

MCM302

ONLINE JOURNALISM



Course video is available on our app

Course code: MCM 302

Course title: Online Journalism

Course credit load: 2 Units

List of Series:

Series 1: New and Social Media in Online Journalism

Series 2: News Gathering and Reportage in the Digital Age

Series 3: Fake News, Misinformation, and Social Media

Series 4: Citizenship, Identity, and the Power of Connectivity

Series 5: Creating and Uploading Online Content

Suggested Outline of Parts and Sub-Parts

Part 1 (1.1): Defining New and Social Media

Sub-Part 1.1.1: Meaning and scope of new media

Sub-Part 1.1.2: Characteristics of social media platforms

Part 2 (1.2): Major Social Media Platforms and Their Features

Sub-Part 1.2.1: Facebook and its role in journalism

Sub-Part 1.2.2: Twitter as a news dissemination tool

Sub-Part 1.2.3: LinkedIn and professional networking in journalism

Part 3 (1.3): Impact of Social Media on Online Journalism

Sub-Part 1.3.1: Influence on news gathering

Sub-Part 1.3.2: Influence on reportage and distribution

Part 4 (1.4): Opportunities and Challenges of Social Media in Journalism

Sub-Part 1.4.1: Opportunities for engagement and reach

Sub-Part 1.4.2: Challenges of credibility and verification

Introduction

Social media has become one of the most powerful tools shaping the way news is created, shared, and consumed. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have transformed journalism by enabling instant communication, interactive engagement, and global reach. For journalists, these platforms are not only channels of distribution but also spaces where stories are discovered, verified, and debated.



The aim of this Series is to introduce you to the concept of new and social media, and to equip you with the knowledge of how these platforms influence online journalism in terms of news gathering, reportage, and professional practice.

We shall commence this Series by defining new and social media, and examining their key characteristics. Next, we will explore major social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, focusing on their unique features and relevance to journalism. Subsequently, we will analyse the impact of social media on news gathering and reportage, highlighting both opportunities and challenges. Finally, we will wrap up by considering the broader opportunities and challenges that social media presents for journalism in the digital age.

3 Series Learning Outcomes

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

- SLO 1.1** define new media and social media, and explain their scope in online journalism,
- SLO 1.2** describe the features of major social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn,
- SLO 1.3** analyse the impact of social media on news gathering and reportage,
- SLO 1.4** evaluate the opportunities and challenges that social media presents for journalism.

1.1 Defining New and Social Media

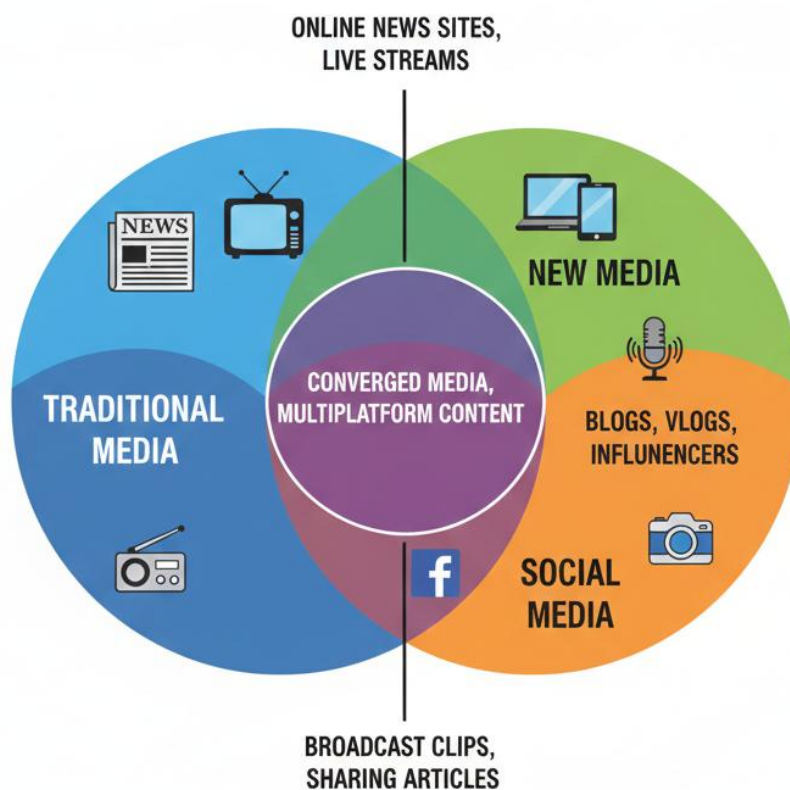
1.1.1 Meaning and scope of new media

The term **new media** refers to digital communication technologies that allow interactive, networked, and multimedia forms of information exchange. Unlike traditional media such as newspapers, radio, and television, new media is characterised by immediacy, interactivity, and decentralised production. It encompasses websites, blogs, podcasts, and especially social media platforms.

Social media is a subset of new media that enables users to create, share, and interact with content in real time. It is built on user-generated content and fosters communities where individuals and organisations can engage directly.



MEDIA LANDSCAPE OVERLAP



CC BY

Description: Diagram showing the relationship between traditional media, new media, and social media.

Figure 1.1 Relationship between traditional media, new media, and social media

Fill in the blank: New media differs from traditional media because it allows _____ and decentralised production.

1.1.2 Characteristics of social media platforms

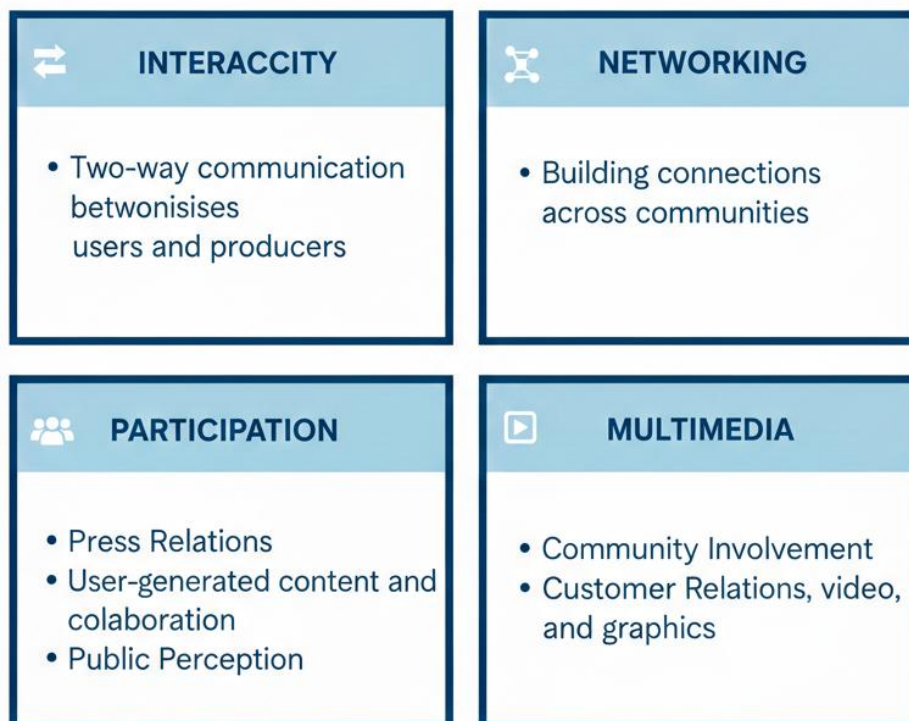
Social media platforms share several defining features. First, they are **interactive**, meaning users can respond, comment, and share content instantly. Second, they are **networked**, allowing



individuals to connect across geographical boundaries. Third, they are **participatory**, giving everyone the ability to produce and distribute information. Finally, they are **multimedia-based**, supporting text, images, audio, and video.

These characteristics make social media particularly powerful in journalism, as they enable rapid news dissemination and audience engagement. However, they also raise challenges of credibility and information overload.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Box 1.1 Key characteristics of social media platforms

Fill in the blank: One major characteristic of social media is _____, which allows users to contribute their own content.



Pilot questions 1.1

Define new media in your own words.

Explain why social media is considered a subset of new media.

Identify one characteristic of social media that makes it suitable for journalism.

Fill in the blank: Social media platforms are _____ because they allow users to respond and engage instantly.

List two differences between traditional media and new media.

1.2 Major Social Media Platforms and Their Features

1.2.1 Facebook and its role in journalism

Facebook is a social networking platform that allows users to share text, images, videos, and links with their network of friends or followers. In journalism, Facebook serves as a distribution channel where news organisations publish stories, interact with audiences, and gather feedback. It also provides tools such as live streaming and groups, which enable journalists to reach specific communities.



Screenshot-style image showing a Facebook news feed with a news organisation's post.

Plate 1.1 Example of a Facebook news feed used for journalism



Fill in the blank: Facebook enables journalists to reach audiences through _____ and interactive features such as comments and likes.

1.2.2 Twitter as a news dissemination tool

Twitter is a microblogging platform where users share short messages called tweets. For journalists, Twitter is valuable for breaking news, live updates, and engaging directly with audiences. Its hashtag system allows stories to trend globally, making it a powerful tool for visibility.

HASHTAGS & TRENDING NEWS ON TWITTER



Diagram showing how hashtags connect tweets into trending topics.

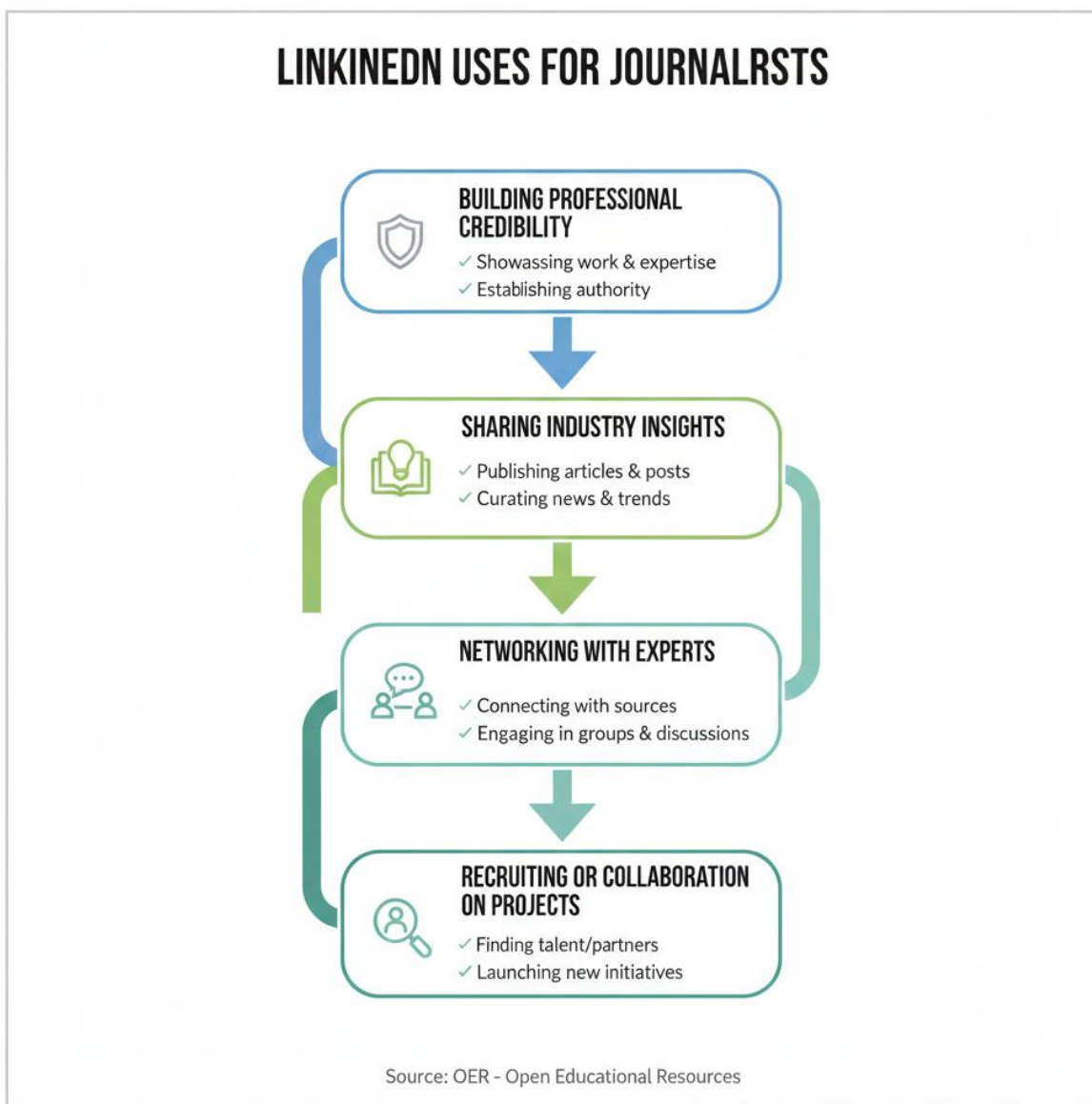
Figure 1.2 Hashtags as connectors of news stories on Twitter

Fill in the blank: On Twitter, short posts known as _____ are used to share updates quickly.



1.2.3 LinkedIn and professional networking in journalism

LinkedIn is a professional networking platform that connects individuals and organisations. For journalists, LinkedIn provides opportunities to build professional credibility, share industry insights, and connect with experts for interviews or collaborations. Unlike Facebook and Twitter, LinkedIn focuses on professional discourse rather than casual interaction.



Box 1.2 Uses of LinkedIn for journalists

Fill in the blank: LinkedIn is primarily used for _____ networking and professional credibility.



Pilot questions 1.2

Describe how Facebook supports journalism.

Explain why Twitter is considered effective for breaking news.

Fill in the blank: Twitter uses _____ to connect stories and make them trend.

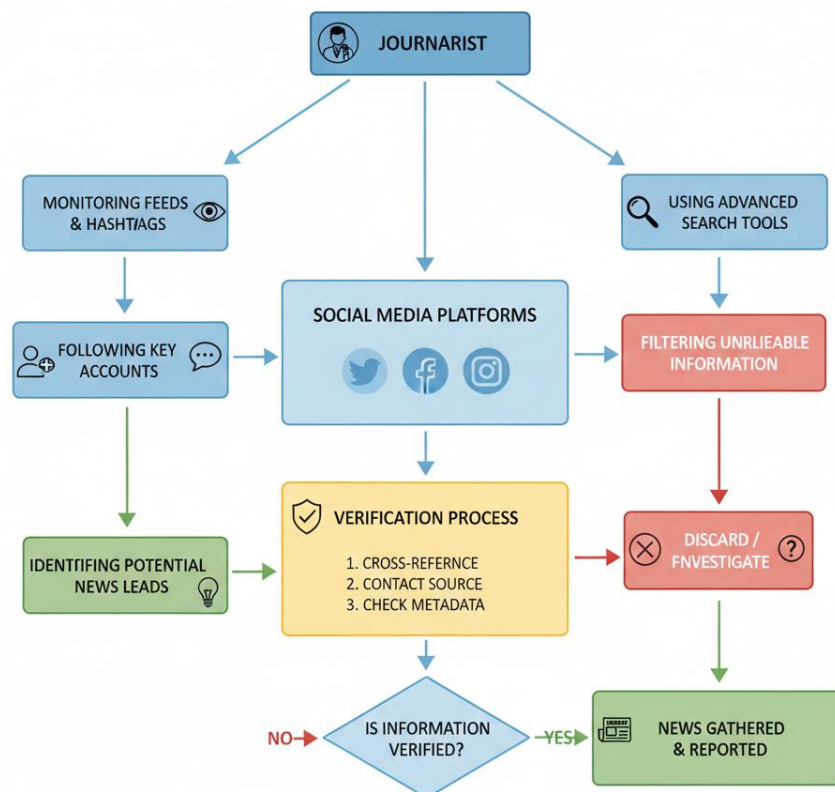
Identify one way LinkedIn can benefit journalists.

Compare the focus of LinkedIn with that of Facebook.

1.3 Impact of Social Media on Online Journalism

1.3.1 Influence on news gathering

Social media platforms have become essential tools for **news gathering**, which refers to the process of collecting information for reporting. Journalists use platforms like Twitter and Facebook to monitor breaking events, track public opinion, and identify eyewitnesses. This immediacy allows them to access information faster than traditional methods.



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Flowchart showing how journalists gather news from social media posts.



Figure 1.3 News gathering process using social media

Fill in the blank: The process of collecting information for reporting is known as _____.

1.3.2 Influence on reportage and distribution

Reportage refers to the act of reporting and presenting news stories. Social media has transformed reportage by enabling journalists to publish instantly and interact with audiences. Distribution is no longer limited to newspapers or television; instead, stories can reach global audiences within seconds. This speed enhances visibility but also raises challenges of accuracy and verification.

SOCIAL'S IMPACT ON REPORTAGE



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Box 1.3 Impact of social media on reportage



Fill in the blank: Social media allows journalists to publish stories _____, reaching audiences instantly.

Pilot questions 1.3

Define news gathering and explain how social media supports it.

Fill in the blank: Journalists use _____ to monitor breaking events and public opinion.

Explain how social media has changed the distribution of news.

Identify one challenge that arises from instant reportage on social media.

Describe the difference between news gathering and reportage.

