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## Proposed Solutions to Improve the Quality of Social Media Exploitation and Use by Vietnamese Journalists Today

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### **Abstract**

*The rise of the Internet has profoundly changed the source of information and the relationship between the public and the media. In the face of modern changes, journalists are required to make some changes to adapt to the trend in collecting news, content, transmission methods, and relationships and interactions with the public. In fact, in Vietnam today, many journalists have exploited and used a certain amount of information from social media platforms. They also see social media as a channel, a medium, and a way to transmit information to the public or build their image on the internet. However, in the process of exploiting and using social media, journalists have faced many difficulties. This paper will use the method of content analysis and synthesis to analyze practical solutions to help Vietnamese journalists and journalists around the world improve their ability to exploit and use social media to serve their work in the context of globalization. With the aim of proposing some solutions to overcome limitations and obstacles and to improve the efficiency of the use and exploitation of social media communication by journalists today. In addition, the paper also contributes to enriching the documentation on the use and exploitation of information on social media platforms of Vietnamese journalists.*

**Keywords:** Social Media, Journalist, Vietnam, Solutions.

### **Introduction**

The use and exploitation of information on social media is a necessary activity for journalists. It is like a breath of fresh air that diversifies the means of communication between journalists and the public.

The purpose of using social media by Vietnamese journalists in the survey is quite different from that of journalists in many countries around the world who were surveyed in previous studies. For example, while the main purpose of Vietnamese journalists use social media for entertainment (81.8%)<sup>3</sup>, Spanish journalists (survey results published in 2012)<sup>4</sup> use social media to diversify their sources (80.4%), and relax (42%). Latin American journalists also believe that seeking entertainment is not the main way to use social media platforms. Social media is a rich resource for journalists to exploit and use for their professional purposes. However, using it effectively requires journalists to have professional skills, combined with honest professional ethics.

One of the most complex problems for journalists when participating in social media is that it is very difficult to clearly distinguish between the personal status of a user and the status of a practicing journalist, and behind that is the reputation, prestige of the organization, as well as the profession that he/she pursues.

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<sup>4</sup>Dr. Pilar Carrera Álvarez, "Journalism and Social Media: How Spanish Journalists are Using Twitter", *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, Volume 18, Number 1, Pages 31-53.

In addition, the exploitation and use of social media by Vietnamese journalists also have certain limitations. In this article, the author will propose some solutions to improve the quality of information exploitation from social media to serve the work of journalists and media organizations.

## **Content**

### **Responsibilities for Journalists**

Journalism is considered to be one of the most demanding professions, as the responsibility of journalists and media organizations to society is enormous. Journalists must exploit information from social media platforms, but they must be very careful when using information from social media platforms as material for their articles. In addition, journalists need to fight against fake news and false information on social media platforms, which is essential and urgent in the current period. To combat fake news, journalists also need to use some fake news detection software tools and identify the source of article information such as Newstrition, newshelper.gov.tw.

Because of the explosion of fake news with increasing frequency, but in some cases, media organizations are still slow and have not timely verified, or corrected to help readers and guide public opinion, then journalists have a pioneering role in fighting fake news, guiding public opinion on social media platforms. In this regard, journalist H.N (Cà Mau Newspaper) said: "I rarely and almost never argue with others on social media. Only for hot issues, I also only give a few opinions when I know the ins and outs of the issue. When I don't know, I won't give my opinion to argue, avoid taking the issue too far. I am in charge of education and health, so not all issues I write. I have not used topics on social media to write articles, but only go to reality to record and write."

### **Responsibilities for Journalists When Using Social Media**

In the face of the modern development trend of journalism, journalists need to exploit the emotional factor and empathize with the target audience in the article. However, exploiting the emotional factor to put into the article is not an easy task, it can distort the content and correctness of the issue. Therefore, the exploitation of emotional factors in the article requires journalists to have the courage, conscience, and responsibility of a journalist. When journalists write statuses or share articles on their pages, they will have a significant impact on the public. Therefore, to identify the issue information, journalists need to praise and criticize correctly with the nature of the event, it is even more difficult when journalists have to distinguish between good and bad in the pile of "super huge" information. Therefore, it requires journalists to have the ability to determine the accuracy of the information, the ability to analyze with sharp thinking with a "sharp pen, pure heart", avoid material temptations to slander, take revenge personally, "fight", belittle others to elevate the side for journalists "benefits". In addition to personal abilities, journalists also require a strong mentality, and training "steel nerves" in all situations. When writing any wrong or confusing information in the article, it can also receive countless criticisms, and harsh swearing words from netizens, especially "keyboard heroes".

