



Public Accountability and Role of Media in 21st Century

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Abstract: According to academics, the rising use of digital platforms, including blogs, social media platforms, and online news portals, has improved media responsibility to the general public and professional stakeholders. According to scholars, the greater use of interactive, instantaneous, and global digital platforms has led to an improvement in the news media's and journalists' accountability to public stakeholders. The degree to which a nation's citizens freely exercise their fundamental rights defines democracy. Speech and expression freedom is one of these rights. This essay aims to examine the media's societal responsibilities as a widespread channel for communication and shared worldviews. This article provides an overview of media accountability on digital platforms by incorporating various aspects, such as concepts, evolution, current practises, significant challenges, and the role of audiences in holding media accountable to the general public. It does this by reviewing the literature on media accountability. The idea that the news media are more responsible to the public is thrown into doubt by a variety of issues, despite the fact that digital platforms provide some advantages in this regard (such as immediateness, transparency, accessibility worldwide, and interaction). Therefore, this study investigates how audiences may address these issues and hold the media accountable for upholding ethical norms and public interests. By using a variety of news media technologies, media consumers now actively participate on digital platforms as citizen journalists, assisting in the accountability of online media to public and professional stakeholders.

Key Words: Digital Channels, Evolvment, Modern Methods, Ethical Norms, Major Media & Digital News.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The need to be accountable to general and professional partners is one of the most frequently discussed journalistic moral guidelines. Responsibility has been acknowledged as being one of the foundational requirements for professional reportage by a number of journalistic organisations, such as the Social Structure of Real Journalists, the Canadian Affiliation of Reporters, the American Society of Editorialists, the International Organisation of Journalists, and the Working Group of Responsible Reporters. Such organisations widely define the parameters of mainstream press responsibility, encompassing a set of typically held values such as: putting the public's involvement initially; promoting the airing of frustrations by the wider populace; revealing immoral conduct in media and news organisations; upholding the accuracy and dependability of reportage; responding to mistakes in a timely and honest manner; and seeking approval once appropriate and/or feasible before trying to report on study participants. The development of online news outlets and the introduction of the Internet have drawn the interest of academics all over the globe to the problem of responsible internet technology. Many media scholars have already been largely hopeful, highlighting the significant advantages of the Web in regards to upholding corporate accountability because it provides accessible open spaces for political dialogue on journalism practises, including blogging, micro-blogging, and online forums [1]. For example, consumers that were previously mostly neglected by conventional media now utilise their own internet channels to voice their issues.

Furthermore, as censors and producers, viewers may participate in the necessarily indicated. Consequently, it may be claimed that due to ongoing surveillance by consumers throughout the world, news organisations tend to be increasingly responsible for professional and general users on online platforms. In light of the rapid technical advancement and development that has resulted from the convergence of all kinds of media onto platforms—, despite the fact that internet media have indeed been present for more than 20 years, they remain a comparatively recent phenomenon among journalists globally. Although these social media platforms have several characteristics that can be helpful for maintaining real oversight, including their widespread availability, interactive elements, and public engagement, they aren't without expert difficulties, including lax governance, haphazard knowledge notifications, and comment control [2]. These difficulties could raise questions about journalists' capacity to preserve and accept compliance with both public and private partners on online platforms. Journalism has evolved over time, beginning with the cable in the mid-nineteenth century and ending with the Web in the late twenty-first. The moral standards of the media, according to academics [3], are generally unaffected by evolving employment conditions. These academics



contend that in the internet age, press responsibilities and accountability have risen instead of decreased in order to meet the needs of the people. Additionally, the conventional view of responsibility has been the subject of research discussion when it comes to the implementation of the concept of digital newspapers and electronic content. The question at hand concerns whether or not social media platforms improve the responsibility of mainstream media and reporters to public and private interested parties. It is crucial to perform a thorough study of the scholarly articles on the issue of mass media responsibility on online platforms in order to add to the comprehension in a technically evolving setting. Bearing in mind the ensuing crucial inquiries

2. METHODOLOGY:

The rise to increased current is covered in this study's examination of the scholarly papers on journalistic responsibility. The idea of responsibility in terms of professional reporting was hotly debated in the middle of the 1980s, and the word "responsibility" had first been used in the context of media outlets as a key component of a code of conduct [4]. A targeted literature search was conducted as part of the integrated feedback, a design of the study used in this study, with the goal of identifying diverse science publications on the public responsibility issue. In order to investigate the material from the required period of time on the subject of press responsibility, the Morisett Repository, the biggest reading room at the University of Ottawa, was searched for this reason. 33 articles from the literature (13 journal articles, 15 books, and 6 empirical research projects) are chosen based on their substance and journalistic responsibility. As needed, the assertions in the chosen publications were also cross-examined using six ethical codes from diverse career journalists' affiliations (such as the American News Editors Organization, Canadian Affiliation of Reporters, and World Federation of Reporters), in addition to some pertinent research work on previous internet transparency.