1.4 Opportunities and Challenges of Social Media in Journalism

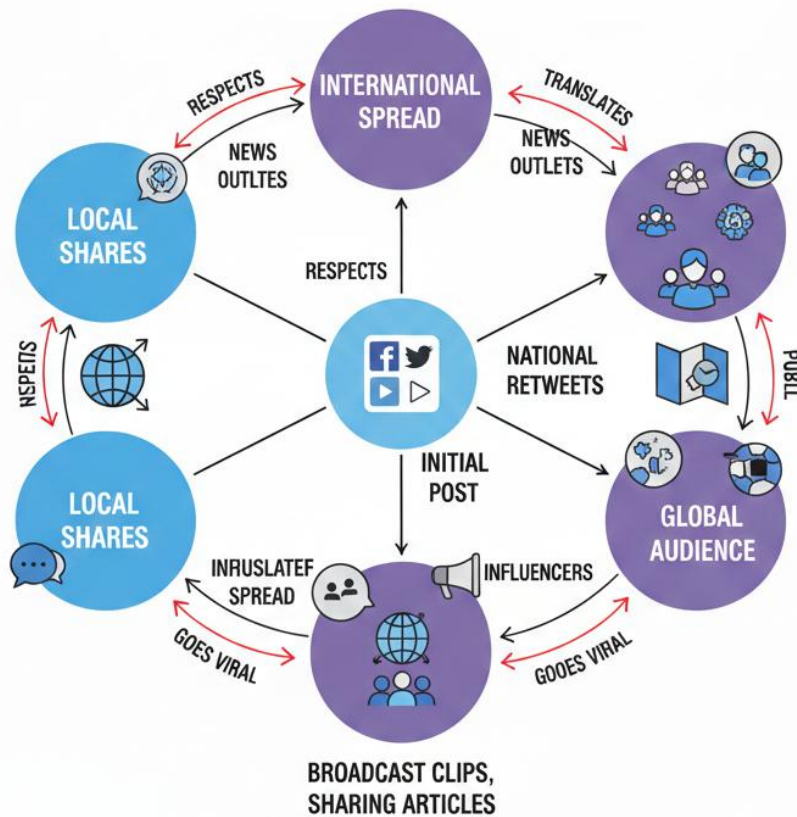
1.4.1 Opportunities for engagement and reach

Social media provides journalists with unprecedented **opportunities** to engage with audiences and expand their reach. Unlike traditional media, which often relies on one-way communication, social media allows for two-way interaction. Journalists can receive instant feedback, clarify issues, and even crowdsource information from their followers.

Another opportunity lies in the global reach of platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. A single post can be shared across continents within seconds, enabling journalists to connect with diverse audiences. This immediacy enhances visibility and ensures that stories are not confined to local boundaries.



GLOBAL REACH OF A SOCIAL MEDIA POST



CC BY

Description: Diagram showing how a single post spreads globally through shares and retweets.
Figure 1.4 Global reach of social media posts

Fill in the blank: Social media enables _____ communication, allowing journalists to interact directly with audiences.

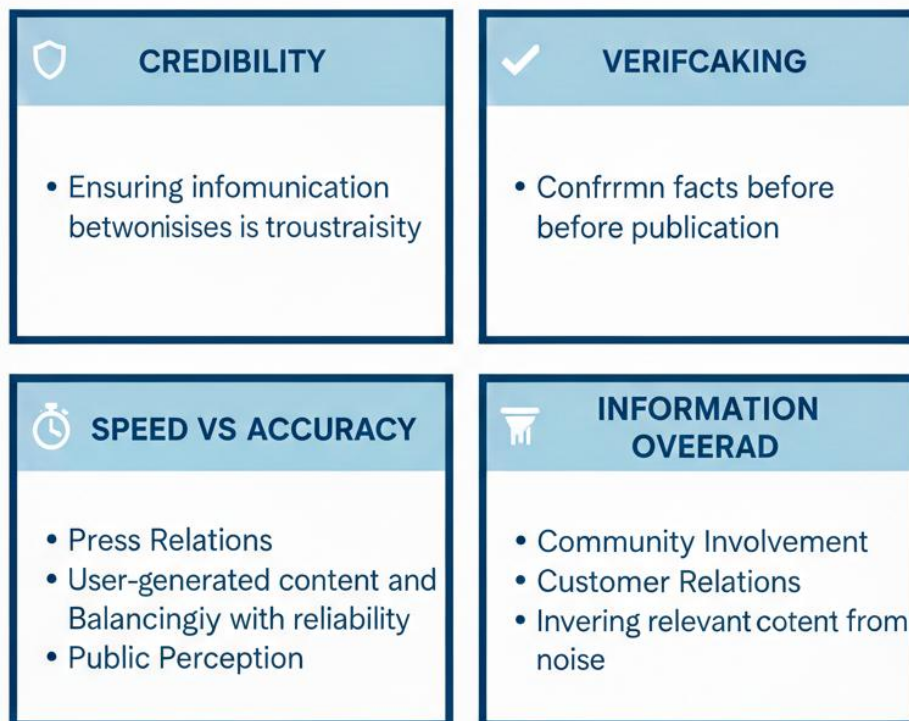
1.4.2 Challenges of credibility and verification

While social media offers opportunities, it also presents significant **challenges**. One of the most pressing issues is **credibility**, which refers to the trustworthiness of information. Because anyone can publish content online, journalists must carefully verify sources before reporting.



Verification is another challenge. The speed of social media often pressures journalists to publish quickly, but without proper checks, misinformation can spread. Balancing immediacy with accuracy is therefore a critical skill in online journalism.

CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN JOURNALISM



Source: OER – Open Educational Resources

Box 1.4 Challenges of social media in journalism

Fill in the blank: One major challenge of social media in journalism is _____, which requires confirming facts before publication.



Pilot questions 1.4

Explain how social media enhances audience engagement for journalists.

Fill in the blank: A single post on social media can achieve _____ reach across continents.

Identify one opportunity that social media provides for journalism.

Describe one challenge journalists face when verifying information on social media.

Explain the tension between speed and accuracy in online journalism.

Series Summary

This Series has introduced the role of new and social media in shaping online journalism, highlighting their relevance in today's digital news environment. We began by defining new media and social media, noting how they differ from traditional forms of communication. From there, we explored the features of major platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, showing how each supports journalism in unique ways. We then examined the impact of social media on news gathering and reportage, before considering the wider opportunities and challenges these platforms present, particularly in relation to engagement, global reach, credibility, and verification.

By working through these parts, you should now be able to define and explain the scope of new and social media (SLO 1.1), describe the features of key platforms (SLO 1.2), analyse their influence on news gathering and reportage (SLO 1.3), and evaluate both the opportunities and challenges they create for journalism (SLO 1.4).

Glossary of Terms

Credibility: The trustworthiness of information, requiring journalists to ensure accuracy before publication.

LinkedIn: A professional networking platform used by journalists to build credibility, share insights, and connect with experts.

New Media: Digital communication technologies that allow interactive, networked, and multimedia exchange, unlike traditional one-way media.

News Gathering: The process of collecting information for reporting, often supported by monitoring social media platforms.

Reportage: The act of reporting and presenting news stories to audiences.

Social Media: A subset of new media that enables users to create, share, and interact with content in real time.

Twitter: A microblogging platform where short posts called tweets are used for breaking news and live updates.



User-Generated Content: Information created and shared directly by users, forming the basis of social media interaction.

Verification: The process of confirming facts and sources to ensure accuracy in journalism.

Facebook: A social networking platform that supports journalism through distribution, live streaming, and interactive audience features.

Hashtags: Keywords or phrases preceded by the hash symbol (#) on Twitter, used to connect posts and make stories trend globally.

Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

Objective Questions

Define new media and explain how it differs from traditional media. (Linked to SLO 1.1)

Identify one characteristic of social media that makes it distinct from traditional media. (Linked to SLO 1.1)

State the primary function of hashtags on Twitter. (Linked to SLO 1.2)

Fill in the blank: The process of collecting information for reporting is known as _____. (Linked to SLO 1.3)

List one challenge journalists face when using social media for news verification. (Linked to SLO 1.4)

Short-Answer Questions

6. Describe how Facebook supports journalism through its features. (Linked to SLO 1.2)

7. Explain how social media has changed the distribution of news stories. (Linked to SLO 1.3)

8. Identify one opportunity and one challenge that social media presents for journalism. (Linked to SLO 1.4)

Long-Answer Questions

9. Analyse the impact of social media on news gathering and reportage, highlighting both benefits and risks. (Linked to SLO 1.3)

Basic response: Learners should explain how social media enables faster news gathering and instant reportage, while also noting risks such as misinformation and lack of verification.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may extend the analysis by discussing case studies of breaking news events on social media, evaluating how journalists balance immediacy with credibility, and suggesting strategies for responsible use.

Evaluate the opportunities and challenges of social media in journalism, focusing on audience engagement, global reach, credibility, and verification. (Linked to SLO 1.4)

Basic response: Learners should outline how social media enhances engagement and reach, while also presenting challenges of credibility and verification.



Value-added response: Outstanding learners may provide examples of how journalists use social media to crowdsource information, discuss ethical implications of misinformation, and propose solutions for improving accuracy in online journalism.

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 1]

New media refers to digital communication technologies that allow interactive, networked, and multimedia exchange, unlike traditional media which is one-way and slower.

Interactivity, which allows users to respond and engage instantly.

Hashtags connect tweets into trending topics and make stories visible globally.

News gathering.

Ensuring credibility and verifying facts before publication.

Facebook supports journalism by enabling distribution of stories, live streaming, and audience interaction through comments and groups.

Social media allows instant publication and global distribution, making news accessible beyond local boundaries.

Opportunity: global reach and engagement. Challenge: credibility and verification.

Basic response: Social media enables faster news gathering and instant reportage but risks misinformation.

Value-added response: Case studies show journalists balancing immediacy with credibility, using verification strategies to ensure accuracy.

Basic response: Social media enhances engagement and reach but challenges credibility and verification.

Value-added response: Journalists crowdsource information, face ethical issues of misinformation, and propose solutions such as fact-checking tools.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 1]

Part 1 (1.1)

Digital, interactive communication technologies.

Because it is based on user-generated content and real-time interaction.

Interactivity.

Interactive.

Traditional media is one-way and slower, while new media is interactive and decentralised.

Part 2 (1.2)

By enabling distribution of stories, live streaming, and audience interaction.



Because it allows short, instant updates and trending topics.

Hashtags.

Building professional credibility and networking.

LinkedIn focuses on professional networking, while Facebook focuses on social interaction.

Part 3 (1.3)

News gathering is collecting information for reporting, supported by social media monitoring.

Social media platforms.

It allows instant global distribution of stories.

Accuracy and verification.

News gathering is collecting information, reportage is presenting it.

Part 4 (1.4)

By enabling two-way communication and feedback.

Global.

Audience engagement.

Difficulty in verifying sources and facts.

Speed pressures accuracy, creating tension in reporting.

References and Attributions [Series 1]

This section provides references and attributions for the instructional content, illustrations, and suggested open educational resources (OERs) used in **Series 1: New and Social Media in Online Journalism**. All entries are presented in APA 7th edition format.

Instructional Content References

Castells, M. (2012). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age*. Polity Press.

Fuchs, C. (2017). *Social media: A critical introduction* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Hermida, A. (2010). Twittering the news: The emergence of ambient journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 4(3), 297–308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512781003640703> ([doi.org in Bing](#))

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Schulz, A., & Nielsen, R. K. (2020). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2020*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk> ([reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk in Bing](#))



Illustration Placeholders and Attributions

Figure 1.1 Relationship between traditional media, new media, and social media

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a simple Venn diagram showing overlap between traditional media, new media, and social media.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram traditional vs new media vs social media.”

Plate 1.1 Example of a Facebook news feed used for journalism

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a mock-up of a Facebook news feed showing a news organisation post.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER image Facebook news feed journalism.”

Figure 1.2 Hashtags as connectors of news stories on Twitter

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate a diagram showing hashtags linking tweets into trending topics.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram Twitter hashtags news.”

Box 1.2 Uses of LinkedIn for journalists

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing LinkedIn uses for journalists.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic LinkedIn journalism.”

Figure 1.3 News gathering process using social media

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate flowchart showing journalists gathering news from social media posts.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER flowchart news gathering social media.”

Box 1.3 Impact of social media on reportage

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing impact of social media on reportage.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic social media impact on reportage.”

Figure 1.4 Global reach of social media posts

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing how a single social media post spreads globally through shares and retweets.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram social media global reach journalism.”

Box 1.4 Challenges of social media in journalism

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing challenges of social media in journalism.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic challenges social media journalism.”

General Attribution Note

Where illustrations are AI-generated, attribution should include the specific AI tool used and the prompt provided. Where OERs are sourced, attribution should follow institutional guidelines for open educational resources, ensuring proper credit to the original creators.



Course code: MCM 302

Course title: Online Journalism

Course credit load: 2 Units

List of Series:

Series 1: New and Social Media in Online Journalism

Series 2: News Gathering and Reportage in the Digital Age

Series 3: Fake News, Misinformation, and Social Media

Series 4: Citizenship, Identity, and the Power of Connectivity

Series 5: Creating and Uploading Online Content

Suggested Outline

Part 2.1: Understanding News Gathering in the Digital Age

Sub-Part 2.1.1: Definition and scope of news gathering

Sub-Part 2.1.2: Tools and techniques for digital news gathering

Part 2.2: Social Media as a Source of News

Sub-Part 2.2.1: Monitoring platforms for breaking events

Sub-Part 2.2.2: Crowdsourcing and citizen journalism

Part 2.3: Reportage in Online Journalism

Sub-Part 2.3.1: Instant publication and live reporting

Sub-Part 2.3.2: Audience interaction and feedback

Part 2.4: Ethical and Professional Considerations in Digital Reportage

Sub-Part 2.4.1: Accuracy and verification in fast-paced reporting

Sub-Part 2.4.2: Balancing speed with credibility

Introduction

News gathering and reportage have always been central to journalism, but the digital age has transformed how these processes are carried out. With the rise of social media and online platforms, journalists now have access to real-time information, eyewitness accounts, and global conversations that shape the way stories are discovered and reported.

The aim of this Series is to equip you with the knowledge and skills to understand how news is gathered and reported in the digital age, with particular emphasis on the role of social media and the ethical challenges that accompany instant publication.



We shall commence this Series by defining news gathering and exploring the tools and techniques used in digital contexts. Next, we will examine how social media serves as a source of news, including the role of citizen journalism. Subsequently, we will analyse reportage in online journalism, focusing on instant publication and audience interaction. Finally, we will conclude by considering ethical and professional issues such as accuracy, verification, and the balance between speed and credibility.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

SLO 2.1 define news gathering and explain its scope in the digital age,

SLO 2.2 demonstrate how social media platforms can be used as sources of news,

SLO 2.3 analyse the transformation of reportage in online journalism,

SLO 2.4 evaluate ethical and professional considerations in digital reportage, particularly accuracy and credibility.

2.1 Understanding News Gathering in the Digital Age

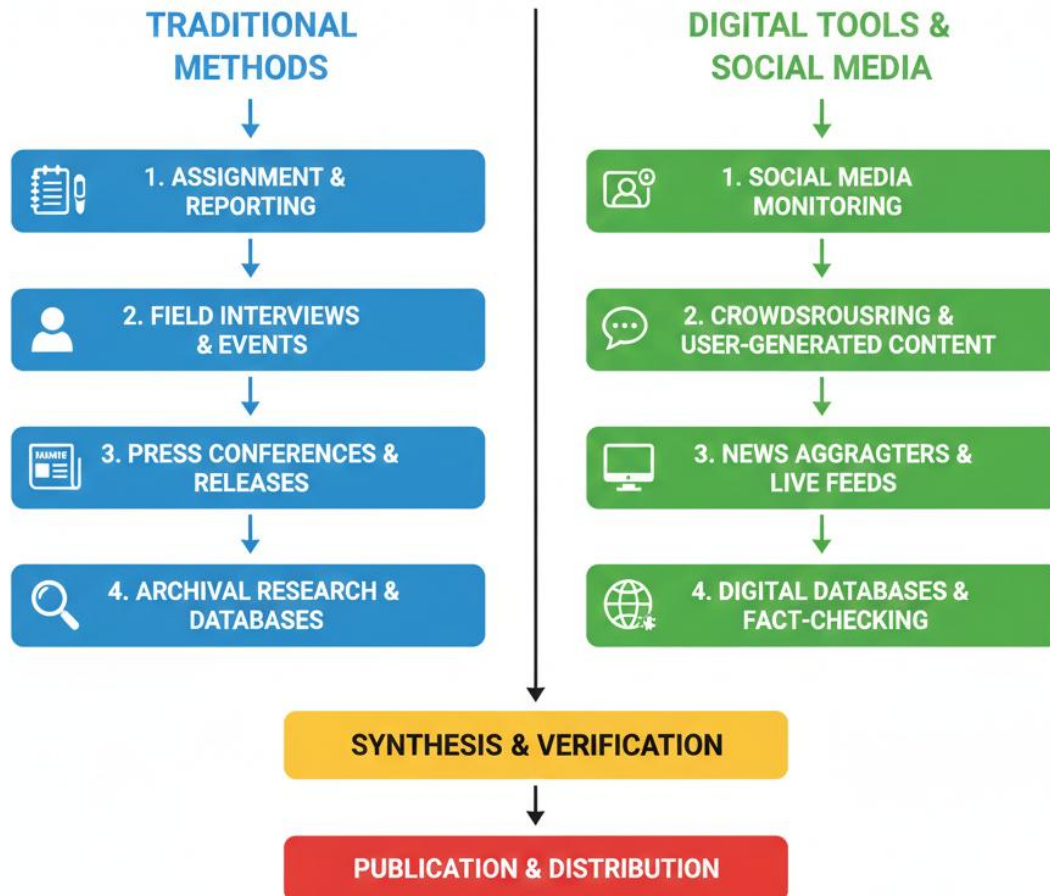
2.1.1 Definition and scope of news gathering

News gathering refers to the process of collecting information, facts, and perspectives that form the basis of a news story. In the digital age, this process has expanded beyond traditional methods such as interviews, press releases, and field reporting, to include online monitoring, data analysis, and social media tracking.

Digital tools allow journalists to access information instantly, monitor global events, and identify emerging stories. This immediacy has reshaped the scope of news gathering, making it more dynamic and responsive to real-time developments.



NEWS GATHERING METHODS: DIGITAL VS. TRADITIONAL



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Description: Flowchart showing traditional vs digital news gathering processes.
Figure 2.1 Traditional and digital news gathering compared

Fill in the blank: The process of collecting information for reporting is known as _____.

