Maintaining Online Media Amidst the Aggressive Determinism of Social Media

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Abstract

Online media is the new face of the existence of mass media, which enjoyed its heyday as a medium of information for society. However, this heyday did not last long, because social media is not only a threat but has also shifted the position of mass media as an information medium. This research aims to determine the extent of efforts made by online media to maintain its existence amidst the aggressive determinism of social media. This research was carried out using a qualitative approach with the method used being a case study. The research was conducted on the online media Jatimtimes.com and Tugumalang.id. The research results show that Jatimtimes.com specifically targets young people as an audience segmentation because young people are very familiar with and cannot even be separated from the existence of technology and social media. This encourages Jatimtimes.com to present news that suits the needs of young people as their main audience. Meanwhile, Tugumalang.id places more emphasis on writing news straightforwardly and clearly as it should be presented in writing journalistic works. Writing news in straightforward and clear language will be easier for readers to understand.

Keywords: *Determinism, News, Online Media, Social Media*

Abstrak

Media online adalah wajah baru dari eksistensi media massa yang sempat menikmati masa jayanya sebagai media informasi bagi masyarakat. Akan tetapi, masa jaya ini tidak berlangsung lama karena media sosial tidak hanya menjadi acaman, tetapi sekaligus sudah menggeser kedudukan media massa sebagai media informasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui upaya yang dilakukan media online untuk mempertahankan eksistensinya di tengah agresivitas determinisme media sosial. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode yang digunakan adalah studi kasus. Penelitian dilakukan di media online Jatimtimes.com dan Tugumalang.id. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Jatimtimes.com secara khusus membidik anak muda sebagai segmentasi khalayak karena anak muda sangat akrab dan bahkan tidak bisa dilepaskan dari keberadaan teknologi dan terutama media sosial. Hal ini mendorong Jatimtimes.com untuk menyajikan berita-berita yang sesuai dengan kebutuhan anak muda sebagai khalayak utama mereka. Sementara itu, Tugumalang.id lebih menekankan pada cara penulisan berita yang lugas dan jelas sebagaimana memang harus disajikan dalam penulisan karya jurnalistik. Penulisan berita dengan bahasa yang lugas dan jelas

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akan lebih mudah dipahami oleh pembaca sehingga pembaca tetap bertahan untuk menikmati sajian berita media online.

Kata Kunci: Berita, Determinisme, Media Online, Media Sosial

INTRODUCTION

The presence of the internet has caused enormous changes in the mass media industry. The mass media are required to survive by converging, so many mass media who do not want to stop operating choose to adapt to the demands of the times, namely by converging. Media convergence is an inevitability brought about by the internet. Many conventional mass media have also expanded or made new innovations in the form of online mass media or online news portals. This is proven by the growth of online media, which continues to increase. This can be seen from the number of mass media which is estimated at 47,000, of which 43,300 are online media (Lestari, 2017).

Until the end of 2019, the Press Council had actually carried out factual and administrative verification of 511 media throughout Indonesia. These are broken down into various mass media, including up to 250 print publications, 211 internet or cyber-based publications, 45 television broadcasts, and 5 radio broadcasts. In addition, 615 mass media have received administrative verification and are waiting for factual verification. A total of 73 print media, 223 cyber media, 313 television media and 6 radio media. Meanwhile, 5,663 mass media outlets, including 1,574 print outlets, 3,836 online outlets, 149 television stations and 104 radio stations, have registered for verification (Kaparino, 2020). The data above states that internet-based publications are in second place in presenting news to the public. This indicates that the presence of online media greatly helps the public's need for information. Through online media, people can get information very quickly. In fact, people can get it in real-time via existing online news portals. Online media is also able to fulfil information needs very widely so it continues to grow with the number of users increasing all the time (Habibah, 2021; Hapsari & Pamungkas, 2019).

People adapting to the information society face lifestyle adjustment patterns, especially in terms of collecting and sharing information. In addition to computers, additional wireless communication devices such as cell phones, personal digital assistants, tablets, or other technological devices can also be used to obtain news (Respati, 2014). Due to advances in information technology and telecommunications, previously existing media known as new media have been enlarged, so widespread use of the internet has become feasible (converged). It also includes interactive user input, creative engagement, the creation of a community around the

media, and "real-time" generation elements. This relates to demands for access to content (content/information) from any location using any digital device (Respati, 2014). Therefore, online news portals or online media refer to any type or format of content that can only be viewed online including text, video and sound (Gushevinalti et al., 2020; Raharja & Natari, 2021).

