Future Frame:

Perspectives On The Ever-changing Media Workspace

SYMBIOSIS
CENTRE FOR MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

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Editor's Note

By Bhanuni Saini

With great pride and enthusiasm, we present the fourth edition of the Anukram book to all. This publication is a testament to the Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication's (SCMC) unwavering dedication to equipping its students with the tools and knowledge to navigate the evolving media landscape while providing numerous opportunities for both professional expertise and personal growth. It stands as a reflection of the collective effort and passion of the SCMC community, which constantly strives to push boundaries and embrace new horizons.

In the world of media, where change is constant and inevitable, this book serves as a compass, guiding young professionals to navigate uncharted waters with the adaptability, creativity, and resilience needed to thrive. This year's theme, "Preparing for Tomorrow: Readying the Youth for Everchanging Media Workspaces," encapsulates our efforts to address the challenges posed by this dynamic industry. It reflects our determination to prepare students not only for today's professional demands, but also for the unpredictable shifts of tomorrow.

This edition of Anukram seeks to address these pressing industry shifts through a series of thought-provoking articles, innovative ideas, and practical insights contributed by our talented students and faculty. The book celebrates the collaborative spirit and the vibrant academic environment at SCMC, where creativity meets critical thinking, fostering a culture of lifelong learning. This theme aims to spark a dialogue about the need for continuous learning and innovation in media education, ensuring that young professionals are not just participants but pioneers in shaping the future. Numerous AI images have been used, celebrating the ethos of Anukram over the years.

The research papers published in this book have been penned and edited with utmost sincerity, reflecting the dynamic learning environment at SCMC. They explore critical issues, emerging trends, and the transformative power of media in shaping society. Each contribution has been thoughtfully curated to inspire meaningful engagement and reflection. We are confident that readers will find valuable takeaways in these pages, whether they are students, educators, or professionals in the field.

We hope this book inspires, informs, and empowers its readers to embrace the possibilities and uncertainties of tomorrow with confidence and curiosity. As you turn these pages, we invite you to engage with the ideas presented here, to reflect on the challenges and opportunities of the media industry, and to envision how you can contribute to its transformation. Let Anukram be your bridge to a future filled with possibilities, sparking conversations that drive progress and innovation.

Happy reading!

Bhanuni Saini
Editor-in-Chief

ANUKRAM

Table Of Contents

ANUKRAM

ANUKRAM OVER THE YEARS

DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

Dr. Sreeram Gopalkrishnan

The eight-hour workday originated as a part of the production assembly line was structured around individuals going to work in the morning and returning home to their families in the evening. Even after a century, when the concept of "going to work" has evolved into "work coming to individuals," this template remains unchanged (Forbes, March 2024).

The average lifespan of a U.S. S&P 500-listed company has declined from 67 years to merely 15 years. In India, only 16 companies have persisted since 1947. Given the uncertainty of any company's long-term existence, how can anyone guarantee the longevity of a career? The sector that seems lucrative today could just simply vanish when disrupted by innovation. The question - "What should one pursue in the long run?" - commonly appears among parents and educators concerning career longevity. As Keynes famously stated, "In the long run, we are all dead." Everything undertaken today is subject to transformation or obsolescence tomorrow, and the skills and competencies developed may not even be relevant in the future. This dilemma raises the question: What constitutes a timeless asset one can rely upon? Should individuals focus solely on their passions? However, who would indulge in such pursuits apart from one's immediate family and friends? For example, how would success be achieved if an individual is passionate about painting and wishes to pursue it exclusively? While family and friends may initially support such endeavours, this approach lacks long-term viability .Passion, in itself, does not equate to competence.

A contemporary thinker, Luke Burgis, posits that individuals encounter "thin" and "thick" desires. Thin desires are ephemeral and surface-level, such as a fondness for food or photography. In contrast, thick desires are enduring aspirations to which one may wish to dedicate one's life. These pursuits imbue one's career with meaning and purpose. Nevertheless, thick desires must align with financial viability; they require external recognition and compensation for a sustainable career path.

In the contemporary era, advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) have heightened concerns about widespread job displacement. However, the true challenge lies not in AI but in one's ability to harness its potential. Individuals proficient in utilizing AI will replace those without such proficiency.

Anukram, the flagship event of SCMC, is designed to foster an industry-academic interface. It provides students with a platform to understand the evolving workplace dynamics and equips them for the future. The event is intended to aid participants in identifying their "thick desires" while recognizing that "thin desires" can always be pursued as a complement.

All the best!

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From Print to Pixels: How Traditional Media Adapts in a Digital World

By Ananya Ganotra

The growth of digital technology has greatly affected the media industry worldwide as traditional media firms are being challenged to learn new journalistic competencies while maintaining old styles and formats. In the past, legacy media (Newspapers, Radio and Television) journalists and producers were almost always all-rounders. This is because their elements were inherent in their multifaceted approach aside from being an organising framework.

Old media products have to face the challenges of digital journalism. With tools such as the internet, social media networks and mobile gadgets, people have changed not only the way of receiving but also producing and sharing the news. This paper aims to assess how traditional media can adopt new skills of journalism inclusion, such as data journalism, multimedia, storytelling and reconciliation of audience engagement, which does not undermine accuracy, fairness, and accountability that are integral parts of legacy media.

Commitment to giving an account of balanced underlying truths and narrating the side of the unheard or untouched is crucial for journalism. The use of analogical, ethical and human conversion created the journalist's traditional good story. It was a voice piece to the camera, sound behind the narration, finger on the keyboard and faces on the screen. These human figures were relied on fully to bring the stories to the newsrooms and keep the audience informed. This image of how journalism is understood is changing quickly with the coming of Artificial Intelligence-assisted news production.

The Need for Innovation

Innovation has revolutionised journalism and established new tools for news gathering that include real-time reporting, interactive news making and novel ways of customers' news consumption. These technologies have to be embraced by the legacy media to survive. For example, data journalism, which is the practice of telling stories through data analysis and visualisation, is now firmly established and indispensable. One good example is *"The Guardian"*, an international newspaper whose data journalism team was formed in 2009 and has used data effectively in the reporting process as well as in using the data to develop interesting graphics and textual content to engage the public.

> *"I love what The Guardian, The New York Times, Washington Post and NPR are doing — particularly in the areas of data storytelling, immersive podcasts, VR and AR storytelling on Instagram,"* -Devadas Rajaram
> Professor at the Asian College of Journalism in Chennai, India. (Radcliffe, 2021, 27).

A report published by the Reuters Institute in 2023 shows that younger groups use news on social networks and mobile devices. What is therefore evident is that legacy media has to learn how to apply multimedia storytelling in its traditional fashion, encompassing text, video, audio and Linking, which is interactivity. Consumption of traditional media, such as TV and print, continues to fall in most markets, with online and social consumption failing to make up the gap. (Digital News Report 2023 | Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2023). The New York Time's multimedia project Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek is another great example, gravitating between conventional journalism and new media savvy practices.

Balancing Tradition and Innovation

While adopting the idea of innovation, legacy media cannot afford to compromise their ethical standards, such as accuracy, fairness and credibility of new skills; rather, they should strengthen these values. The correct handling of fact-checking mechanisms must address the question of real-time reporting and the use of social media. The Washington Post's Fact Checker initiative to systematically rate the truthfulness of statements made by public figures shows that traditional values are truly alive in a new media age.

Several new skills which postmodern journalists need to master imply significant expense in training and education. First, it is pertinent to point out that understanding journalism's role and defining the expectations placed upon it requires considering the journalistic profession in its dual nature: traditional media reporting and the newly emergent media competencies. Legacy media organisations should ensure that media professionals undergo recurrent training sessions such as knowledge exchange sessions, internet courses, and partnerships with educational institutions. It presents an elaborate training regime for digital journalism, using data analysis and multimedia content production in the BBC Academy, proving that the organisation is keen on developing its human resources career. Scholars and journalists agree that the future of news will involve a battle between the legacy media and online news start-ups that will be waged on the digital front (Belam, 2010; Gold, 2012; Jewell, 2016).

News production in the 21st century requires new skills from journalists, making the profession more challenging. The widespread use of mobile digital devices is a response to the labour market's demands for individualised and multitasking work, offering advantages like agility, flexibility, mobility, and autonomy. Legacy media, such as the BBC and Al Jazeera, have begun integrating mobile journalism (mojo) to adapt, training reporters to produce high-quality content quickly. However, balancing these innovations with the traditions and values of journalism, such as accuracy and accountability, remains a challenge. The future of journalism depends on blending tradition with technology effectively.

Redefining Corporate Communications: Harnessing Technology, and Engagement in the Digital Age

By Yashika Majumdar

This paper examines the basic strategic opportunities and practices that will allow people, organisations, and companies to communicate more effectively and efficiently in the future. By increasing reliance on digital instruments and technologies, companies can improve their communication policies and the level of relationships with their stakeholders, as well as increase the strength of their brands. However, the coming of new technologies and platforms strongly reshapes the entire discourse of corporate communications. This paper examines the factors and forces that influence the development of corporate communications in the modern world and highlights the need for changeability, openness, and interaction.

> "The companies that understand how to harness the power of digital storytelling will own the future of communication."
> – Brian Solis.

Digital Transformation in Corporate Communications

With the advancement of AI, big data analytics, and the increasing use of social media channels, there has been a growing digital transformation of corporate communication. These tools enable real-time feedback, personalised messaging, and deeper stakeholder engagement. Chatbots, AI-driven tools, are reshaping the corporate communications paradigm by eliminating mundane communication tasks, conducting sentiment analysis, and improving customer interaction. For instance, chatbots can answer customer questions without delay, while AI systems can screen thousands of pieces of information to detect sentiment and content style. Big data analytics enables companies to understand stakeholder behaviour and tailor communication strategies effectively." Social media has become a key medium for corporate communication.

Strategies for Effective Digital Corporate Communications

Companies need to engage in corporate communications using strategies that leverage a profound sense of transparency, authenticity, and engagement. The digital age has changed how people communicate and interact with one another. By employing appropriate messaging strategies and forms, organisations can connect better with their target audience, enhancing interactions within the organisation. To build trust and credibility, companies must prioritise transparency and authenticity, addressing concerns openly and providing accurate information. In the digital era, stakeholder engagement is equally vital, requiring organisations to foster meaningful, interactive exchanges that reflect their commitment to honesty and responsiveness. Organisations need to prepare the right type of messages using videos, infographics, and interactive posts, among others, to enhance the effectiveness of their messages. In the new environment, effective corporate communications require an exchange. Organisations need to hear from their stakeholders and act on what they say while engaging them in meaningful discussions. In order to show how the theoretical aspects of the previously discussed corporate communications and PR strategies are put into practice, we will highlight several examples of organisations that have mastered the use of these tools.

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Case Study 1: Coca-Cola

Using AI, Coca-Cola, a global leader in the beverage industry, employed AI chat bots to improve customer interactivity. The company's chat bot "Coke Bot" included integration with social networks and messengers and provided users with quick answers to their questions. As a result of these activities, Coca-Cola was able to examine the data that was previously collected during feedback sessions and determine the clients' likes and concerns. This enabled marketing strategies to be more customised, thus increasing customer satisfaction. This advancement also improved the overall efficiency of customer support and also enhanced the overall bond between Coca-Cola and its customers.

Case Study 2: Netflix

Personalization Through the Use of Customer Data Netflix, a leader in the streaming industry, uses big data analytics in communications campaigns. With this information, they were able to recommend specific content to Netflix viewers based on their previously viewed material. This model of working with users' data in streaming services revolved around movies included in its database and extended to email marketing as well as advertising in social networks.

