


Chapter 26

New Media and New Journalism: Discussions on Digital Journalism

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ABSTRACT

This study was inspired by the SWOT analysis method to evaluate the relationship between digital technologies and journalism. SWOT analysis is a self-assessment method based on strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Although it is a technique commonly used in the field of organizational communication and marketing field, it is seen as a suitable frame to address the strengths and weaknesses of digital technologies in the context of journalism and to evaluate the opportunities and threats it offers. Accordingly, after considering the strengths and weaknesses of digital technologies in the context of journalism, the opportunities and threats it presents will be evaluated. The main questions to be answered in this study can be listed as follows: How does digitalization affect journalism positively and negatively? What are the strengths and weaknesses of digital technologies in the context of journalism? What are the opportunities and threats that digital technologies offer for journalism?

INTRODUCTION

Technology has always had a decisive influence on journalism. Digital technologies in particular have taken this effect to a very advanced level. Digital communication and information technologies, along with many other things, have led to serious changes in the field of journalism. This change affected the production, design and distribution of the news as well as the readers' access to the news, the consumption patterns of the news, and their perception of trust in the news. Internet journalism, which could be considered as the pioneer of digital journalism, started around 1994. This form of journalism was simply transferring the news to the internet. Therefore this journalistic practice was called showalware in reference to the act of shoveling the content from one medium to another. The concept of digital journalism came to the fore in 2005 when news organizations and independent journalists began us-

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ing digital technologies to create multimedia and interactive storytelling (Sterling, 2009:407). Today, users can access uninterrupted news thanks to laptops, tablets and other mobile devices. Many events are recorded and shared by people present at the scene. Journalists on social media platforms such as Twitter, Youtube and Instagram can reach a wider audience at any time compared to traditional mass media. According to Neuman, “we are witnessing the evolution of a universal interconnected network of audio, video, and electronic text communications that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communication” for a while (Neuman, 1991). In such an environment, change in journalism, or more ambitiously, “evolution,” has been the focus of research on journalism. These discussions mainly cover journalists in the context of digital communication environments and their relationship with technologies.

It is a clear fact that journalism has been constantly changing since the day it appeared. There are many factors that can lead to this change. However, the driving forces behind this change can be grouped under four main headings. These four headings can be listed as socio-cultural, business, technological and professional-normative. Social, cultural, political and demographic changes also change journalistic practices. The changing structure of society and culture also affects the lives of individuals. The reflection of this change on the lives of readers also affects the relationship between newspaper and reader. Together with the changing social and cultural structure of society, changes in people’s income, lifestyles or educational levels can be expressed as one of the main motivations behind changes in journalism. Another reason is the changing business model and the economic structure of journalism. Journalism is a form of business, news is a product, and readers are customers. Generating economic income is one of the primary aims of journalism. In short, journalism, which exists within the relations of capitalist economy, is affected by all kinds of changes in the economy. Elements such as the way journalism professionals do business, their education, skills, and ethical understanding can also be shown among the factors affecting journalism. Technology, which has been attributed a special importance in the context of this work, can be cited as one of the most important factors in changing journalism. (Heinonen, 1999:20-22). Evaluating change in journalism with only its technological dimension can be perceived as a technological determinant approach. Society and technology are two concepts that affect and change each other. This interaction can be considered an important factor in the development of the two concepts (Tong, 2017:3). However, in the context of this study, the social, economic or cultural dimensions of the subject were evaluated as an analysis of digital technologies directly. In this study technological factors that change journalism will be discussed in the context of digitalization.

In general, Turkey is a country where technology is quickly adopted and spread. Mobile technologies and the Internet continue to become increasingly common. According to the Turkey section of the report published by We Are Social and HootSuite in 2019, 72% of the population are internet users. The proportion of people who use the internet every day is 84 per cent. According to the report, 93 percent of the total population has a mobile subscription. 77 percent of them are smartphone users. The average daily time spent on the internet is 7 hours. Moreover, Turkey has a young population and can adapt quickly to technological developments. In such a country, it is particularly important to establish the relationship between journalism and digital technologies.

This study was inspired by the SWOT analysis method to evaluate the relationship between digital technologies and journalism. SWOT analysis is a self-assessment method based on strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Although it is a technique commonly used in the field of organizational communication and marketing field (Watson and Hill, 2012:294), it is seen as a suitable frame to address the strengths and weaknesses of digital technologies in the context of journalism and to evaluate the op-

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