

HOW MODERNITY CHANGE INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

As a result of the proliferation of information, every industry now faces a new set of difficulties. For the journalism industry, the advent of IT has brought about profound changes to many parts of the job. The high-tech revolution has broken the conventional monopoly of the mainstream media and drastically changed how the public gets its news and information. The survival of the news media depends on how well they adapt to the changing requirements of their audience. Despite the rise of other types of journalism, investigative reporting still has a prominent place in the field. One of the cornerstones of democracy is free speech to hold those in authority responsible, a means through which corruption may be exposed and the people can be educated. Before the Internet, journalists would spend months gathering information before publishing a major investigation like Watergate. The basic tenets of investigative journalism remain the same, but the methods used to expose stories have evolved. The digital realm has provided not only new mediums for storytelling but also altered traditional methods of tale distribution. You cannot expect people will set aside time to read the paper or watch TV at certain times of the day. The trend of growing syndication poses a threat to investigative journalism since it may lead to a simplification of viewpoints and an emphasis on stories having national rather than regional appeal. While this is a drawback, it must be balanced against syndication's usefulness in saving money for high-priced forms of journalism like investigative reporting that help mastheads fulfil their watchdog role in a democratic society.

Keywords: “Investigative Journalism; Digital Age; News; Information Technology, Traditional Monopoly, Media, Production of News, Computer and Internet Access”

I. INTRODUCTION

Until a few years ago, India appeared like the image of a healthy democracy, with a strong free media and a rising growth rate. Many hallmarks of contemporary democracies have been waning in India as a result of the ascendance of violent Hindu nationalism and its torchbearer, Prime Minister and Bharatiya Janata Party leader Narendra Modi. Journalists have been arrested and labeled "anti-nationals" on spurious sedition allegations. The use of both online and legal harassment against journalists working for free and independent media outlets by both state and non-state actors is becoming prevalent. In the meanwhile, most news outlets have become the government's propaganda machine.

New digital media platforms have emerged as leaders in "independent and free journalism," while established news sources discreetly toe the official line. These journalists battle judicial harassment and uncover the secret networks of troll armies, commanded by operatives backing the governing elites.

A journalist's holy grail, the one concept without which the field would collapse, spans all of human history and knowledge. From the time of pigeons until the present day of the Wi-Fi internet, newspapers have been the primary medium for journalistic content. However, the recent telecommunications revolution represents a radical departure from previous modes of technological advancement. We have the chance and the obligation to approach this situation quite differently. "Since new technologies are reshaping the most fundamental parts of our communications system, we must reevaluate our most fundamental assumptions about the future of newsgathering and dissemination."

NDTV 24x7, India's Leading Television Network Our study participants, who mostly use English while using the internet, rank national publications like the Times of India, Hindustan Times, and The Hindu behind only Today TV and BBC News in terms of their offline popularity. India's print and broadcast media are self-regulated, and certain stations have gained notoriety for sensationalizing the news and hosting contentious discussions. After a financial dip caused by the epidemic, print media rebounded in 2021, with an estimated 20% increase in income [1]—most of which came from an increase in advertising.

Online, however, established media outlets are up against a lot of nimble, digitally born firms that are dedicated to editorial autonomy. To augment their ad income, many non-profits depend on grants and reader contributions. Similar to NewsLaundry, several digital native companies depend only on memberships and contributions to stay afloat. While The Wire's editorial stances tend to be anti-establishment and investigative in character, those of NewsLaundry's are more neutral, with the former preferring to provide a range of perspectives as they see them. While The News Minute focuses only on South Indian news, The Quint uses its news coverage, as well as its citizen journalism projects and fact-checking services, to create connections within the local community. Advertising and subscription income both increased by 29% in 2021, contributing to the total 29% growth of the digital market [2]. The majority of Indians (72%) get their news through their mobile devices, while just 35% do so via personal computers. Google News (used by 53% of Americans), Daily Hunt (25%), InShorts (19%), and NewsPoint (17%) are just a few examples of news aggregator systems and applications that have grown popular and widely used.