Challenges and Solutions

The advancement of digital technology has indeed changed the corporate communications landscape with common problems such as significant amounts of information, privacy issues, and speed. These are some of the ways to mitigate these challenges. One way to minimise Information Overload is for companies to deliver messages that are brief, to the point, relevant, and timely in message delivery. Companies must adhere to compliance when it comes to data privacy protection and also have measures that safeguard stakeholder data. Explaining how the data is used can also be a trustworthy measure.

It is also necessary to remain nimble in a rapidly changing digital environment. Change the company's strategies wherever required while still being in touch with trends.

The scope of corporate communications has been expanded as a result of advancements in technology, which have offered new ways of approaching communications. Companies can, therefore, improve their efforts in communication and strengthen their stakeholders through a reliable strategy in a competitive market. The authenticity of a brand and its adaptability will be crucial in determining the future of corporate communications.

As Journalism Faces a Crisis, What is the Future of Journalism Education?

By Kabir Upamnyu

The news in June that the Indian Institute of Journalism & New Media, Bengaluru will no longer be offering programmes in journalism due to inadequate applications has revived the existential questions around the profession – and, by extension, the need for an education for it. Among the reasons cited for rising disillusionment with journalism is the financial precariousness that comes with working in the industry and operating in political contexts that render the profession vulnerable. These are legitimate concerns with no easy answers – perhaps a discussion for another time. But what about journalism education? While the power of journalism professors and scholars is limited in addressing the factors mentioned above, is there something that they can do to make education more open, flexible and utilitarian?

Recalibrating Journalism Education

Over the course of three years since I have been taking classes relating to journalism, I have found myself constantly recalibrating my approach to teaching it in an attempt to make it more relevant and broad-based. Firstly, I have attempted to reframe what journalism is and what all it entails in today's context. The digital era, especially marked by the rise and dominance of digital intermediaries (search engines, social media platforms, and now artificial intelligence platforms), has been constantly changing the very nature of journalism over the last two decades. In such a context, students need to be taught about a journalism that is much more loose in terms of its boundaries and not just confined to our normative understandings of the profession. I make it a point to emphasise that those aspiring to become journalists need not have to land up working in institutionalised settings, part of a typical news organisation structure and the hierarchies that come with it. They may also end up becoming independent content creators or curators dealing with contemporary happenings across different platforms. Or they might end up straddling both sides. Of course, the teaching of professional values and ethical norms associated with journalism must remain common to all. However, what should not be done on the part of media and journalism educators is inherently attaching a status of superiority to the former and that of inferiority to the latter.

Changing Roles

A related aspect is the roles people perform in journalism today. Many journalistic accounts today have become "iterative" in nature, subject to constant evaluation and correction. Journalists often find themselves functioning as "secondary eyewitnesses", managing and curating information already posted online. The production of original content may not be a central task for a lot of journalists today.

In that context, new and unique roles involving organisation and curation of content or information management, community and audience management have become key in the profession. These roles are especially relevant in an environment where the amount of information is overwhelming, and there is a need to guide audiences who might often be left with a feeling of incompleteness. With generative AI's popularity soaring and its adoption across industries over the last couple of months, one coul d also expect newcomers to be hired for roles such as prompt engineering in the journalism industry (if it isn't already happening).

Thus, journalism education should not just accept such roles but also seek to revise curriculums constantly and devise best practices and ethical guidelines to adequately train students for a constantly evolving scenario. Simply looking the other way or scoffing at such roles and lamenting the death of "old-school journalism" would not be helpful to anyone.

Seeking Out Good Journalism

Another factor that might discourage students from taking up journalism could be how the profession is being seen as undergoing a process of rot and decay, in the Indian context at least. The conduct of the television news media has played no small part in contributing to that narrative, with coverage that is often partisan, sensationalist plain dishonest, or a combination of all. The pop culture portrayals of the profession – cue films or television shows – don't help either.

It is easy to equate the state of the TV news media as being symptomatic of the entire journalistic industry. What gets hidden in plain sight, however, is the impactful work being done by various print as well as online publishers – both in terms of the kind of stories being covered as well as innovative formats of delivering news.

Good journalism still exists in India, that too in plenty, but one just needs to know where to look. There are myriads of news publishers that have produced extensive reportage and analyses in beats that might be considered overlooked – health, education, rural, environment and climate change – adopting a grassroots and/or data-heavy approach. In terms of formats, initiatives are offering smartly curated credible news across platforms such as Instagram, email newsletters or mobile applications. It is such coverage that needs to be the focus of journalism education – with reporters and editors involved in those stories serving as role models – rather than fixating on the broadcast news entertainers who just happen to be categorised as journalists due to our inertia.

(Also published on Scroll.in)

ANUKRAM

From Rallies to Reels:
Evolving Political Communication and Role of Journalists

By Krishnanshu Panda

Journalists and news have traditionally been the medium through which politicians communicate with the citizens. When journalists report politics and politicians, they report the news as much as they act as a medium of communication between them and the audience. Apart from that, interviews and press conferences are also tools for politicians to make their points. Over the years, the definition of news and journalists has evolved, and news consumption patterns have also changed. With the news going beyond TV and newspapers, politicians are also looking at other avenues of news to communicate with the citizens, especially their electorate.

According to the "Media in India" survey report released by CSDS (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies) and Lokniti in 2022, Television is the most dominant news source, accounting for 42% of their sample group. We would like to believe that newspapers are the second most dominant news source, but that is not the case. Only 6% of people chose newspapers as their dominant source of news. On the other hand, 22% of citizens chose new media (internet and social media), and 18% chose People (friends and family) as the dominant news source.

We often compliment politicians for their oration skills, and their political wins are credited to the same, but good oration skills only help when they are complimented with proper strategising and, most significantly, identifying the right target audience. The CSDS data shows how news consumption through new media has emerged as a strong contender to TV news, and political communication is gradually but steadily shifting. Political communication is at its peak during election season, and during the 2024 elections and run-up to elections, we observed politicians delivering their messages across mediums. Senior cabinet ministers like S. Jaishankar, Jyotiraaditya Scindia, Piyush Goyal and many others gave interviews to mainstream news channels and Online news portals like The Lallantop.

Who do we call a journalist today? Someone who is backed by a news organisation? Someone who freelances for different news organisations? Or Someone who works independently and presents the news with analysis and even their own opinions? All of them. The sheer number of content creators in India whose primary medium is new media has grown in the past decade. One thing that used to set journalists apart from others was their access to politicians. Today, podcasts on YouTube like that of Ranveer Allhabadia, creators like Samdish Bhatiya and even creators in travel and food like Curly Tales have access. Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav not only gave an interview to Samdish Bhatia but also gave him exclusive access to their election campaigns. Similarly, all cabinet ministers and even opposition leaders like Supriya Sule came to the BeerBiceps podcast. Curly Tales had interviews with Rahul Gandhi, Aaditya Thackrey and Smriti Irani (all belonging to different political parties and spectrums). A Statista Report showed that TV news viewership continues to decline, and at the same time, new media is garnering millions of views. Political communication is shifting where they get their return on investment to reach a larger audience.
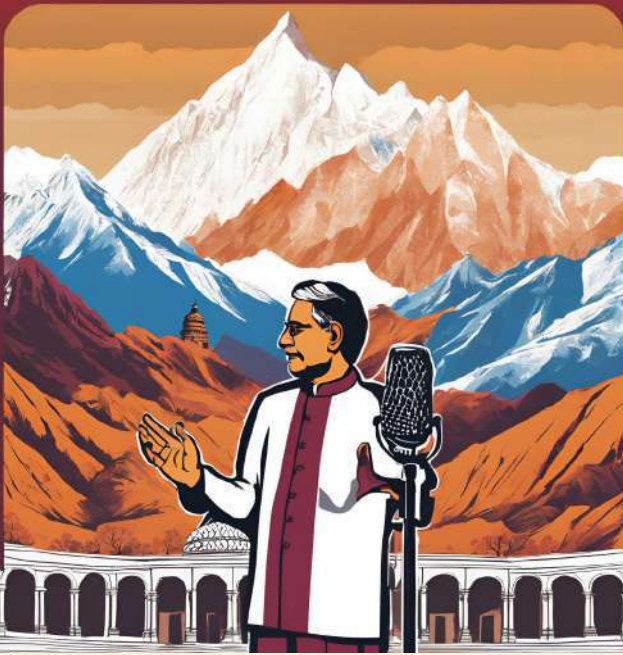
However, this shift upholds the relevance and influence of TV news exercises. In the run-up to the 2024 elections, PM Modi gave 41 interviews to TV news channels between March 31 and May 14, 2024. These news channels cater to the 42% of the population for whom TV is still the primary news source. At the same time, both INC and BJP were very active on social media platforms like Instagram, targeting a younger audience by following trends and making creative reels that went viral within days. No one can argue that traditional news media and the Rallies from the ground are time-tested methods of communication for politicians, but in contemporary times, communication strategies are evolving. This is not because Rallies and Interviews have lost their charm but because media consumption has changed; new media makes it easier to reach more people, and this is simply more feasible.

To conclude, the trend has been set, lines dividing different mediums have been blurred, and the very definition of journalists is changing. This is a socio-economic-cultural change that is directly impacting the way politicians communicate. All political parties are catching up on this change, and so are the content creators of new media (and those from the mainstream who have transitioned). In my opinion, it all boils down to the age-old theory of survival of the fittest. Politicians are changing their communication strategies, and journalists/creators are adapting to their new job descriptions to survive in the near future.

ANUKRAM

Sustaining Storytelling in the Age of Micro-Trends: Transforming the Transient into the Enduring

By Ahana Ghosh

'Micro-Trends' can be summed up as, propagandistically, the short-lived and temporary market influence barely thriving within cultural landscapes. It is a phenomenon that is constantly in flux, akin to a coin being flipped by the masses, with its direction determined by collective behaviour and shifting societal preferences. (Journal of Marketing, 2019).

Preceding micro-trends, there existed a time when YouTube commanded a significantly larger and more engaged audience than Instagram. The platform thrived as a haven for long-form storytelling, with audiences eagerly dedicating their attention to videos that spanned fifteen to twenty minutes. Often rich in content and narrative depth, these videos could fully captivate viewers, drawing them into immersive stories that resonated on a personal level but could not be classified as an ideal choice for dynamic management of time.

The heroic entry of short-form culture in the contemporary context monopolised the attention economy by capturing bite size intel and making it fast-paced for the newer generation. The concept of "Doom-scrolling" was popularised during the era of COVID-19, which fostered the emergence of micro-trends. (Psychology of Popular Media, 2020). We stumble upon millions of distinct short-form content on various social media platforms, and each of them creates

tapestries that coalesce with several other micro-trends. Such a blend draws commonalities to create perspectives large enough to influence the masses and function as a marketing strategy. (Social Movement Studies, 2019).

Micro-trends heavily monopolise "Storytelling" as a genre to evoke feelings of unity, sensitivity and relatability to appeal to the masses either solely for the sake of recognition or for engagement. (Journal of Digital Media & Policy, 2022) Storytelling serves as a backbone, living within every minute intricacy of compelling propaganda. Promotion of eco-conscious living by advertising collagen-boosting, plant-based capsules and the push to grow indie clothing brands by creating aesthetic fashion trends- all require compelling stories that tug at the emotional quotient of the viewing masses.