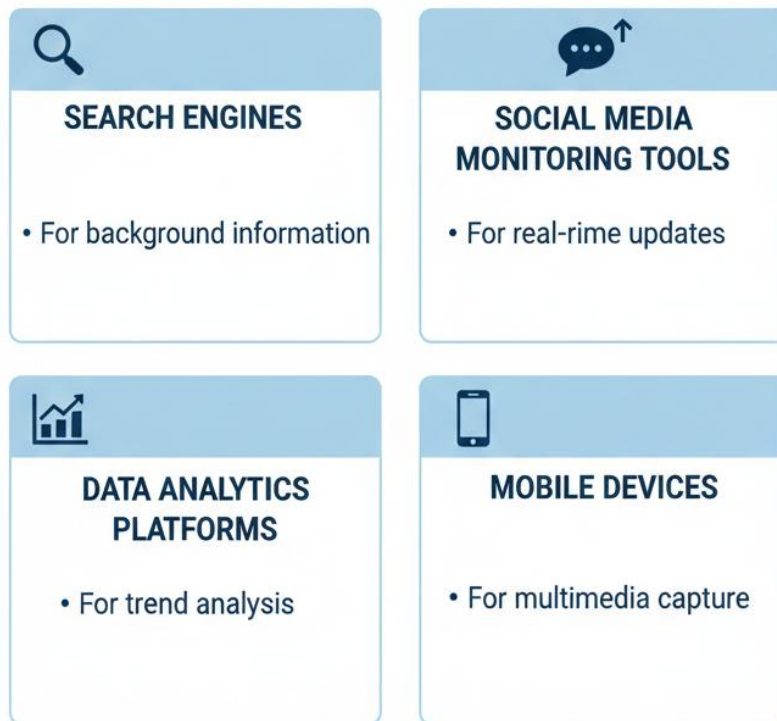
2.1.2 Tools and techniques for digital news gathering

Digital news gathering relies on a variety of **tools and techniques**. Journalists use search engines, social media monitoring tools, and data analytics platforms to track stories. They also rely on mobile devices for instant communication and multimedia capture.



Techniques such as keyword tracking, hashtag monitoring, and geolocation searches help journalists identify breaking events and eyewitness accounts. These methods enhance efficiency but require careful verification to ensure accuracy.

TOOLS USED IN DIGITAL NEWS GATHERING



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Box 2.1 Tools for digital news gathering

Fill in the blank: Journalists often use _____ monitoring to track breaking events on social media.



Pilot questions 2.1

Define news gathering in the context of journalism.

Explain how digital tools have expanded the scope of news gathering.

Fill in the blank: Journalists use _____ searches to identify eyewitness accounts.

List two tools commonly used in digital news gathering.

Describe one difference between traditional and digital news gathering.

2.2 Social Media as a Source of News

2.2.1 Monitoring platforms for breaking events

Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have become vital sources for monitoring **breaking events**. Journalists can follow hashtags, trending topics, and live streams to identify stories as they unfold. This immediacy allows them to report faster than traditional methods.

However, reliance on social media requires caution. Not all information is accurate, and journalists must verify sources before publication. Monitoring platforms is therefore both an opportunity and a responsibility.





Description: Diagram showing how hashtags and trending topics highlight breaking events.
Figure 2.2 Monitoring breaking events through hashtags

Fill in the blank: Journalists use _____ to follow conversations about breaking events on Twitter.

2.2.2 Crowdsourcing and citizen journalism

Crowdsourcing refers to gathering information from a large group of people, often through social media. Journalists use crowdsourcing to collect eyewitness accounts, photos, and videos. This practice enhances coverage by incorporating diverse perspectives.



Citizen journalism occurs when ordinary individuals report news using digital tools. While it provides valuable insights, it also raises questions of credibility and professionalism. Journalists must balance the benefits of citizen contributions with the need for verification.

CROWDSOURCING & CITIZEN JOURNALISM

FUELING NEWS WITH COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS



Box 2.2 Crowdsourcing and citizen journalism in practice

Fill in the blank: The practice of ordinary individuals reporting news using digital tools is called _____ journalism.

Pilot questions 2.2



Explain how journalists use social media to monitor breaking events.

Fill in the blank: Journalists follow _____ to track trending topics on Twitter.

Define crowdsourcing in the context of journalism.

Describe one benefit and one challenge of citizen journalism.

Explain why verification is important when using social media as a source of news.

2.3 Reportage in Online Journalism

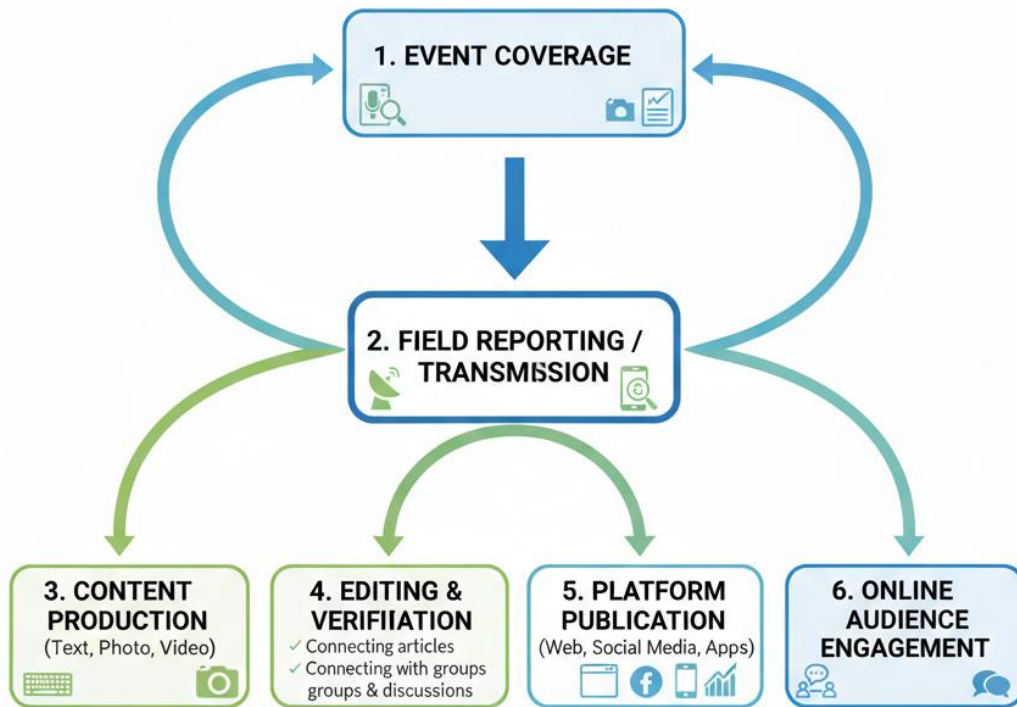
2.3.1 Instant publication and live reporting

Reportage refers to the act of reporting and presenting news stories. In online journalism, reportage has been transformed by the ability to publish instantly. Journalists can now share updates in real time through live blogs, tweets, and streaming services. This immediacy ensures that audiences are informed as events unfold, rather than waiting for the next day's newspaper or scheduled broadcast.

Live reporting also allows journalists to provide continuous coverage of events such as elections, protests, or sports matches. However, the speed of publication requires careful attention to accuracy, as errors can spread rapidly.



LIVE REPORTING PROCESS: FROM EVENT TO AUDIENCE



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Description: Diagram showing the process of live reporting from event to audience.
Figure 2.3 Instant publication and live reporting process

Fill in the blank: The act of reporting and presenting news stories is called _____.

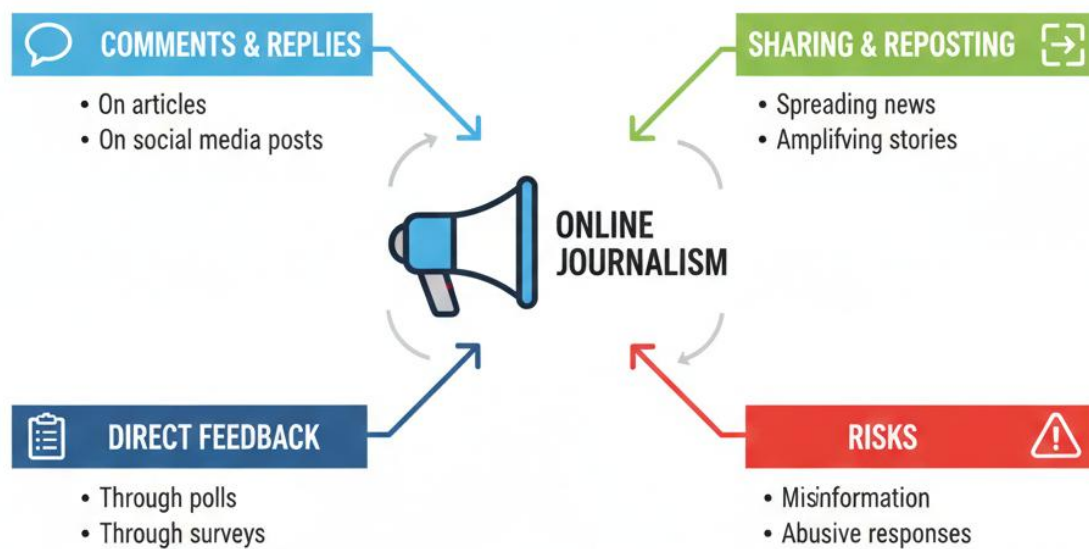
2.3.2 Audience interaction and feedback

One of the defining features of online reportage is **audience interaction**. Unlike traditional media, where communication is one-way, online journalism allows readers to comment, share, and respond instantly. This feedback loop helps journalists gauge public opinion, clarify misunderstandings, and even identify new angles for stories.



Audience interaction strengthens engagement but also introduces challenges, such as dealing with misinformation in comments or moderating abusive responses. Journalists must therefore balance openness with responsibility.

AUDIENCE INTERACTION IN ONLINE JOURNALISM



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Box 2.3 Audience interaction in online journalism

Fill in the blank: Online journalism differs from traditional media because it allows _____ interaction with audiences.



Pilot questions 2.3

Define reportage in the context of journalism.

Explain how instant publication has changed the way news is reported.

Fill in the blank: Online journalism allows _____ feedback from audiences.

Identify one benefit and one challenge of live reporting.

Describe how audience interaction influences online journalism.

2.4 Ethical and Professional Considerations in Digital Reportage

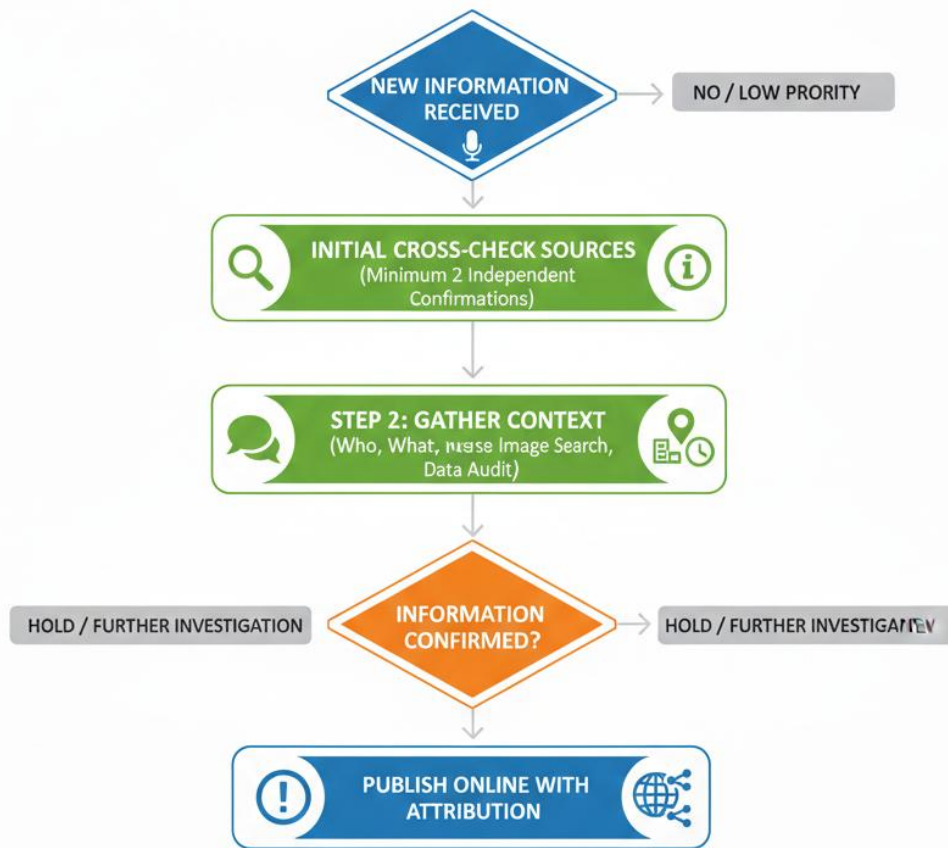
2.4.1 Accuracy and verification in fast-paced reporting

In the digital age, the demand for speed often conflicts with the need for **accuracy**. Accuracy refers to the correctness of information, while **verification** is the process of confirming facts before publication. Journalists must resist the temptation to publish unverified information, even when competing for immediacy.

Verification techniques include cross-checking sources, consulting official statements, and using fact-checking tools. These practices ensure that credibility is maintained, even in fast-paced reporting environments.



JOURNALISM VERIFICATION STEPS FOR ONLINE PUBLICATION



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Description: Flowchart showing verification steps before publishing online.
Figure 2.4 Verification process in digital reportage

Fill in the blank: The process of confirming facts before publication is called _____.

2.4.2 Balancing speed with credibility

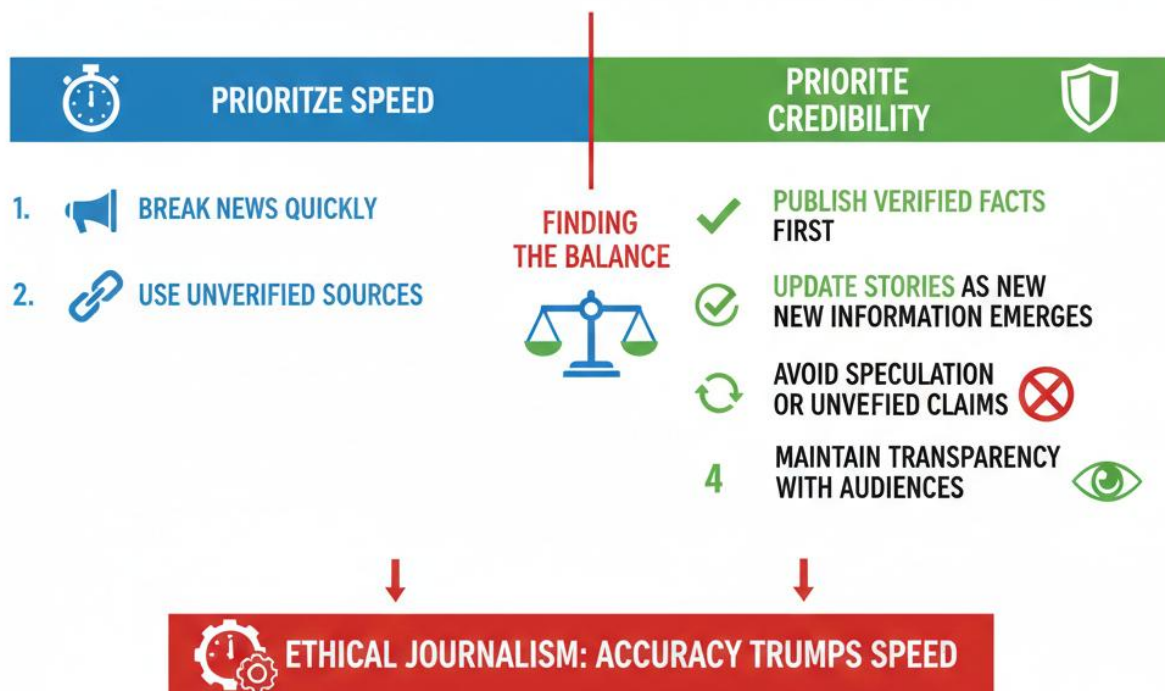
Journalists face the challenge of balancing **speed** with **credibility**. While audiences expect instant updates, credibility is built on trust and reliability. Publishing too quickly without proper checks can damage a journalist's reputation and the integrity of the news organisation.



The key is to prioritise credibility while still delivering timely updates. This may involve publishing verified facts first, then updating stories as more information becomes available.

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

SPEED VS. CREDIBILITY IN JOURNALISM



CC BY

Box 2.4 Balancing speed and credibility in online journalism

Fill in the blank: Journalists must balance the demand for speed with the need for _____ in reporting.

Pilot questions 2.4

Explain why accuracy is important in digital reportage.



Fill in the blank: The process of confirming facts before publication is called _____.

Describe one technique journalists use to verify information.

Explain the tension between speed and credibility in online journalism.

Identify one strategy journalists can use to balance speed with credibility.

Series Summary

This Series has explored how news gathering and reportage have been reshaped in the digital age. We began by defining news gathering and examining the tools and techniques that journalists now use, such as search engines, social media monitoring, and mobile devices. We then considered how social media serves as a source of news, focusing on monitoring platforms for breaking events and the role of crowdsourcing and citizen journalism. Following that, we analysed reportage in online journalism, highlighting instant publication, live reporting, and the importance of audience interaction. Finally, we addressed ethical and professional considerations, particularly the need for accuracy, verification, and balancing speed with credibility.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to define news gathering in the digital age, demonstrate how social media can be used as a source of news, analyse the transformation of reportage in online journalism, and evaluate ethical and professional considerations. These abilities directly align with the Series Learning Outcomes, ensuring you are prepared to apply these concepts in your practice of online journalism.

Glossary of Terms

Accuracy: The correctness of information presented in journalism, ensuring facts are reported truthfully.

Audience interaction: The process by which readers or viewers engage with journalists through comments, shares, and feedback in online platforms.

Citizen journalism: News reporting carried out by ordinary individuals using digital tools, often shared through social media.

Credibility: The trustworthiness and reliability of information or a journalist.

Crowdsourcing: Collecting information, perspectives, or content from a large group of people, often through social media platforms.

Live reporting: Continuous coverage of events as they unfold, often delivered through online platforms.

News gathering: The process of collecting information, facts, and perspectives to form the basis of a news story.

Reportage: The act of reporting and presenting news stories to an audience.



Verification: The process of confirming facts and sources before publication to ensure accuracy and credibility.

Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

Objective Questions

Define news gathering in the digital age. (Linked to SLO 2.1)

Identify one tool commonly used in digital news gathering. (Linked to SLO 2.1)

Fill in the blank: Journalists use _____ to follow conversations about breaking events on Twitter. (Linked to SLO 2.2)

State one benefit of citizen journalism. (Linked to SLO 2.2)

Fill in the blank: The process of confirming facts before publication is called _____. (Linked to SLO 2.4)

Short-Answer Questions

6. Explain how social media monitoring helps journalists track breaking events. (Linked to SLO 2.2)

7. Describe one way audience interaction influences online reportage. (Linked to SLO 2.3)

8. Identify one strategy journalists can use to balance speed with credibility. (Linked to SLO 2.4)

Long-Answer Questions

9. Analyse the transformation of reportage in online journalism, focusing on instant publication and audience interaction. (Linked to SLO 2.3)

Basic response: Learners should explain how instant publication and live reporting have changed journalism, and how audience interaction provides feedback and engagement.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may extend the analysis by discussing examples of live coverage (e.g., elections or protests), evaluating both benefits and risks, and suggesting ways to manage audience interaction responsibly.

Evaluate the ethical and professional considerations in digital reportage, particularly accuracy, verification, and credibility. (Linked to SLO 2.4)

Basic response: Learners should outline the importance of accuracy and verification, and explain the tension between speed and credibility.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may provide examples of misinformation spreading online, discuss ethical implications, and propose solutions such as fact-checking tools, transparency, and responsible reporting practices.

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 2]

News gathering in the digital age is the process of collecting information using digital tools such as search engines, social media monitoring, and mobile devices.

Social media monitoring tools.



Hashtags.

Citizen journalism provides eyewitness accounts and diverse perspectives.

Verification.

Social media monitoring helps journalists track hashtags, trending topics, and live streams to identify breaking events.

Audience interaction influences reportage by providing feedback, clarifying issues, and shaping new angles for stories.

One strategy is to publish verified facts first and update stories as new information emerges.

Basic response: Instant publication and live reporting allow continuous coverage, while audience interaction provides feedback and engagement.

Value-added response: Examples such as election coverage show both benefits and risks, with journalists needing to manage misinformation and abusive comments responsibly.

Basic response: Accuracy and verification are essential, and journalists must balance speed with credibility.

Value-added response: Misinformation can spread quickly online, so journalists should use fact-checking tools, maintain transparency, and prioritise credibility over speed.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 2]

Part 2.1

News gathering is the process of collecting information for reporting.

Digital tools allow instant access to information and global monitoring.

Geolocation searches.

Search engines and social media monitoring tools.

Traditional news gathering is slower and less interactive, while digital methods are immediate and networked.

Part 2.2

Journalists use hashtags, trending topics, and live streams to monitor breaking events.

Hashtags.

Crowdsourcing is gathering information from a large group of people, often through social media.

Benefit: diverse perspectives. Challenge: credibility concerns.

Verification ensures accuracy before publication.

Part 2.3



Reportage is the act of reporting and presenting news stories.

Instant publication allows real-time updates.

Instant.

Benefit: continuous coverage. Challenge: risk of errors.

Audience interaction provides feedback and shapes story angles.

Part 2.4

Accuracy ensures information is correct and trustworthy.

Verification.

Cross-checking sources or consulting official statements.

Speed pressures journalists to publish quickly, risking credibility.

Publish verified facts first and update stories later.

References and Attributions [Series 2]

This section provides references and attributions for the instructional content, illustrations, and suggested open educational resources (OERs) used in **Series 2: News Gathering and Reportage in the Digital Age**. All entries are presented in APA 7th edition format.

Instructional Content References

Allan, S. (2017). *Citizen journalism: Global perspectives* (2nd ed.). Peter Lang.

Hermida, A. (2010). Twittering the news: The emergence of ambient journalism. *Journalism Practice*, 4(3), 297–308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512781003640703> ([doi.org in Bing](#))

Pavlik, J. V. (2013). Innovation and the future of journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 1(2), 181–193. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2012.756666> ([doi.org in Bing](#))

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C. T., Eddy, K., & Nielsen, R. K. (2023). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2023*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk> ([reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk in Bing](#))

Singer, J. B. (2021). *Journalism in a digital age*. Polity Press.

Illustration Placeholders and Attributions

Figure 2.1 Traditional and digital news gathering compared

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate flowchart comparing traditional news gathering methods with digital tools such as social media monitoring.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram digital vs traditional news gathering.”



Box 2.1 Tools for digital news gathering

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing tools used in digital news gathering.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic tools digital news gathering.”

Figure 2.2 Monitoring breaking events through hashtags

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing hashtags and trending topics used to monitor breaking events.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram hashtags breaking news journalism.”

Box 2.2 Crowdsourcing and citizen journalism in practice

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing crowdsourcing and citizen journalism contributions to news.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic crowdsourcing citizen journalism.”

Figure 2.3 Instant publication and live reporting process

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing live reporting process from event coverage to online audience.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram live reporting journalism.”

Box 2.3 Audience interaction in online journalism

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing audience interaction in online journalism.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic audience interaction journalism.”

Figure 2.4 Verification process in digital reportage

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate flowchart showing verification steps before publishing online.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER flowchart verification journalism.”

Box 2.4 Balancing speed and credibility in online journalism

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing balance between speed and credibility in journalism.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic speed vs credibility journalism.”

General Attribution Note

Where illustrations are AI-generated, attribution should include the specific AI tool used and the prompt provided. Where OERs are sourced, attribution should follow institutional guidelines for open educational resources, ensuring proper credit to the original creators.



Course code: MCM 302

Course title: Online Journalism

Course credit load: 2 Units

List of Series:

Series 1: New and Social Media in Online Journalism

Series 2: News Gathering and Reportage in the Digital Age

Series 3: Fake News, Misinformation, and Social Media

Series 4: Citizenship, Identity, and the Power of Connectivity

Series 5: Creating and Uploading Online Content

Suggested Outline

Part 3.1: Understanding Fake News and Misinformation

Sub-Part 3.1.1: Definition and scope of fake news

Sub-Part 3.1.2: Forms and techniques of misinformation

Part 3.2: Social Media as a Conduit for Fake News

Sub-Part 3.2.1: Viral spread and algorithms

Sub-Part 3.2.2: Case studies of misinformation online

Part 3.3: Impacts of Fake News on Journalism and Society

Sub-Part 3.3.1: Effects on public trust and credibility

Sub-Part 3.3.2: Influence on citizenship and democratic processes

Part 3.4: Combating Fake News and Promoting Media Literacy

Sub-Part 3.4.1: Verification and fact-checking strategies

Sub-Part 3.4.2: Role of journalists and audiences in media literacy

Introduction

Fake news and misinformation have become pressing challenges in the digital age, particularly with the rise of social media platforms. These platforms, while powerful tools for communication, can also be exploited to spread false or misleading information at unprecedented speed and scale. For journalists, the presence of fake news undermines credibility and complicates the task of reporting accurately.

The aim of this Series is to help you understand the nature of fake news and misinformation, examine how social media contributes to their spread, and analyse their impact on journalism



and society. It also seeks to equip you with strategies for combating misinformation and promoting media literacy.

We shall commence this Series by defining fake news and exploring the different forms of misinformation. Next, we will consider how social media acts as a conduit for fake news, including the role of algorithms and viral sharing. Subsequently, we will analyse the impacts of misinformation on journalism, public trust, and democratic processes. Finally, we will conclude by discussing strategies for combating fake news, focusing on verification, fact-checking, and the promotion of media literacy.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

SLO 3.1 define fake news and explain the scope of misinformation,

SLO 3.2 analyse how social media contributes to the spread of fake news,

SLO 3.3 evaluate the impacts of fake news on journalism, public trust, and democratic processes,

SLO 3.4 demonstrate strategies for combating fake news through verification and fact-checking,

SLO 3.5 explain the role of media literacy in empowering audiences and journalists.

3.1 Understanding Fake News and Misinformation

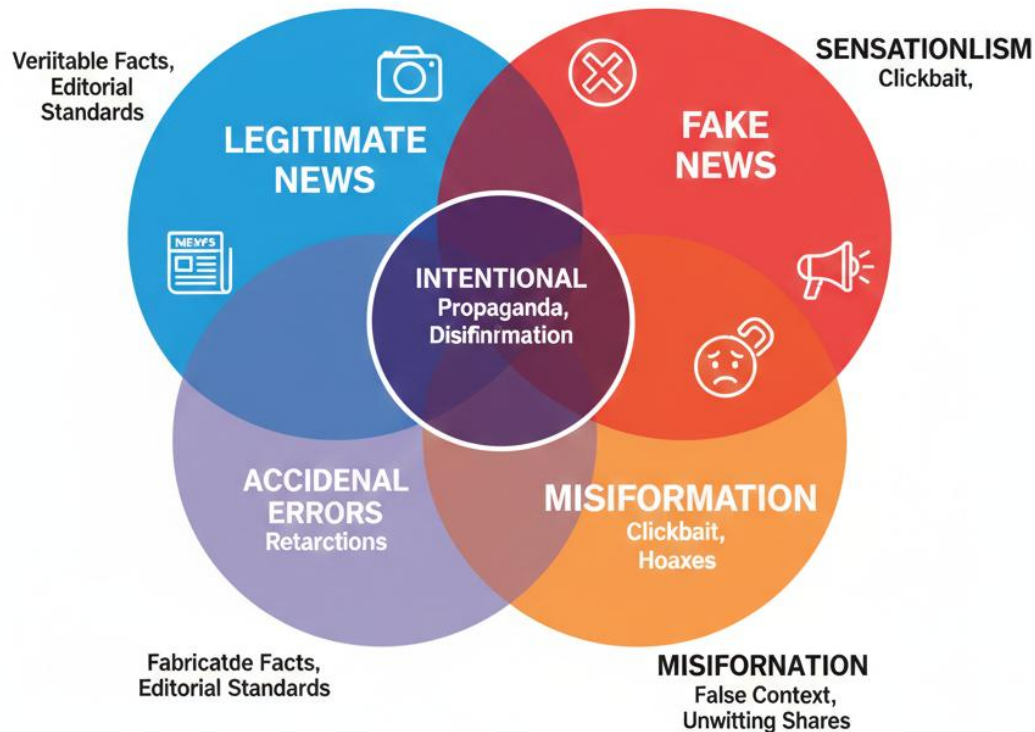
3.1.1 Definition and scope of fake news

Fake news refers to deliberately fabricated information presented as legitimate news, often with the intention of misleading audiences or influencing opinions. It mimics the style of genuine journalism but lacks accuracy and credibility.

Misinformation is false or inaccurate information that is spread regardless of intent. Unlike fake news, which is deliberately deceptive, misinformation may result from misunderstanding, poor verification, or careless reporting.



THE NEWS LANDSCAPE: FAKE NEWS, MISINFORMATION & LEGITIMATE NEWS



CC BY

Description: Diagram showing the distinction between fake news, misinformation, and legitimate news.

Figure 3.1 Distinction between fake news, misinformation, and legitimate news

Fill in the blank: Fake news is deliberately fabricated, while _____ may spread without intent to deceive.

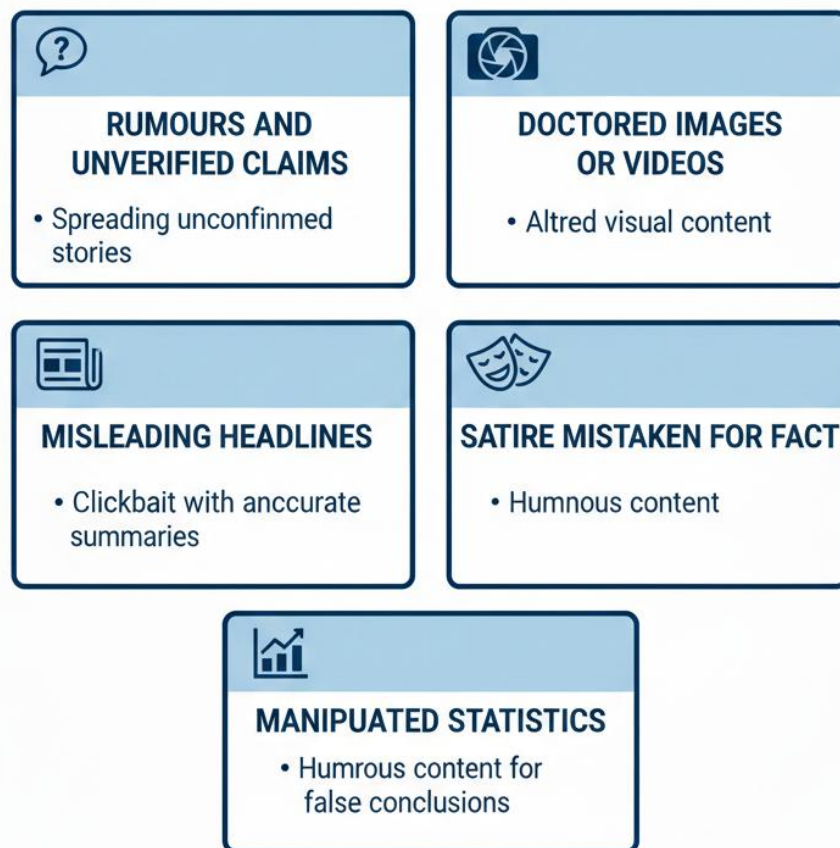


3.1.2 Forms and techniques of misinformation

Misinformation can take many forms, including rumours, doctored images, misleading headlines, and satire mistaken for fact. Techniques often used include selective reporting, emotional language, and manipulation of statistics.

These forms exploit cognitive biases, making audiences more likely to believe and share false information. Journalists must be aware of these techniques to identify and counter misinformation effectively.

COMMON FORMS OF MISINFORMATION



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Box 3.1 Common forms of misinformation



Fill in the blank: A misleading headline is an example of _____ used to spread misinformation.

Pilot questions 3.1

Define fake news and explain how it differs from misinformation.

Fill in the blank: Fake news is deliberately fabricated, while _____ may spread unintentionally.

Identify two common forms of misinformation.

Explain why misinformation is often persuasive to audiences.

Describe one technique used to spread misinformation.

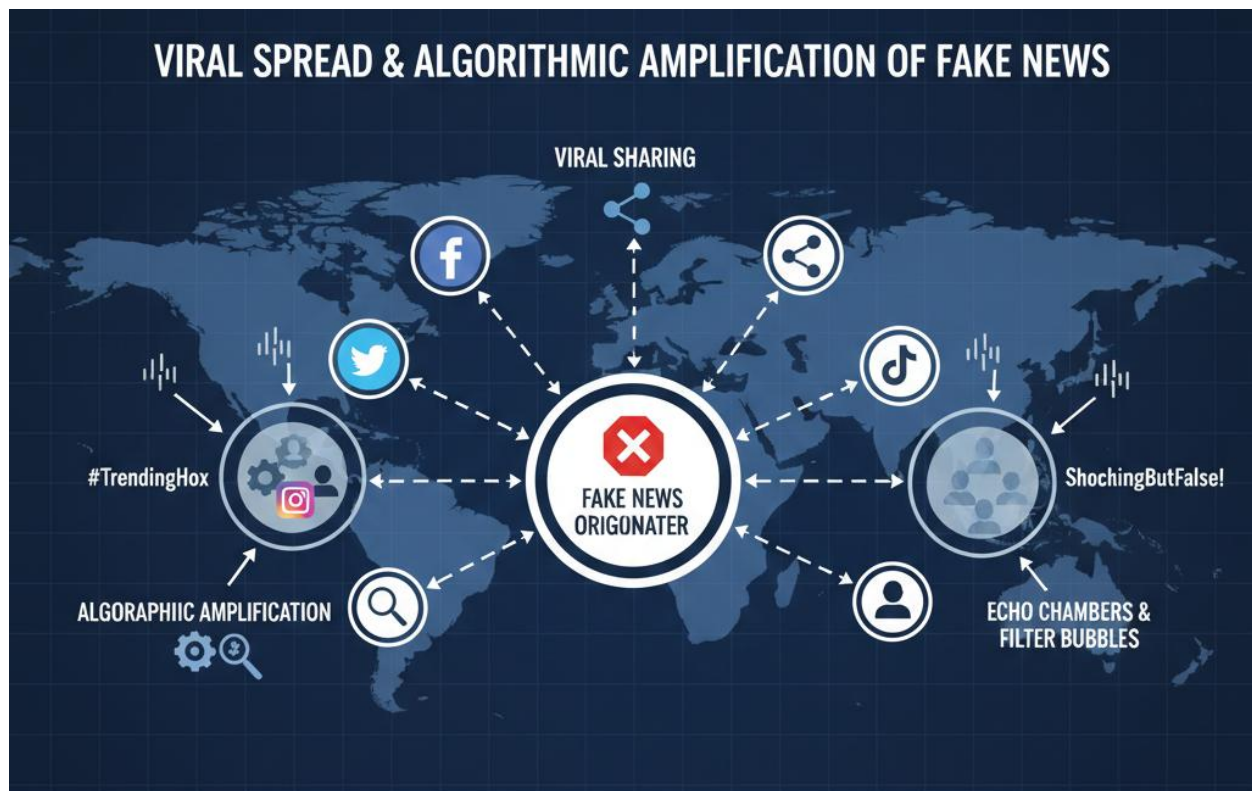
3.2 Social Media as a Conduit for Fake News

3.2.1 Viral spread and algorithms

Social media platforms amplify fake news through **viral spread** and **algorithms**. Viral spread occurs when users share content rapidly across networks, often driven by emotional reactions. Algorithms prioritise content that generates engagement, which can include sensational or misleading stories.

This combination makes social media a powerful conduit for fake news, as false information can reach millions within minutes.





Description: Diagram showing how algorithms and viral sharing amplify fake news.
Figure 3.2 Viral spread and algorithmic amplification of fake news

Fill in the blank: Social media algorithms prioritise content that generates _____, which can include misleading stories.

3.2.2 Case studies of misinformation online

Several case studies illustrate how misinformation spreads online. For example, during elections, false claims about candidates can circulate widely, influencing public opinion. Similarly, health



misinformation, such as false cures or vaccine myths, has spread rapidly on platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

These cases highlight the need for journalists to monitor, verify, and counter false information actively.