3. CONCEPT AND SCOPE:

A type of controlling the masses over digital content known as "medium responsibility" responds to the press's considered responsibilities, including the duty to provide correct information, encourage greater political systems, defend human rights, and refrain from or minimise causing society harm. Press responsibility addresses a popular viewpoint that news organisations should be held accountable to the general public and professional partners for the work they produce. According to McQuail (2005) [6], "communication responsibility" is defined as including "all the involuntary or voluntary mechanisms by which the medium accounts either directly or indirectly to its community for the quality and/or repercussions of publishing," according to McQuail (2005) [6]. (p. 207). The idea of press responsibility has been described in various ways by experts, but they all agree that it entails mainstream media fulfilling their professional and ethical responsibilities. Communication responsibility, according to Plaisance (2000), is the "symptom of assertions to accountability" (p. 258). It is, in the words of McIntyre (1987), "an encompassing phrase that encompasses all of the mechanisms for implementing the statement of purpose" that a news organisation must uphold (p. 151). It is "a mechanism through which the media might or ought to be required or obligated to present a true and complicated picture of the events to their people," according to Painter and [7]. (p. 4). According to Glasser (2009), medium responsibility also relates to "the possibility of ensuring responsibility if there is refusal" and "the desire of a medium must account for what they contribute through their actions of publishing, particularly what they cause to society in general" (p. 132). According to a number of academics (Friend & Singer, 2007, McQuail, 2003, Painter & Hodges, 2012, and Plaisance, 2000), responsibility is essential to the general operation of the mainstream press. The SPJ has created guidelines for professional media responsibility. Reporters must "urge the audience to vent its concerns about the media, recognise shortcomings and immediately remedy errors, reveal unethical practises of reporters and the news organizations, and live with the same exacting standards toward which they hold others," in line with the SPJ (1996). Additionally, academics (Friend & Singer, 2007; Joseph, 2011; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007) assert that a variety of practises, such as the publishing of editorials, availability to worried people in the crowd, the cataloguing of previous media articles for reference purposes, and dedication to educating the public concerning media adjustments, can guarantee editorial responsibility. Painter and Hodges (2012) also suggest a variety of strategies to hold the mainstream press responsible to the public in a liberal country, including drafting and enforcing ethical guidelines; creating independent oversight municipalities or commissioners; cultivating negative coverage through all the free and impartial op-ed webpage; and supporting news reporting measures.



In the 19th century, democratisation, urbanization, technical advancements, and rising education resulted in a rise in the number of mainstream articles published in Western societies. News outlets were perceived as guardians of knowledge and protectors of freedom, with "a moral claim to independence and quasi-authority" [8]. Nevertheless, the expansion of news organizations, especially in Europe and in the United States, was frequently accompanied by economic monopolies, poor journalism, and other harmful impacts of unchecked press dominance (Krogh, 2012).

Responsibility of The Industry On Online Portals:

According to Friend and Singer (2007), as digital news is a relatively new discipline, there are still few ethical standards to handle the problems brought on by online platforms. Although some reporters contend that the Web is a radically different type of media (Ward, 2010; Ward & Wasserman, 2012), others contend that news reporting supersedes barriers and that the exact norms are universal whatever the medium. It's been demonstrated that the use of conventional good ethics in digital newspapers is controversial (Joseph, 2011; Reuters, 2013). Numerous academics, including consulting firms, have responded "Never" to the issue of whether editorial standards alter in the setting of internet reporting. The CAJ's (2011) moral norms state unequivocally that "ethical practise does not alter with the media" (para 9). According to Reuters (2013), "Internet reporting is nothing more than applying basic modern journalism standards to the occasionally peculiar conditions churned up in the digital world. The very same procurement, identity, and validation criteria are used (para 1). According to Hohman (2011) and Whitehouse (2010), standard journalistic principles apply to internet reporting. Similar ones have been articulated by Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001), who claim that the internet age has not drastically altered the role of the media. Although the methods may change, the fundamental ideas remain the same. Several academics contend that the spectrum of initiatives to promote real oversight via customer engagement may be considerably improved by new technologies made possible through the Internet. Sites, blogging, and social networking sites are all more supportive of real oversight than conventional media forms, according to Bardoel and Haenens (2004), and this tendency has been growing over time. Kovach and Rosenstiel contend that the two different interactions of digital sites have transformed the function of reporters from being a teacher to that of a discussion moderator (2007). For example, on March 4, 2014, the New York Times magazine corrected Solomon Northup's incorrect last name in his book "12 Years a Slave," which was first released 161 years earlier (on January 20, 1853).