Stories publicise micro trends, and in the same way, micro trends amplify stories. When critiquing a specific micro-trend that has dissolved into the sea of socially available opinions swirling across all accessible platforms; we can find how storytelling holds the audience in a powerful chokehold. Reels and Tweets offer countless examples of victims sharing their experiences of Sexual Violence, Domestic Violence, Gender Inequality, Hate Crimes, Social Stigmatization and other forms of negative issues, causing traction through the lens of storytelling. (Feminist Media Studies, 2021) .

ANUKRAM

Micro-trends have also been responsible for giving birth to storytellers who crusade as creators within the realm of micro trends. This can be viewed as bidirectional, as, at times, creators who tell stories are initially influenced by micro-trends. A storyteller has the potential to propagate their beliefs, ideals, morals and experiences to a sizeable community, eventually motivating them to continue the cycle.

Micro-trends can also be considered as a harmonious collaboration of today and tomorrow. Micro-trends have the power to uphold diversity on a global scale within the palm of our hands through visually engaging mediums like Facebook, Pinterest, or even Reddit blogs (Global Media and Communication, 2021) Storytelling once buried in detailed travelogues, lengthy media segments, and dusty cookbooks is now more accessible through micro-trends that summarise essentials while preserving origins, culture, and significance.

In the age of algorithm culture or, more specifically, algorithm-driven content curation, the micro trends that are ripe with stories do not merely find their audience; the audience, in turn, seeks out similar stories. (Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 2020). One tap on a heart icon initiates a cascade of related content, creating an ever-expanding web of perspectives. Through this interplay of storytelling and algorithmic amplification, micro-trends evolve from fleeting phenomena into relatable and enduring cultural artefacts. (New Media & Society, 2022). The ability to engage, educate and inspire demonstrates the vast potential of storytelling in an age characterised by rapid content consumption and collective digital participation (Storytelling, Self, Society, 2022).

The scope of storytelling universally resides in every form of media and not just micro-trends. In the era of micro-trends, it gets shaped by these ephemeral phenomena. Through symbiosis, micro-trends and storytelling perpetuate each other in an infinite loop. It shapes the collective consciousness of the digital age as storytelling transforms the fleeting into the enduring, offering micro-trends a profound significance that transcends its transient nature.

> *"You're never going to kill storytelling because it's built in the human plan. We come with it."*
> - Margaret Atwood.

ANUKRAM

Emerging Journalistic Skills Amidst the Ongoing Digital Revolution in Building Consumer Trust

By Molshree Kaushik

The world is saturated with rapidly evolving media spaces trying to stand out from the existing information overload and cash in on the attention economy. Recently, we have seen a massive shift from long-form horizontal to vertical short-form content. The news space is undergoing a digital revolution where legacy media houses try to stay relevant by producing multiple-format content. For a media outlet, the continuous struggle to remain relevant has given rise to new skills while striking a balance between innovation and tradition.

In a digital age, anyone can disseminate news owing to which misinformation can spread like wildfire. According to the World Economic Forum, India is at the highest risk of misinformation. So, it has become an essential step in news curation to check the accuracy of the information to prevent its potential misuse. This threat of misinformation has led to the rise of fact-checking as it ensures access to credible information, which assists citizens in making informed decisions.

Legacy media organisations have started integrating and offering newer job roles of a Fact Checker. Further, some organisations such as The Logical Indian, The Quint, Factly, Vishwas News and others either have an active fact-checking unit or function as individual fact-checking agencies. With a population of 1.4 billion and less than 20 credible fact-checking organisations, fact-checking is necessary in this news environment.

Legacy News Houses in India are engaging in cross-media ownership. They have established a stronghold in print, broadcast, and digital media networks. More and more newsrooms are opting for multimedia content. They adapt a single news story in multiple formats to attract and engage the audience. To excel in all these, news organisations constantly seek skills like video editing, copy editing, and motion graphics. Specific digital stories done by legacy media houses such as The New York Times utilise extensive editing and motion graphics to create a digital story that combines video snippets and infographics to give a universal experience to the viewer.

In the digital media space, legacy houses have started using search engine optimisation to create content that reaches their targeted readers. Tools like Google Trends, SEMrush, and Yoast SEO are used to obtain data on trending keywords on relevant topics. When used in articles, these 'keywords' help the algorithm pick the article as an appropriate result, increasing visibility. Journalists sometimes even utilise the data obtained from Google Trends to curate stories, which reflects the growing popularity of specific issues amongst the readers. For example, the Visa guide shows a 1514% surge in Google searches for 'leaving the US' after President Trump's victory (Shabani, 2024). Such statistics help in data-driven journalism and simultaneously open up new avenues for research.

The Indian news media space has been constantly subjected to change. From newspapers, radio and television to online news, podcasts and reels, legacy news organisations have adapted to newer technologies and requirements. The changing news ecosystem has made it the need of the hour to complement the traditional roles of journalism with newer journalistic skills. This is reflected in the evolving roles that a news organisation now encompasses.

Making Marketing Campaigns in Time and Style

By Shrangha Mittal & Vyom Ramani

Crafting a marketing or advertising campaign requires a delicate balance between the relentless ticking of deadlines and the boundless need for creativity. Capitalising on this balance by industry professionals is crucial in delivering impactful and innovative ideas without compromising on timeliness.

At the base of any innovative campaign is the search for inspiration. This stage involves a lot of research, brainstorming, and exploring ideas so that the campaign resonates with the audience. Coca-Cola's "Share a Coke" campaign required the brand to dig deep into consumer behaviours, analysing people's emotional connection with their names. This was transformed into a simple, revolutionary idea: personalising bottles with popular names. Coca-Cola became a global hit. It worked because people searched for their names on Coca-Cola bottles and shared their findings online.

Deadlines, though, can be looked at as the enemies of creativity are strong enablers. They oblige teams to condense their ideas into a crystal-clear, actionable concept. Nike's "Dream Crazy," with Colin Kaepernick, capitalised on the urgency of the social and political conversation by giving the brand a bold, focused message. By embracing what deadlines impose, teams can hone their ideas to stay impactful and relevant.

Technology encompassing AI-driven tools, automated workflows, and digital platforms helps execute things faster while freeing creative minds to focus on storytelling and strategy. For example, Spotify's "Wrapped" campaign uses user data from across the year to create personalised end-of-year recaps. This data-driven creativity, combined with automated design systems, lets Spotify execute a globally personalised campaign inside an annual window that would be tight in the best times. The success of Spotify Wrapped year-on-year rests on its ability to fine-tune and execute complex data visualisation in a limited time frame.

Another aspect of managing creativity within deadlines is adaptability. Creative projects rarely go as planned, and teams must prepare to pivot when challenges arise. Dove's long-running "Real Beauty" campaign is a testament to this adaptability. As time has passed, the campaign has adapted to changing societal conversations about beauty standards, showcasing how flexibility can keep a campaign relevant and impactful. Iterative testing and refining, even within strict deadlines, allow teams to respond to feedback and emerging trends while staying true to their vision.

It is where creativity and deadlines meet, with the final phase often proving the most challenging to execute. Breaking down the process into smaller, manageable milestones ensures quality and prevents last-minute compromises. Deadlines are ultimately not about problems to be solved but a solution to embrace. Campaigns like "Share a Coke," "Dream Crazy," and "Wrapped" reveal that with structure, creativity thrives. Deadlines help the disciplined keep their creative energy in focus and ensure that whatever has been conceived is meaningful and memorable. Whether leveraging technology, breaking down the process, or being adaptable to circumstances, marketing professionals need to balance tight schedules with opportunities for brilliance.

Purpose-Driven PR: Communicating Beyond the Bottom Line

By Apeksha Kishnani and Dishita Hassanandani

As the dynamics of operating a business continue to transform in today's world, basic parameters to measure success are changing as well. According to current consumer perspectives, this is because business firms cannot just produce excellent financial results for them to be supported. This is why the current consumer paradigm requires not only a different mode of communication but also a direct link between a brand's purpose and societal needs.

What is Purpose-driven PR?

Consequently, the concept of purpose-driven PR comes forward as a potent strategy that distinguishes it from ordinary practices in marketing. It reflects a major revolution in organisational communication where the organisation's value propositions and social responsibilities take the central stage in organisational branding. This approach assumes that the target audience, with particular emphasis on the millennials and Generation Z, are in pursuit of utilities, goods, services, or a combination of these but are more interested in supporting brands committed to initiating positive change in society.

As a result, the principle on which purpose-driven PR is built is to form meaningful emotional bonds far beyond functional ones. When, in its action and communication, a business manages to reflect an actual social purpose, it essentially becomes more than a company – it becomes a solution provider. This approach cannot be achieved through over-the-counter advertising finesse or tokenisms of corporate giving back to society. It requires comprehensive engagement in learning and practising all aspects of issues that confront society.

Elements of Purpose-driven PR

First, the statistical information and data become the component of this communication strategy; second, transparency plays a critical role. Today's consumer is smarter, more informed, and knows how to spot a liar or a fake from a mile away. Companies must possess a desire and openness to deliver the brand story, including losses, gaps, and progress toward change. Such a position makes the differentiation more natural, giving consumers insight into the human aspect of corporate endeavours.

The understanding is that the best sense-of-purpose public relations initiatives can be specifically aligned with a company's themes and activities. It cannot be an attempt to take every trending social issue swept across social media and focus on what the organisation needs to do there. This may include one technology firm establishing elaborate digitally facilitated learning awareness campaigns, a manufacturing company adopting environmentally friendly production processes, or a financial institution providing economic opportunities for disenfranchised communities.

Why are purpose-driven narratives important here? Storytelling has a significant impact in this case. Instead of providing plain statistics or more generalised statements, successful brands show relatable people's stories that speak about the brands. This case brings out the impact that is being made in the real sense as corporate communication is moved from being an information one-way process to a dialogue.

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Challenges of Purpose-driven PR

However, as this article will comprehensively explain, purpose-driven PR is not entirely without its difficulties. The danger of 'purpose-washing', that is, organisations making extensive declarations and paying mere lip service to them, is real. Customers are becoming smarter; thus, they cannot be easily convinced by marketers who are just superficially committed to a cause. This means that social impact must be part of the overall organisational culture, not simply the messaging strategies.

The most strategic perspectives categorise purpose as the organisational strategy's core, incorporating social responsibility into multiple tiers of the company. Sustainable communications can mean implementing tangible objectives, focused and active disclosure, and ongoing practice adjustments for maximum effectiveness.

Moreover, purpose-driven PR is not just the wave of the future that clamours for meaningful and authentic change sweeping across the business globe, it symbolises a paradigm shift in terms of how businesses generate value or engage with investors and the rest of society. When the message people receive from an organisation is genuine and related to the social cause, people get more involved, businesses work on a conscious plan to bring about change, and this form of success is much more fulfilling and effective, even from a business standpoint of view.

The Role of Mindset in Freelance Success

By Sachi Singhai

In today's world, the 9-to-5 grind is no longer the only path to success, and freelancing has become a game-changer. With the freedom to choose your projects, clients, and work hours, freelancing offers flexibility that traditional jobs can't match. But while the perks are clear, succeeding as a freelancer requires more than just technical skills. It's about mastering freelance culture and building a personal brand that helps you stand out in a crowded marketplace. So, how do you go from being a lone freelancer to a sought-after professional? The answer lies in two key components: mindset and branding

Turning Every Setback into a Comeback

Freelancing is a rollercoaster. Some days, you're landing dream clients and getting paid well for exciting work; other days, you're dealing with imposter syndrome or juggling multiple deadlines. The key to survive and thrive is a mindset to grow. A growth mindset, coined by psychologist Carol Dweck, is the belief that your abilities can be developed through hard work, learning, and perseverance. In freelancing, challenges aren't failures; they're opportunities to grow. No matter if a client ghosted you or a project went bust, a freelancer focused on growth sees every missed opportunity as a lesson. Resilience is key. Learn from the potholes in the road, change your strategy, and stay on the road.