MISINFORMATION CASE STUDIES ONLINE

REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES & IMPACTS



ELECTION-RELATED MISINFORMATION

- Influencing voter perceptions
- Fabricated news stories



HEALTH MISINFORMATION

- Spreading false cures or vaccine myths
- Anti-science narratives



RUMOURS DURING CRISIES

- Natural disasters causing panic
- Fake emergency alerts

ONLINE DECEPTION = REAL-WORLD CONSEQUENCES



Box 3.2 Case studies of misinformation online

Fill in the blank: False cures and vaccine myths are examples of _____ misinformation.



Pilot questions 3.2

Explain how viral spread contributes to the amplification of fake news.

Fill in the blank: Social media algorithms prioritise content that generates _____.

Describe one case study of misinformation online.

Identify one risk posed by health misinformation on social media.

Explain why journalists must monitor and counter misinformation actively.

3.3 Impacts of Fake News on Journalism and Society

3.3.1 Effects on public trust and credibility

Fake news undermines **public trust** in journalism. When audiences encounter false or misleading stories, they may begin to doubt the reliability of all media sources, including legitimate ones. This erosion of trust damages the credibility of journalists and news organisations, making it harder to maintain authority in public discourse.





Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Description: Diagram showing the relationship between fake news, declining trust, and reduced credibility.

Figure 3.3 Impact of fake news on public trust and credibility

Fill in the blank: Fake news undermines _____ in journalism, making audiences doubt reliable sources.



3.3.2 Influence on citizenship and democratic processes

Fake news also affects **citizenship** and **democratic processes**. Misinformation can distort public opinion, influence voting behaviour, and polarise communities. During elections, false claims about candidates or policies can spread rapidly, shaping perceptions and decisions.

This influence threatens democracy by weakening informed participation and fostering division. Journalists play a crucial role in countering these effects by providing accurate, verified information.



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Box 3.3 Influence of fake news on democracy



Fill in the blank: False claims during elections can distort _____ behaviour and weaken democracy.

Pilot questions 3.3

Explain how fake news affects public trust in journalism.

Fill in the blank: Fake news undermines _____ in journalism.

Describe one way misinformation influences democratic processes.

Identify one risk posed by fake news during elections.

Explain why journalists are important in countering misinformation.

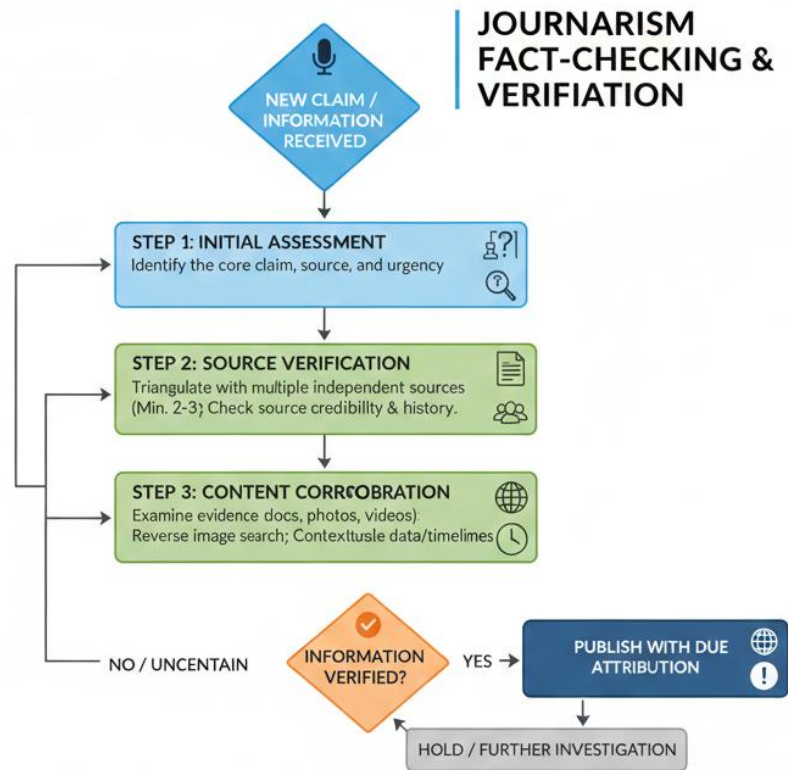
3.4 Combating Fake News and Promoting Media Literacy

3.4.1 Verification and fact-checking strategies

The most effective way to combat fake news is through **verification** and **fact-checking**. Verification involves confirming facts before publication, while fact-checking refers to systematically evaluating claims already circulating.

Journalists use techniques such as cross-referencing sources, consulting official documents, and employing digital tools to detect manipulated images or videos. These strategies help maintain credibility and protect audiences from misinformation.





Source: OER - Open Educational Resources



Description: Flowchart showing steps in verification and fact-checking.
Figure 3.4 Verification and fact-checking strategies

Fill in the blank: The process of systematically evaluating claims already circulating is called _____.

3.4.2 Role of journalists and audiences in media literacy

Media literacy refers to the ability to critically analyse and evaluate media content. Journalists promote media literacy by educating audiences about misinformation and encouraging sceptical consumption of news.



Audiences also play a role by questioning sources, checking facts, and avoiding the spread of unverified information. Together, journalists and audiences can build resilience against fake news.

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE PROMOTING MEDIA LITERACY: JOURNALISTS & AUDIENCES



CC BY

Box 3.4 Role of journalists and audiences in media literacy

Fill in the blank: The ability to critically analyse and evaluate media content is called _____ literacy.



Pilot questions 3.4

Explain the difference between verification and fact-checking.

Fill in the blank: The process of systematically evaluating claims is called _____.

Describe one technique journalists use to verify information.

Explain the role of audiences in promoting media literacy.

Identify one way journalists can educate audiences about misinformation.

Series Summary

This Series has examined the challenges posed by fake news and misinformation in the digital age, with a particular focus on their relationship with social media. We began by defining fake news and distinguishing it from misinformation, before exploring the different forms and techniques used to mislead audiences. We then analysed how social media acts as a conduit for fake news, highlighting the role of viral spread and algorithms, supported by case studies of misinformation online. Following this, we considered the impacts of fake news on journalism and society, especially its effects on public trust, credibility, and democratic processes. Finally, we discussed strategies for combating fake news, including verification, fact-checking, and the promotion of media literacy by both journalists and audiences.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to define fake news and misinformation, analyse how social media contributes to their spread, evaluate their impacts on journalism and democracy, and demonstrate strategies for combating them. These abilities directly align with the Series Learning Outcomes, ensuring that you are equipped to critically engage with misinformation and strengthen responsible journalism practices.

Glossary of Terms

Algorithms: Automated systems used by social media platforms to prioritise and recommend content based on engagement.

Citizen journalism: News reporting carried out by ordinary individuals using digital tools, often shared through social media.

Credibility: The trustworthiness and reliability of information or a journalist.

Fake news: Deliberately fabricated information presented as legitimate news, intended to mislead or influence audiences.

Media literacy: The ability to critically analyse and evaluate media content to identify bias, misinformation, or manipulation.

Misinformation: False or inaccurate information that spreads regardless of intent, often due to misunderstanding or poor verification.

Public trust: Confidence audiences place in journalism and media organisations to provide accurate and reliable information.



Verification: The process of confirming facts and sources before publication to ensure accuracy and credibility.

Viral spread: The rapid sharing of content across social media networks, often driven by emotional reactions.

Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Objective Questions

Define fake news and explain how it differs from misinformation. (Linked to SLO 3.1)

Identify one common form of misinformation. (Linked to SLO 3.1)

Fill in the blank: Social media algorithms prioritise content that generates _____.
(Linked to SLO 3.2)

State one impact of fake news on public trust in journalism. (Linked to SLO 3.3)

Fill in the blank: The ability to critically analyse and evaluate media content is called _____ literacy. (Linked to SLO 3.5)

Short-Answer Questions

6. Explain how viral spread contributes to the amplification of fake news. (Linked to SLO 3.2)

7. Describe one way misinformation influences democratic processes. (Linked to SLO 3.3)

8. Identify one strategy journalists use to verify information before publication. (Linked to SLO 3.4)

Long-Answer Questions

9. Analyse the impacts of fake news on journalism and society, focusing on public trust and democratic processes. (Linked to SLO 3.3)

Basic response: Learners should explain how fake news undermines trust in journalism and influences voting behaviour or public opinion.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may extend the analysis by discussing case studies of election misinformation or health-related falsehoods, evaluating their broader societal consequences.

Evaluate strategies for combating fake news, including verification, fact-checking, and media literacy. (Linked to SLO 3.4 & 3.5)

Basic response: Learners should outline the importance of verification and fact-checking, and explain how media literacy empowers audiences.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may provide examples of fact-checking organisations, discuss the role of journalists in educating audiences, and propose innovative approaches to strengthen media literacy.

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 3]

Fake news is deliberately fabricated information intended to mislead, while misinformation may spread unintentionally.



Misleading headlines.

Engagement.

Fake news reduces public trust, making audiences doubt reliable sources.

Media literacy.

Viral spread allows content to be shared rapidly across networks, amplifying false information.

Misinformation can distort public opinion and influence voting behaviour.

Cross-referencing sources or consulting official documents.

Basic response: Fake news undermines trust in journalism and influences democratic processes.

Value-added response: Case studies show how election misinformation distorts voting behaviour and health misinformation spreads panic, weakening informed citizenship.

Basic response: Verification and fact-checking ensure accuracy, while media literacy empowers audiences to resist misinformation.

Value-added response: Fact-checking organisations and journalist-led education initiatives strengthen resilience, while innovative approaches such as digital literacy campaigns enhance public awareness.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 3]

Part 3.1

Fake news is deliberately fabricated, while misinformation may spread unintentionally.

Misinformation.

Rumours and doctored images.

Because it exploits cognitive biases and emotional reactions.

Misleading headlines.

Part 3.2

Viral spread allows rapid sharing of content across networks.

Engagement.

Election-related misinformation.

It can mislead people about health risks or cures.

To ensure accuracy and credibility in reporting.

Part 3.3

Fake news reduces public trust in journalism.



Credibility.

It can distort public opinion and influence voting behaviour.

False claims about candidates.

Journalists provide accurate, verified information.

Part 3.4

Verification confirms facts before publication, while fact-checking evaluates circulating claims.

Fact-checking.

Using digital tools to detect manipulated images or videos.

Audiences critically evaluate sources and avoid spreading unverified information.

By educating audiences about misinformation and promoting sceptical consumption of news.

References and Attributions [Series 3]

This section provides references and attributions for the instructional content, illustrations, and suggested open educational resources (OERs) used in **Series 3: Fake News, Misinformation, and Social Media**. All entries are presented in APA 7th edition format.

Instructional Content References

Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(2), 211–236. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211> ([doi.org in Bing](#))

Lazer, D. M. J., Baum, M. A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A. J., Greenhill, K. M., Menczer, F., ... & Zittrain, J. L. (2018). The science of fake news. *Science*, 359(6380), 1094–1096. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aao2998> ([doi.org in Bing](#))

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Tandoc, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2018). Defining “fake news”: A typology of scholarly definitions. *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 137–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143> ([doi.org in Bing](#))

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Robertson, C. T., Eddy, K., & Nielsen, R. K. (2023). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2023*. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk> ([reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk in Bing](#))



Illustration Placeholders and Attributions

Figure 3.1 Distinction between fake news, misinformation, and legitimate news

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing overlap and differences between fake news, misinformation, and legitimate news.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram fake news vs misinformation journalism.”

Box 3.1 Common forms of misinformation

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing common forms of misinformation.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic forms of misinformation journalism.”

Figure 3.2 Viral spread and algorithmic amplification of fake news

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing viral spread and algorithmic amplification of fake news on social media.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram viral spread algorithms fake news.”

Box 3.2 Case studies of misinformation online

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing examples of misinformation case studies online.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic case studies misinformation social media.”

Figure 3.3 Impact of fake news on public trust and credibility

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing how fake news reduces public trust and credibility in journalism.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram fake news public trust journalism.”

Box 3.3 Influence of fake news on democracy

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing influence of fake news on democratic processes.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic fake news democracy journalism.”

Figure 3.4 Verification and fact-checking strategies

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate flowchart showing verification and fact-checking steps in journalism.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER flowchart verification fact-checking journalism.”

Box 3.4 Role of journalists and audiences in media literacy

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing role of journalists and audiences in promoting media literacy.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic media literacy journalism.”

General Attribution Note

Where illustrations are AI-generated, attribution should include the specific AI tool used and the prompt provided. Where OERs are sourced, attribution should follow institutional guidelines for open educational resources, ensuring proper credit to the original creators.



Course code: MCM 302

Course title: Online Journalism

Course credit load: 2 Units

List of Series:

Series 1: New and Social Media in Online Journalism

Series 2: News Gathering and Reportage in the Digital Age

Series 3: Fake News, Misinformation, and Social Media

Series 4: Citizenship, Identity, and the Power of Connectivity

Series 5: Creating and Uploading Online Content

Suggested Outline

Part 4.1: Understanding Digital Citizenship

Sub-Part 4.1.1: Definition and scope of digital citizenship

Sub-Part 4.1.2: Rights and responsibilities in the digital space

Part 4.2: Identity in the Age of Connectivity

Sub-Part 4.2.1: Online identity and self-presentation

Sub-Part 4.2.2: Privacy, security, and ethical concerns

Part 4.3: The Power of Connectivity

Sub-Part 4.3.1: Social media and global communities

Sub-Part 4.3.2: Connectivity as a driver of social change

Part 4.4: Challenges and Opportunities of Digital Connectivity

Sub-Part 4.4.1: Risks of digital exclusion and inequality

Sub-Part 4.4.2: Opportunities for empowerment and civic engagement

Introduction

The digital age has transformed the way individuals interact, form identities, and participate in society. **Citizenship** now extends beyond physical communities into digital spaces, where rights, responsibilities, and ethical behaviour are essential. At the same time, **identity** is shaped by online self-presentation, privacy concerns, and the challenges of navigating interconnected platforms.

Connectivity, powered by digital technologies and social media, has created global communities and enabled social change. However, it also raises questions about inequality, exclusion, and the responsible use of digital tools.



The aim of this Series is to help you understand digital citizenship, explore identity in the age of connectivity, and analyse the power of connectivity in shaping communities and societies. It also seeks to equip you with the knowledge to critically evaluate both the challenges and opportunities of digital connectivity.

Series Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

SLO 4.1 define digital citizenship and explain its scope,

SLO 4.2 analyse how identity is shaped in the age of connectivity,

SLO 4.3 evaluate the power of connectivity in building communities and driving social change,

SLO 4.4 assess the challenges and opportunities of digital connectivity, including issues of exclusion, empowerment, and civic engagement.

4.1 Understanding Digital Citizenship

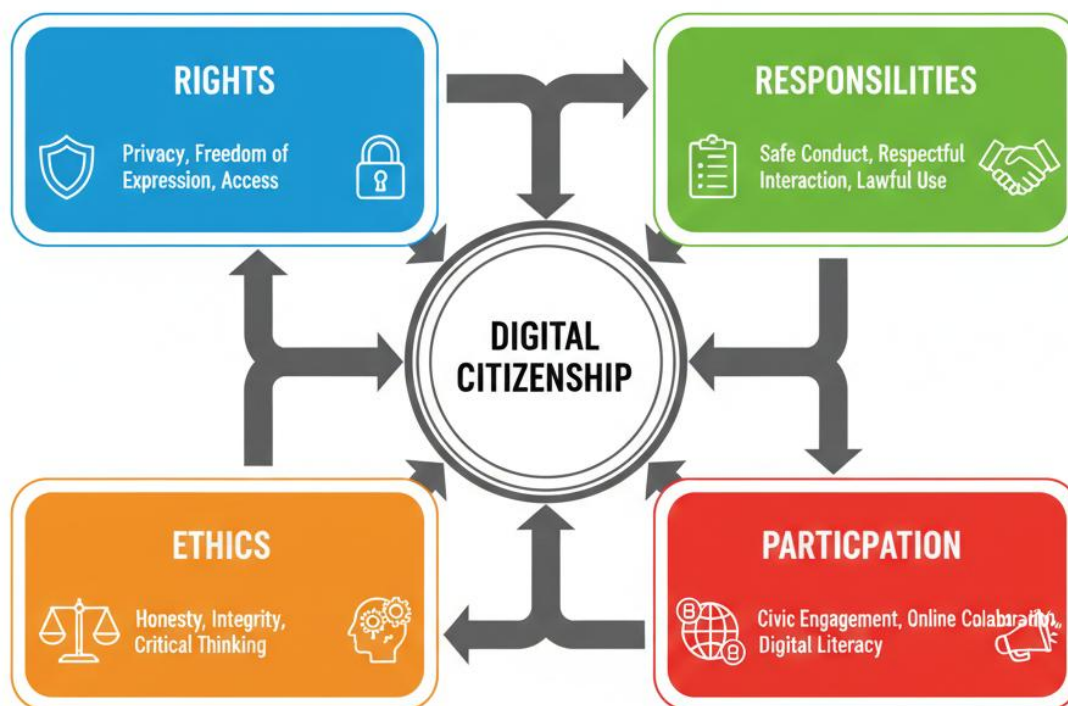
4.1.1 Definition and scope of digital citizenship

Digital citizenship refers to the responsible use of technology by individuals who engage in society through digital platforms. It encompasses participation in online communities, respect for digital rights, and adherence to ethical standards in communication.

The scope of digital citizenship includes access to information, freedom of expression, privacy, and the responsibility to avoid harmful behaviours such as cyberbullying or spreading misinformation.



DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP: COMPONENTS



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Description: Diagram showing components of digital citizenship (rights, responsibilities, ethics, participation).

Figure 4.1 Components of digital citizenship

Fill in the blank: Responsible use of technology in online communities is called _____ citizenship.

4.1.2 Rights and responsibilities in the digital space

Digital citizenship involves both **rights** and **responsibilities**. Rights include access to information, freedom of speech, and privacy. Responsibilities include respecting others online, protecting personal data, and avoiding harmful behaviours.



Balancing rights and responsibilities ensures that digital spaces remain safe, inclusive, and productive.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIGITAL CITIZENS



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Box 4.1 Rights and responsibilities of digital citizens

Fill in the blank: Freedom of expression and privacy are examples of digital _____.



Pilot questions 4.1

Define digital citizenship.