The majority of the people we studied (53% and 51%) in India get their news via social media platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp, respectively. After TikTok and other Chinese applications were prohibited in 2020 for security reasons, local alternatives such as Moj, Roposo, and Josh emerged, along with platform-level additions like Instagram Reels. Despite their widespread usage, social media platforms are also home to a great deal of false information, not to mention persistent trolling and harassment, which has policymakers worried about the impact of this phenomenon. According to third-party sources, major political parties' allies have been known to coordinate such actions on occasion [3]. Several YouTube news stations were blocked by the government in April of this year [4] for endangering "national security" and "international relations." The restriction was implemented in accordance with new information technology laws drafted in February 2021, which have been contested by both social media and traditional media outlets. Furthermore, Facebook has been under under scrutiny as media investigations showed the site had promoted divisive material and disinformation in the form of adverts, favoring the governing party BJP, throughout the 2019 and 2020 election seasons [5]. Meanwhile, concerns that Google has misused its dominating position in the online news business have prompted an inquiry by India's Competition Commission of India (CCI). Publishers in

the US, as in other countries, complain that they do not get enough payment for the material made available by third-party digital platforms [6].

The World Press Freedom Index 2022 placed India at #150, eight places lower than in the previous year, suggesting deteriorating conditions for press freedom there. In January, members apparently loyal to the local government took over the independent Kashmir Journalistic Club (KPC) in the presence of armed police, a move the Editors Guild of India condemned as part of a "continued tendency to crush press freedom" [7]. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has issued new accreditation guidelines for journalists, which indicate, among other things, that accreditation might be cancelled if employment is judged to undermine the wider interests and sovereignty of the country [8]. The Supreme Court of India established a commission to investigate claims that Pegasus spyware was used against journalists, activists, students, and members of civil society in India [9]. This was done to allay public worries about their right to privacy and freedom of speech.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Field theory and its application in journalism studies*

In the mid-1960s, when Bourdieu [10] first introduced the phrase field theory, it was mostly used in the study of literature and the arts. In the words of Wacquant [11], "the various spheres of life, art, science, religion, the economy, the law, politics, and so on, tend to form distinct microcosms endowed with their own rules regularity and forms of authority—what Bourdieu calls fields." Field theory is not a simple theory but rather incorporates many concepts such as capital, Doxa, and habitus. "Bourdieu [10] employs these ideas to depict the field not merely as a physical location where power dynamics may be seen, but also as a setting in which these dynamics are structurally ordered according to their logic." According to Bourdieu [10], entering a field calls for understanding the field's justifications and accepting the norms integral to the field's functioning and structure. His first take on this logic labels it as Doxa, which he defines as "the implicit presuppositions that participants in this area know well" [12]. According to Bourdieu, Doxa emerges through the interactions between players in a field and is dependent on the prior beliefs and experiences of those actors [11]. Bourdieu calls this dynamic and its structural outcome habitus, which describes how forces (such as cultural, social, symbolic, and economic capital) compete to preserve or disrupt the status quo of this field's established order [13]. Internal conflicts and tensions among the field's many forces are also shown by field theory [14]. Bourdieu contends that actors may alter their standing in the field by accumulating and investing capital and that this is essential for understanding the field's power structure and linkages [15]. In contrast to economic capital, which refers to tangible resources like land or buildings, cultural capital includes intangible assets like expertise, connections, and reputation [15, 16].

Scholarly investigations center on the fight for power within the journalistic field [17], and there is no long history of applying field theory to journalism studies. To paraphrase Benson [16], "the journalistic field is understood as part of the field of power; that is, it tends to deal with first and foremost those actors who hold huge quantities of capital." Journalism is an area where diverse forces dwell and may influence journalistic works. However, this quote emphasizes that it is located inside the 'dominated' field of cultural production, a field within this wider field. The struggles between various types of capital are studied in depth. "while forms of capital are useful to map variation in journalism both along broader traditions and genres, as well as between organizations and agents," Maares and Hanusch [15] write, "the concept and its analytical power to research journalism has not yet been streamlined in journalism scholarship." For instance, Zeveleva [17]

notes that the country's political elites are undermining Russia's journalistic sector and that this is reflected in the country's extremely concentrated media ownership. "Specifically, Li [18] examines the advertising operations of US news organizations and concludes that the pursuit of commercial objectives undermines the professionalism of legacy media by eroding the wall of separation between editorial standards and business activities." Scholars that study digital journalism have discovered that nontraditional news outlets (such as citizen journalism and aggregators) have joined the industry and are threatening traditional journalism's dominance in content production by drawing on traditional journalism's cultural capital [19]. These outlets develop their credibility by adopting a similar approach to traditional media while maintaining a distinct voice and aesthetic.