Building a Personal Brand: Your Secret Weapon

Building a personal brand can be intimidating at times, but your brand is your secret weapon. It's not just about logos or business cards; it's about telling the world who you are and what you stand for. That's the magic of a personal brand: it's the impression you leave with clients, colleagues, and even casual connections long after you've logged off. Now, the question arises: How can we create a brand that cuts through the noise?

> *"Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room."*
> -Jeff Bezos

Start with clarity. What makes you unique? Maybe you're a writer who specialises in tech copy or a designer turning minimalist concepts into stunning visuals. Identify your vocation, which will be the foundation of your branding. Then, communicate it clearly through your platforms—a professional website, a well-curated Linked In profile, and a strong presence on social media. But don't just list your skills; instead, share your story. Talk about why you chose freelancing, the challenges you've overcome, and the victories you've celebrated. Clients connect with people, not resumes.

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Great Brands Start with Great Questions

Once you've established your brand, it's time to test it. Asking open-ended questions to colleagues or past clients is the best way for you to get feedback. For example: What sets me apart from other freelancers in my field? Or, What do you think I excel at? This feedback will help you refine your brand and messaging. Remember, continuous improvement keeps you in the game. Once you gain more experience and new skills, revisit your brand to ensure it stays in line with your growth.

The Freedom to Choose: Knowing When to Say No

One of the biggest perks of freelancing is that you have your freedom. You get to decide what projects you want to take on, what clients you want to work with, and how much to charge. But this freedom comes with the responsibility of knowing when to say NO. Sometimes, it may be tough, especially when just starting, to take on projects that don't align with your values, expertise, or interests. It can do more harm than good. Instead, be selective. Say no to opportunities that don't excite you or help you grow, and focus on those that challenge you and align with your long-term goals. When you refuse poor projects, you leave room for better ones.

Freelancing isn't just a job; it's a lifestyle; embrace it. It's about creating a career that fits your values, passions, and interests. But it also requires hard work, discipline, and the willingness to grow continuously. By cultivating a growth mindset, building a personal brand that reflects your unique skills, and embracing the freedom to choose projects that excite you, you'll set yourself up for long-term success in the freelance world. Freelancing isn't about working harder. It's about working smarter with passion, purpose, and a personal brand that speaks for itself.

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Breaking Barriers: Challenging the Conventional Careers in Journalism

By Nayana Ittiyamparampath and Aura Kataria

The traces of journalism have shifted immensely from the 17th century, and over the years, the media has witnessed profound change and transformed into a powerful weapon of democracy. Merriam-Webster defines journalism as 'the collection, editing and presentation of news through the media. However, is this definition applicable in today's digital society? The generational differences, fast-paced technological developments, and the need to match the evolving market trends have resulted in reshaping journalism as a profession and opening new, unconventional doors of opportunities in the field. The context in which journalism is seen today is in a state of constant fluctuation, as there has been a slow but steady drift from traditional print news to a more digitised space.

> *"Innovation is the lifeblood of journalism. Without it, we risk becoming irrelevant in a rapidly changing world."*
> - Kara Swisher.

Amplifying Journalism beyond the Conventional Careers

When the word 'journalists' is heard, it is often associated with roles such as reporters, editors, anchors, presenters, photographers, videographers, copywriters, etc. This limits one's career scope of exploring different aspects of creativity and knowledge. Bursting the bubble and standing out in a crowd are the skills needed to succeed in a competitive environment. YouTube and Instagram creators, travel vloggers, and podcasters are often not included in the so-called category of journalism. The reality is that young adults rely on these platforms to get most of their daily headlines, rather than newspapers or structured news channels, which are still prevalent, but more so among the older generation. So, the debate is, are these non-traditional news sources a modern form of journalism?

The Hidden Fields within Journalism

Alternative journalism is a pathway of journalism that steers away from the narrow walls of conventional coverage of news and extends beyond just writing and broadcasting. With the advent of social media, journalism has expanded and given rise to unconventional fields such as freelance war correspondents, advocacy journalism, digital storytelling, pop culture critiques and journalism ethics advisors. Journalism ethics advisors, who inspect the standards and credibility maintained by journalists. This job is extremely crucial today as there is a rampant upsurge of misinformation, fake news and violation of ethical norms.

Freelance war correspondents go to war conflicted zones, document and disseminate the events from the prisoners of war and catalysts, find a media source, for example, Reuters and Agence France-Presse (AFP) and publish their findings in the form of articles or documentaries. This is one of the more common jobs on the list. Advocacy journalism, on the other hand, focuses on using journalism as an instrument to voice out prejudices within society. Certain topics covered in this field are environmental issues, human rights violations and political exposés.

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Digital storytelling, as the name suggests, is the use of digital mediums to narrate stories using texts, images, video and audio. This is a way to bring in an immersive element in journalism and expand viewership. The field of pop culture critique is an up-and-coming profession that analyses aspects of movies, fashion and social media trends.

Why does the Industry need an Unconventional approach?
The rise seen in unconventional careers today is a result of the problems faced in traditional forms of journalism, as it is mundane and unappealing to the newer generations. Meeting the demand for diversity, creative freedom, and niche storytelling is something that cannot be achieved through mainstream journalism. Journalists are often burnt out and overworked yet underpaid. This is because journalism runs primarily on advertisement revenues, but platform companies have made it difficult to show ads at high rates.

Big media houses have a monopoly over a region, making it harder for upcoming media outlets to enter the market. Corporatisation and politicisation have become more commonplace, creating bias within the industry, which in turn leads to the suppression of voices and the spread of false news. Sensationalism and giving importance to more entertainment-based news have resulted in declining quality of content. These problems can be solved by breaking the barriers and making way towards unconventional careers in journalism.

Unconventional careers in journalism cater to a new normal. It challenges the pre-existing forms of journalism and gives it a fresh perspective. As the flux of newer generations increases, adapting to their interests and mindsets is essential. So, unconventional careers in journalism are not so unconventional - they are the need of the hour.

Gen Z, Digital Trends, and the Growth of Niche Careers in Media

By Prerna Daswani and Tanishaa Nidemboor

Niche is defined as "a place, employment, status, or activity for which a person or thing is best fitted" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.) and niche roles are highly specialised positions requiring unique skills and expertise. These roles address specific challenges or functions within broader fields, often bridging gaps that general roles cannot. Due to their specialised nature, they are less common, resulting in fewer opportunities and a limited pool of qualified professionals.

In a competitive market, businesses rely on niche professionals to deliver targeted solutions and drive success. In the media industry, the rise of digital platforms and the demand for personalised content have fueled the need for these roles. Additionally, Gen Z's career preferences for creativity, individuality, and innovation have pushed companies to create specialised positions to attract top talent and meet evolving demands (Skillfuel, 2024).

Niche Roles In Career Development

The part that niche roles play in career development is pivotal in shaping professionals equipped to navigate specialised fields. These positions provide individuals with opportunities to not only refine their expertise but also build distinct personal brands and contribute uniquely to their industries (Staff, 2024). For instance, a Micro-Influencer Strategist specialises in identifying and collaborating with smaller-scale influencers, mastering the art of targeted campaigns and genuine audience engagement. These individuals are sent PR packages that they are required to market online on their social media platforms. We see this happen quite often in the case of small businesses looking to grow their audience and business.

In the evolving media landscape, roles like Emoji Copywriter and ASMR Specialist exist as well. They cater to specific trends and audience preferences. An Emoji Copywriter designs playful, emoji-driven messages that resonate with younger demographics through relatable and concise communication. For example, countless YouTube channels and even F&B brands employ ASMR Specialists to produce audio-centric campaigns that captivate audiences by tapping into the sensory appeal of sound, thus connecting professionals in this niche to innovative marketing techniques.

Certain niche roles offer even more unique opportunities to bridge creativity with analytical prowess. A Meme Strategist, for instance, crafts relatable and viral memes that align with brand identities. Zomato exemplifies this example by employing Gen Z talent to boost engagement through witty reel comments and personalised app notifications, adding to the humorous memes they share and creating a relatable and engaging brand image.

By attracting highly skilled, specialised talent, companies can address precise challenges with innovative solutions. This approach enables organisations to stay competitive in a rapidly evolving media environment, ensuring their strategies remain relevant (Staff, 2024). Niche roles foster creativity and innovation within teams, allowing brands to experiment with unconventional approaches and gain a competitive edge. Ultimately, these roles empower both individuals and organisations, driving growth, fostering innovation, and ensuring alignment with evolving industry demands (ATS, n.d.).

Strategies Companies Use to Market Niche Roles to Youth:

Social media goes beyond job postings, allowing companies to showcase their culture, projects, and achievements through engaging content like videos and infographics. Active participation in groups and online events helps build trust and credibility and attract niche talent. Flexible work options, such as remote or project-based roles, appeal to niche professionals who value work-life balance and autonomy. These options expand the talent pool and boost productivity by catering to diverse needs. Encouraging employees to share phenomenal experiences about the company adds value to the employer brand. Sourcing authentic endorsements from actual staff members would invite more niche talent than official channels because they would showcase the company culture through a sense of community and atmosphere.

According to the article written by Lucas James Talent Partners in 2024, there are various challenges, but subsequent solutions are also available. The scarcity of qualified candidates for specialised roles can be addressed by broadening recruitment efforts through specialised job boards, professional networks, and industry-specific agencies. Simultaneously, organisations can focus on developing skills through targeted training and internship programs to expand the talent pool. In a landscape of intense competition, attracting in-demand talent necessitates offering competitive salaries, flexible work conditions, growth opportunities, and fostering a company culture aligned with professional values.

To manage the demanding nature of niche roles, employers should communicate expectations clearly and provide support through mentoring, regular feedback, and achievable goals, reducing stress and enhancing job satisfaction. Retaining specialised talent requires creating a balanced work environment, offering continuous development opportunities, recognising contributions, and ensuring employees feel valued and integral to the company's future.

The specialised niche roles in the media industry redefine the industry to meet specific needs. This trend is boosted by Gen Z's creativity and need for innovation, digital growth, and the demand for personalised communication. Trend forecasting and meme strategy are examples of specialist creative and data artisans working to solve narrow problems and ignite innovative activity. In addition to assisting organisations to adapt and thrive in a competitive environment, these positions enable professionals to hone their skills. The influence of niche roles on the direction media take is through creating avenues for encouraging innovation and following trends.

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How Generative AI is Empowering Small Newsrooms and Freelance Opportunities

By Insiya Johar

The journalism industry has evolved over decades, transitioning from traditional print to establishing a digital presence and then hopping on to social media platforms. With technological advancements, the industry has adapted to address the changing media landscape, and generative AI has emerged as the latest addition. Generative AI is an artificial intelligence technology that can create text and multimedia elements based on the given prompts and the data on which it has been trained. It is used by journalists to analyse information, combat deepfakes, and maintain an online presence, among other things.