Absence of industry experience:

The bulk of the personnel in internet news are from a variety of non-journalistic professions. Academics focused on internet reporting are extremely uncommon in postsecondary learning, including for individuals with journalistic training (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; Friend & Singer, 2007). Because of this, very few reporters, whether or not they study media, are acquainted with web technologies from an educational point of view when they begin their careers. Professionals in the 21st century are probably underqualified, whether for practical or factual reporting. According to Friend and Singer (2007), online workers usually fit into the first group. Individuals lack the skills necessary to create audio-visual goods, rewrite, edit, and translate. Their options are to install, or use efficient data search techniques. They possess technological expertise and business acumen rather than journalism abilities and skills. Singer (2003) contends that several internet reporters cross the line between journalism and commercials by producing adverts or including pop-up commercial boxes that users must deal with while browsing for other data in order to avoid economic demands. Concerning the monitoring role of journalists, which Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) claim has been significantly endangered by a new type of business conglomerate, they voice their concerns. According to the outcomes of their study, chat room chatter is frequently utilised on online platforms to "misrepresent, confuse, and overpower the role of free media" (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; p. 166).

Multitude Tracking and Contented Restraint:

Digital reporters frequently use platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Dailymotion to gather material for their articles as well as to advertise their work. News organisations and reporters utilise crowdfunding to get data at their convenience without investing a lot of time or cash in the environment. The majority of people in the audience who are willing to offer data at any moment without asking for credit has proven to be crowdsourcing's biggest draw thus far. Since no one is accountable for confirming or certifying the data gleaned by bulk espionage, its veracity is called into question. Additionally, the unauthorised use of data that was first put on audiences' Twitter or Facebook profiles regularly violates users' internet privacy.

Ignorance of customer reviews:



Two responsibility markers for online platforms are the viewer's rising engagement and the internet's boundless room. Those two criteria prompt digital media organisations to ask readers to comment on articles in order for the press to be watched and challenged if they do not uphold their responsibility to the public at large. Nevertheless, even within the respectable news sources of industrialised countries, this conceptual idea is not properly applied. For instance, the main broadcasting company in Canada occasionally forbids online readers from responding to news topics it deems to be contentious. On February 21, 2015, a report headlined "3 UK schoolgirls accused of embracing ISIS in Syria" was removed from the site within 24 hours of its publication. It was discovered that within the setting of a third world nation like Kathmandu, nasty reviews are suppressed, extensively changed for publishing, or deleted off online newspapers to deflect blame (Acharya, 2014). Comment or "un-publishing": Mainstream media organisations are utilising digital versions more frequently, although there are benefits and drawbacks to doing so. On only one hand, users may be able to remember previous events and have them ready right now thanks to web material. On the other hand, our experiences are captured and shared on social media, where they are always "only a couple of clicks away." Several news sources have already been dealing with complaints from people asking for internet services to be withdrawn for a range of reasons, such as the publishing of erroneous or imperfect data, deceptive or old material, origin regret, and even fraudulent charges (CAJ, 2010; English, Currie & Link, 2010). A lot of individuals also urge Google to "un-publish" material that has an impact on their careers, but Google is unable to do so until the content is deleted first from the original website (Moskwa)