Fill in the blank: Responsible use of technology in online communities is called _____ citizenship.

Identify two rights of digital citizens.

Describe one responsibility of digital citizens.

Explain why balancing rights and responsibilities is important in digital spaces.

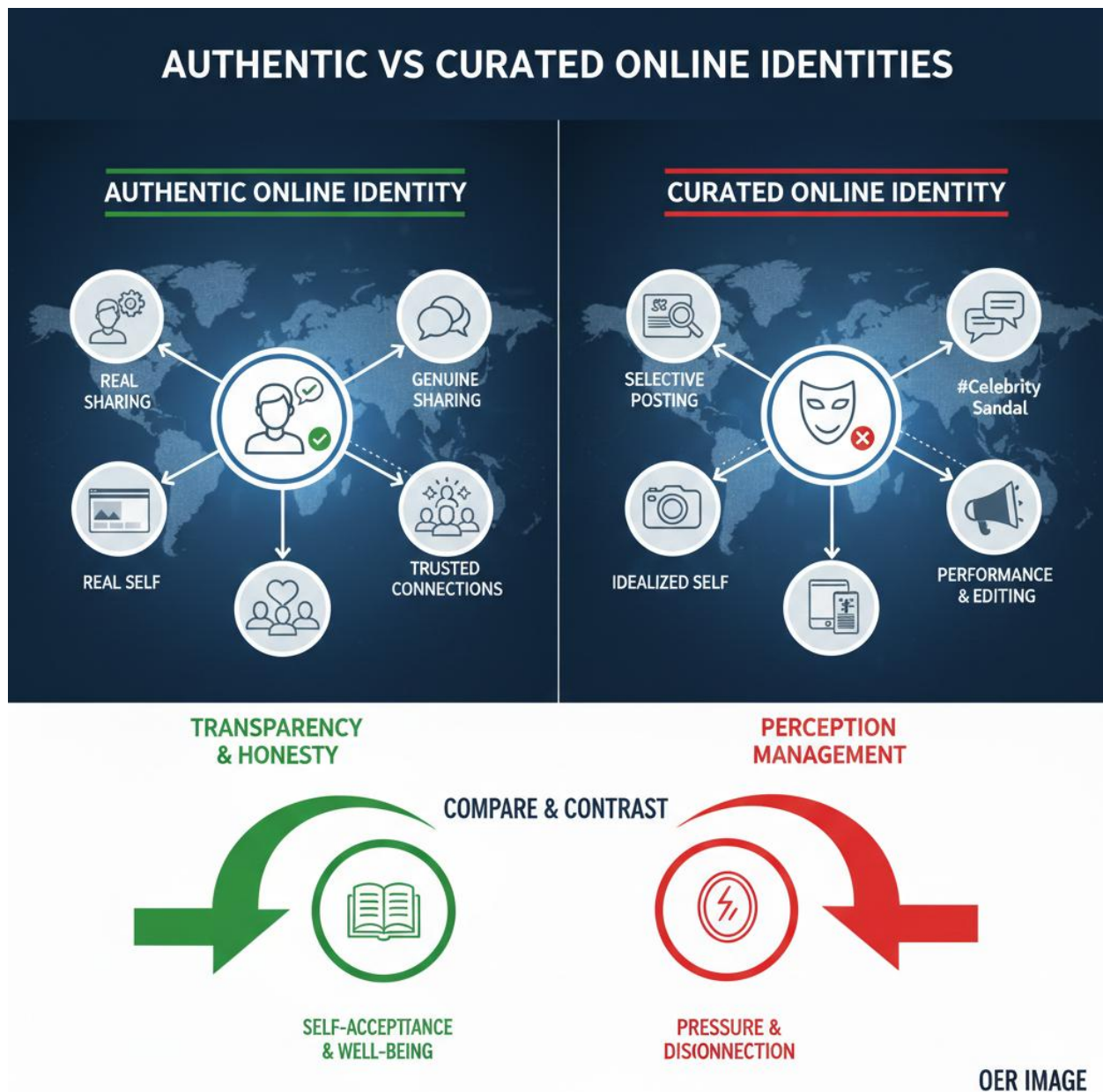
4.2 Identity in the Age of Connectivity

4.2.1 Online identity and self-presentation

Online identity refers to how individuals present themselves in digital spaces. This may include usernames, profiles, posts, and interactions. Self-presentation online can be authentic or curated, depending on how individuals wish to be perceived.

Connectivity allows individuals to construct multiple identities across platforms, but it also raises questions about authenticity and accountability.





Description: Diagram showing authentic vs curated online identities.
Figure 4.2 Online identity and self-presentation

Fill in the blank: The way individuals present themselves in digital spaces is called online _____.

4.2.2 Privacy, security, and ethical concerns

Digital identity is closely linked to **privacy** and **security**. Sharing personal information online can expose individuals to risks such as identity theft, cyberbullying, or surveillance. Ethical concerns also arise when individuals misrepresent themselves or misuse others' identities.



Journalists and citizens alike must be aware of these risks and adopt practices that protect privacy and promote ethical behaviour.

ONLINE: IDENTITY PRIVACY, SECURITY & ETHICS

NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL SELF RESPONSIBLY



RESPONSIBLE ONLINE BEHAVIOR = SAFER DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

OER

Box 4.2 Privacy and ethical concerns in online identity

Fill in the blank: Sharing personal information online can expose individuals to risks such as identity _____.



Pilot questions 4.2

Define online identity.

Fill in the blank: The way individuals present themselves in digital spaces is called online _____.

Identify one risk associated with sharing personal information online.

Describe one ethical concern related to online identity.

Explain why privacy and security are important in digital connectivity.

4.3 The Power of Connectivity

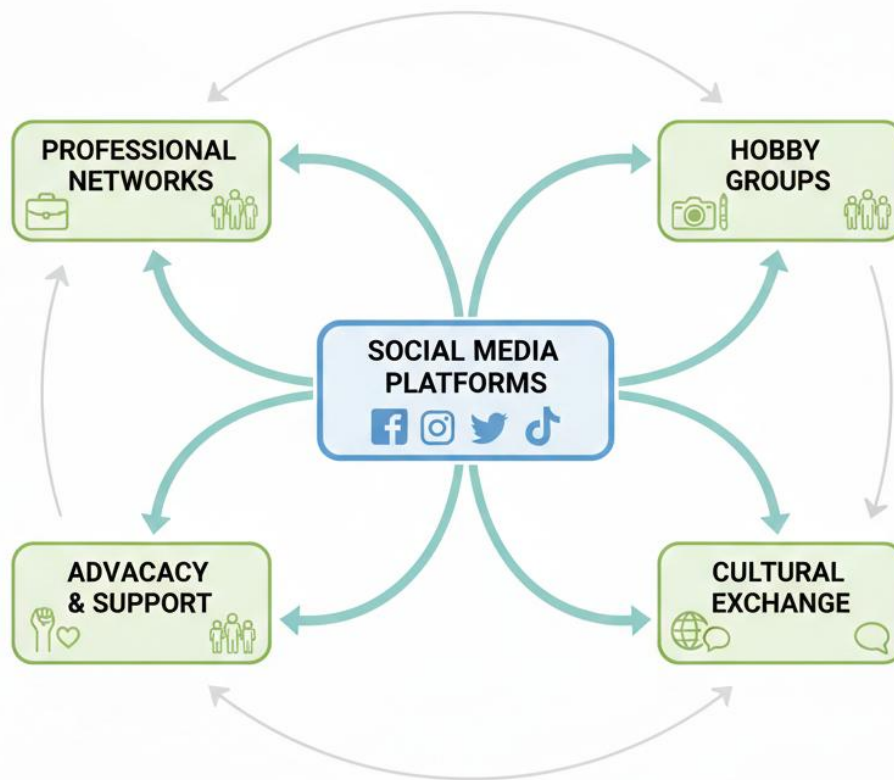
4.3.1 Social media and global communities

Connectivity through digital platforms enables the creation of **global communities**. Social media allows individuals from different cultures, countries, and backgrounds to interact, share ideas, and collaborate. These communities foster cultural exchange, solidarity, and collective action.

For journalists, connectivity expands audiences beyond local boundaries, enabling stories to reach global readerships instantly.



SOCIAL MEDIA & GLOBAL COMMUNITIES: CONNECTING THE WORLD



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Description: Diagram showing how social media connects individuals into global communities.
Figure 4.3 Social media and global communities

Fill in the blank: Connectivity through digital platforms enables the creation of _____ communities.

4.3.2 Connectivity as a driver of social change

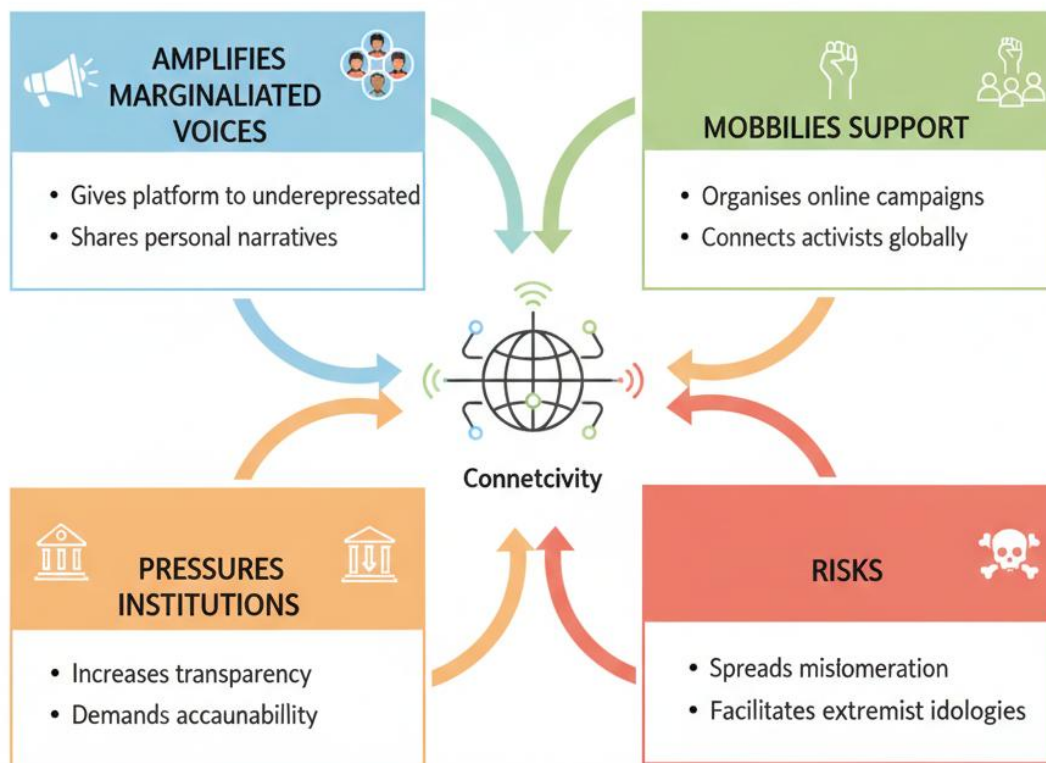
Connectivity has become a powerful driver of **social change**. Movements such as #MeToo, climate activism, and pro-democracy campaigns have gained momentum through online



platforms. Connectivity amplifies voices, mobilises support, and pressures institutions to respond.

However, the same connectivity can also be exploited for harmful purposes, such as spreading misinformation or extremist ideologies.

CONNECTIVITY AS A DRIVER OF SOCIAL CHANGE



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

: Box 4.3 Connectivity as a driver of social change

Fill in the blank: Online movements such as #MeToo show how connectivity drives _____ change.



Pilot questions 4.3

Explain how social media fosters global communities.

Fill in the blank: Connectivity enables the creation of _____ communities.

Describe one example of connectivity driving social change.

Identify one benefit and one risk of connectivity.

Explain how connectivity expands the reach of journalism.

4.4 Challenges and Opportunities of Digital Connectivity

4.4.1 Risks of digital exclusion and inequality

While connectivity offers opportunities, it also creates risks of **digital exclusion** and **inequality**. Not everyone has equal access to digital tools or reliable internet. This digital divide can marginalise communities, limiting their participation in online discourse and civic engagement.

Exclusion also raises concerns about fairness, as those without access may be left behind in education, employment, and political participation.



THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: CONNECTED VS. EXCLUDED COMMUNITIES



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Description: Diagram showing digital divide between connected and excluded communities.
Figure 4.4 Risks of digital exclusion and inequality

Fill in the blank: Unequal access to digital tools creates risks of digital _____.

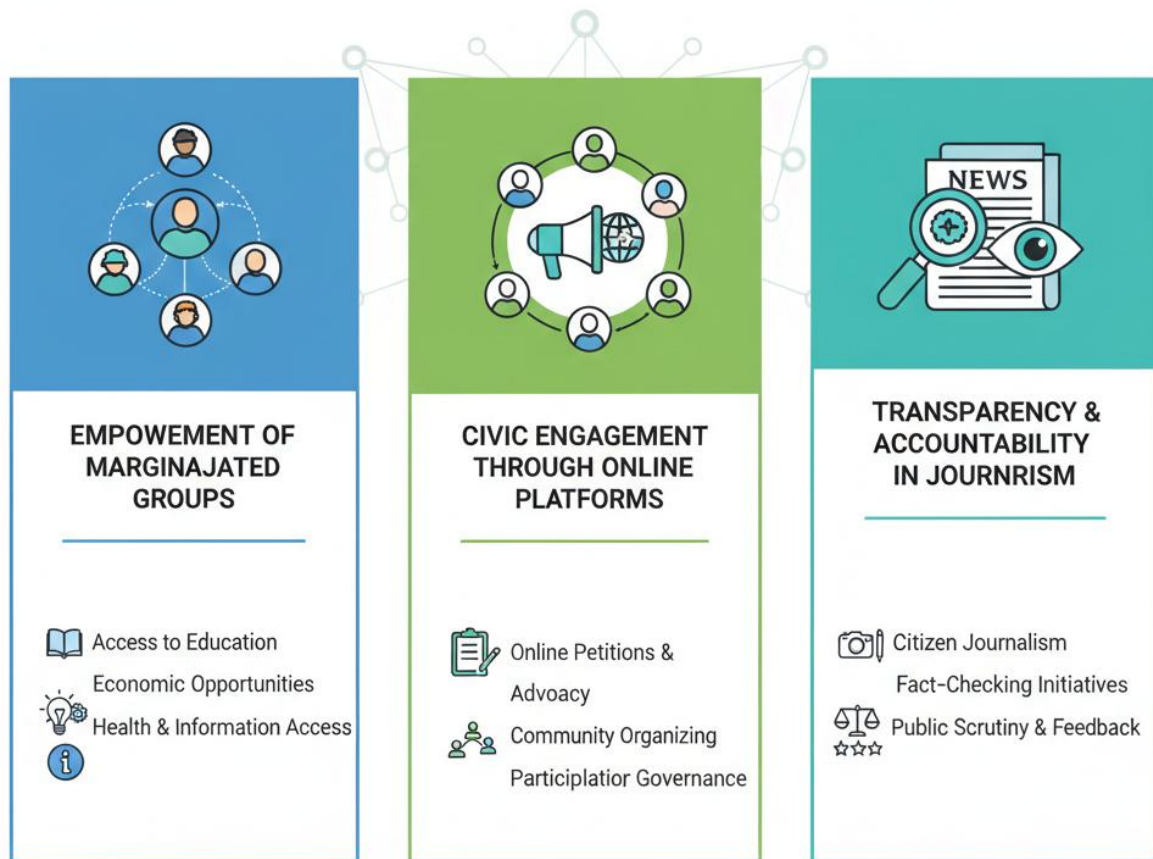
4.4.2 Opportunities for empowerment and civic engagement

Connectivity also provides opportunities for **empowerment** and **civic engagement**. Individuals can participate in online discussions, advocate for causes, and hold leaders accountable. Digital platforms empower marginalised groups by giving them visibility and amplifying their voices.



For journalism, connectivity enhances transparency and accountability, as audiences can interact directly with reporters and institutions.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY: EMPOWEMENT & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Box 4.4 Opportunities of digital connectivity

Fill in the blank: Connectivity empowers individuals to participate in _____ engagement online.



Pilot questions 4.4

Explain what digital exclusion means.

Fill in the blank: Unequal access to digital tools creates risks of digital _____.

Describe one consequence of digital inequality.

Identify one opportunity provided by digital connectivity.

Explain how connectivity enhances transparency in journalism.

Series Summary

This Series has explored how **citizenship, identity, and connectivity** are reshaped in the digital age. We began by defining digital citizenship and examining its scope, including rights and responsibilities in online spaces. We then analysed identity in the age of connectivity, focusing on online self-presentation, privacy, and ethical concerns. Following this, we considered the power of connectivity, highlighting how social media fosters global communities and drives social change. Finally, we addressed both the challenges and opportunities of digital connectivity, including risks of digital exclusion and inequality, as well as opportunities for empowerment and civic engagement.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to define digital citizenship, analyse how identity is shaped online, evaluate the power of connectivity in building communities and driving social change, and assess both the challenges and opportunities of digital connectivity. These abilities directly align with the Series Learning Outcomes, ensuring you are prepared to critically engage with digital society and its implications for journalism and civic life.

Glossary of Terms

Connectivity: The ability to link and interact with others through digital platforms and networks.

Civic engagement: Participation in activities that contribute to community and democratic processes, often facilitated by digital tools.

Digital citizenship: Responsible participation in online communities, encompassing rights, responsibilities, and ethical behaviour.

Digital divide: The gap between individuals or communities with access to digital technologies and those without.

Empowerment: The process of gaining confidence, visibility, and influence through digital platforms.

Global communities: Online networks that connect individuals across cultures and countries.

Online identity: The way individuals present themselves in digital spaces, through profiles, posts, and interactions.



Privacy: The right to control personal information and protect it from misuse in digital contexts.

Self-presentation: The act of shaping how one is perceived online, either authentically or in a curated manner.

Social change: Transformation in societal norms, values, or structures, often driven by collective action through connectivity.