The article will explore how chatbots are effective for small newsrooms and freelance journalists. A study published by the Science Journal argues that the current Large Language Models (LLMs) could make an individual at least 50% faster for an average of 14% of tasks in the hundreds of occupations it studied while maintaining or increasing quality. In addition, if we consider additional software on top of an LLM for a specific task, the average share of tasks per occupation that might benefit jumps to 46%. However, what is in it for the Journalism industry? Researchers estimate that for news analysts, reporters, and journalists, 43.3% of tasks will benefit from current LLM, and for editors, it is 52.4%.

How Generative AI Simplifies Complex Budget Analysis for Journalists

In 2023, in a survey conducted by the International Budget Partnership, the Philippines scored 75/100 in budget transparency but only scored 33/100 in public participation. Although the Philippines boasts one of the most transparent budgets in the world, analysing the budget becomes a complex task.

The 2025 budget document is highly technical, with over 730000 items. To solve this issue and make it easier for journalists to decipher it, Filipino journalist Jaemark Tordecilla used generative AI to create a chatbot called "Budget Bot." The bot uses ChatGPT's code interpreter to navigate vast datasets and present them in a Jupyter Notebook interface. An individual or journalist can utilise a budget bot with just a $20-a-month ChatGPT subscription, making it economical and convenient. In this way, generative AI helps individual journalists as a resource and increases their productivity.

The AI Tool to Combat Audio Deepfakes

In another newsroom in Spain, at PRISA Media, journalists have incorporated an experimental AI tool called VerificAudio to fight misinformation. This tool was developed in collaboration with the Google News Initiative and the Spanish technology company Minsait. VerificAudio is an AI-powered tool capable of detecting and assessing synthetic voice manipulation using natural language processing and deep learning. The tool further works on noise reduction, format reconversion, volume equalisation, and temporal cropping to analyse dubious audio. While detecting deepfakes, the tool does not offer absolute results; instead, it translates them into a percentage skewed towards either real or false. Journalists then consider this percentage and their fact-checking procedures to make the final decision.

Redefining Efficiency through Generative AI

Cuestión Pública is a small independent Colombian newsroom that focuses on investigative journalism. Since investigative journalism is their primary focus, covering daily news and current affairs becomes arduous with a limited workforce of ten full-time employees and 14 journalists, including part-time or freelance journalists. To solve this issue, in 2023, the newsroom received $5000 from the Open Society Foundations' Applied AI in Journalism and created an AI tool called "Odin" for day-to-day breaking news. Odin's interface produces an X thread on a trending topic within 15 minutes, which would have otherwise taken three hours for a journalist to do. Odin connects the trending topic and Cuestión Pública's five-year database by putting together a draft in the newsroom's distinctive tone and voice, which has an acidic tone characterised by irony. The end product is then supervised by journalists and posted on social media.

In another case, British journalist Sophia Smith designed an AI chatbot called Sophina to counter the issue of efficiency. The chatbot helps journalists to write scripts and create viral videos in vertical format. Smith had made herself a name for creating viral news videos but wanted to safeguard her work from being used by tech companies to train their LLMs and, therefore, did not consent to it. This resulted in the creation of Sophina, which gave her ownership of the tool. While creating news packages, scripting becomes time-consuming. However, Sophina minimises this time and creates viral scripts that are optimised for a 'journalistic algorithm'. A further advantage of this tool is that if there is an algorithm shift on social media, the prompt can be tweaked in the chatbot, and Sophina will work accordingly.

Generative AI has undoubtedly transformed journalism, offering small newsrooms and freelance journalists innovative ways to analyse complex information and increase efficiency. However, a research paper titled Generative AI in Journalism: The Evolution of Newswork and Ethics in a Generative Information Ecosystem found users' concerns regarding using generative AI in newsrooms. It discovered that 21.8% of responses were concerned about "no human supervision" and 16.4% about "inaccurate information". This suggests that generative AI, though a highly useful tool, may not be entirely reliable, making it essential to integrate robust fact-checking and human editorial review. Nevertheless, generative AI can be an asset to the newsrooms if utilised in a just and transparent way.

Creating Content as a Digital Generation

By Aadrita Nandi

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, everyone wants to create some genre of content, as it has become a vital source to acquire and generate income. Content creation in this digital age is a potential profession for many and even a space to blend creativity and ideas to share with a global audience. The new generation, or Gen-Z, has been growing up in an era where digital content is one of the primary sources of entertainment. The author believes that whenever the new generation wants to get out of the daily musings of their monotonous lives, they often turn to Instagram or YouTube. As the new generation navigates through this ever-changing concept of media environment, it is crucial to understand how creating content that resonates with the audiences derives a meaningful impact. This paper explores the multifaceted idea of content creation today, its impact on the audience, its importance, and how to create content that entertains and influences people for the better.

Evolving and Expanding Plethora of Content Creation:
The digital revolution has completely remodelled the way we consume and create content. The rapid industrial growth of social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, X, blogs, and video-sharing websites is challenging traditional media outlets like magazines, television, newspapers, etc. Traditional media outlets, although entertaining, don't allow audiences to create content through those platforms. Content creation was popularised by pioneers of content creation platforms like YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, etc., in the 2010s. These platforms allowed creators to share their ideas and stories with a global audience. These platforms not only democratise and influence people but also monetise worthy creators, giving them a source of income for their work.

The Human Element: The Key to Creating Effective and Relevant Content
While technology is the faucet through which content flows into such global platforms, the human element in content creation is indispensable. Authentic storytelling, emotional connection, empathy, etc., are qualities that make every piece of content special and unique within itself. These human elements are something that AI can never replicate, even in such a digital age. By adding a human touch and uniqueness to their content, creators can forge meaningful connections and deeper engagement with their audiences, creating a loyal fan base. In content creation, the creator must understand the content type they want to create and what describes them.

The content should be entertaining, as it is hard to grab the new generation's attention. Incorporating aesthetically pleasing and engaging visuals can overcome the acute attention economy. Transparency builds trust with the audience. Learning how to market content and tailor it to the social media platform for a quicker reach is a crucial skill. Lastly, the creator must stay current on top of trends and adapt their content accordingly.

The Future of Content Creation:

As technology constantly evolves, so does the future of content creation, as it holds groundbreaking possibilities. Even with the rise of AI and machine learning, they can assist creators in a few things, freeing them to focus more on the artistic dimension of content creation. However, the humanistic element will always remain the most pivotal and valuable asset in creating new content that resonates with such a broad stage of audiences. Nonetheless, this platform must be used to generate valuable and entertaining content, not content that has fatal effects that wire the minds of younger generations, as they are the primary consumers of such media.

Experience is the best teacher in managing creativity and deadlines. Nike's "Just Do It" and Dove's "Real In the digital age, content creation is a pioneering tool for individuals and organisations to strike a chord with their audiences, entertain them, build a brand image, pursue it as a profession, and generate wealth. By embracing digital growth and leveraging its perks, content creators can produce impactful and compelling content that has the power to influence generations. Nonetheless, content creators must use such a platform to help bring positive changes rather than negatively affect the audiences. As the digital landscape and media evolve day by day, the ability to create entertaining, helpful, and authentic content will be the key differentiator for success as a creator.

On SEO's Evolution and the Growth of Audience-centric Optimisation Strategies

By Rajat Bandhopadhyay

Search Engine Optimisation is a unique art that evolves constantly with growing trends and shifting algorithmic paradigms. It has come a long way from a traditional keyword-density approach to a keyword relevance and credibility approach. For the unversed, keyword density is the traditional method of inserting potential keywords at various places within a website, ensuring that the pages of the website get screened by crawlers. Earlier, SEO practices in the World Wide Web focussed primarily on keyword manipulation and stuffing different combinations of relevant and irrelevant keywords to attract search engine bots. Additionally, building dummy and decoy links with no credible websites to route them or host them was also widely practised, as traditional SEO approaches focus more on the website's hit counter than page views and unique visitors. These tactics were often employed to artificially boost a website's ranking in search engine results pages (SERPs). However, as search engines became more sophisticated, these tactics became less effective. Today, SEO is more about understanding the search intent and the emotional appeal of a keyword before being suggested for indexing (Moz, 2023).

The purpose of the ever-increasingly sophisticated algorithms is to optimise user experience and content quality. Google has updated its algorithm multiple times in the last 10 years, some of the most popular ones being Panda and Penguin (Google Search Central, 2023). These updates tend to penalize low-quality and irrelevant content and, in turn, reward relevant web pages that establish credibility. The question is, what kind of SEO keywords do we need to work with that are easily understood by the search engine AI? The answer lies in implementing hooks and relevant phrases, which are aligned with the search intent of the user (HubSpot, 2022).

Emerging practices such as using AI-based content research & suggestions, framing search intent-friendly keywords, and eye-catching hook keywords are essential to carve the relevance of a website in today's attention-powered economy (Jasper AI, 2024). Hooks refer to compelling phrases or ideas that capture the reader's attention (as opposed to capturing the algorithm). These hooks are essential for engagement and can be implemented in titles, headings, and introductions to draw readers in. It is important to decide what hooks resonate with the audience so that the content can be tailored to meet their needs and improve their chances of being visible in search results (Search Engine Land, 2020). Content relevance is crucial for effective SEO. In modern SEO practices, it is essential to challenge the old-school method and develop numerous other SEO tactics with creative marketing ideas and concepts. These practices add more value to the content apart from the company. Creatively marketing content can not only help drive more traffic to the website but can also be used to focus on one particular line of products. It can also boost brand recall based on creative elements like campaign slogans and titles that resemble the language of the mass online audience (Cervi, 2020). Having such an objective-driven approach can help to understand the shifting practices of internet trends and ever-evolving popular culture.

Thus, experimenting with new approaches such as voice-over content, video content, hook-based content, or simply any other format of content that helps to engage with the target audience is more favourable than prioritizing being on top of the search engine results page. SEO today is no less than an art form, where many digital marketing practitioners can use innovative approaches to win the battle of visibility, search result rankings, and the overall ease of being found online.

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Building Youth Friendly Media Workspace

By Riya Rode

In contemporary media corporations, the expectations of youth differ from those of previous generations. This article discusses potential strategies for attracting and retaining young talent by focusing on digital fluency, creating an inclusive and non-toxic work environment, promoting business and creative opportunities for professional development, and addressing mental health concerns. A synthesis of current trends and research in the media industry underpins these strategies, offering organisations insights into how they can remain competitive in attracting this generation of employees. Youth forces in media corporations have distinct mindsets shaped by generational differences in priorities and expectations. Organisations must adapt to this shift by focusing on quality hiring, leveraging digital skills, and fostering an evolved workplace culture. This article explores interventions and strategies to attract and retain young talent in media workspaces, addressing their unique needs and aspirations.

Digital recruitment and communication are essential for attracting youth to media corporations, as their expectations differ from previous generations. Organisations must adopt quality hiring practices, leveraging digital skills and fostering an evolved workplace culture. Digitally oriented data-driven analytics enable customised recruitment campaigns with personalised messaging alongside flexible communication tools and social media platforms to showcase company traditions and values. Hybrid and remote work models are increasingly popular, offering youth the convenience of work-from-home options. Such arrangements align with Gen Z's desire for work-life balance and opportunities for professional development. Moreover, fostering a non-toxic, diversity-driven workplace dynamic is critical. Inclusivity in ethnicity, gender, and perspectives attracts Gen Z, while employer branding initiatives that emphasise authenticity, social responsibility, and growth opportunities further enhance appeal.

