

Working Process of Digital Journalists in the 21st Century

Kritsada Thaweesaksri and Panita Wannapiroon

Abstract—This research aims to synthesize the conceptual framework of the working process of digital Journalists in the 21st century, in order to make an improvement of the said working process. The focus of the study is on the duty framework and working criteria of the digital Journalists, working procedure from start to finish, including the use of information & communication technology (ICT)’s devices in the working process. This is a qualitative research, which, by using Snowball sampling, selects 10 online news editors and chief executives of mass media organizations as purposive samples. Research device used is in-depth interviews, which are later used in the content analysis. Research result was found that the working process of Thai digital Journalists in the 21st century includes the following 3 major elements: input factor, processing level and delivery level. Each element indicates the processing of actual working by the digital Journalists from beginning to end.

Index Terms—Working process, digital journalists, 21st century.

I. INTRODUCTION

Development of information & communication technology has a direct impact on the growth of new media, which is not only limited to online media, but also includes many other different forms of media, i.e. news report via SMS on mobile phones, social networking, such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, etc. [1]

All of these are the new mediums that come to challenge the existence of the original ones like newspaper and radio. They have changed the working style of many Journalists, also with the changing habit of Thai people who like to receive information through various channels, including satellite television, internet, mobile phone, PC tablet, etc. Therefore, the traditional media like newspaper, radio and television need to adjust themselves for the digital world, hoping to add new channels to earn some for their organization. [2]

When the mass media organizations change themselves from the traditional self into the modern one, it appears that there’s an obvious impact on the circle of education of communication arts and mass communication, as the producing institution for media organizations. Consequently, there is an urgent need to study the working process of the digital Journalists in order to analyze their duty framework and working criteria.

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The authors are with Department of Information and Communication Technology for education, Faculty of Technical Education, King Mongkut’s University of Technology North Bangkok (e-mail: fhumkdt@ku.ac.th, panita.w@hotmail.com).

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- 1) To synthesize the conceptual framework of the working process of digital Journalists in the 21st century.
- 2) To study the working process of digital Journalists in the 21st century.
- 3) To make an improvement of the working process of digital Journalists in 21st century.

III. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework is set up for this research, in accordance with the research objectives, as follows:

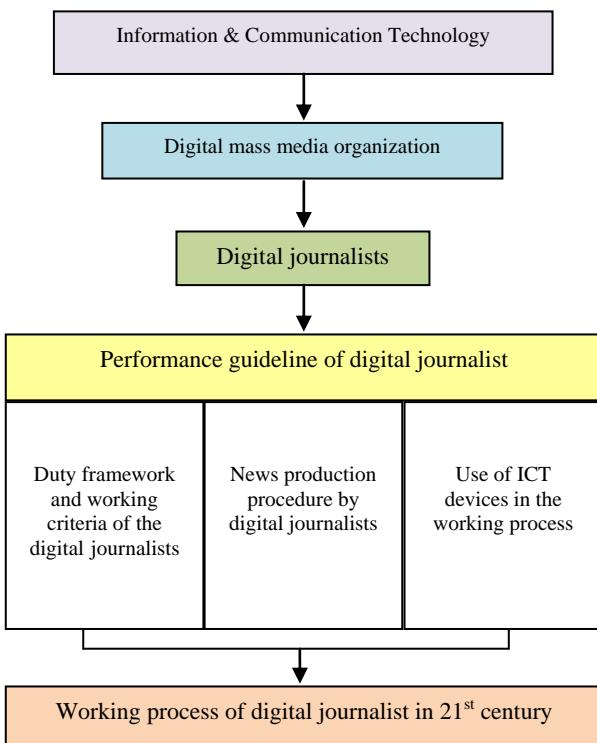


Fig. 1. conceptual framework of working process of digital journalists in 21st century.