### **Responsibilities for Journalists in the Context of the Current Media Environment**

Vietnamese journalists operate under the guidance and supervision of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and the Communist Party of Vietnam is the party of the Vietnamese working people, so journalists need to be more responsible in reporting honestly and fairly to the public, expressing the voices of the "low-class", protecting the interests of the country and nation. When working as well as sharing information, journalists need to try to put themselves in the position of the subject that they are targeting and referring to in the article. If you provide, or share false information, or information that is only partially correct, then journalists may have contributed to destroying a future, even a lifetime, it can turn them into a

laughingstock, or even become "bait" for netizens to talk about ... It may not be wrong from a legal perspective, but from the perspective of humanity, compassion, it is a "crime". Half the truth is still not the truth, journalists need to be careful in the matter of liking, sharing, and commenting on information on social media. Journalists must value and respect the truth, that is the conscience, and professional responsibility of journalists and is the future of the destiny of society and nation. To adapt to the current media environment, journalists need to understand the psychology of social media users, and first of all, they need to have strong knowledge, understand the customs, traditions, and culture of Vietnamese people, firmly grasp the regulations of Vietnamese law on information law, journalism, the guidelines, orientations, policies, and strategies of the Party and the State with the ability to learn, improve and train knowledge and professional ethics.

### **Impacts on News Agencies**

The rapid development of technology and engineering has created favorable conditions for the development of digital media. Social media platforms have emerged one after another, playing a significant role in changing the way people communicate, think, and act.

**News Agencies Need to Strengthen Their Professional Skills:** News agencies need to regularly provide training on how to use online tools and resources, how to find news on the internet, and how to handle online sources. In addition, news agencies should focus on how to write for the web and how to optimize search engine results (SEO). This will help journalists improve their professional skills.

**News Agencies Need to Develop Codes of Conduct:** Many news agencies have yet to establish a code of conduct for social media. They can refer to the codes of conduct of the Ministry of Information and Communications and the Vietnam Journalists Association for guidance. News agencies need to create incentives for journalists to innovate their work methods to adapt to new media platforms. This will help journalists better understand their audience. Journalists are the "arms" of news agencies. News agencies should also develop codes of conduct for journalists on social media that are consistent with the right to freedom of expression and the law.

**News Agencies Need to Connect with the Audience:** News agencies need to occupy the market and distribute information widely on social media. To do this, journalists are essential. When journalists share information on social media, it helps news agencies connect with the audience, increase the accuracy and credibility of information, and make journalists more sensitive to information. Information will be directed by journalists if they participate on social media. The information on social media is very diverse and abundant. This is an opportunity for journalists and news agencies to connect with sources. However, when using information from social media, it is important to be careful, evaluate, and analyze the information carefully to adapt to the current digital media environment.

**News Agencies Need to Restructure Their News Products:** News agencies need to restructure their news products to be more in line with the strengths and harmony of different news genres in the digital media environment. The trend of creating journalistic works by using numbers, images, charts, etc. to tell stories is increasingly being pursued and implemented by news agencies. News agencies need to invest in technology and develop a variety of news formats to meet the needs of readers on multiple platforms, especially mobile devices. News agencies can also add features to their news apps that are similar to the features of social media apps: comments, shares, etc.

**News Agencies Need to Be More Engaged on Social Media:** News agencies need to be truly engaged on social media, not just sharing links as they do now. To do this, news agencies need to improve their competitiveness in the digital media environment with new media and innovative content. News agencies need to strengthen training on professional skills, short courses related to social media for

collaborators and journalists in the newsroom, especially multi-skill courses, how to use social media platforms effectively, analysis skills, and online training courses for citizen journalists.

## Conclusion

Social media platforms offer many positive values, such as access to diverse and up-to-date information from multiple perspectives. They also allow users to connect with friends and family quickly and easily. Journalists can see social media as a "modern newsroom" where information is updated quickly and concisely, presented in a variety of formats, and explored from different angles. However, information on social media is not verified, so journalists need to be careful.

The use of social media by journalists in Vietnam has also encountered several problems, such as a lack of objectivity when sharing information, a lack of attention to fighting fake news, and a lack of use of information and topics on social media, especially the issue of international integration. Therefore, journalists need to constantly learn, improve their professional skills, integration skills, and language barriers. In addition, news agencies should pay more attention to training and skills courses to meet the requirements of working in the digital media environment to help journalists improve their skills.

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