Youth also endorse social responsibility, favouring purpose-driven environments that contribute to larger societal goals. Companies that encourage creative expression through brainstorming areas and art installations spark innovation and idea-sharing. Retaining youth requires cross-functional opportunities that enhance adaptability and engagement by allowing employees to explore different roles and participate in interdisciplinary projects. Strategic collaborations with respected influencers and creators amplify brand visibility, positioning organisations as creative and innovative hubs. Addressing mental health proactively through wellness programs, flexible scheduling, and open dialogue mitigates burnout and fosters organisational loyalty. By addressing generational differences in workplace expectations and values, organisations can attract and retain young talent, creating an environment that drives innovation and positions companies as desirable workplaces for future leaders.

Attracting and retaining young talent in media requires acknowledging generational differences in expectations and values. By prioritising digital fluency, inclusivity, mental health, and creativity, organisations can foster environments that drive innovation and transformation. Embracing these strategies positions companies as desirable workplaces, ensuring an innovative future led by fresh perspectives.

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Insights into Modern Forms of Journalism

By Nishthha Bhargava & Srija Misra

The industry of digital journalism has drastically evolved with the advent of technology. Traditionally, journalism was limited to reporters, columnists, and editors. However, journalism has come a long way, giving rise to new career paths such as influencer journalism, social media content creators, and podcasters, reshaping the media landscape. The growing opportunities for journalism are a product of the increasing power of digital media content to reach large audiences.

Influencer Journalism

Influencer journalism is a fusion of traditional reporting and personal branding. While traditional journalists tend to focus solely on delivering news, influencer journalists create personalities around their niches and accompany their commentaries with personal anecdotes. This technique is used to connect with their audience on a deeper level by presenting information in the form of entertainment. Taylor Lorenz, a technology journalist at the New York Times, has transitioned into a career combining journalism with her experiences and insights on internet culture, using platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Lorenz's style is unique as she conveys her in-depth analysis with her personal storytelling, appealing to a demographic that prefers relating to news personalities rather than faceless news organisations. Another example is Dhruv Rathee, a popular YouTube influencer whose content features discussion on political and socio-economic issues. He also maintains an active presence on other social media platforms, interacting with audiences to boost his engagement with the public.

Social Media Journalists

Like influencer journalists, social media journalists are news writers specialising in content specifically suited to their platform, focusing on real-time reporting and audience engagement. Such journalism is based on a culture of immediacy and brevity that caters to the quick consumption habits of social media users. In contrast, influencer journalists typically focus on long-form content that studies specific details by breaking down socio-political events and phenomena taking place regularly. Such forms of content intend to explain rather than simply inform in the way social media reporting does This makes social media journalism an important resource for those looking for instantaneous updates in the digital world. An example of this genre is Mohammed Zubair, co-founder of Alt News, who often uses Twitter to comment on news or correct misinformation through fact-checking and narrative debunking.

Podcasting: Storytelling through Audio
Alternative journalism's new storytelling format is borrowed from the concept of radio programmes, giving rise to Podcasting, free from the constraints of written news, as it uses audio channels and platforms to convey news and information. Podcasting shows a clear shift from long-form visual storytelling models of journalism by newspapers like The New York Times. It has popularised the preference for serial podcast shows, creating significant scope for investigative reporting. Amit Varma, an active figure in the world of political journalism, runs the podcast The Seen and the Unseen on various platforms. This medium creates a space for long-form discussions to thrive in today's world of fast-paced, picture-rich content that social media journalists put out. Another notable example of podcast journalism is Pooja Singh's The Big Story, an Indian podcast produced by CNN News18. Singh covers the latest news stories and elaborates on major political, economic, and social issues, featuring experts and guest speakers. The Big Story demonstrates how podcast journalism can provide deep insight into current issues, acting as a channel to host well-researched thought.

Independent Journalism: Moving Toward Sustainable and Customised Models
Independent journalism has emerged recently as a preferred career, allowing journalists to remain independent of corporate or institutional influence, unlike most mainstream productions today. Primarily, Independent journalists are supported by their audiences through crowdfunding, memberships, and paying subscribers or freelancing. Independent journalists are free from restrictions by production houses and news agencies, allowing them to completely exercise their editorial vision. Some key personalities working as independent journalists include Faye D'Souza, who uses platforms like Instagram and YouTube to address politics and society. Another example is Casey Newton, who co-founded The Verge and built his newsletter platform, Platformer, on which he discusses technology and politics. His independent venture thrives on the subscription model, allowing him to sustain his work independently.

Unconventional journalism marks the evolution of content and storytelling produced by journalists. Every model of journalism caters to a separate audience through a different form of storytelling, thus expanding the scope of journalism and news consumption. There is now space for niche content that might be able to question conventional journalism. These new career prospects represent adaptability, a characteristic that testifies to journalism's commitment to connecting with audiences in diverse and meaningful ways as times change.

The Dark Side of the PR Industry: Exploiting Digital Creators in the Creator Economy

By Anisha Atul Khedekar

The modern creator economy revolutionises the interaction between brands and audiences, making digital creators the heart of modern marketing and PR strategies. Their capacity to reach niche audiences and authenticity has placed these creators as an irreplaceable part of the industry at whatever cost. The creator economy is a double-edged sword for digital creators, the former who are remapping PR by influence and creative power but are, on the one hand, suffering from tremendous exploitation. Brands, agencies, and platforms ask for free labour, underpay, and misuse creator data. This paper explores the darker aspects of the creator economy through burnout, uncredited work, and power imbalances within the industry that promise inclusivity yet operate with legal loopholes.

Kavya Karnatac, culture influencer, rejected 60% of brand deals; "Some creators are expected to work for free for the sake of visibility." PR agencies justify these unpaid collaborations, stating it's a win-win situation: creators receive publicity, build portfolios and deepen relationships with brands. Nano-influencers (1K-10K followers) and micro-influencers (10K-50K followers) are targeted as they are eager to grow and willing to accept free products or experience overpayments. PR agencies also claim that collaborating with reputed brands enhances creators' credibility and future paid opportunities. This strategy doesn't respect the time, effort and resources invested in content creation. It takes advantage of the creator's desire to expand their reach, leaving them to bear the burden of unpaid labour.

The power imbalance between digital creators and PR agencies results in meagre negotiation powers by the creators. PR agencies usually decide what to feature in content, forcing creators to adopt certain narratives that align with brand guidelines, not leaving room for expression. Deadlines and demands for constant campaigns have brought about creator burnout. Aanchal Agrawal, a digital creator and a stand-up comedian, was exhausted from keeping up with the algorithms and the stream of endless content production. "I was so exhausted with all this initially. Then I set a rule of taking breaks," she said.

In recent years, we have witnessed more digital creators scaling down their existence and talking about burnout. Most of these creators attribute this continuous pursuit of perfection, constant interaction with the audience, and fixation on performance metrics in the name of relevance in the current landscape of PR to being damaging to mental and emotional health. This increased fatigue directly results from how the PR industry, making money off of influence, forgets the costs to creators in the interest of short-term gains. Data privacy violation exploits creators where personal information and audience insights for creators are mishandled and lead to unauthorised use. Thousands of law enforcement officers and applicants recently had their biometric and personal data breached online.

Similarly, personal data also suffers from the vulnerability of digital mishandling. Although the current incidence refers only to law enforcement data, it is an example of the entire mishandling of data in the digital realm.

In research, caste-based discrimination was pointed out wherein the upper-caste influencers occupy the space, and others remain marginalised. The problem is a systemic bias that limits the opportunity for a diverse voice and makes a digital space a social hierarchy. In India's PR industry, structural gaps and legal loopholes undermine the rights of digital creators. The lack of a strong law framework exposes a creator to PR agreements, often without standardised contracts. This lack of accountability regarding creator-brand contracts means exploitation and unfair compensation practices. For example, a report by the Fairwork India Ratings 2023 reveals that most gig economy platforms fail to provide fair pay, thus creating a need to standardise contracts and fair pay standards.

The exploitation of digital creators within the creator economy is an urgent issue that cannot be ignored. The creator economy demands fairness and respect; without it, the entire ecosystem is at risk. If the PR industry continues to take away creators' creativity and labour for its success, it will chip away at the trust in which creators and audiences have invested. The era of quick fixes and shortcuts is over. Ethical, sustainable practices are the only way forward. Will the industry grow or crumble beneath the weight of its greed? The answer lies in how it chooses to treat its creators today.

Lights, Camera, Freelance: Thriving as a Cinematographer in India

By Kehan Chindhy

The creative industry in India has seen remarkable transformations in recent years. The rise of freelancing has resulted in creators getting alternate opportunities to showcase their talent, refine their craft and learn through hands-on experience. Freelancing has opened avenues for artists to craft their journeys. Cinematographers, often hailed as visual storytellers, oscillate between diverse opportunities. Most pray for their dream jobs in the form of independent film shoots; however, there are more pennies in the pot regarding quality work. A cinematographer can land gigs to create visual magic at a music festival, a restaurant/cafe opening or even the opening of a corporate shoot. Yet, securing gigs in this dynamic field requires more than just talent; it demands strategic networking, adaptability, and an entrepreneurial mindset.

Understanding the Landscape

There is a need for cinematographers in many industries in India. Music festivals such as Sunburn, VH1 Supersonic and NH7 Weekender India must use Vibrant, dynamic visuals to convey the event's spirit. Similarly, cinematographers must artistically display locations, ambience, and culinary artistry during restaurant openings, which strongly focus on establishing a stylish and captivating setting. These jobs are very different from studio or traditional filmmaking, which takes a more controlled and story-driven approach. It is essential for freelancers working in this field to realize that these chances frequently arise from a gig-oriented, fragmented market. The freelance gig economy revolves around short-term contracts, which provide freedom but also uncertainty, in contrast to full-time positions at studios or production companies. The unpredictability of freelancing entails establishing a career for cinematographers based on their reputation, an impressive portfolio, and persistent networking.

Networking: The Lifeblood of Freelancing

For Indian cinematographers, networking is not just essential; it is the foundation upon which careers are built. The first step is creating a strong presence within communities where potential clients congregate. Film societies, creative workshops, and meetups organized by platforms like Film Companion or Indian Film Project offer opportunities to connect with event organizers, producers, and fellow creatives. Social media platforms play a crucial role in networking. In Instagram, Linked In, and even YouTube, cinematographers can showcase their work, engage with audiences, and attract potential clients. Many freelancers leverage these platforms by sharing behind-the-scenes content, tutorials, or project highlights. Regular engagement can lead to collaborations and referrals, a significant source of gigs in this industry.

Building a Portfolio

A strong portfolio serves as a résumé in the gig economy. Building a versatile portfolio should be the goal of aspiring cinematographers. A music festival production, for example, might showcase artful framing, complex lighting arrangements, and dynamic crowd shots. However, work for a restaurant launch may emphasize atmospheric shots, in-depth close-ups, and using food and décor to convey a story.

Working on small, non-commercial projects or volunteering are two ways to get a portfolio started. Working with local companies, NGOs, or independent musicians can provide practical experience and help establish credibility. These projects may not pay initially, but they will help demonstrate one's skills, leading to frequently paid gigs.

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Understanding Client Needs and Requirements

Every gig has a different set of requirements and difficulties. Cinematographers need to have the ability to comprehend and execute the visions of their clients. For a music festival, the emphasis may be on vibrant images that convey the enthusiasm of the artists and the audience. On the other hand, a restaurant launch can focus more on style, highlighting the layout and menu.

