that all content adheres to regulatory standards and guidelines. Through automated content review processes, AI can flag potentially non-compliant material, allowing RTM to address issues proactively.

RTM is also exploring a more holistic application of AI, particularly in marketing and audience engagement. RTM aims to leverage AI to enhance its business-to-consumer (B2C) interactions through its platform. AI can help RTM identify and match advertisers with target audiences more precisely, creating a win-win situation for both parties and maximizing the effective use of airtime. By using AI to analyse viewer data and preferences, RTM can offer advertisers more specific targeting options, increasing the relevance and impact of their marketing efforts.

Advancements in AI technology will continue to open new possibilities for content creation, distribution, and audience engagement. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) experiences, powered by AI, could become part of RTM's offerings, providing immersive and interactive content.

Moreover, as AI technologies become more sophisticated, RTM can further enhance its capabilities in areas such as predictive analytics, automated journalism, and real-time audience feedback.

AI Revolutionizes RTM User Experience

Artificial Intelligence is ushering in a new era for broadcasting, with RTM leading this exciting transformation. By integrating AI into its operations, RTM is enhancing efficiency, boosting content quality, and significantly improving the viewing experience for its audience. Generative AI, in particular, is a game-changer, enabling RTM to create innovative content, streamline operations, and engage viewers more effectively.

As AI technology advances, RTM's commitment to innovation ensures it remains a leading force in the broadcasting industry. This strategic implementation of AI sets a benchmark for public broadcasters, demonstrating how to leverage technology to stay relevant and competitive in the digital age. The future of broadcasting in Malaysia is bright, with AI driving this promising transformation.

THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

What is the best career advice you received or you would give a young journalist today?

- Always stay curious and never stop learning
- Focus on news society desires to know
- Journalism is a noble profession. A journalist can help society and people.
- Learn languages
- You do something different everyday
- Make sure news is accurate and the source is valid
- Research is the key before jumping to a story
- Everything you say should be a fact
- You see the world being a journalist
- You can experience a little bit of everything. It's an All in one career in a way
- Ask questions behind the story. If you don't ask, you don't get
- Be brave, honest, never give up and be willing to take risks
- Always find ways to improve as a storyteller. Be passionate about facts
- You are only as good as your last story, protect your sources, verify all information before publishing
- Give attention to AI and focus on digital skills
- Be unique in your journalism
- Be positive. Always hunt for news. Love work and try to enjoy the profession.
- Don't care about the low salary. Gaining experience is more important.
- Keep in touch with the community. Peoples voices
- Be a trusted person
- Do your job without fear or bias. If there is influence be mindful there are very different ways of presenting your news to the public
- You can make the world a better place to live
- Read a lot of news and be aware of what is happening around the world
- Put a lot of time and effort into student media
- Accept and learn from criticism
- Study and work. Get the experience early
- The beauty of being a reporter is being the Voice of the Voiceless, something to feel good about at the end of everyday
- If possible leave your country and work in another to develop a greater worldview
- Be relevant, inspired, and try to get big articles. Don't be a lazy journalist
- Read more
- To be passionate about reporting, but not to become an activist. Always doubt everything you are told and everything you see. Challenge yourself by leaving the social media algorithm bubble and going out into the field. Observe what is happening first hand

New tools & climate change in the South Pacific

By Ritika Pratap
Deputy News Manager
Fijian Broadcasting Corporation

Ritika began as a cadet journalist at Fijian Broadcasting Corporation (FBC) in 2005. She became Hindi Desk Editor in July 2010 and has since led FBC's Hindi news content. She assumed TV Desk editing duties in January 2015 and became Deputy News Manager in October 2015. Presenting balanced information across various platforms, Ritika gathers, verifies and reports news with precision, upholding journalistic standards and engaging audiences effectively. She is currently pursuing studies in international relations and diplomacy.



The media landscape has dramatically changed over the past ten years with the arrival of digital media/social media and cutting-edge technology to produce news content. AI-powered tools, video and photo-editing software, and mobile journalism are some of the technologies widely used by journalists on a daily basis. These technologies will continue to advance, not only determining how the public consumes news, but also how it perceives news and engages with media in the future. Will people rely on traditional media, such as TV, radio, and print, or will everything be digitized? What will be The Future of News?

