

International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(A High Impact Factor, Monthly, Peer Reviewed Journal)

Visit: www.ijirset.com

Vol. 9, Issue 3, March 2020

Television News Channels and Newspapers as Information Seeking Source

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ABSTRACT: Information plays a significant role in our professional and personal lives. People need information to work properly in their respective fields. The advent of technology introduced into both newsrooms and the media culture in the past ten years has changed the needs and habits of print and television journalists. The Indian model of television programmers is unique as it is expected to pass on the culture from one generation to other and persuasion. Media professionals working in media organizations need current, authoritative and factual information to construct the news and programmers. There is an enormous need to identify the need of media professionals because they are "information users as well as information producers and information communicators". The proliferation of information on the Internet, the diffusion of communication technologies such as cell phones and personal digital assistants have increased television media professionals capabilities at both seeking and gathering information for their work.

KEYWORDS: television, channels, newspapers, information, source, programmers, internet, digital

I. INTRODUCTION

The news media or news industry are forms of mass media that focus on delivering news to the general public or a target public. These include news agencies, newspapers, newsmagazines, news channels, news websites etc. Broadcasting is the distribution of audio and video signals (programs) to a number of recipients ("listeners" or "viewers") that belong to a large group. This group may be the public in general, or a relatively large audience within the public. Thus, an Internet channel may distribute text or music worldwide, while a public address system in (for example) a workplace may broadcast very limited ad hoc soundbites to a small population within its range.¹

The sequencing of content in a broadcast is called a schedule.

Television and radio programs are distributed through radio broadcasting or cable, often simultaneously. By coding signals and having decoding equipment in homes, the latter also enables subscription-based channels and pay-per-view services.

A broadcasting organization may broadcast several programs at the same time, through several channels (frequencies), for example BBC One and Two. On the other hand, two or more organizations may share a channel and each use it during a fixed part of the day. Digital radio and digital television may also transmit multiplexed programming, with several channels compressed into one ensemble.²

When broadcasting is done via the Internet the term webcasting is often used.

Broadcasting forms a very large segment of the mass media.³

Broadcasting to a very narrow range of audience is called narrowcasting. In a broadcast system (television), journalists or reporters are also involved with editing the video material that has been shot alongside their research, and in working on the visual narrative of the story. Broadcast journalists often make an appearance in the news story at the beginning or end of the video clip.

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In television or broadcast journalism, news analysts (also called news-casters or news anchors) examine, interpret, and broadcast news received from various sources of information. Anchors present this as news, either videotaped or live, through transmissions from on-the-scene reporters (news correspondents).⁴

News films ("clips") can vary in length; there are some which may be as long as ten minutes, others that need to fit in all the relevant information and material in two or three minutes. News channels these days have also begun to host special documentary films that stretch for much longer durations and are able to explore a news subject or issue in greater detail.

The desk persons categorise news stories with various formats according to the merit of the story. Such formats include AVO, AVO Byte, Pkg, VO SOT, VOX POP, and Ancho Visual.⁵

- The AVO, or Anchor Voice Over, is the short form of news. The story is written in a gist. According to the script visual is edited. The anchor reads the news while the visual is broadcast simultaneously. Generally, the duration of an AVO is 30 to 40 seconds. The script is three to four lines. At first the anchor starts to read the news, and, after reading one or one-and-a-half lines, the visual is aired, overlapping the face of anchor.
- The AVO Byte has two parts: An AVO, and one or more bytes. This is the same as an AVO, except that as soon as the AVO ends, the Byte is aired.
- The Pkg has three parts: Anchor, Voice Over, and Sign Off. At first a Script is written. A voice over anchor reads the anchor or anchor intro part.⁶

A newspaper is a lightweight and disposable publication (more specifically, a periodical), usually printed on low-cost paper called newsprint. It may be general or of special interest, and may be published daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly.