For expectations to be aligned, clear communication is essential. To build trust and guarantee flawless execution, pre-production meetings to review shot lists, stylistic preferences, and timeframes might be beneficial. To get excellent results, it is also essential to comprehend the technical elements, such as lighting, camera configurations, and post-production needs.

Freelancers often encounter challenges such as fluctuating incomes, irregular work schedules, and last-minute changes. For Indian cinematographers, the competitive nature of the industry adds another layer of complexity. Building a support system through industry peers, mentors, and online communities can provide guidance and emotional support during lean periods.

Financial planning is equally important. Maintaining a balance between investing in high-quality equipment and managing day-to-day expenses can help sustain a long-term career. Additionally, diversifying income streams by exploring different genres of cinematography—such as corporate videos, advertisements, or short films—can offer stability

The quest for gigs in India's freelance cinematography landscape is both challenging and rewarding. While the path is rife with uncertainties, it offers unparalleled creative freedom and the opportunity to work on diverse projects. Cinematographers can carve a niche in this vibrant and evolving ecosystem by building a strong network, crafting a compelling portfolio, and staying adaptable to industry trends. With persistence and passion, the gig economy can transform from a daunting challenge into a platform for unlimited possibilities.
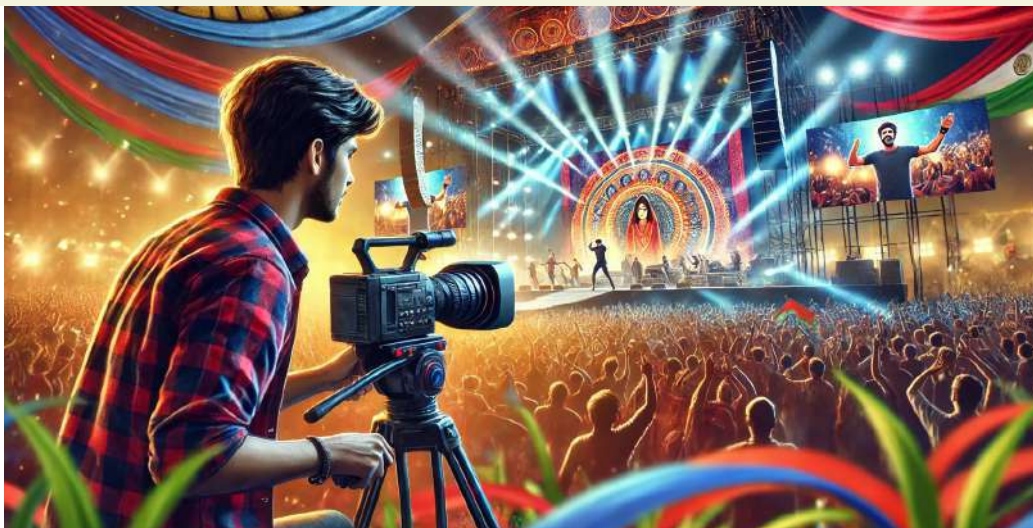
Niche Is the New Norm: Redefining Media Consumption in the Digital Age

By Saniya Singh

In recent years, niche content consumption has assumed immense importance with the emergence of more digital and social media platforms. Niche content, unlike mass media, refers to content delivered to a particular group with specific interests rather than to a broad audience that mass media typically caters to. It reflects wider-scale changes in audience media consumption, fueled by technological advancement and the possibility of custom-made content. The rise of niche content has wide-ranging implications for content creators and audiences as much as for the traditional media industry. This paper examines why niche content is growing, its impact on mainstream media, and its trend into the future of consumption.

The Emergence of Digital Platforms

One main reason niche content grows is the rapid increase of digital platforms offering wide arrays of content targeted toward super-specific interests. For instance, YouTube and TikTok, as well as podcasts, have helped democratise the media creation process by letting creators bypass or, more than likely, avoid traditional media institutions and not be cowed by the possible constraints that they may pose. On these platforms, niche subjects can reach small specialised audiences as algorithms are used to tailor content according to individual user preferences. This makes niche content more discoverable and accessible than ever, enabling creators to build authentic, involved audiences. Digital platforms, therefore, have allowed for the removal of intermediaries, like TV networks or publishers, who act between content creators and consumers.

Audience Fragmentation and Personalisation

Most of the shift from mass-market content to niche content is due to audience fragmentation. The internet has helped consumers find content that best matches their individual interests, preferences, and hobbies. Such communities are much more engaged and interactive than users of traditional media. In addition, social media and content-sharing websites enable users to become content creators and share their work, further enhancing the diversification of media content. The more niche communities are built, the more advertisers understand that this subgroup may be smaller but very focused on the growing need for niche-specific content.

Monetisation and Content Generation

Niche content also has much to give creators. Focusing on a particular subject or interest, creators can easily position themselves as authorities in their niche, bringing devoted followings along. Loyal and engaged niche audiences can encourage continued engagement and community building. This allows for different types of monetisation, including sponsorships, brand partnerships, paid content, and crowdfunding sites like Patreon. Furthermore, the low cost of production for niche content ensures that more producers gain access to the niche content, and financial barriers that may otherwise limit access to traditional media production are removed.

Niche content presents an avenue to create messages for particular high-value audiences targeted by advertisers. With consumers shifting further to digital for content consumption, it implies that advertisers can leverage richer data from these platforms to enhance message reach. This change leads to influencer marketing, where brands have a partnership with the creators who have a following for a specific niche. It creates a more direct route to the consumer, who would more than likely engage and respond to tailored messaging.

The increase in niche content represents an even broader trend away from traditional patterns of media consumption; that is, more and more people are changing their patterns of media consumption according to technological and digital innovations. Wherever audiences fragment, demand in general for content grows for all and sundry specific interests and preferences. These changes will make legacy media organisations more diverse in the types of programs they carry, but digital platforms are truly the change agents. Niche markets will only continue to increase in the near future as creators and advertisers will seize opportunities for higher engagement and monetisation through these communities. The role of niche content will, in future, play a pivotal role when the individual is more fragmented and personalised in the media landscape.

The Role of Creators in Redefining PR in the Digital Age

By Arpita Luthra

Public relations (PR) is changing at its very core. It has traditionally followed a linear model in which professionals craft messages that are delivered by journalists to passive audiences. However, the rise of digital platforms of Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, has changed this dynamic. Digital creators are now becoming architects of influence, building communities and fostering connections with audiences. Especially, since authentic voices resonate with audiences, PR professionals must recognise this shift to stay relevant. In this context, the article will examine the changing relationship between creators and PR, including real-life campaigns, the issues and ethics of this turn, and what the future holds.

> *"In the era of digital storytelling, creators are not just changing the conversation they are diving it"*

Creators as New Architects of Influence

Creators are storytellers who earn the trust of their audience through authenticity. For instance, Gymshark, a fitness brand, bypassed traditional advertising methods and instead sought to collaborate with influencers whose lifestyles represented the brand's values. These influencers did not simply wear Gymshark but they also personified its core values. This is how a connection that feels relevant to the audience, rather than a mere spectacle, becomes a billion-dollar brand. Similarly, Fenty Beauty redefined the standards of inclusivity within the beauty industry. The makeup brand collaborated with diverse creators who shared its values. The message—beauty for all—was not scripted by PR professionals but was conveyed through real, lived experiences. This approach resonated with audiences, who found it relatable. Apple's #ShotOniPhone campaign illustrates the power of this approach. Here, Apple put together influencers of high-profile reach with the intimacy of everyday creators to make a marketing initiative become a global conversation. The message was that anyone can tell their story through an iPhone lens.

Ethical Challenges and the Fragility of Trust

Trust is fundamental to the creator-PR dynamic and without it, this relationship breaks down. A notable example of this occurred in 2019 when influencer Elle Darby was involved in a scandal after failing to disclose a paid partnership. The fallout was swift, her credibility was damaged, and the reputation of the brand she represented was also marred. Now, transparency is no longer a choice but a necessity. Regulations such as the FTC guidelines in the United States and ASA rules in the United Kingdom demand full disclosure. However, compliance with these regulations alone is not enough. Audiences expect openness and honesty. When creators and brands fail to meet these expectations, the damage can be severe or even irreparable.

Moreover, another challenge that exists is the matter of control. Creators, by nature, work independently. PR teams who drive the message must adapt to collaborate rather than command. When creators are empowered to maintain their authenticity while aligning with brand values, it results in effective and meaningful partnerships. There are tensions in the relationship between PR and creators. However, when appropriately executed, the results are transformative. Fenty Beauty stands out as a case in point. Instead of imposing rigid narratives, it allowed creators to design their identities. Moreover, what came about was organic but impactful.

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Striking Balance between Deadlines and Innovation

By Siya Samant

The media industry thrives on a balance of creativity and deadlines, with professionals needing to manage this balance to build successful careers in a fast-paced environment. Creativity, often fueled by emotions, is shaped by freedom and experience. It is a process that requires time, patience and persistence to reach its full potential, along with careful consideration before implementation. The outcomes of these processes are impactful, often resonating with the audience in the media industry. For instance, Christopher Nolan took approximately ten years to complete the film Inception, which is now regarded as a prime example of creative brilliance. The role of deadlines is to maintain consistency, ensure an efficient workflow, drive focus, and improve time management. Deadlines also cultivate perseverance, as they help individuals develop the ability to overcome obstacles and meet expectations. For example, in marketing, project timelines are often aligned with product campaigns, making it essential to complete the tasks on time to ensure the campaign's success. In this case, failure to meet deadlines can result in serious consequences.

Challenges in Balancing Deadlines and Creativity

Balancing deadlines and creativity is a big challenge, often leading to several difficulties such as time pressure, stress, and compromised quality. Tight deadlines can limit opportunities for brainstorming and experimentation, while the constant demand to deliver the work on time can negatively affect mental health causing problems like stress. If individuals are frequently rushing to meet deadlines, it may result in errors or even a lack of innovation. On the other hand, having too much time can lead to overthinking and procrastination, both of which may severely affect the final product. In a team setting, these challenges become complex as each member has to contribute different ideas while also sticking to deadlines.

Strategies for Creativity Under Pressure

Despite the challenges, it is possible to effectively manage both deadlines and creativity. Mastering this requires understanding the creative process and respecting the time needed for ideas to evolve into meaningful outcomes. Dividing the project into smaller and manageable tasks allows for complete focus on each task by carrying it out in an organised manner. Similarly, setting aside some time for brainstorming and thinking outside the box helps creativity flow and generate fresh ideas.

Clear communication in teams is a key that ensures everyone stays aligned. Healthy discussions, where each person shares their point of perspective, help understand different aspects of the project. Prioritising tasks and delegating responsibilities among team members reduces stress and makes the workload manageable. Other strategies also include maintaining a positive mindset, managing pressure effectively, and taking regular breaks to recharge.

The importance of balancing deadlines and creativity lies in both the process and results. This balance ensures that professionals can deliver work on time while maintaining quality, which reflects positively on an individual's character or brand image. An excellent example demonstrating this is Nike's Just Do It campaign. Despite being created under time constraints, the campaign did not compromise on creativity. It was a bold and inspiring move by Nike that showcased the power of strength and determination in the world. The success of this campaign sets an example of how deadlines and creativity, when managed well can lead to outstanding accomplishments.

In conclusion, balancing deadlines and creativity is crucial for producing impactful and meaningful work. Finding the balance is not about choosing one over the other, but about blending them in the right proportion. It makes individuals remain calm and creative while also acting wisely within the constraints of time. By managing time effectively and embracing challenges, one can create work that meets its expectations. Ultimately, it is about trusting the process and starting with a simple idea that will eventually develop into something extraordinary.