Online media can also be considered a type of online communication, so the online media category also includes email mailing lists, websites, blogs, and social media (Nasution et al., 2019; Romli, 2018). However, more specifically, online media is online mass media presented in the form of websites (Laksono & Zakiyah, 2023). Even though they can both be categorized as online communication or communication that takes place through online communication media, they can be clearly differentiated by defining online mass media and online communication media, where online communication media is more synonymous with social media.

Both online (mass) media and social media are two types of media that are being intensively used by society. In fact, people cannot be separated from various social media applications because they can get information and news from there. Social media allows individuals to connect with each other through internet infrastructure (Husna & Aziz, 2021). Rather than online media, there is a tendency for people to use social media more to communicate and obtain information (Meilinda et al., 2020; Pratama & Anwar, 2023; Triyaningsih, 2020). According to the We Are Social report, the number of active social media users in Indonesia will be 167 million people in January 2023. This number is equivalent to 60.4% of the population in the country (Widi, 2023). The number of social media users, which is more than 50% and tends to consume information, has shifted to social media. This fact is actually quite threatening to the existence of online media. Maybe not immediately, but gradually, as happened with conventional media, online media will also be abandoned by many people, especially when online media does not want to improve or does not want to adapt to the creations and innovations of the times.

Moreover, the increase in the number of online media in Indonesia is quite high, where internally, online media also have to compete with fellow online media. In Malang City, there are also two online media that massively provide news to the public, namely Jatimtimes and Tugumalang.id. Both of them compete as fellow online media, but neither of them also do not close their eyes to the fact that they are also under pressure from the existence of social media, namely when people no longer find online media interesting and switch to using social media because information on social media is more diverse and spreads much faster than in the past carried out online media (Ahmad & Nurhidaya, 2020; Hamdi et al., 2021; Kosasih, 2019).

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Therefore, one of the elements that really determines the success of the online mass media sector is the strategy used as an effort to survive amidst the aggressiveness of social media. Online media must take strategic steps and innovate to face the growth of the mass media industry, especially in the current new media period, to compete for public affection (Ummah, 2021). So, actually the competition is no longer head to head with online media anymore, but also with social media which in fact is not mass media. In the research conducted by Fikhasari & Aji (2019) on Tirto.id media regarding the role of social media in online media management, it was stated that the role of social media currently has a big influence on every aspect of Tirto.id's editorial management process. Meanwhile, other research carried out by Kumalasari & Setianingrum (2018) regarding IDN Times editorial management in facing online media competition stated that the IDN Times editorial team in presenting news went through several stages, starting from preparing plans, collaborating with members of the editorial team, carrying out news production and conducting evaluations. Apart from that, in facing online media competition, the IDN Times editorial team uses the focus, speed, and quality formula, provides positive content, utilizes social media to get closer to its readers, and develops a writing community. In contrast to these two studies, what is an important point in this research is what kind of strategy is carried out by Jatimtimes.com and Tugumalang.id in order to deal with the massive penetration of social media as well as alternative information media because it offers too much convenience in accessing a variety of information that society needs.

METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach. In qualitative research, the researcher functions as the main instrument, where the depth of research results is determined by the extent of exposure and analysis carried out by a researcher on data obtained in the field, and that is why qualitative research findings emphasize importance rather than generalization (Sugiyono, 2015). A qualitative approach is a research approach carried out to examine humans and the social reality that surrounds them, and therefore, this research is not based on mathematical calculations, numbers, or statistical methods but rather on the extent to which a researcher describes the phenomena that occur in a realistic way of social.

