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1. Introduction

The Internet has had a profound effect on the profession of journalism and media industries. One of the most significant impacts is how news is composed, transmitted, and consumed. The Internet has given rise to the phenomenon of online news sources, which are independent news outlets that are widely available without requiring a subscription. With the Internet, people can easily find and read stories from different news channels. This has led to a more globalized perspective on news and made it easier for journalists to report stories from other parts of the world. The Internet has also facilitated the use of digital media that enable journalists to take more creative approaches to news reporting. Some reporters, for example, use social media platforms to share photos and videos of events they cover to provide a complete picture of what is happening. This type of creativity is often absent from traditional news outlets, which give readers a more comprehensive and accurate view of events.

Despite the lucrative benefits digital media has offered, principal journalism remains unchanged. Journalists still need to find and report the news objectively and fairly while also being able to create engaging stories that will appeal to the audience. Not only that, the stories reported should help the audience make a decision on different issues. Journalism, in this sense, acts as a conduit that connects sources across the world to carry information so that what we hear and read can be woven together to make sense of reality.

2. Ethical issues in journalism

The world of journalism is not as desirable as what people may perceive through the representation of news anchors. In fact, journalists, and media organizations in general, carry responsibilities to promote truth and accountability within their communities. Regardless of the objectives of journalism, the remaining unsettled issues revolve around ethics. In different situations, journalists and news organizations face dilemmas in their duty to present information to the audience. As a journalist or researcher in the field, there are ethical issues with which one will deal. Therefore, it is vital to deliberate on these issues before making decisions to approach them and set the right example for others in journalism. Among them include being the first at the expense of credibility, conflict of interest, challenges to remain impartial, telling the truth and privacy, social media as sources, and others. Some of the ethical considerations detailed in this introductory chapter can be found embodied in the chapters of this book.
In the era of digital technology, the urge to become the first has, to a certain extent, relegated the quality of news. Not a few incidents involved reporters using unverified sources and publishing questionable information due to tight deadlines and wanting to be the first to bring up an issue. Alivi et al. [1] noted that “competition in the communication and media line makes media practitioners compete to become the first to report on certain issues” which has led to errors in the information. Bad reporting may have backfired on a specific media organization. The worst part, the backlash could affect the credibility of the media industry as an institution that upholds the truth. Therefore, no matter the reasons, journalists should endorse the idea that information should be produced based on truthful, responsible, and ethical principles. If journalism is to be high on the list of honorable careers, its practitioners need to understand the context and detail of an issue with source verification as the top priority before delivering it to the public [2]. Mehrabi et al. [3] argued that one of the key factors in assisting the public from perception of a media organization is through credible information they provide. In journalism, credibility should not be compromised.

Besides, journalism should also pay special attention to impartiality. However, when impartiality is the prime aim, conflict of interest could be deterrence. Journalists might be torn between being objective and maintaining the interest of others, such as power holders. It has become an unsettling element that has tarnished the true spirit of the profession. As Ghazali [4] discussed, the media is regarded as the government's institution of culture to reproduce and propagate its ideological hegemony. For as long as the media is not fully independent, it will continue to face intimidation to comply with the interest of others. Despite this, the open society offered by the Internet should become an urge for the media to relook at the need to be accountable in being impartial to provide a rational discourse on issues of public importance. Journalism practitioners should remember that the new media landscape has affected the way people think [5]. They are no longer a complacent audience who will accept information without verification through online sources. Having said that, if the media fail to deliver, it could be detrimental to the media credibility. Hence, journalists are in a position to continue serving the public by producing news and information with an ethical consciousness.

The discussion of journalism ethics further extends to media responsibility to the public. According to the University of Arizona Global Campus [6], the media organization is expected to provide the public with access to a poll of information they need in contrast to what they want. Even though, the direct competition with nonofficial news providers has heightened the fact that journalists are forced to approach issues assertively that providing information people should get becomes secondary. The media tend to focus on sensationalizing an issue. This can be traced back to the 1980s through yellow journalism, which refers to journalism that features sensationalism, scandal-mongering, and other unethical practices done by media organizations and journalists. Though sensationalism might sell, it is “hurtful to the media’s reputation” ([7], p. 1). Sensationalism also raises ethical conflicts with journalists’ noble profession. Most often, sensationalism carries exaggeration and shifts attention from the principal issue. In other words, instead of focusing on the problem to create awareness, sensationalism diverts attention to the extraordinary side of the problem. This practice is deceiving since it often serves the interest of the media providers and individual journalists. Without a doubt, sensationalism works in getting the public attention when competition with other unofficial media sources on the Internet can be stiff, it has tarnished this noble profession.
3. Future challenges

The discussion above pointed out that digital technology poses relentless challenges despite countless benefits if not properly addressed. Social networks, for example, could be perceived as providing sources of information to ease journalists working on issues getting their information sources. However, too much dependency on the platform may reduce journalists’ creativity in finding reliable and credible information sources and decrease the critical traits journalists should enhance through practice. On this note, journalism is a profession that comes with great responsibility and accountability. Therefore, digital advantages garnered by current practitioners should not hinder them from upholding ethical conduct. Instead, it should drive them to frame and deliver news creatively with greater inclusivity for a sustainable future.

All in all, bearing on communication generally and journalism, in particular, the chapters in this book demonstrate that journalism does not only affect individuals but also the society that we live in. The effects can be social, political, economic, health, religious, cultural, and many others. This book may not be a comprehensive approach to journalism and media ethics, but rather a dedication to assisting media producers, researchers, scholars, and students in journalism as well as members of the public to ponder pressing journalism-related issues that could have wide-reaching consequences. It is hoped that this book will provide the crucial framework needed for ethical journalism and for understanding the importance of journalism to provide common knowledge that fits the needs of the audience while still reminding them to be critical consumers of media outputs.

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