B. The mutual transition among capitals in the digital age

Though economic capital is more influential than cultural capital, it is usual to witness a shift between the two in the digital era [20]. When two capitals switch places, there is a marked shift in the orthodoxy of the media. Today's news outlets [21] care more about their readers than their proprietors. Advertisers place a premium on audience behavior, so news outlets must include this in their decision-making when selecting, producing, and publishing stories. Using news metrics and web analytics, media outlets may better understand their viewers' interests and discover story ideas from the wide range of subjects currently trending online [22, 24]. "The proprietors of media platforms may offer recommendations and suggestions to their audience about what to consume in the future by capturing and analyzing the digital trail that the audience leaves online while consuming or accessing material on a digital platform that is known to them, it has been argued by academics like Ignatow and Robinson [25] that digital media functions as a type of information capital in the information creation process, including the generation of news."

In order to stay competitive with other media channels, legacy media is also creating online outlets in response to the digital trend. Most times, the news information shared on social media platforms deviates from the printed edition. "Soft content and a strong political slant define the newspapers' use of social media to convey news in South Korea, according to recent research [26]." Newspapers may improve their viewership by evaluating the comments they get on social media and making regular updates to keep the information fresh [27]. The news media now rely heavily on digital platforms to not only "stay in contact" with their readers, but also to establish their credibility and the credibility of the content they produce. BuzzFeed research [28] suggests that economic wealth in journalism may be better-distributed thanks to the rise of digital communication. BuzzFeed's online popularity has grown over time because of the site's mixture of humorous and serious media content. For news outlets and reporters alike, digital platforms have become a valuable resource for gathering sources and audience input that contribute to economic and cultural capital growth. To paraphrase what Perreault and Stanfield [26] call "personal, environmental, and audience aspects," digital technology is a hub where these three elements meet.

While digital media has helped strengthen the link between cultural and economic capital, viewers' engagement on two levels has altered the doxa of this branch of journalism.

First, journalists' subjective judgments of what constitutes newsworthy events must consider readers' concerns. Journalists cannot depend only on their understanding of newsworthiness from a professional standpoint [29]. This does not always imply that the audience controls how the story is told. The journalist's sense of what constitutes "breaking news" must be balanced with the interests of the reading public.

Moreover, second, there is the potential for strife between reporters and editors from an organizational standpoint. Editors play a crucial role in ensuring readers and advertisers are satisfied with the information journalists to produce since each news outlet caters to a certain demographic. The rise of digital communication has put the audience squarely at the heart of this journalistic arena, where it no longer functions as a separate but equal force.

This summary provides evidence of the use of field theory in the study of journalism. Journalists Maares and Hanusch [15] point out that Bourdieu's ideas were not thoroughly investigated and that he did not provide any clarification on how to apply the above notions to the study of journalism. Most research on these ideas is grounded in the customs of the West. The following part will present the notion of plot twist news and the landscape of digital media in China in order to analyze the role of the digitally empowered audience in the Chinese context of journalism.

III. TECHNOLOGY AND JOURNALISM PRACTICES

Huge technological advances in the production, alteration, and dissemination of images during the last quarter century have significantly influenced journalism, entertainment, advertising, and the visual world at large. One of the most pressing challenges we have in defining the public interest today is to question the nature of news journalism in light of the dramatic changes in the media environment and associated technology. The "Times of India" and "The Hindustan Times" have daily online editions.

Reporting methods, story structure, and even the fundamental definition of what constitutes "media" have all been altered by the proliferation of digital technology.