AI-powered tools have slowly crept into the industry, with a number of reputable media organizations around the world already using them for content creation. Journalists are gradually moving from traditional text-based reporting to multimedia storytelling. While automated journalism still hasn't fully expanded, news companies are encouraging journalists to use AI to perfect their scripts and delivery. Apart from AI, journalists now also have improved technologies for filing stories from anywhere in the country or the world. As smartphones advance, the work of journalists becomes easier. They can now shoot, record, script and edit their visuals on phones and send them directly to their editors from the fields. Live crosses from remote and rural areas also have become easier with internet access expanding day by day. The COVID-19 pandemic also has changed how the media operates. As prolonged lockdowns were implemented to stop the spread of the virus, the media had to look for other ways to keep the public informed. Zoom and other online video forums emerged, helping journalists contact important stakeholders and disseminate relevant critical information. This gave readers and viewers a new experience to stay informed. But the enhancement in technology will not end there. More new tools and artificial intelligence will be created that media houses will eventually start using. The question is, will the newsroom become fully automated? Will there be no need for journalists in the newsrooms of the future? Will the newsroom be run by robots? We may only know the answer in years to come.

While digitization has its own challenges, it also provides good opportunities for both the media houses and the public. In this fast-paced world, very few people have the time to sit back and watch or read news. People are on the go at all times, so media houses have a huge challenge to keep their attention and provide timely news and critical information.

Digitization, however, has increased competition. The journo or the news outlet that breaks the story first to your smartphones will be followed the most. But traditional media are not only competing with each other. There is a constant battle between the news outlets and so-called social media influencers. In the race to increase followers, these influencers often end up spreading or posting misinformation, sometimes creating unnecessary panic among the public. As a result, traditional news outlets are working hard to verify facts and present credible information during critical times.

Despite these challenges, the future of news, especially in the South Pacific region in this digital age, holds great promise. Today's workforce has five generations working together. Many newsrooms have very young journos who are tech-savvy. While seasoned journalists have deep knowledge of how the industry works, the young graduates who are good with technology are bringing in new perspectives to reach the wider audience. We can no longer remain stubborn to just rely on the traditional and old methods of reporting. The views of all journalists in the newsroom are being incorporated to remain relevant with the changing world. The dynamics of news delivery have changed. Stories are broken on digital media first before they are aired on radio, television, and print media. High-quality videos and images carry a lot of weight to be able to catch the attention of the consumers. We now have different audiences, and scripts are written in different ways to suit them. Scripts for radio and television have a different style, while those posted on the website and social media need to be rewritten. Journalists now have the advantage of filing their stories as and when it happens by going live on social media platforms or posting a few snippets on their pages. News reporting has become more fun and easy.

The other major issue that is changing the dynamics of reporting in newsrooms in the South Pacific region is climate change. According to weather experts, 2023 was the warmest year since global records began in 1850. The 10 warmest years in the 174-year record have all occurred between 2014-2023. It is a fact that small island states in the Pacific are the most vulnerable to climate change. In Fiji, close to 50 villages have been earmarked for relocation to higher ground in the next five to 10 years, six have already been relocated. While global warming has been an issue for sometime now, but due to its rising impacts, journalists have recently played huge role in highlighting its over all impact as well as helping raise awareness about it. In 2016, a Category Five Cyclone hit Fiji killing 44 people. Between 2018 and 2023, Fiji has experienced 14 within its boundaries and there have been numerous instances of crippling flooding shutting down towns, villages and some industry for days on end and requiring emergency shelter for the displaced members of the Fijian populace. These weather patterns and cyclones may continue to get more severe, putting journalists in precarious and unpredictable situations, but due to advancement in technologies and the power of digital media they will still be able to provide critical information for the safety of the

public. Just like first responders, journalists have also been risking their lives to keep their viewers/listeners and readers informed. As more and more people in Fiji now own smart phones and network connectivity increases, journalists and weather experts find it easier to disseminate advance weather warnings to help everyone prepare. The media is an important player in each country, to keep people informed and educated about severe weather patterns and what to expect in future when it comes to global warming.

As the global spread of media continues to evolve and grow at a rapid pace, propelled by advancements in technology and changing audience preferences, the future of news promises both challenges and opportunities. From the integration of AI-powered tools to the rise of citizen journalism on social media platforms, the way we consume news is undergoing a profound transformation. While the traditional role of journalists remains indispensable in providing credible and verified information, the collaboration between seasoned professionals and tech-savvy newcomers heralds a new era of dynamic storytelling and audience engagement. As we navigate this digital age, one thing remains certain: the quest for truth and meaningful storytelling will endure, shaping the future of news in ways yet to be imagined.

THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

What's the best thing about being a journalist?

A word cloud where the word 'people' is the largest and most central. Other words include 'new opportunities', 'meeting people', 'types of people', 'telling their stories', 'different everyday', 'story-telling', 'educate people', 'voice', 'first hand info', 'people in my country', 'story/history', 'change', 'society', 'important people', 'influential people', 'journalists', 'news', and 'BBC News'.

Which organisations do you admire, for their future focused approach?

A word cloud featuring several media organizations. The largest word is 'bbc'. Other prominent words include 'OpenAI', 'national outlets', 'BBC News', 'news agencies', 'NHK', 'TRT/ AlJazeera', 'TRT', 'ABC news', 'VOX for visuals', and 'presenters using reels'.

THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

What skills did you need for your first job in journalism?

- English, writing and speaking skills
- Hardworking and smart working qualities
- Research, analysis, interviewing, general knowledge
- Ability to find news via different media
- Core journalism skills & courage to face sudden situations
- Critical thinking skills
- News reporting skills
- Video editing skills
- Writing skills for broadcast
- Confidence, will power
- An excellent writing ability, exceptional general knowledge
- Camera skills and video editing skills
- Confidence to pick up a phone and speak to newsmakers
- Video journalism
- Financial data analysis and the capacity to convert figures into stories people would understand

Which skills would you require if applying for a job today?

- Critical thinking
- Ability to speak and write in English
- Research skills
- Tiktok
- Communication and translation skills
- Digital skills
- News writing skills
- AI knowledge
- Video journalism
- Tech savvy
- Problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability
- Strong broadcast voice
- Writing, video editing, presenting, being up to date with latest news
- Video story telling
- The skills to verify if news is true or false
- Multimedia skills
- Be your own one-man team. Presenter/camera/audio.
- Data research and journalism
- Big data knowledge, understanding of algorithms and how they operate
- Investigative skills

What skills do you think your newsroom will need in five years?

- More tech skills
- Data visualisation and analysis
- Ability to adapt and develop skills to new circumstances
- Editing, animation & AI proficiency
- Use AI to make creative videos/animation
- Use social media more effectively
- Fact checking skills
- Vibrant, engaging young news production
- TV Production and time management
- Ability to detect when AI is being misused or abused
- Social media skills
- Multimedia skills; journalists to edit their own photos and videos
- Big data knowledge, a strong understanding of social development trends
- More environmental journalism

Maintaining values in a time of transition

*By Harry Lock
Editorial Manager
Public Media Alliance*



Public service media (PSM) has never had so many avenues through which to reach audiences. But in this year of elections, it is more important than ever for public media to adapt without losing sight of their core values.

Each arrival of a new third-party platform comes with the promise of a new audience demanding new forms of content – an audience that, prior, PSM was never able to reach. The choices over which third-party to use can be dizzying, and the potential can be overwhelming.

This modern media market aides certain core values of public service media, such as universalism and accessibility. Public media – both through their own digital platforms and through third-party digital platforms – are now just a finger tap away from their audience.

With social networks becoming the go-to method of news consumption for the young and digitally literate, some major PSM are adopting ‘digital first’ strategies – putting the emphasis on producing and distributing content primarily for digital channels – to maintain relevance.

Risks are inherent in this strategy. While many public media have invested strongly in homegrown digital platforms – from mobile apps to streaming platforms – third-party digital platforms such as Apple Podcasts or Instagram remain some of the most cost-effective and essential ways of reaching audiences with public media content. In using these platforms – the new gatekeepers – public service media surrender a degree of autonomy, they sometimes sacrifice final editorial control, and they can lose prominence.

The growth and scale of many of these platforms far outweighs that of all legacy media in many jurisdictions, resulting in a severe loss of bargaining power for many PSM. Negotiating fair levels of compensation for the use of content, or even for the scraping of content by AI, is proving near impossible. As shown in Canada, efforts to compel big tech firms to reimburse news media for the content they provide are proving difficult, with Facebook taking the disproportionate and harmful decision to stop hosting news completely.

None of which is to say these are red lines. Public service media organisations remain on third-party platforms because they recognise it's where audiences are and will continue to be. There is certainly an important, value-driven case to be made for why PSM should embrace the use of these platforms, even if it's simply as a counter to mis- and disinformation on those platforms.

But while this is the flashy, cutting-edge side of public service media, it is also crucial to not forget those audiences for whom public media means public broadcasting. The audiences for whom linear radio and TV – provided by their national broadcaster – is the essential way of consuming news and information.