As an empiricism-based research, this research was conducted using the case study method, an exploration of a "bounded system" or "a case/various cases" over time through in-depth data collection and involving rich sources of information in a context (Creswell, 1998). Therefore, in this context, empirical research was conducted in two online media in Malang City, namely Jatimtimes.com and Tugumalang.id. Because it uses a case study, the data studied in this

research was obtained in the main way, namely conducting interviews with the editor-in-chief, editors and journalists from the two media, where both the editor-in-chief, editor and journalists had in-depth information about how the two media online is run. The data obtained through interviews was then analyzed using three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Jatimtimes.com Draws a Bead on Young People

Young people have become a hot topic of conversation in recent times, and in the context of mass media, young people cannot be ignored because society has been dominated by young people in recent years. But of course, the Jatimtimes.com media does not necessarily adapt its news content to the needs of young people because the mass media industry has to return to its initial support for journalistic activities, namely the editorial kitchen. In this case, before discussing Jatimtimes.com, which in its reporting targets young people as the main readers, there is a term known as editorial policy in the editorial kitchen. In this case, Jatimtimes.com carries out an editorial room management strategy, which includes coverage planning. In this case, before carrying out journalistic activities, of course, all parties who are a company must first determine what is needed when starting out or when going into the field. Don't forget cooperation is also required by always coordinating.

The stage of Jatimtimes.com's grand strategy is planning, which is an action by managers to think about goals before carrying out activities. A good plan will determine the goals and targets that must be met. According to the Chief Editor (Pimred) of the East Java Times, Yunan Helmy, setting goals or targets is very important for every company. In the online media Jatimtimes.com, the planning function has an important role in organizing the news process for the next week. Jatimtimes.com, in its planning function, holds meetings once a week. As stated by Yunan Helmy, even though the meeting is held once a week, it does not rule out the possibility that at any time there will always be coordination between editors and journalists, and vice versa. Previously, Jatimtimes.com, during the pandemic, also held daily planning meetings which were held every morning. However, in general, the meetings implemented by Jatimtimes.com are held once a week. Thus, it is very important for each institution/organization to hold meetings to discuss everything that is needed in the future. Apart from that, editorial meetings are important to re-evaluate everything that is an obstacle so that it can be overcome properly (Aprillaianah & Nataly, 2018; Yusuf & Nurlansyah, 2021).

The editorial meeting, which is held once a week, is attended by the editor-in-chief, editors, and journalists, but there are also several other elements, such as the director, CM, the graphics team, and so on, who can provide input regarding the latest development or matter what makes the East Java Times more optimal. In the meeting, discussion of news was the main thing. What was discussed in the meeting was the development of issues and current events, for example, events that occurred on the same day. Then, in selecting news angles, Jatimtimes.com emphasizes choosing an interesting angle so that it is different from the others, even one that is not owned by other media. The different interesting angle here means that if other media package news from the who element, then Jatimtimes.com will photograph the event from the why element so that the substance is more visible than just what happened and who was involved. The editor-in-chief of Jatimtimes.com and the rest of the crew also require them to always monitor developments in issues, whether at the national, regional, East Java or local levels in Malang. This was done by Jatimtimes.com so that it would not be left behind by other media in Malang in packaging an event to become news.

In the process of reporting news, Jatimtimes.com pays attention to the appropriateness of news. For Jatimtimes.com, as explained by Yunan, newsworthiness refers to news values. In this case, there are 11 news values that make news worthy of coverage (Suciati & Fauziah, 2020). The news values referred to include magnitude, character, interesting, contemporary, trendy, and dramatic. Jatimtimes.com journalists also have guidelines related to news or what are usually called the pillars of faith that they have studied. So, news that has a lot of news value will be better. On the other hand, news that contains little news value is less interesting to read. Therefore, journalists focus more on looking at events that occur at the same time; for example, a flood event occurred in two areas, namely Malang City with ten victims and Malang Regency with 1 victim. With great probability, journalists chose an event that killed ten people. In publishing news, Jatimtimes.com uses almost all social media platforms because it cannot be denied that social media is an application—if not a technology—that is very attached to people's lives, as if without social media they could not do anything.