Although it's doubtful the complete stories would be removed due to the absence of defined procedures, several internet news companies have begun to develop domestic laws for removing or censoring libellous remarks that users have written on an item (CAJ, 2010; English, 2009). There is a major moral quandary surrounding what is or isn't just to delete a tale from web records or if it should be left intact, and although web digital preservation processes could constantly victimise individuals (for example, whenever an old, unproven accusation persists digitally, generating a fool into thinking of the accused). So how would online media respond to requests to stop posting whilst following professional standards and guidelines? In order to ensure and improve journalism's responsibility to the general and professional users, this chapter has identified advantages of and possibilities on digital platforms (owing to the platforms' special attributes, such as interaction, openness, availability, and responsiveness). This chapter has also covered the additional difficulties posed by the utilisation of electronic content for preserving editorial integrity and please adjust. In light of these issues, the next part makes the case that the audience may address them and hold news organisations on online platforms responsible for their duties as journalists as well as the wider populace. The federal administration is answerable to the legislature; the public is answerable to the legislature; as well as other fundamental entities are answerable to specialised agencies under a legislative representative democracy. Solzhenitsyn (1978) poses the question, "[B]y which law does it [journalism] get chosen and for whom is it liable?" in relation to the profession. (As quoted on page 36 of Christians, 1989) "Who keeps these "whistle-blowers" [media] responsible?" British journalist Toby Webb, chairman and chief executive of London's Moral Society, ponders. (Webb, 2009). These really are significant inquiries regarding continued unfair media practises, and it's difficult to define the precise solution. The audience or viewership, meanwhile, may be the possible "assembly" that might keep the media and news organisations responsible, according to the views and justifications of several communication academics. According to Painter and Hodges (2012), although news organisations might have a variety of stakeholders to whom they must answer, "the public and governmental culture are their core stakeholders" (p. 1). Viewers that are engaged and aware may play a significant part in holding the press responsible for the expectations of the public and experts.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

Although digital technologies have special traits like timeliness, interaction, openness, and connectivity, press responsibility may be guided by the exact same conventional ethical guidelines on online media as in traditional channels, according to some of the researchers cited above. The position of audience members appears to be much more important in online media, despite the fact that active and conscientious viewers can resolve these issues and put mainstream press and reporters back on track. This is due to distinctive features of online portals (such as outsourcing, post publication adjustment, and post deletion data) also resulting in different obstacles. A constant inform and guide among audience members and reporters on online media is critical because it inspires journalists to correct their mistakes and consider the interests of the community, despite the role of viewers in holding mainstream press personally liable and accountable to the general population for their actions and outcomes, which is essential in any digital medium (traditional or innovative). The usage of press-response tools by mass audiences such as news outlets, press bloggers, and various social platforms helps to increase press responsibility and transparency to individual and societal partners. Because social media platforms use quasi-aspects to keep consumers interested in viewing regulatory



agencies, their role is more important than it is in traditional media. Online systems' non-conventional characteristics, for example, might make it easier for internet news viewers to increase amounts anywhere in the world as well as to stay current at all times. It gives viewers unrestricted space and time to remark on specific topics and to interact directly with current material through the visuals and engagement of internet news. In these other terms, the public now are similar to the legislature, to whom a true democracy is still answerable. Various digital channels, like Instagram and Twitter, can enable users to respond, query, and request additional data if they disagree with media content, forcing reporters to take responsibility for their work. Consumers may check and confirm data by participating in cooperative video production with real journalists. This encourages journalism behaviour that is responsible to the general public as well as users. It is clear that viewers may exert ongoing influence on media groups and reporters to uphold the objectives of the wider populace and to answer to the people.

Therefore, viewers play a key role in the evaluation of reporters' work, urging them to uphold a decent level of responsibility in the online space. In addition, if many consumers have access to the internet, they would be able to continuously check platforms and digital to verify material and exert pressure on writers to answer to their employers and the public at large. According to research, a smaller digital divide and increased media literacy can greatly motivate consumers to use online platforms and pay attention to watchdogs (Acharya, 2014). In situations when news outlets and reporters disregard the interests of the state and stray from the law and management in order to stress commercial or political goals, robust and effective monitoring bodies, including press councils or watchdogs, are also necessary to protect public values. The media may live up to the public's standards by disseminating accurate, comprehensive, and trustworthy information; enticing people to continually check for and share information; and giving viewers a venue to voice a variety of perspectives, particularly significant ones. Media outlets and watchdog organisations may assure significant audience involvement by fostering Critiquing journalistic and cultural practises, talking about moral values, and changing or modernising moral guidelines are all examples of moral discourse. This essay has established that responsibility is a critical component of competent reporting in any medium, from print to the internet. Preserving responsibility on online media is much more advantageous than doing so through conventional media systems for the reasons listed: the accessibility of online platforms to a worldwide reach; the systems' capacity to release articles instantly; the potential appeal of media presentations in media types to a broad audience; and the interactive content of the systems, which inspires audience members. But the networks have also brought forth fresh difficulties in preserving editorial integrity and comparing the current. Such difficulties involve regular updates, sourcing, comment correction, commenting, and a rise in copying. Due to the emergence of new media tools that are simple to use, available, and efficient, media consumers play a more significant role in reacting to such concerns on online platforms. Since the first devotion of true journalists or mainstream press establishments should be toward their viewers and the public at large, a genuine response role of the media and society can thus aid in the development of mainstream press that is firmly responsible to private and public stakeholders.

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