From the above image, a conceptual framework is set up to show how influential the development of ICT is to the working process of digital Journalists. The study focuses on the working process of digital Journalists in the present time, analysis of impact(s) on adjusting the duty framework and working criteria, working procedures, methods and overall image of media production, using of ICT devices and communication in the working process of digital Journalists. Research result will be used as data in supporting the teaching of Communication Arts in Thai universities, to accord with the actual working process in the mass media organizations, in terms of accessing information resources, as well as more channels for expanding the information. This

will enable the media to create new ways to present the news, which will meet the lifestyle of news consumers who are exclusively familiar with digital media, and also raise the bar in presenting the online news.

IV. RESEARCH METHODS

Working Process of Digital Journalists in 21st century to Support the Teaching of Communication Arts in Thailand is a qualitative research, of which the data is collected by conducting in-depth interviews. Research methods are as follows:

A. Population and Samples

- 1) Population used in research includes online news editors and chief executives in the major mass media organizations in Thailand
- 2) Samples 10 online news editors and chief executives in mass media organizations, whose work experience is not less than 5 years; all of them selected by Snowball sampling.

B. Research Device

In-depth interviews are used as research device, while ICT-related information is thoroughly studied beforehand. According to research objectives, an interview form is constructed with open-ended questions, to which specialists are able to answer freely. The scope of questions includes:

- 1) What the duty framework, responsibility and criteria in working as a digital Journalists should look like
- 2) The working procedure, working with sources, methods of retrieving the news from sources, conveying the news, news production, and overall image of a digital Journalists
- 3) What it should be like to use ICT devices and tools in each step of the production

Data collected is analyzed for its content and details from key informants' interviews, in order to find an accordance of data and common understanding.

V. RESEARCH CONCLUSION

From the above image, Working process of digital Journalists in 21st century to show an includes the following 3 elements, which are 1) input factor 2) processing level and 3) delivery level.

- 1) Input factor – Media organizations that produce newspaper and radio & television programs still holds on to the mainstream and original forms of printed media and TV broadcast. However, due to the ICT innovations the media also adds the online form to the original ones, as a new channel to present the news. Meanwhile, the duty framework and working criteria for digital Journalists have been revised to meet the organization's protocols. Consequently, Journalists will go on doing the field job and pass on all the information to the central news storage, then the editorial department will put that information on the news report; the general department is responsible for the mainstream media, while the online department is in charge of the online media, all information is administrated and conducted by online

editors.

- 2) Processing level – is the working orders of digital Journalists, that is, Journalists passing the stories from fieldwork to the news storage for the online editors to screen. Then the news rewriters take the screened stories and adapt them into proper format for online news. At this level, the contents creators, who are both Journalists and creative graphic designer, will create the news contents as well as images and other media proper for online presentation, such as video clips, stills or animations, in order to respond to the viewers' need. Subsequently, online news editors will examine the final stories for properness in publishing them online. The editors are fully authorized for all endorsements of the news.
- 3) Delivery level – The system of online news is operated by 2 divisions. First is the webmaster, in charge of all administration and news presentation of the organization's website. And the social media coordinator who acts as the team support, in charge of mobility of the social media, all the updates and other related articles, including acquiring and selecting background information for news presentation.

VI. RESULT DISCUSSIONS

- 1) Working process of digital Journalists in 21st century focuses on the use of ICT to fulfill the needs of news consumption and pass the information to target groups as diversely as possible. This is accordant to the idea of Multiple Platforms by Dan Saugstrup, which proposes that the development of ICT will help support the performance of mass media in the future. News presentation through various channels at the same or closer time, interrelation between images and contents, will help add more channels to the news consumers. These are the new strategies of Journalists performance [3].

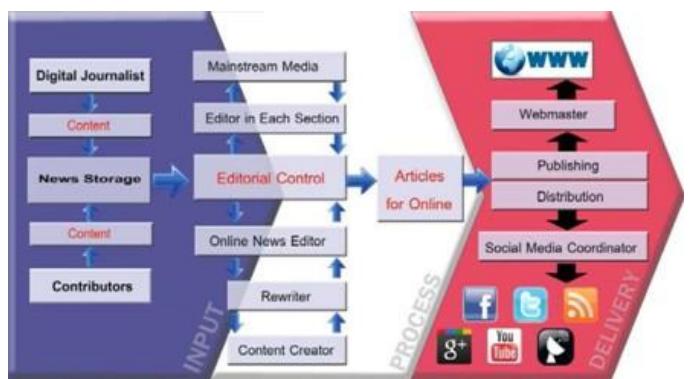


Fig. 2. Working process of digital journalists in 21st century.