Concept Check Questions [Series 4]

Objective Questions

Define digital citizenship. (Linked to SLO 4.1)

Identify one responsibility of digital citizens. (Linked to SLO 4.1)

Fill in the blank: The way individuals present themselves in digital spaces is called online _____. (Linked to SLO 4.2)

State one benefit of connectivity in building global communities. (Linked to SLO 4.3)

Fill in the blank: Unequal access to digital tools creates risks of digital _____. (Linked to SLO 4.4)

Short-Answer Questions

6. Explain why balancing rights and responsibilities is important in digital citizenship. (Linked to SLO 4.1)

7. Describe one ethical concern related to online identity. (Linked to SLO 4.2)

8. Identify one example of connectivity driving social change. (Linked to SLO 4.3)

9. Explain one consequence of digital exclusion. (Linked to SLO 4.4)

Long-Answer Questions

10. Analyse how identity is shaped in the age of connectivity, focusing on self-presentation, privacy, and ethical concerns. (Linked to SLO 4.2)

Basic response: Learners should explain how individuals present themselves online and why privacy and ethics matter.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may extend the analysis by discussing curated vs authentic identities, risks of misrepresentation, and strategies for protecting privacy.

Evaluate the challenges and opportunities of digital connectivity, including risks of exclusion and opportunities for empowerment. (Linked to SLO 4.4)

Basic response: Learners should outline the digital divide and explain how connectivity empowers civic engagement.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may provide examples of excluded communities, discuss inequality in access, and propose solutions such as digital literacy programs or infrastructure expansion.

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 4]



Digital citizenship is the responsible participation in online communities, encompassing rights, responsibilities, and ethical behaviour.

Respecting others online.

Identity.

It fosters cultural exchange and solidarity across borders.

Exclusion.

Balancing rights and responsibilities ensures digital spaces remain safe, inclusive, and productive.

Misrepresentation of identity.

The #MeToo movement.

Excluded communities may lack access to education, employment, or civic participation.

Basic response: Online identity involves self-presentation, privacy, and ethics.

Value-added response: Curated vs authentic identities affect perception; risks include misrepresentation and privacy breaches; strategies include cautious sharing and ethical behaviour.

Basic response: Digital exclusion creates inequality, while connectivity empowers civic engagement.

Value-added response: Examples include rural communities lacking access; solutions involve infrastructure expansion and digital literacy initiatives.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 4]

Part 4.1

Digital citizenship is responsible participation in online communities.

Digital.

Access to information and privacy.

Respecting others online.

It ensures safety and inclusivity in digital spaces.

Part 4.2

Online identity is how individuals present themselves in digital spaces.

Identity.

Identity theft.

Misrepresentation of self.

They protect individuals from risks and ensure ethical behaviour.



Part 4.3

Social media connects individuals into global communities.

Global.

The #MeToo movement.

Benefit: amplifies voices. Risk: spreads misinformation.

It allows stories to reach global audiences instantly.

Part 4.4

Digital exclusion means being left out due to lack of access to digital tools.

Exclusion.

Limited participation in education or civic life.

Empowerment of marginalised groups.

Audiences can interact directly with journalists, enhancing accountability.

References and Attributions [Series 4]

This section provides references and attributions for the instructional content, illustrations, and suggested open educational resources (OERs) used in **Series 4: Citizenship, Identity, and the Power of Connectivity**. All entries are presented in APA 7th edition format.

Instructional Content References

Stellmann, E., & Song, L. (2024). Essential elements of digital citizenship: Insights from the literature. *TechTrends*, 68(5), 749–760. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-024-00789-3> ([doi.org in Bing](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-024-00789-3))

Ribble, M. (2015). *Digital citizenship in schools: Nine elements all students should know* (3rd ed.). International Society for Technology in Education.

Charles Sturt University. (2021). *Digital citizenship guide*. Retrieved from <https://www.csu.edu.au>

Castells, M. (2012). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age*. Polity Press.

Jenkins, H., Ito, M., & Boyd, D. (2016). *Participatory culture in a networked era: A conversation on youth, learning, commerce, and politics*. Polity Press.

Illustration Placeholders and Attributions

Figure 4.1 Components of digital citizenship

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing rights, responsibilities, ethics, and



participation as components of digital citizenship.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram digital citizenship components.”

Box 4.1 Rights and responsibilities of digital citizens

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing rights and responsibilities of digital citizens.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic digital citizenship rights responsibilities.”

Figure 4.2 Online identity and self-presentation

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing authentic vs curated online identities.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram online identity self-presentation.”

Box 4.2 Privacy and ethical concerns in online identity

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing privacy, security, and ethical concerns in online identity.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic privacy security online identity.”

Figure 4.3 Social media and global communities

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing social media connecting individuals into global communities.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram social media global communities.”

Box 4.3 Connectivity as a driver of social change

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing connectivity as a driver of social change.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic connectivity social change.”

Figure 4.4 Risks of digital exclusion and inequality

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing digital divide between connected and excluded communities.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram digital divide exclusion inequality.”

Box 4.4 Opportunities of digital connectivity

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing opportunities of digital connectivity for empowerment and civic engagement.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic digital connectivity empowerment civic engagement.”

General Attribution Note

Where illustrations are AI-generated, attribution should include the specific AI tool used and the prompt provided. Where OERs are sourced, attribution should follow institutional guidelines for open educational resources, ensuring proper credit to the original creators.



Course code: MCM 302

Course title: Online Journalism

Course credit load: 2 Units

List of Series:

Series 1: New and Social Media in Online Journalism

Series 2: News Gathering and Reportage in the Digital Age

Series 3: Fake News, Misinformation, and Social Media

Series 4: Citizenship, Identity, and the Power of Connectivity

Series 5: Creating and Uploading Online Content

Suggested Outline of Parts and Sub-Parts

Part 5.1: Principles of Creating Online Content

Sub-Part 5.1.1: Understanding audience and purpose

Sub-Part 5.1.2: Elements of effective online content

Part 5.2: Tools and Techniques for Content Creation

Sub-Part 5.2.1: Writing and multimedia integration

Sub-Part 5.2.2: Editing and formatting for digital platforms

Part 5.3: Uploading and Publishing Online Content

Sub-Part 5.3.1: Platforms for content distribution

Sub-Part 5.3.2: Technical steps in uploading and publishing

Part 5.4: Ethical and Professional Considerations in Online Content Creation

Sub-Part 5.4.1: Copyright, plagiarism, and fair use

Sub-Part 5.4.2: Accuracy, transparency, and accountability

Introduction

The digital age has transformed how content is created, shared, and consumed. Online platforms provide opportunities for journalists, creators, and everyday citizens to publish content instantly to global audiences. However, effective online content requires more than just posting, it demands careful planning, audience awareness, and adherence to professional standards.

This Series explores the principles of creating online content, the tools and techniques available for content creation, and the processes involved in uploading and publishing across digital platforms. It also addresses ethical and professional considerations, including copyright, plagiarism, and the importance of accuracy and transparency.



By engaging with this Series, you will gain practical knowledge and skills to create, edit, and publish online content responsibly and effectively.

Series Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Upon completing this Series, you should be able to:

SLO 5.1 explain the principles of creating online content, including audience and purpose,

SLO 5.2 demonstrate tools and techniques for writing, multimedia integration, editing, and formatting,

SLO 5.3 describe the processes of uploading and publishing content across digital platforms,

SLO 5.4 evaluate ethical and professional considerations in online content creation, including copyright, plagiarism, accuracy, and transparency.

5.1 Principles of Creating Online Content

5.1.1 Understanding audience and purpose

Effective online content begins with a clear understanding of the **audience** and the **purpose** of communication. Journalists and creators must identify:

Who they are addressing,

What information the audience needs,

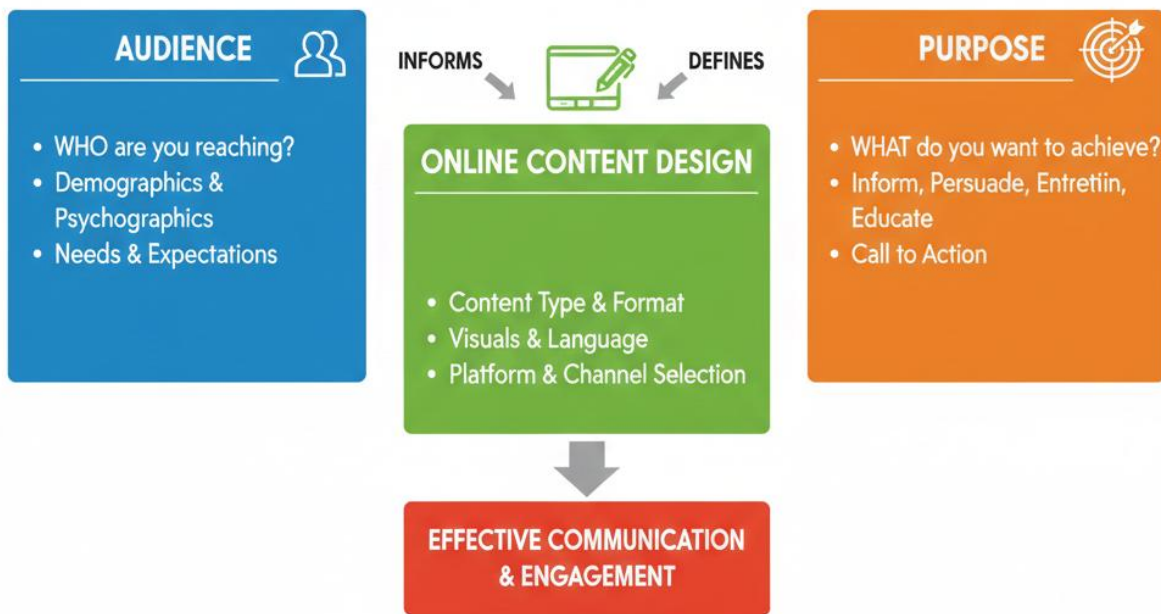
How best to deliver it.

Purpose may include informing, persuading, entertaining, or educating. Audience analysis ensures that tone, style, and format are appropriate.



ONLINE CONTENT DESIGN: AUDIENCE & PURPOSE

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE



CC BY

Description: Diagram showing relationship between audience, purpose, and content design.
Figure 5.1 Audience and purpose in online content creation

Fill in the blank: Effective online content begins with understanding the _____ and the purpose.

5.1.2 Elements of effective online content

Effective online content is characterised by clarity, relevance, engagement, and credibility. It should be concise, visually appealing, and adapted to the platform where it will be published.



Key elements include:

Clear headlines and structure

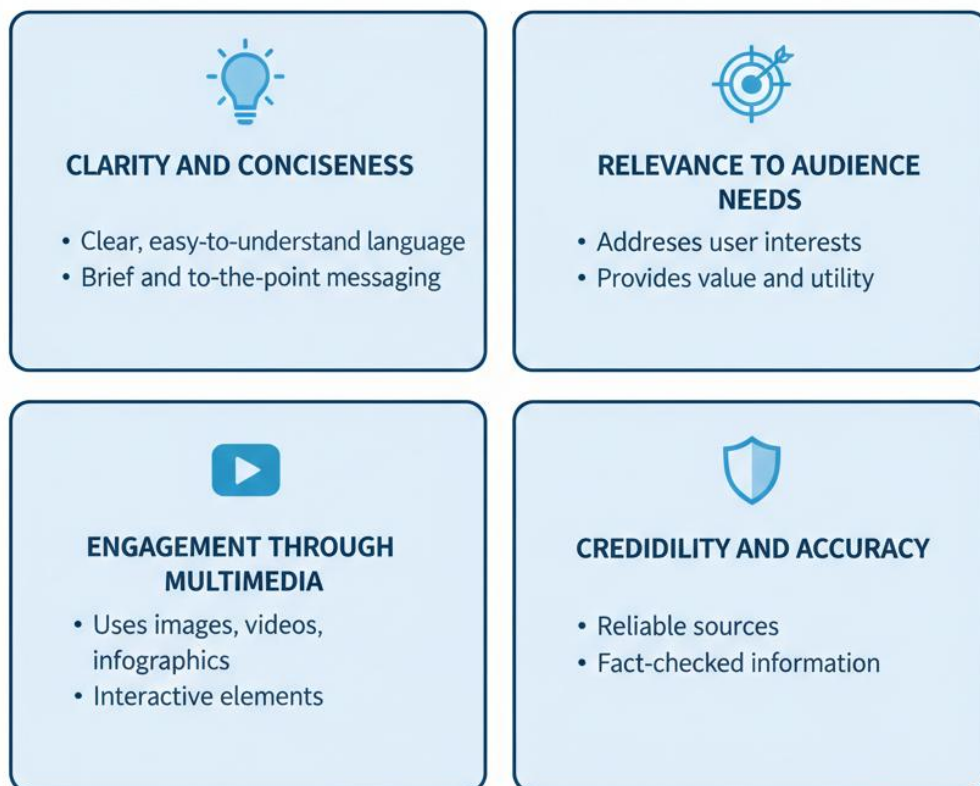
Use of multimedia (images, videos, infographics)

Hyperlinks for context and references

Interactive features such as polls or comments



ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE ONLINE CONTENT



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Box 5.1 Elements of effective online content



Fill in the blank: Clear headlines and multimedia are key elements of effective _____ content.

Pilot questions 5.1

Define the importance of audience in online content creation.

Fill in the blank: Effective online content begins with understanding the _____.

Identify two purposes of online content.

List two elements of effective online content.

Explain why credibility is important in online content.

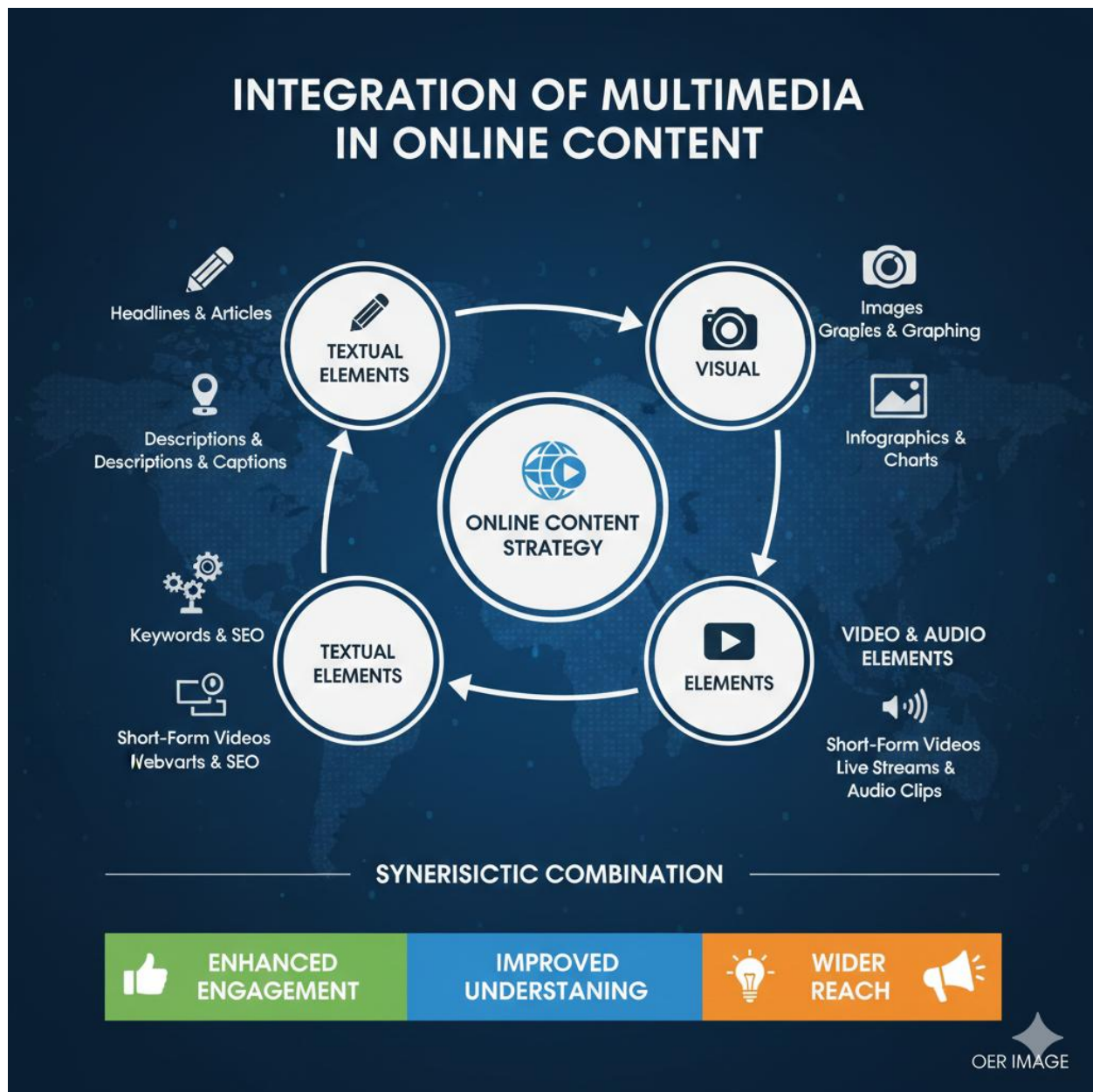
5.2 Tools and Techniques for Content Creation

5.2.1 Writing and multimedia integration

Online content often combines **writing** with **multimedia**. Writing must be concise and adapted to digital reading habits, while multimedia such as images, videos, and infographics enhance engagement and comprehension.

Integration of multimedia requires careful selection to ensure relevance and avoid distraction.





Description: Diagram showing integration of text, images, and video in online content.

Figure 5.2 Writing and multimedia integration

Fill in the blank: Online content often combines writing with _____ to enhance engagement.

5.2.2 Editing and formatting for digital platforms

Editing ensures accuracy, clarity, and professionalism. Formatting adapts content to the platform, whether it is a blog, social media post, or news website.



Digital formatting includes:

- Use of headings and subheadings
- Bullet points for readability
- Hyperlinks for references
- Responsive design for mobile devices

EFFECTIVE EDITING & FORMATING FOR DIGITAL PLATFORMS

OPTIMIZING ONLINE CONTENT FOR READERS

ACCURACY & CLARITY



- Fact-checking
- Proofreading
- Concise Language

READABILITY



CLEAR and concise communication

HYPERLINKS



- Headings (H1, H2, etc.)
- Internal Linking
- Short Paragraphs

RESPONSIVE DESIGN



- Mobile Optimization
- Internal Linking
- Fast Loading
- Accessible Layout

POLISHED CONTENT + USER EXPERIENCE = DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT



Box 5.2 Editing and formatting for digital platforms



Fill in the blank: Editing ensures accuracy, while _____ adapts content to digital platforms.