General-interest newspapers are usually journals of current news on a variety of topics. Those can include political events, crime, business, sports, and opinions (either editorials, columns, or political cartoons). Many also include weather news and forecasts. Newspapers increasingly use photographs to illustrate stories; they also often include comic strips and other entertainment, such as crosswords. A story is a single article, news item or feature, usually concerning a single event, issue, theme, or profile of a person. Correspondents report news occurring in the main, locally, from their own country, or from foreign cities where they are stationed.⁷

Most reporters file information or write their stories electronically from remote locations. In many cases, breaking stories are written by staff members, through information collected and submitted by other reporters who are out on the field gathering information for an event that has just occurred and needs to be broadcast instantly. Radio and television reporters often compose stories and report "live" from the scene. Some journalists also interpret the news or offer opinions and analysis to readers, viewers, or listeners. In this role, they are called commentators or columnists. Reporters take notes and also take photographs or shoot videos, either on their own, by citizens or through a photographer or camera person. In the second phase, they organize the material, determine the focus or emphasis (identify the peg), and finally write their stories. The story is then edited by news or copy-editors (U.S. style) or sub-editors in Europe, who function from the news desk.⁸ The headline of the story is decided by the news desk, and practically never by the reporter or the writer of the piece. Often, the news desk also heavily re-writes or changes the style and tone of the first draft prepared by the reporter / writer originally. Finally, a collection of stories that have been picked for the newspaper or magazine edition, are laid out on dummy (trial) pages, and after the chief editor has approved the content, style and language in the material, it is sent for publishing. The writer is given a byline for the piece that is published; his or her name appears alongside the article. This process takes place according to the frequency of the publication. News can be published in a variety of formats (broadsheet, tabloid, magazine and periodical publications) as well as periods (daily, weekly, semi-weekly, fortnightly or monthly). A newsmagazine, is a usually weekly magazine featuring articles on current events. News magazines generally go more in-depth into stories

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than newspapers, trying to give the reader an understanding of the context surrounding important events, rather than just the facts.⁹

II. DISCUSSION

The ability to accurately recall where one learned something is fundamental for evaluating its reliability or accuracy, or for being able to find the information at a later date. The integration of news on social media can result in the confusion of sourcing. For example, people misidentified certain televised advertisements that seemed like news, as actual news about 70% of the time.^[37] A study published in March 2019 examined how different generations are able to remember the content and source of information they read on social media and traditional news sources. The study found that content read on social media was remembered better by both younger and older generations than traditional news content. The study also found that when the content and format of a news headline do not match one another, the participants were less likely to remember the source information. The adults in the older generation were more likely to think that a news headline was from a traditional source rather than a social media post. Therefore, it is not uncommon for people to forget where one found a piece of information, especially when that information was read on social media. These findings suggest that the disappearance of boundaries that exist between traditional news sources and social media platforms has possible implications for peoples memories on the source of information they are reading.¹⁰

News media and television journalism have been a key feature in the shaping of American collective memory for much of the twentieth century. Indeed, since the United States' colonial era, news media has influenced collective memory and discourse about national development and trauma. In many ways, mainstream journalists have maintained an authoritative voice as the storytellers of the American past. Their documentary style narratives, detailed exposes, and their positions in the present make them prime sources for public memory. Specifically, news media journalists have shaped collective memory on nearly every major national event – from the deaths of social and political figures to the progression of political hopefuls. Journalists provide elaborate descriptions of commemorative events in U.S. history and contemporary popular cultural sensations. Many Americans learn the significance of historical events and political issues through news media, as they are presented on popular news stations. However, journalistic influence is growing less important, whereas social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, provide a constant supply of alternative news sources for users.¹¹

As social networking becomes more popular among older and younger generations, sites such as Facebook and YouTube, gradually undermine the traditionally authoritative voices of news media. For example, American citizens contest media coverage of various social and political events as they see fit, inserting their voices into the narratives about America's past and present and shaping their own collective memories. An example of this is the public explosion of the Trayvon Martin shooting in Sanford, Florida. News media coverage of the incident was minimal until social media users made the story recognizable through their constant discussion of the case. Approximately one month after the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin, its online coverage by everyday Americans garnered national attention from mainstream media journalists, in turn exemplifying media activism. In some ways, the spread of this tragic event through alternative news sources parallels that of Emmett Till – whose murder by lynching in 1955 became a national story after it was circulated in African-American and Communist newspapers.¹²