- 2) Working process of digital Journalists in the 21st century tends to have its own structure and criteria within the editorial department. This is the changes that are carried out in several features. First is the change of duty, additional jobs are assigned to one person, meaning one Journalists will have to become multi-skilled Journalists who not only provides news stories to one media, but also to several kinds of media channels. The other is

change in editorial department's role, which is to support performance of digital journalism, such as online editor, content creator, or social media coordinator. These changes agree with a model for the 21st century newsroom by American journalism specialist Paul Bradshaw, in "Moving away from 'the story': 5 roles of an online investigations team" [4].

- 3) Working process of digital Journalists requires building up of knowledge and skills to be those of global citizens, to catch up with the development of working processes and self-development. It suggests that one should learn ICT, [5] especially the new technology to help access more information and help develop new channels for broadcasting the news. This knowledge and skills should come with qualities that a Journalists should possess, which are: eruditeness, curiosity, agility, good skills in language, knowledge about cameras, courage, good conversational skills, professional ethics, attentiveness, good human relationship, wisdom, and punctuality [6].
- 4) Academic institutions in Thailand that established the discipline of Communication Arts should consider that it's crucial to update their curricula constantly to catch up with the ever-changing process in professional journalism, for which professional skills are highly required. The education of this area still needs to put focus on news presentation skills, creating news issues, collecting the information, conducting an interview, investigative journalism, writing the news, and writing skills for journalism. Additional skill that must be put into the curriculum is convergence journalism, which is a result of development of ICT innovations, where the fortés of different media converge. [7] Therefore, teachers should be encouraging students to use any new media in each step of journalism, in accordance with the nature of digital media, such as using social media in collecting information, expressing opinions and presenting the news. Another important element in education of journalism is to cultivate analytical, creative and critical thinking to Journalists of new generation, as well as the aesthetic views and taste in designs. It is likely that digital Journalists are able to present the stories in the more diverse modes, than merely in written form or via still photography, but they can also use multimedia that includes stills, animations, sounds, or beautiful CGIs in their presentation.

VII. FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

- 1) Suggestions in applying research result into practicality Research result indicates that the working process of digital Journalists in the 21st century consists of 3 major elements, which are input factor, processing level and delivery level. The result can be used to plan and model the curriculum of Communication Arts, in order to meet the standards of professional journalism, and to produce quality graduates who can respond to the needs of mass media organizations, and are able to catch up with any changes in society. The curriculum has to be modern, responding to the current need, and at the same time, it

should as well be able to convey the future trends of journalism. To effectively respond to the market in the era of digital communication, it is crucial to any institutions that they must have a clear conscience in producing graduates for the market, especially those from the curriculum that is directly related with quickly changing nature of communication.

2) Suggestions for further researches.

- Future research based on technological development that affects the production of mass media, to help predict possible trends and any abrupt changes
- Comparative study between opinions of digital Journalists and satisfaction of news consumers
- Study of value assessment of digital news report, to investigate how much it responds to news consumption at current time.

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Kritsada Thaweesaksri is a lecturer at Department of Communication Arts and Information Science, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University, Thailand. is a Ph.D. candidate, Department of Information and Communication Technology for education, Faculty of Technical Education, King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok(KMUTNB), Thailand. He has interesting topics is Digital Journalists, Online Journalism, New Media for Communication.



Panita Wannapiroon is an assistant professor at Department of Information and Communication Technology for Education, Faculty of Technical Education, King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok (KMUTNB), Thailand. She has experience in many positions such as the Director at Innovation and Technology Management Research Center, Assistant Director of Online Learning Research Center, Assistant Director of Vocational Education Technology Research Center, and Assistant Director of Information and Communication Technology in Education Research Center. She received Burapha University Thesis Award 2002. She is a Membership of Professional Societies in ALCoB (APEC Learning Community Builders) Thailand, and Association for Educational Technology of Thailand (AETT).