Since the advent of the information age and electronic journalism, the journalist's role has shifted from information transmission to information processing. According to the writings of Marshall McLuhan, each new medium offers a different sensory experience that allows the user to project their identity out into the world.

- Investigating the Delhi Riots by Scanning Social Media

The Wire, a nonprofit digital media platform that publishes in four Indian languages, has set the standard for independent and objective reporting in the country. Its reporters, notably the paper's founding editor Siddharth Varadarajan, have been subjected to repeated defamation and sedition prosecutions by the government. Pegasus Project monitoring targeted several journalists with ties to the media organization.

The Delhi riots, which killed 53 people and damaged hundreds of houses and stores, were investigated by Wire reporters Alishan Jafri, Shehlat Maknoon Wani, and Varadarajan himself for months using material gleaned from social media accounts. Reporters were able to determine that members of the minority Muslim community were disproportionately affected by the riots because the Delhi police did not undertake a thorough investigation. The guys who were instrumental in spreading hatred, organizing crowds, and inciting violence were also identified as a result of the investigations.

- Using Satellite Imagery, NDTV Verifies China's Incursion into Indian Territory

It has been a source of tension between India and China for many years since the two nations share a border that stretches for more than 3,000 kilometers (2,000 miles). Many troops from both countries were killed in border fighting last year, and a full-scale war broke out between them in 1962 over the same region.

The ultranationalist administration led by Modi has always rejected any Chinese invasion. However, this assertion was debunked by the top Indian news station using satellite imagery. The news organization aired a series of reports detailing Chinese-built settlements in the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. A report from the United States Department of Defense subsequently corroborated the claims made by the Indian news outlet.

- Pegasus Project's Impact in India

After the Modi government refused to admit it was spying on opposition leaders and others under the guise of national security, the Pegasus Project investigation, in which The Wire played a significant role, shook the foundations of India's democratic system and prompted the Supreme Court of India to form a high-level committee.

The Wire reports that the Israeli IT firm NSO Group was given a list of 300 verified Indian mobile phone numbers belonging to ministers, opposition leaders, journalists, the legal community, businesses, government officials, scientists, and rights campaigners. A forensic examination of a subset of the phones "found unambiguous indicators of targeting by Pegasus spyware in 37 phones, of which 10 are Indian," the study said.

IV. THEMES REFLECTING THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The media's position in the information era is met with fear, perplexity, and jubilation. The concern stems from a natural aversion to novelty and difficulty adapting to rapid change, particularly regarding digital technology. Following the feedback loop between YouTube and traditional media, we can see that these concerns are not entirely unfounded. The speed with which the narrative spread, was interpreted, and was reshaped presented a significant challenge to the established methods of obtaining news.

The fetishization of devices and the widening gulf between those who have grown up in the digital world and those who have had to adapt to it are two more sources of perplexity brought on by the advent of new digital technology. The iPod was seen as the "harbinger of this transition," and the concept of a "golden era of gadgets" and "third age of gadgets" was proposed to describe the emerging industry centered on consumer electronics. The fierce rivalry between major tech firms drove this [30]. The widespread availability of sophisticated mobile phones and the cult following enjoyed by products like the iPod may lead to misunderstandings regarding their practicality. These devices' storage capacity, multimedia capabilities, and communication skills are outstanding, yet the devices themselves are agnostic technology. People and materials are essential for their functioning.

In addition, there is muddled thinking regarding how persons born before and after 1980 interact with the digital age. Different generations are sometimes characterized as being on different sides of a digital divide regarding their knowledge and comfort levels. Differences in early exposure to various forms of media and methods of communication likely contribute to a generational divide in digital literacy. Changes in the

conventional distribution of power between the young and the elderly, as well as in business, education, and entertainment, have resulted from the introduction and growth of the microchip, the Internet, and the digital economy.

Our third idea is one of reserved joy. Creating, transmitting, and receiving information digitally has opened communication and the media in previously inconceivable ways. “People's desire to engage in and share their media and information experiences is reflected in the creator/consumer audiences seen in the new public arenas of YouTube, Blogspot, and MySpace.”