The social media empowerment carried out by Jatimtimes.com is an effort to maintain people's interest in reading. Apart from socializing via other social media, Jatimtimes.com also follows developments in what the public still likes now. Jatimtimes.com started targeting young people because young people always interact with technology, especially cell phones and social media. Jatimtimes journalist Hendra Adi Saputra said in an interview that young people who hold cellphones automatically check their cellphones at least often and look for the information they need at will so that there is a possibility for young people to get online news notifications,

although not necessarily Jatimtimes. For this reason, the segmentation of young people is prioritized, and the news in Jatimtimes is more or less adapted to the character of the information they need, such as news about celebrities, music, and so on. Jatimtimes even always asks its journalists not to leave certain sections blank for news that young people like. At a minimum, in a day there must be news about domestic artists who are currently being discussed by the public, music, films, and so on because this is news that is liked by the millennial generation and generation Z, where these two generations are very closely related to technology.

Apart from that, Jatimtimes.com uses various social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, Twitter and Facebook. These four social media are the most actively used social media platforms, and one of the most followed is Instagram, with a number of followers reaching fifty thousand. As Yunan said, this is a way to maintain reader interest. News that has been posted by followers on Jatimtimes.com's social media is automatically directed to visit the website. Social media is the most effective means of disseminating information. This can be proven by the number of social media users increasing every year. Based on the data that has been traced, many internet users obtain information from social media because information from mass media can actually be promoted via social media platforms (Dewa & Safitri, 2021; Ismail, 2021). Apart from that, Jatimtimes.com also follows developments that are being widely discussed among the public or that are currently viral and liked by the public, such as Korean dramas that are currently being watched by the public. That way, Jatimtimes.com gets material to package into the news.

Apart from that, Jatimtimes.com also emphasizes maintaining its existence amidst the emergence of social media which is also a competitor to online media. Especially now, since the 2020s, social media has become the media most widely used by people to access information; next in line is television, and followed by online news (Pusparisa & Ridhoi, 2020). This data explains that online media is in number three as a public information medium. Jatimtimes.com strives not to be left behind by social media which is free for anyone to display unclear information. This is certainly different from online media which carries out verification first.

Yunan Helmy explained in an interview that Jatimtimes.com emphasized journalists to always monitor posts from social media that were opponents or rivals. Of course, by better understanding the issues and carrying out verification that makes the news better and more responsible than social media. Jatimtimes.com makes more efforts so as not to be left behind by social media, whether it is one day, one hour, or not even a moment behind because Jatimtimes.com is an online media that can publish various types of information. Thus, the issue of verification is very important in making news. Moreover, the source of information could be

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obtained from social media where the truth is not yet known (Adila et al., 2019). Therefore, verification discipline is something that journalists need to adhere to so that news can be conveyed to the public properly and correctly (Nadhiroh, 2020).

Tugumalang.id: Using Journalistic Language that is Easy to Understand

In general, the number of Tugumalang.id readers by 2023 will reach millions. In fact, if summarized from various social media platforms, Tugumalang.id readers have increased to one and a half million. However, sometimes Tugumalang.id also has news that has a small number of readers. On the other hand, there is also news from Tugumalang.id, which has a large readership so its readership has reached one and a half million. The news created is less interesting or does not comply with the provisions for incoming news on Discover. Discover is news that will be offered by Google. Therefore, according to the General Manager of Tugumalang.id, who is also a journalist, Fajrus Sidiq, Tugumalang.id really pays attention to the content in the news, for example, journalists create interesting keywords and fulfil the news elements so that the news is displayed by discover. In Indonesia and almost all over the world, news is the choice to enter the discovery. According to Fajrus Sidiq, news that has entered Discover means that the news is very interesting in accordance with existing provisions and elements.

In the current era of new media, Tugumalang.id emphasizes the branding power of Tugumalang.id to make it closer to readers. In terms of proximity, Tugumalang.id readers are Malang residents, both Malang residents in Malang and Malang residents outside Malang. Tugumalang.id strives to always approach readers in order to maintain its existence. Moreover, in 2023, Tugumalang.id will compete with media that are already old, such as Radar Malang and Malangposco Media. Even though Tugumalang.id is only four years old, it has been able to increase its branding strength every year. Apart from building branding strategies, Tugumalang.id also strengthens the marketing sector. According to Fajrus Sidiq, this is done not only in Malang but also outside Malang so that the business being run will continue to grow.