“Public media can’t afford to lose its traditional audience ... but public media has to really adapt to serve younger people with the same values but in completely different formats,” Nic Newman, of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, recently told PMA’s Media Uncovered podcast. “This is the dilemma: within constrained budgets, how do you speak to two audiences who want things increasingly differently?”

Which begs the question: In the past century of public service media, has there ever been a time when audiences have been so disparate in both the way they receive news and information, and the way it is presented?

The rise and popularity of social networks such as TikTok indicates that young audiences want news packaged in a bitesize length, filmed in portrait-mode, and delivered casually. Compare this to the way news and information is presented through legacy channels.

Yet public service media – through its mission to serve and reach all audiences – must find this balance. Move too quickly towards a digital transition and risk losing your traditional audience; don’t move at all and say farewell to the younger, digitally literate audience.

Meanwhile, public media must continue to innovate and experiment to remain apace with their digital and traditional competitors.

“Do all of this and do it within more constrained budgets” – this is often seen as the reality of the challenge.

Audiences desperately need public service media. They need to be able to access news and information which is reliably sourced and editorially independent, from a brand they can trust. They need to be offered news that is impartial, balanced, and fair, from journalists who ask critical and searching questions.

While news is in transition, those values are not. This brave new world of rapidly evolving platforms, content creation, and distribution methods cannot be allowed to compromise that which identifies public service media from its private and state media competitors: independence, trust, transparency, accountability. Against mis- and disinformation, against increasing polarisation, against political actors who would do public media harm – public service media must continue to be a source of accurate information.

Innovative tools to restore media trust in the age of AI

*By Cédric Alviani
Director Asia-Pacific Bureau
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)*



In 2024, with almost a quarter of the world's population set to go to the polls, media coverage of the numerous elections held globally is being disrupted by the transformations brought about by artificial intelligence (AI). Ahead of the presidential elections in Slovakia, a fake conversation generated by AI featured journalist Monika Tódová and the leader of a political party fomenting electoral fraud. In India, where AI impersonations of political figures and journalists surged before the general elections, India TV's editor-in-chief Rajat Sharma took legal action after discovering his image was used in a fake video promoting dubious health treatments.

Such incidents highlight how AI is fueling the fake content industry, posing ethical and economic threats to journalism. As the lines between true and false narratives blur, jeopardising the right to information and deepening the media trust crisis, it is crucial for governments and news organisations to collaborate on robust regulatory frameworks and ethical guidelines.

The Paris charter on AI and journalism

Press freedom organisation Reporters Without Borders (RSF), in addition to its core advocacy activities to secure the release of detained journalists, as well as emergency support and capacity-building, has developed innovative solutions to address the novel challenges posed to press freedom and the right to information in the digital information ecosystem.

To respond to the growing threats that AI poses to journalism, RSF has gathered a commission of global experts led by the journalist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Ressa, to develop the Paris Charter on AI and journalism, published in November 2023 with 16 partner organisations including the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU). Aware that technological innovation doesn't inherently lead to progress, but that it must be guided by ethics to truly benefit humanity, the authors of the charter launched this first international ethical benchmark for AI and journalism in order to redefine the principles that should guide journalistic ethics in the digital age.

Among the ten principles it sets out, the charter insists that ethics should be the guiding criterion governing technological choices within the media, reaffirms the pre-eminence of human action in editorial decisions, and stresses the crucial need for the media to draw a clear line between synthetic and authentic content.

JTI, a standard for trustworthy journalism

To restore trust in the media amid growing scepticism, RSF also recently initiated the launch of the Journalism Trust Initiative (JTI), the first international ISO standard for the media. Developed by a committee of 130 experts to certify the transparency and ethics of the newsrooms in terms of the information process, this standard aims at helping the public identify reliable news content and give it preference in algorithmic search engines.

The initiative is enjoying growing success: more than 1,500 media outlets in 118 countries around the world have already signed up with JTI to combat misinformation and reward ethical and professional journalism. In October 2023, US technology giant Microsoft vowed to promote content from sources that align with JTI criteria in its flagship products, including search engine Bing and social media LinkedIn.

To preserve the right to information and the future of journalism, journalists and newsrooms must join forces and draw inspiration from these initiatives to ensure that ethics guide the governance and use of technology in order to restore public confidence in the media, and more broadly in political institutions.