Using non-traditional platforms such as social media as a news source is an easy way to gain access to numerous different types of information such as gossip blogs, sporting events, political matters, and business affairs. Using social media as a news outlet helps relieve the hardships of navigating through several websites and articles to find one source with information pertaining to the topic being explored. However, using social media as a news gateway also presents several implications which can be challenging to guide through. Some of the most current issues regarding using social media as a news source are:

- Spreading of false news
- The "news finds me" perception
- Biased news articles

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- News containing disturbing image or video content¹³

The spread of fake news has become a complex challenge for social media platforms to mediate. False information is being spread by individual social media users and companies and organizations who use social media to communicate with their audience. Approximately 23% of social media users have reported that they have spread fake news, and fake news spreads faster than true news on social media, primarily because people share it amongst others. In today's day and age, almost 62% of adults get their news from social media platforms and that number is increasing. There are two distinctions between news found on social media and traditional journalism. The first is that any user can create news on social media, regardless if it is fake or real. Then others are able to share it and spread that information to others rapidly. The second distinction is that the majority of social media platforms present news feeds to their users. The feeds consist of a mix of news from friends, followers, sources based on past activities or interactions and from advertisers who pay to have their content on users' feeds.¹⁴

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have begun implementing fact-checking tools to ensure that the shared content is accurate and factual. However, this moderated news is not always done promptly and can take several days before being reviewed. According to a study published in the article "Understanding Patterns of Covid Infodemic: A Systematic and Pragmatic Approach to Curb Fake News," the author states that "based on the analysis of 225 pieces of fake news identified by fact-checking tools, Brennen, Simon, Howard, and Nielsen (2019) indicated that 20% of them were shared by politicians, celebrities, and other public figures". With so much of this false information being shared by trusted politicians and honourable authorities such as doctors, there becomes a stress factor for users to decide who is trustworthy.¹⁵

In recent times, research has been focused on the growing "news finds me" perception, which is the phenomenon that comes as a result of individuals trusting in social media algorithms and reposted content to provide them with all the relevant news they need. The primary causes of concern surrounding this phenomenon are the loss of contextualization and reliance on peers that characterize it.

Another implication that social media as a news source has introduced is the rise in biased news. In recent studies, it has been stated that social media users tend to create an environment in which the pages and users they follow only reflect and reinforce the opinions of their own.^[56] This phenomenon is referred to as an echo chamber and is fueled by confirmation bias. Research has found that "it is possible to determine the political leanings of a Twitter user by simply looking at the partisan preferences of their friends. When social media users rely on these networking platforms for their daily news sources, it is possible that they are only receiving information that is a reflection of what they want to see in society, further implicating the matter by ignoring issues that require being addressed.¹⁶

Social media can and cannot be a reliable source for information. False news is not strongly regulated on social media platforms therefore it is easy and widely accessible for anyone to post and for many more people to consume that information that has been released.

Another common issue that has risen through the use of social media as a news platform is mixing information and altering or exaggerating a story or event. Social media being such an open, diverse and accessible place to display information has made it an easy way for information to be altered and changed, which can lead to false news and can even be dangerous depending on the target audience. Along with how common false news is on social media platforms, media is also consumed and retired at an alarming rate. Often times headlines on social media are quickly discarded and it is very challenging to keep a subject relevant.¹⁷

III. RESULTS

The introduction of television has given rise to a number of challenging questions concerning its relevance to political and cultural life. First, there is a great deal of interest in the fast growth of television, which in most European countries has taken place well within the life experience of one generation. At present a majority of Europeans have grown up in societies with radio and the press as the dominant mass media, and yet they have shared the experience of television