Tugumalang.id does not have a special strategy for attracting reader interest. In this case, journalists write news, following readers' habits. For example, journalists write news in interesting and easy-to-understand language. This cannot be called a special strategy. But in writing news or journalistic works, the use of direct and clear language is easier for readers to understand (Aryusmar, 2011; Saep, 2022). This means that in attracting readers' interest, Tugumalang.id journalists always position themselves as readers, too. As said by Tugumalang.id journalist Aisyah Nawangsari Putri, there is no special strategy she uses when making news. This is done by simply positioning yourself as a reader. Where when writing news, the language in words and sentences, such as scientific terms, is simplified into language that is easy to

understand. However, when you have to use these terms, you will continue with the explanation. This is something that other journalists might also do, so it is not a special strategy. From the results of this interview, it can be said that journalists need to position themselves in making news. In this case, when a journalist writes news, it is necessary to describe the writing in words and sentences that are simple, straightforward, and easy for readers to understand in general. This strategy is used by almost all journalists in writing news so that the news can be read by all groups.

Social Media: The Grand Challenge of Mass Media

The presence of social media has become a big challenge for conventional and digital mass media. Easy and free social media means that everyone can use it (Parlika et al., 2019). In its development, anyone can become a journalist. This can be taken from the phenomenon of citizen journalism. However, what differentiates them from mass media journalists is that mass media journalists don't just take videos or photos and finish but also have to carry out fact-checking objectively and accurately. Tugumalang.id journalists, for example, continue to verify the news they receive from related parties in a video taken by the journalist. The source of the news can be an event or a person. In this case, there are no events that do not involve or are not related to humans. That is why an event must be checked by the people involved in it (Indrawan & Ilmar, 2020).

In general, social media is a challenge not only for online media journalists but also for conventional mass media, especially newspapers, television, and radio. Back in its heyday, television was said to be one of the media that attracted the most attention from the public. However, nowadays, since the advent of social media, more public attention has been paid to social media, especially in recent years; the ones that have been widely used are TikTok, YouTube, and several other types of social media such as Instagram and X (formerly Twitter). This is natural because social media has advantages that other types of media, especially conventional mass media, cannot have. The advantage of social media is that it allows the public to obtain information quickly (Arianti, 2017; Zubaedi et al., 2021). The information presented in it is also multimedia so that consumers or audiences do not feel bored even if they have to spend a long time using the social media they have. When compared to conventional media, social media is faster, even faster than online media. However, this is understandable because mass media journalists will continue to prioritize checking and rechecking or verifying information from complete and clear from trusted sources (Hamna, 2017).

This is indeed an advantage of the many advantages that mass media has. But so far, if you look at the existing data, mass media is still in the top three media that people use most and

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consume information, namely television and online media. Both are in second and third place, while the one that is in first place in terms of being the media most often used as a reference or source of information is social media. This fact explains that social media is not just a threat but a threat that has quickly shifted mass media in the race for public affection. Of course, mass media has reformed by converging or, in this case, has also penetrated digital media with many conventional mass media also available in digital form. There are also online media that are purely online, that is, in the sense that they are directly present in the form of online news portals. However, the massive innovation carried out by social media, which can deviate and provide various forms and types of information, is both a threat and an opportunity that cannot be underestimated.

CONCLUSION

In the midst of the aggressiveness of social media which ranks first in the media vortex which is most widely used as a source of information, online media is required to carry out comprehensive creation and innovation. This also happened to two large online media in Malang City, namely Jatimtimes.com and Tugumalang.id. The two media compete as fellow online media, but neither of them turns a blind eye to the threats posed by social media. Therefore, to maintain their existence as media that are always at the forefront in providing objective news to the public, both media (of course, and this cannot be denied) are implementing an editorial desk strategy, namely organizing news coverage and writing. But what is no less important is what the two online media have done, providing reader-friendly news while still adhering to professional journalism. Jatimtimes.com, for example, specifically targets young people (millennial generation and generation Z) as a media audience segment because young people are very familiar with and cannot even be separated from the existence of technology and, especially, social media. This encourages Jatimtimes.com to present news that suits the needs of young people as their main audience. Meanwhile, Tugumalang.id places more emphasis on writing news in a straightforward and clear manner as it should be presented in writing journalistic works. Writing news in straightforward and clear language will make it easier for readers to understand so that readers continue to enjoy online media news offerings.

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