Reporters Without Borders' key Paris Charter principles

- The use and development of AI systems must uphold the core values of journalistic ethics, including accuracy, fairness, impartiality, independence, respect for privacy and confidentiality of sources.
- Editorial teams must clearly define the goals, scope, and usage of each AI system.
- Any use of AI that has a significant impact on the production or distribution of journalistic content should be clearly disclosed.
- Media outlets must avoid misleading the public. They should refrain from creating or using AI-generated content mimicking real-world events or realistically impersonating individuals.

For more information: www.rsf.org/en/paris-charter-ai-and-journalism

Prioritising journalist safety is not just the right thing to do for your staff. It may be a matter of survival for your organisation.

*By Elena Cosentino
Director
International News Safety Institute*

Elena is the Director of the International News Safety Institute (INSI). She has worked as a journalist and current affairs documentary filmmaker at CNN, ITN, BBC and others over nearly 20 years. She has travelled the world covering natural disasters, wars, migration, drug trafficking, terrorism and organised crime.



If you think you can still do without a comprehensive editorial safety strategy for your journalists, you may need to think again. Not only do you risk untold financial and reputational damage should something go wrong, you risk being left behind by your competitors.

Being a journalist today means facing significant risks while covering most if not all beats, from conflict to science, from politics to the environment, from crime to gender, our colleagues are regularly at the receiving end of both physical and digital threats. Recruiting and retaining the best talent in this challenging environment becomes harder by the day but without it, there's no business left.

Devising and implementing a broad and effective editorial safety strategy, particularly if you are starting from scratch, may appear daunting and unaffordable, but it doesn't need to be.

Whether you are employing one person or a whole team to focus on the safety and security of your staff and freelancers, what is necessary above all is a simple mind-shift. Risk should never be seen as separate from any editorial decision but as part and parcel of it. Any story's potential risks must be raised and discussed at the same time as the editorial merits of the story. It is only this way that both the news organisation and the deploying journalist can make an informed and fully conscious decision - together - as to how much risk any story is worth taking and how to mitigate it.

Clarity about your organisation's and your team's risk appetite and a candid assessment of the risk involved versus the reward expected, is step number one in the right direction and it may well be wildly different for each outlet and each journalist.

Without this fundamental understanding and acknowledgement of risk, however, there can be no courageous journalism – only recklessness.

Responsible and successful news organisations around the world support and protect their journalists through policies to ensure physical safety, digital security, mental health, and overall well-being. This doesn't necessarily involve massive costs and, through organisations and members networks such as INSI and others, there is a vast wealth of resources, expertise, and industry support available.

INSI members today agree that best practice in physical safety, requires conducting regular risk assessments to identify potential threats to journalists and their teams, especially those working in conflict zones or covering sensitive topics. Outlets should also provide safety training covering hostile environment awareness, first aid, and emergency response procedures. This can include both in-person and online training modules and are now widely available. Staff and freelancers must be supplied with necessary personal protective equipment – or PPE - such as bulletproof vests, helmets, and first-aid or trauma kits when working in high-risk areas. Emergency protocols, including evacuation plans and emergency contact numbers must be agreed in advance of deployments, so that all journalists are familiar with these protocols.

Through Digital Security Training, journalists also need to be regularly updated on the latest threats and protective measures and educated on encryption, secure communications, and safe online practices. The mental health of journalists and news teams is considered just as important as physical safety to the well-being, resilience and productivity of staff and freelancers. A culture of openness about mental health issues should be encouraged and regular check-ins and debriefing sessions implemented, especially after covering traumatic events, or online harassment, to assess journalists' mental health and provide support, including counselling services, hotlines, or peer support groups. A healthy work-life balance should also be fostered by encouraging reasonable working hours and providing time off after stressful assignments.

By implementing a holistic strategy that addresses physical safety, digital security and emotional well-being, news organizations can create a safer and more supportive environment for their journalists and news teams.

UN launches Global Principles for Information Integrity

The United Nations' Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, called for urgent action to curb harm from the spread of misinformation, disinformation and hate speech on 24 June 2024, at the launch of the UN's Global Principles for Information Integrity.

The UN says misinformation, disinformation, hate speech and other risks to the information ecosystem are fuelling conflict, threatening democracy and human rights, and undermining public health and climate action.

It says their proliferation is now being supercharged by the rapid rise of readily available Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, increasing the threat to groups often targeted in information spaces, including children.

The Secretary-General said: "At a time when billions of people are exposed to false narratives, distortions and lies, these principles lay out a clear path forward, firmly rooted in human rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and opinion."