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during their mature years. Along with the novelty of the experience came the vital decisions concerning television: they made it fit into family life and coined the nomenclature, which is still an integrative part of its culture.¹⁸

The search for relevant dimensions in this diffusion process is itself intriguing. How can the remarkably fast spread of television through all segments of the population be explained? Does it have properties vital to existing social and cultural needs that make it fit well into the way of life, or does it change prevalent life patterns and make people adapt to television? Compared to the older mass media, television is more expensive, more difficult to manipulate, and is tied in with household activities in a way which evades the viewers' control, yet its attraction remains undisputed.¹⁹

Considering the attraction of television, we might expect to find an increase in the level of information, but this may take one or more configurations:

1. It may even reduce the contrasts between the informed and the uninformed citizens and make for a more equal distribution of information in the electorate. This function of equalization takes place when a greater proportion of the ignorants become aware of and familiar with politics; it closes the information gap repeatedly observed in the study of information and knowledge in political contexts.²⁰
2. It could possibly provide; a better opportunity for the alert voter already well at home in politics to extend his knowledge. Better intellectual resources could prove vital for the use of this highly attractive medium, compared to people in less favorable positions. This may lead to unexpected consequences for the relation between the informed and the uninformed: information will increase at a faster rate for the privileged extremes and extend the information gap.

The literature on opinion and opinion formation has repeatedly pointed to a correlation between social status and differences in exposure to the mass media, in learning capacities, and in opinionation. In this process the role of the mass media has been specified and in no small degree reduced: their role appears to change in the same degree to which intervening variables have found a permanent place in the relation between the mass media and the individuals. Actually, the potent theorem of the two-step flow of communication frequently blurs the vision of any direct influence of the media. Klapper,¹ in his work on mass communication effects, has not entirely precluded the possibility, but he does not outline any of the conditions under which these residual effects may take place.²¹

Implicit in the demonstration of correlations between life situation and exposure is frequently an assumption of some measure of learning as a result of exposure. This is the case in Key's² study of the relation between public opinion and mass communication, in which it is demonstrated that social class and education determine the chances for exposure to political fare in the mass media. Wade and Schramm³ in a recent article on the role of mass media for the acquisition of knowledge have underlined the importance of education as a very relevant prerequisite for the acceptance of public information.²²

While assumptions about learning are kept implicit in many reports of this kind, some reports do present conclusions about differential rates of retention. Most relevant for this problem is an article by Tichenor, Donohue and Olien⁴ in which the authors test very specific hypotheses about differential growth of knowledge. They found most of their data consistent with a hypothesis stating that in cases where the infusion of mass media in a society increases, the segments of the population with high socioeconomic status tend to acquire knowledge at a faster rate than do the lower status segments. In their concluding remarks they observe that 'the mass media seem to have a function very similar to that of other social institutions: that of reinforcing or increasing existing social inequities'.⁵

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Another point concerns the qualities inherent in the different media. There is a tendency to treat television as simply another member of the family of mass media without due consideration of the aspects that seem to be unique to television.

The period after which television has reached national coverage usually presents difficulties for the study of these and related phenomena. The hunt for uncontaminated' areas may not be successful and even when such experimental fields are found, they are already atypical and often influenced by the ecological effect of high television saturation in the neighboring communities.²³ The phase of introduction probably provides the optimal opportunity for such studies, when large areas can be observed in the pre-television period and where television could be predicted to reach a high coverage within a limited number of years. Simon and Stern⁷ seized the opportunity in their ecological analysis of turnout and television coverage in 98 precincts in the 1952 presidential election in the USA.