Pilot questions 5.2

Explain why multimedia integration is important in online content.

Fill in the blank: Online content often combines writing with _____.

Identify two formatting techniques for digital platforms.

Describe one benefit of editing online content.

Explain why responsive design is important in digital publishing.

5.3 Uploading and Publishing Online Content

5.3.1 Platforms for content distribution

Online content can be distributed through various platforms, including blogs, news websites, social media, and video-sharing sites. Each platform has unique features and audiences, requiring creators to adapt their content accordingly.

For example:

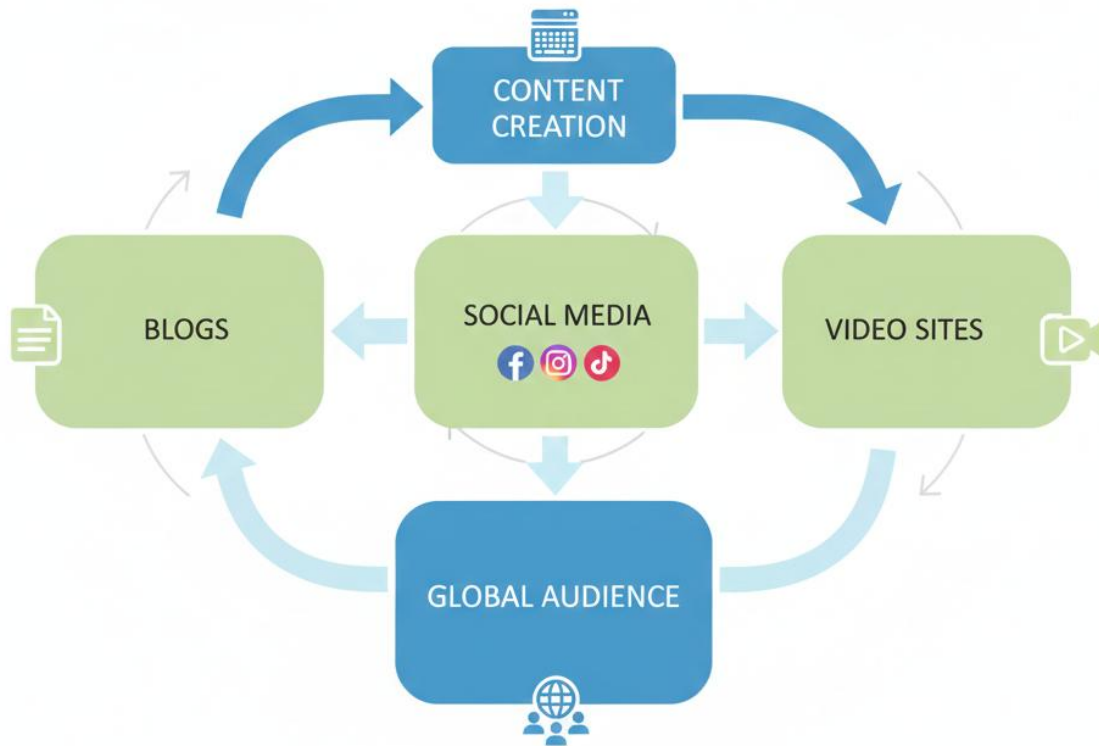
Blogs allow long-form articles with multimedia integration.

Social media platforms favour short, engaging posts.

Video-sharing sites focus on audiovisual storytelling.



ONLINE CONTENT DISTRIBUTION PLATFORMS



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Description: Diagram showing different platforms for content distribution (blogs, social media, video sites).

Figure 5.3 Platforms for content distribution

Fill in the blank: Blogs, social media, and video sites are examples of content _____ platforms.

5.3.2 Technical steps in uploading and publishing

Publishing online content involves several technical steps:





2



Fill in the blank: Adding titles, tags, and descriptions during publishing is called adding _____.

Pilot questions 5.3

Identify three platforms for online content distribution.

Fill in the blank: Blogs, social media, and video sites are examples of content _____ platforms.

List two technical steps in uploading content.

Explain why metadata is important in publishing.

Describe one benefit of previewing content before publishing.

5.4 Ethical and Professional Considerations in Online Content Creation

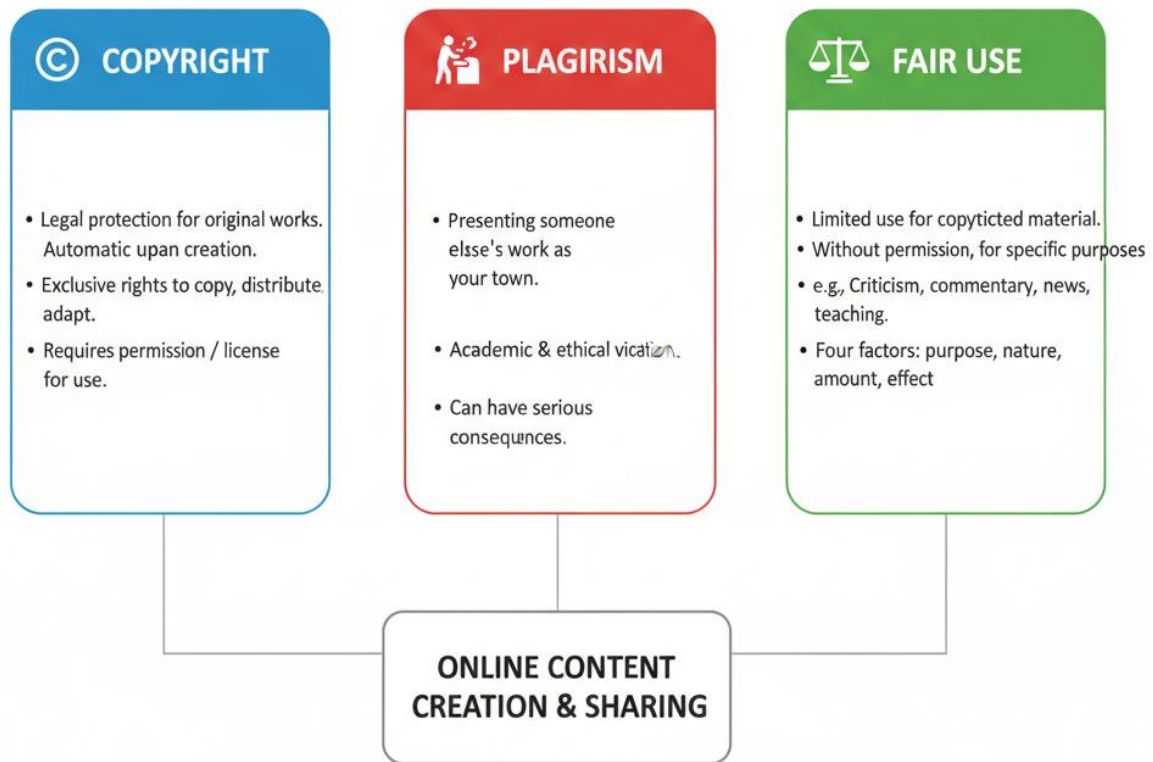
5.4.1 Copyright, plagiarism, and fair use

Creators must respect **copyright laws** and avoid **plagiarism**. Copyright protects original works, while plagiarism involves presenting someone else's work as your own. **Fair use** allows limited use of copyrighted material for purposes such as commentary, criticism, or education.

Journalists must ensure that all content is original or properly attributed to maintain credibility and avoid legal issues.



COPYRIGHT, PLAGIARISM & FAIR USE IN ONLINE CONTENT



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Description: Diagram showing copyright, plagiarism, and fair use.
Figure 5.4 Copyright, plagiarism, and fair use

Fill in the blank: Presenting someone else's work as your own is called _____.

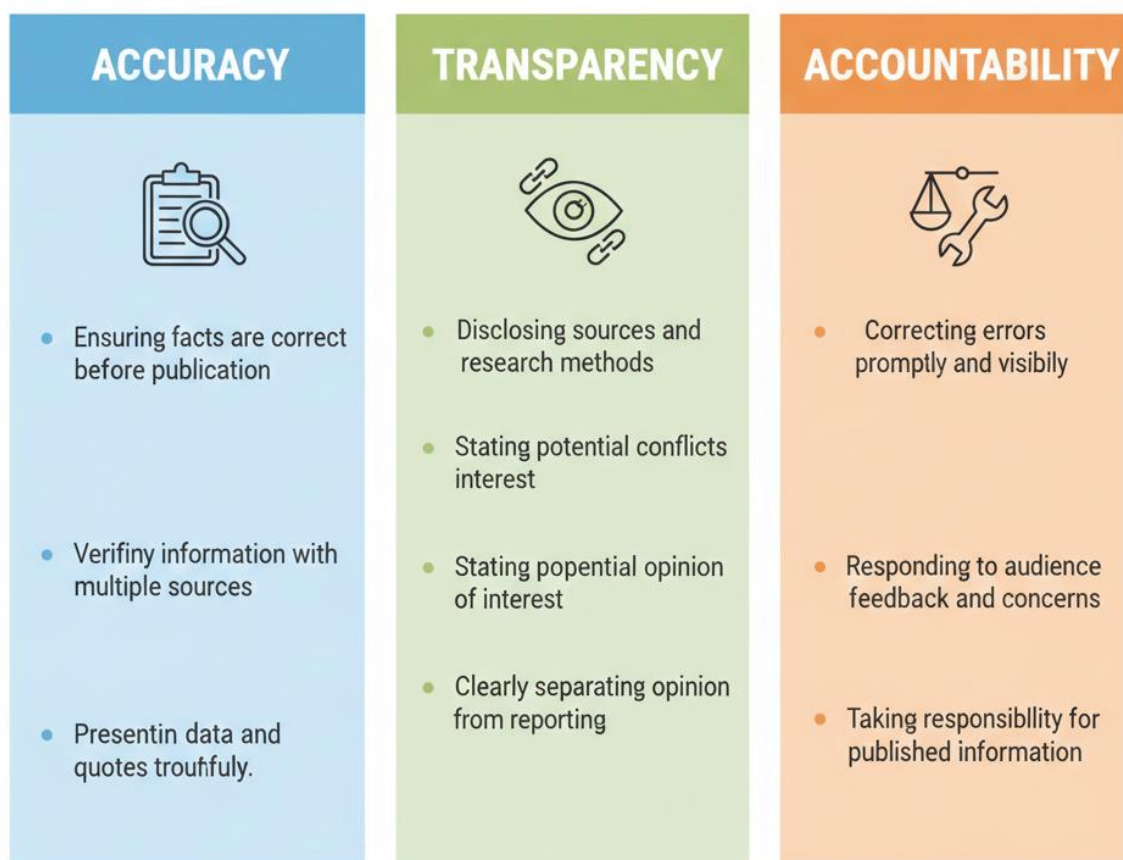
5.4.2 Accuracy, transparency, and accountability

Ethical online content must be accurate, transparent, and accountable. Accuracy ensures credibility, transparency involves disclosing sources and intentions, and accountability means taking responsibility for errors and correcting them promptly.



These principles protect audiences from misinformation and strengthen trust in journalism.

ACCURACY, TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY IN ONLINE CONTENT



Source: OER - Open Educational Resources

Box 5.4 Ethical principles in online content

Fill in the blank: Correcting errors promptly is part of _____ in online content creation.

Pilot questions 5.4

Define plagiarism in online content creation.

Fill in the blank: Presenting someone else's work as your own is called _____.



Identify one principle of ethical online content.

Explain why transparency is important in journalism.

Describe how accountability strengthens trust in online content.

Series Summary

This Series has examined the process of **creating and uploading online content**, focusing on the principles, tools, platforms, and ethical considerations involved. We began by exploring the importance of understanding audience and purpose, and identifying the elements of effective online content. We then discussed tools and techniques for content creation, including writing, multimedia integration, editing, and formatting for digital platforms. Following this, we analysed the steps involved in uploading and publishing content across different platforms, highlighting the role of metadata and previewing. Finally, we addressed ethical and professional considerations such as copyright, plagiarism, fair use, accuracy, transparency, and accountability.

By completing this Series, you should now be able to explain the principles of online content creation, demonstrate tools and techniques for writing and multimedia integration, describe the processes of uploading and publishing, and evaluate ethical and professional standards in digital content creation. These abilities align directly with the Series Learning Outcomes, ensuring you are equipped to create and publish responsible, effective online content.

Glossary of Terms

Audience analysis: Identifying the needs, preferences, and expectations of the target audience for content.

Content distribution platforms: Digital spaces such as blogs, social media, and video sites where content is shared.

Copyright: Legal protection granted to creators of original works.

Credibility: The trustworthiness and reliability of content.

Fair use: Limited use of copyrighted material for commentary, criticism, or education.

Formatting: Structuring content for readability and platform compatibility.

Metadata: Information such as titles, tags, and descriptions added to content during publishing.

Multimedia integration: Combining text with images, videos, or infographics to enhance engagement.

Plagiarism: Presenting someone else's work as your own.

Responsive design: Adapting content for different devices, especially mobile.

Concept Check Questions [Series 5]



Objective Questions

Define the importance of audience in online content creation. (Linked to SLO 5.1)

Fill in the blank: Effective online content begins with understanding the _____.
(Linked to SLO 5.1)

Identify one element of effective online content. (Linked to SLO 5.1)

Fill in the blank: Online content often combines writing with _____ to enhance engagement. (Linked to SLO 5.2)

State one technical step in uploading online content. (Linked to SLO 5.3)

Fill in the blank: Presenting someone else's work as your own is called _____. (Linked to SLO 5.4)

Short-Answer Questions

7. Explain why credibility is important in online content. (Linked to SLO 5.1)
8. Describe one formatting technique for digital platforms. (Linked to SLO 5.2)
9. Explain why metadata is important in publishing. (Linked to SLO 5.3)
10. Identify one principle of ethical online content. (Linked to SLO 5.4)

Long-Answer Questions

11. Analyse the tools and techniques for creating online content, focusing on writing, multimedia integration, editing, and formatting. (Linked to SLO 5.2)

Basic response: Learners should explain the role of writing and multimedia, and the importance of editing and formatting.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may provide examples of multimedia use, discuss responsive design, and evaluate how editing enhances credibility.

Evaluate the ethical and professional considerations in online content creation, including copyright, plagiarism, fair use, accuracy, transparency, and accountability. (Linked to SLO 5.4)

Basic response: Learners should outline the importance of respecting copyright and ensuring accuracy.

Value-added response: Outstanding learners may provide examples of plagiarism cases, explain fair use in journalism, and propose strategies for maintaining transparency and accountability.

Answers to Concept Check Questions [Series 5]

Audience determines the relevance, tone, and format of content.

Audience.

Clarity.

Multimedia.



Adding metadata such as titles and tags.

Plagiarism.

Credibility ensures trustworthiness and protects audiences from misinformation.

Using headings and bullet points for readability.

Metadata improves searchability and helps audiences understand content context.

Accuracy.

Basic response: Writing must be concise, multimedia enhances engagement, editing ensures clarity, and formatting adapts content to platforms.

Value-added response: Examples include integrating infographics, using responsive design for mobile, and editing to maintain credibility.

Basic response: Respecting copyright and ensuring accuracy are essential.

Value-added response: Examples of plagiarism cases highlight risks; fair use allows limited use of copyrighted material; transparency and accountability build trust.

Answers to Pilot Questions [Series 5]

Part 5.1

Audience guides tone, style, and relevance.

Audience.

Informing and persuading.

Clear headlines and multimedia.

Credibility builds trust with audiences.

Part 5.2

Multimedia enhances engagement and comprehension.

Multimedia.

Headings and responsive design.

Editing ensures accuracy and professionalism.

Responsive design makes content accessible on mobile devices.

Part 5.3

Blogs, social media, video sites.

Distribution.

Uploading files and adding metadata.

Metadata improves searchability and context.



Previewing ensures accuracy before publishing.

Part 5.4

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own.

Plagiarism.

Accuracy.

Transparency builds trust by disclosing sources.

Accountability strengthens trust by correcting errors promptly.

References and Attributions [Series 5]

This section provides references and attributions for the instructional content, illustrations, and suggested open educational resources (OERs) used in **Series 5: Creating and Uploading Online Content**. All entries are presented in APA 7th edition format.

Instructional Content References

Koltay, T. (2019). The bright side of information: Online content creation and sharing. *Journal of Information Science*, 45(1), 3–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165551518798618>
([doi.org in Bing](https://doi.org/10.1177/0165551518798618))

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SFU Library. (2024). *Citing websites & online media: APA (7th ed.) citation guide*. Retrieved from <https://www.lib.sfu.ca>

Illustration Placeholders and Attributions

Figure 5.1 Audience and purpose in online content creation

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing how audience and purpose shape online content design.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram audience purpose online content.”

Box 5.1 Elements of effective online content

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing elements of effective online content.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic effective online content elements.”

Figure 5.2 Writing and multimedia integration

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing integration of text, images, and video



in online content.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram writing multimedia integration online content.”

Box 5.2 Editing and formatting for digital platforms

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing editing and formatting techniques for digital platforms.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic editing formatting digital content.”

Figure 5.3 Platforms for content distribution

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing blogs, social media, and video sites as platforms for content distribution.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram online content distribution platforms.”

Box 5.3 Technical steps in uploading content

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing technical steps in uploading and publishing online content.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic uploading publishing online content steps.”

Figure 5.4 Copyright, plagiarism, and fair use

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate diagram showing copyright, plagiarism, and fair use in online content.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER diagram copyright plagiarism fair use online content.”

Box 5.4 Ethical principles in online content

Suggested AI prompt: “Generate infographic showing accuracy, transparency, and accountability in online content.”

Suggested OER search string: “OER infographic accuracy transparency accountability journalism.”

General Attribution Note

Where illustrations are AI-generated, attribution should include the specific AI tool used and the prompt provided. Where OERs are sourced, attribution should follow institutional guidelines for open educational resources, ensuring proper credit to the original creators.



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