The UN says its own missions, operations, and priorities are compromised by the erosion of information integrity, including vital peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts

The principles and the associated recommendations are designed to foster healthier and safer information spaces that champion human rights, peaceful societies and a sustainable future.

Key recommendations for News Media

- Invest in capacity-building for data-driven and investigative journalism to proactively cover and inform the public about risks to the integrity of the information ecosystem. Employ robust editorial processes and standards, including in the sourcing of information, to help maintain and secure trust among media consumers. Establish fact-checking mechanisms as a reference for the public.
- Commit to providing cost-free and timely information to the public during emergency and crisis situations when risks to information ecosystem integrity may be heightened.

- Commit and adhere to globally recognized norms and practices of professional and ethical journalism produced in the public interest, emphasizing impartiality and editorial independence, and actively adopt self-regulatory accountability mechanisms. Provide periodic, quality training to advance ethical, accurate and impartial reporting, and to update skills for promoting innovation and adaptability to changes in the communications landscape, including by adopting a “solutions” or “constructive” journalism approach. Disclose funding sources, ownership structure and financial incentives so that individuals can be better informed about the news that they select and consume.
- Establish robust policies for ethical use of AI technologies, including clearly labelling AI-generated or -mediated material when publishing or broadcasting. This includes information in the metadata that identifies such content as AI-generated or -mediated.
- Take steps to ensure that advertising does not drive risks to information spaces. Clearly distinguish between news, opinion and sponsored content, and ensure transparency as to the funding of opinion pieces and potential conflicts of interest. Clearly mark all paid and AI-generated or -mediated advertising and advertorial content. Provide transparent reporting on advertising revenue sources and clear, accessible advertising policies and practices.
- Establish working conditions aligned with international labour and human rights law and prioritize initiatives that help ensure the welfare and safety of journalists, including in digital spaces, and pay specific attention to discrimination, abuse, harassment and threats of violence against women journalists and media workers.

The Global Principles for Information Integrity are available at:
<https://www.un.org/informationintegrity>

“At a time when billions of people are exposed to false narratives, distortions and lies, these principles lay out a clear path forward, firmly rooted in human rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and opinion.”

Antonio Guterres

THE FUTURE OF NEWS SURVEY

Which courses or workshops do you think ABU News should provide in the next 12 months?

- Newsroom management
- Introduction to AI and AI tools for journalists
- Multimedia journalism
- Digital journalism and transformation
- Mobile (“mojo”) journalism
- Video journalism
- Preparing big programs
- Script writing
- Social media training and optimisation
- News graphics for journalists
- Brekky news and live broadcasting
- Constructive journalism
- Investigative reporting, economic writing, disaster reporting
- Fact-checking and verification
- Strategies to improve inclusiveness and gender equality
- Business Journalism. Investigative journalism
- AI: applications + ethical considerations
- Investigative political reporting
- Workshop on the future of news in the next 10 years
- Hostile environment and safety training (HEST)
- More senior news management collaborative face-to-face sharing of ideas
- Study exchanges for journalists/technicians/editors
- Digital news workshops - use of digital tools including AI
- Climate and environment reporting
- Journalist video editing skills
- Women in leadership
- Ethical reporting practices, diversity and inclusion in newsrooms



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Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union



www.facebook.com/ABU.Headquarters/ | www.facebook.com/Asiavision.AVN/



www.youtube.com/@abu_hq

2024 Asiavision members

For more information: www.abu.org.my/avn-news/



RTA
AFGHANISTAN



ARIANA
AFGHANISTAN



ABC
AUSTRALIA



BTV
BANGLADESH



RTB
BRUNEI



CCTV
CHINA



FBC
FIJI



FIJI-TV
FIJI



TVB
HONG KONG



TVRI
INDONESIA



DD
INDIA



NHK
JAPAN



KBS
KOREA



TDM
MACAU



RTM
MALAYSIA



PSM
MALDIVES



SS MEDIA
MALDIVES



MRTV
MYANMAR



TV5
MONGOLIA



NTV
NEPAL



PASIFIKA TV
NEW ZEALAND



ABS-CBN
PHILIPPINES



MEDIACORP
SINGAPORE



SLRC
SRI LANKA



MTV
SRI LANKA



Thai PBS
THAI PBS
THAILAND



MCOT
THAILAND



TRT
TÜRKIYE



TVTM
TURKMENISTAN



MTRK
UZBEKISTAN



VTV
VIETNAM