We have kept track of the diffusion of television in Norway during the period of introduction and maintain files of media ecology, and we have also studied individual reactions in the period when Norway, as one of the last countries in Europe, entered the television age in the early sixties.²⁴

We shall inquire into the problem by using a set of variables drawn from a simple model of political communication, and we shall examine the strategies applied by the voters in their information-seeking activities. We do not have sufficient documentation on the modes of presenting politics and of the extent to which the different media deal with political subject matter. However, it will probably remain undisputed that there is a great deal of difference between the media on both scores. The voters, whether tied to the political parties in loyalties and identifications or indifferent to politics, seem to perceive the options for political information-seeking surprisingly consistently: they know about the political leaning of their newspaper, and at least in the new television owners there is an almost unanimous praise of their medium as a dependable, unbiased source of certain types of political information.²⁵

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This research started from the hypothesis that newspapers are a relevant information source for historians and linguists, but their potential is not fully used because of limitations in the access to newspaper collections and obstacles in searching and retrieving information from newspaper content. Several sets of results confirmed this hypothesis. The majority of respondents use newspapers occasionally, but if we aggregate the number of respondents who use newspapers in their research, regardless of how often they use them, the total number is significantly high: 74.3%. Although the average mean of assessing the importance of newspapers as an information source for scientific work was 2.94, 37.7% of the respondents assigned a high level of importance to newspapers as an information source. This confirms the premise that newspapers are used and perceived as a useful information source in scientific work. The reasons for not using newspapers lie primarily in the fact that some topics or areas of scientific research are not represented in newspapers. Still, the respondents don't consider newspaper information reliable and credible, and that is also one of the constraints.²⁴ The majority of respondents prefer the digital format of newspapers because of better accessibility and search options when they are available, yet almost a third of the respondents answered that they had a need to consult original print newspapers even though they had digital versions of the newspapers available. The reasons stated for this show that the respondents have a habit of using print versions and that the original format provides them with a sense of authenticity, among other things. This study provided answers to the three research questions with which the authors began. The answers given to the question regarding the kind of information historians and linguists look for in newspapers reveal the need for following types of information: historical data used to check and complete original data from other sources, linguistic characteristics of the text, information about society and culture, original historical data which are not recorded elsewhere and literary texts which are not published elsewhere. The difficulties that researchers encounter when using newspapers can be grouped into two main categories: unavailability of newspapers (a lack of digitized versions and constraints in gaining access to historical print

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collections) and the time consuming aspect of the search process (a lack of bibliographic data in digital newspapers and poor search options and the time consuming aspect of searching for information in print versions).²³

Finally, the answers to the last research question – “What would enhance researchers’ newspaper use in future research” – reveals a need for further digitization of newspapers in Croatian and foreign institutions with open access to full texts as well as a need for better organization and structure of the data. Interestingly, many respondents indicated the need for additional services, such as the possibility to archive, print and copy parts of newspapers. The results presented in this paper are part of a larger study that aims to investigate the information behaviour and user needs of Croatian academics and scholars from the social sciences and the humanities. It is expected that further research will give deeper insight into the behaviour and needs of newspaper users in the academic context.²⁴ Additionally, results gained from this research could be used in developing and implementing newspaper preservation policies on the national and institutional level. Croatian cultural heritage institutions are currently dealing with deterioration of newspaper collections and are often forced to restrict the access to and use of such newspapers, especially historic ones, for limited periods of time during their restoration or digitization for example. Users, particularly academics are often frustrated and unsatisfied if they don’t have continuous access to newspaper collections. As this research showed scholars are also quite unsatisfied if they are not provided by the digital infrastructure that enhances their user experience and helps them find the necessary information quickly and accurately. Although the number of digitized (historic) newspapers is increasing (e.g. Croatian Historic Newspapers project at the National and University Library) there are still many valuable newspaper collections dispersed in Croatian heritage institutions that still need to be digitized. Unfortunately, it seems that those newspapers that are in digital format usually are not designed (search options, interface design) based on thorough and extensive user surveys. On the other hand, contemporary newspaper collections are in the domain of publishers which seem not to prioritize them as research material and it is not evident what long-term preservation policies they apply. Evidently, there are still many challenges to overcome in preserving, making accessible and enhancing usability of newspaper collections²⁵

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