Anticipated reciprocity (the sharing of material), improved recognition (peer respect), and a feeling of effectiveness (the accomplishment felt while generating complicated digital content) are the three key motives that are driving these "virtual communities" [31]. As a result of these incentives, media companies are beginning to develop more media-rich content tailored to certain demographics and user-friendly in that it encourages sharing and user-generated contributions.

V. THREATS TO PRINT INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

There is no one agreed-upon definition of investigative journalism. Based on the research conducted for this article, I have created a ten-point definition (see method section). The time, effort, and verification required to uncover facts that are in the public interest and would otherwise stay secret set investigative journalism apart from regular news reporting.

Given the in-depth nature of an investigation, investigative journalism often results in fewer articles than other forms of journalism. Due to its focus on individuals in positions of authority who may attempt to stifle inquiries, investigative journalism has a greater risk of inviting lawsuits, which drives up costs. Since Australia's print media are under financial duress, it stands to reason that they could be reluctant to devote resources to in-depth reporting. Historically, newspapers, especially broadsheets and non-commercial television media in Australia, have been responsible for investigative reporting. These outlets tend to focus more on political and investigative reporting and draw a sophisticated, well-informed audience known as the affluent AB demographic in the advertising industry. Many people in this group care deeply about open government. Traditionally, broadsheets have been able to devote the necessary resources to conduct in-depth, time-consuming investigations because they have access to more time [32].

VI. THE TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY ELECTRONIC JOURNALIST

Because of the availability of data transfer rates, online databases, not daily newspapers or television newscasts, will serve as the standard for electronic journalism in the digital realm. Instead of point-to-multipoint transmission or print, a self-defining, open network will be the principal medium for news delivery. “The news machine of the twenty-first century will be an interactive multimedia system that combines the strengths of television, newspapers, and the telephone network, it will make the most of an open network, which more effectively utilizes available bandwidth than a one-way, closed system like broadcasting or cable television.”

Readers will have a voice in shaping the news they consume. Journalism will shift from being a monologue to a dialogue. Instead of trying to second-guess their readers' interests, journalists will be free to focus on turning a seemingly unlimited stream of raw material into usable information packages [33].

There will be a proliferation of new media outlets, each much smaller and more niche-focused than the current crop. Compared to traditional news organizations, these newer, more streamlined news outlets will provide more news of a higher volume and diversity for niche demographics. The mere term "mass" media will become archaic. As the cost of producing news decreases and the accessibility of editing software increases, "information on demand" will soon be the most popular news format. Instead of a big team of technological professionals, reporters will often be able to do their jobs with only a few affordable tools like camcorders, laptops, and mobile phones. These journalists' work will be produced and disseminated across many platforms at once. In order to thrive in this more cutthroat market, news organizations will need to develop innovative strategies for maximizing revenue from ever smaller audiences.

VII. CONCLUSION

If you think that monopolistic corporations installing toll booths along the information superhighway or hackers stealing intellectual property are a major risk, think again. It is the work of well-meaning government officials protecting aging infrastructure and attempting to stifle free speech. Eventually, we will have the technological means to convert innumerable digital bits into unfathomable amounts of useful information that can be shared between all people. This expanded power, however, comes with the enormous responsibility of ensuring that all citizens retain their right to freely access such information and participate in the ongoing digital dialogue. The established norms of journalism emerged in a period of few materials. Standards in the media, however, are not dependent on financial hardship and may continue to thrive during prosperous periods. The usefulness of a story does not diminish just because more individuals have access to the raw facts. It would be foolish, however, to ignore that if new technology encourages everyone to speak at once, no one will be heard or understood.

The news machine of the twenty-first century is rapidly becoming a reality, and although it has many positive effects, it also forces people to make difficult choices. There is little question that this cutting-edge equipment will change the face of journalism forever. "It is up to society to ensure this change is for the better." Answering the challenging questions that new technology will raise about the role of journalism in a free society is crucial to the survival of a free press and journalistic ethics as we navigate the perilous waters of Cyberspace. "No matter how potent, technology is only as useful and worthwhile as humans decide to make it. Technology without intentional human contact is "lights and wires in a box," as Edward R. Murrow warned many years ago."

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