Decoding the Success of Niche Magazines in a Fragmented Media Landscape

By Aditi Tarafdar

The growing popularity of niche magazines, both in print and digital, reflects a significant shift in how audiences engage with media in an era dominated by personalisation. These publications offer content tailored to highly particular audiences, carving out unique spaces in the media landscape, much like the subcultures that existed before the rise of the internet.

To begin with, Ane Lynge-Jorlén, in her paper *Between Edge and Elite: Niche Fashion Magazines*, Producers, and Readers defines niche magazines as a sub-genre of magazines that focus on highly specialised content catering to specific cultural intermediaries and niche audiences. These magazines are not just about providing information; they serve as cultural artefacts, engaging deeply with the symbolic value of their subjects (Lynge-Jorlén, 2009).

Niche magazines thrive on their ability to connect with communities by focusing on a specific interest. This trend aligns with the rise of hyper-personalisation, where people seek content that is excessively fine-tuned to their values and identities. Unlike mainstream publications, niche magazines cater to hardcore enthusiasts with a deep, well-curated understanding of technology, design, wellness, or culture. For example, i-D and Rolling Stone have historically appealed to alternative and avant-garde subcultures, blending style with artistic commentary to challenge conventional artistic narratives.

However, the niche is not limited to art; The Caravan, for example, has long been a favourite in India for its feature stories and long-form, essentially political journalism. Similarly, Digit has established its presence in the country as a magazine for tech enthusiasts. Neither is the niche restricted to the glossy pages of print. The digital revolution further broadened the reach of niche media, making a virtual, more accessible platform for stories that often go under the radar of traditional publications.

Digital platforms enable cost-effective production and distribution, allowing independent publishers to flourish without the overhead of conventional printing. As noted in studies of alternative media forms, digital niche publications such as Rest of World excel at amplifying underrepresented global stories, offering perspectives often overlooked by mainstream outlets (Le Masurier 2012).

One of the critical factors behind the appeal of niche magazines is their ability to build communities around shared interests. By focusing on topics like local culture, emerging art, or sustainable living, these magazines foster a sense of belonging among their readers. The Juggernaut, focusing on South Asian culture, excels, especially amongst the diaspora.

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The economic model of niche magazines also highlights their resilience. While traditional publications struggle to maintain revenue streams, the unique nature of the stories and the design language of niche magazines allow them to adopt subscription-based or collector-oriented models with more success. These strategies ensure a loyal readership willing to invest in content that feels uniquely relevant to them. Many digital-first platforms now use personalised recommendation algorithms to enhance the user experience, further deepening engagement with specific demographics.

However, the rise of niche media is challenging. The reliance on digital advertising exposes publications to interventions from sponsors and large tech platforms. Additionally, the oversaturation of content can make it difficult for smaller publications to maintain visibility. Yet, the enduring appeal of niche magazines demonstrates the value of authenticity and expertise in a crowded media environment (Baker, 2018).

As personalised media consumption becomes the norm, the role of niche magazines will likely expand. Publications like these have repeatedly proved their role in providing a platform for narratives beyond those presented by mainstream media, bringing a more human touch to a landscape dominated by market voices and ultimately shaping how stories are approached in a fast-changing journalistic world.

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The Power of Precision: The Rise and Impact of Niche Content Creation

By Devin

The evolution of niche content has reshaped the digital media market, nationally and globally, over the last decade. This study explores the engendering forces of specialised media, including the democratisation and monetisation of content creation platforms. Niche content prospers to cater to a particular audience, fostering meaningful engagement and a sense of community among creators and their audiences.

Niche Content is a content-based marketing strategy aimed at attracting a specific demographic; it is created to engage specific groups of people, providing them with tailored content that mainstream media might overlook. In social and economic markets, niche content has become increasingly popular as creators seek to cater to specific demographics, allowing for authentic connections and compelling engagement. Niche content is preferable in the said sense of the word because the overproduction of content on media platforms serves as a crowded and confusing market for consumers, especially if the creator creates content that explores various demographics.

Various niche platforms that provide specific content thrive due to their ability to attract and sustain their audience effectively. Studies have shown that such content fares better than mainstream forms of entertainment.

> *"Niche social platforms have seen user engagement rates that are up to 60% higher than those of mainstream social media"*
> (The Rise of Niche Social Media, 2024).

Indian consumers are uncomfortable with change, so the niche market works more constructively here than the mainstream market. As a Creator, embracing authenticity and cultivating a niche can help one connect deeply with their audience and experience growth in its essence. Niche content also embeds itself as the force to become globally mainstream and has transformed cultural trends, such as K-pop, Goth, Alternate music, and more, to grow mainstream. The practical reason for the specificity growth in content creation can be traced back to the initial blogging days (2005-2010) when creators explored niche concepts like fitness, travelling, hiking, cooking, and more. The growth seen in niche content also lies in the fact that their audience trusts niche content creators to provide them with the content they were promised. Rather than an influx of information on various things, niche platforms provide essential and quality services to their built patrons.

As Jim Sheperd stated in his article in ETBrandEquity, the fan bases of creators are very particular about the time they are investing in what they are watching, and these fans put in ample amounts of effort in places where they are reassured of authenticity rather than passive engagement. Niche content is imperative in shaping advertising strategies by attracting advertisers who want to target a specific audience. When creators focus on specialised topics, they naturally draw in listeners interested in those subjects, making the advertising messages more relevant and efficient.

This allows brands to effectively connect with their ideal customers, leading to better engagement rates and higher returns on investment for their campaigns.

The burgeoning of niche content in digital media marks a pivotal shift in how audiences engage with content. As Daniela Schlütz and Imke Hedder note, "Media performers can trigger parasocial relationships through informal, conversational styles and audience engagement, fostering intimacy and loyalty within niche communities.". This personalisation has become a defining trait of niche content, particularly in podcasting and independent media, where traditionalism meets evolving monetisation structures.

John L. Sullivan highlights this duality, pointing out that content creation formalisation into a cultural industry reflects the growth of niche media in national contexts while maintaining its capacity to "build close-knitted micro-communities through crowdfunding and targeted advertising models (Oxford Research Encyclopedia)". Such trends exemplify the fragmentation of media consumption patterns, empowering consumers to curate particular content diets, as observed in the Global Media Journal's commentary on media democratisation and fragmentation. Ultimately, the success of niche content highlights the broader narrative: in a world of infinite choices, audiences ultimately lean towards authenticity and resonance. This multifaceted structure of content creation reconstitutes traditional media dynamics and reinforces the relevance of micro-communities as cultural pioneers in a diverse, interconnected digital age.

The Restriction of Social Media Use Among Teenagers: An Analysis of Policy, Perception, and Potential

By Dr. Sunil Belladi

In recent years, remarkable achievements by young individuals have showcased the extraordinary capabilities of adolescents worldwide. For instance, Krish Arora, at the age of 10, achieved an IQ score of 162, surpassing that of Albert Einstein. Similarly, 13-year-old Vaibhav Suryawanshi made headlines when he was auctioned for over a crore in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024. Other inspiring examples include Hend Zaza, who represented Syria at the Tokyo Olympics in table tennis at the age of 12, and Anang Tadar from Arunachal Pradesh, who developed innovative glasses to aid the visually impaired in navigation. Meanwhile, Tilak Mehta, at the age of 13, founded Paper n Parcels, now a 100-crore company. Greta Thunberg's advocacy for environmental sustainability echoes globally, while Alma Deutscher, at nine, composed an opera titled The Sweeper of Dreams. In the realm of science and technology, Adrit, a 15-year-old, has published over a dozen research papers and developed healthcare applications. These examples underscore the potential of adolescents to significantly impact diverse fields.

Despite such accomplishments, the Australian government has introduced legislation prohibiting individuals below the age of 16 from accessing social media platforms. This decision aligns with the "third-person effect" hypothesis, a media theory introduced by Davison in the 1980s (Davison, 1983). According to this hypothesis, individuals tend to underestimate the influence of media on themselves while overestimating its impact on others, particularly vulnerable groups such as adolescents. This perception often leads to censorship based on the assumption that certain media messages have a disproportionately negative impact on specific audiences.

While it is widely recognized that media can shape attitudes and behaviors, imposing blanket restrictions on adolescents under 16 raises significant ethical and practical concerns. Such policies implicitly question the cognitive and rational capabilities of teenagers, suggesting that they are more susceptible to media influence than adults. However, this assumption warrants scrutiny. For instance, the distinction between a 16-year-old and a 17-year-old in terms of their ability to critically engage with media content is marginal at best. Moreover, Australian law grants significant responsibilities to individuals at the age of 17 and 18, such as obtaining a driver's license and voting, respectively. Thus, labeling all individuals under 16 as inherently gullible is both reductive and inconsistent.

Notably, evidence from India highlights that adults, rather than teenagers, are often the primary victims of cybercrimes such as online fraud and ransomware attacks. This observation challenges the narrative that younger users are uniquely vulnerable to digital risks. Furthermore, similar restrictive measures have been attempted elsewhere. For example, a local governing body in Yavatmal, Maharashtra, issued a decree prohibiting individuals under 18 from using mobile phones, citing concerns about academic distractions. However, the effectiveness of such measures remains questionable without rigorous empirical evaluation.

The underlying rationale for such restrictions appears to stem from the perceived failure of traditional institutions, including parenting, education, and social environments, to adequately guide young individuals in navigating contemporary challenges. Instead of addressing these systemic shortcomings, governments and societal actors often scapegoat social media as the root cause of undesirable behaviors among adolescents. This approach shifts responsibility away from nurturing critical thinking and media literacy skills among young people.

Steven Johnson, in his seminal work Everything Bad is Good for You, posits that modern media, bolstered by technological advancements, enhances cognitive abilities—a phenomenon he terms the "sleeper curve." This perspective challenges the notion that social media inherently corrupts young minds. Instead of imposing prohibitive regulations, stakeholders should prioritize fostering media literacy and encouraging responsible social media use. By cultivating habits that promote critical engagement and vigilance, adolescents can harness the benefits of digital platforms while mitigating potential risks.

The recent legislation by the Australian Parliament represents a significant development in global digital policy, marking the first instance of a nationwide ban on social media use for individuals under 16. However, this approach raises concerns about cultural policing and the broader implications of such restrictive measures. As other nations consider similar policies, it is imperative to question whether these actions genuinely address the underlying challenges or merely serve as a convenient, albeit regressive, solution.

Adolescents, like all members of society, should be afforded opportunities to engage responsibly with social media. Rather than curtailing access, governments, educational institutions, and families must collaborate to empower young individuals to navigate the digital landscape with discernment and confidence.

Collaboration weer institutions for respons social media use.

Tales Face Transition: An Era of Conversion from Traditional Storytelling to Micro trends

By Divyani Jakhwal

Storytelling has been an intrinsic part of human culture for generations. It has shaped societies, preserved histories, changed cultures, and inspired innovation. Storytelling has evolved with every technological advancement and societal mould, from traditional vocal transmission to print, films, and digital media platforms. However, in this era of micro trends, storytelling as a skill embedded in our history is on a paradoxical pedestal as we look over the many benefits and drawbacks of how micro trends have affected storytelling over time.

The Age of Micro trends

Micro trends are known for their ability to instantly transmit a message to the audience without much time needed to weave a story around the message that needs to be given to the audience. With the decreasing attention span of today's youth, the era and consumption of micro trends have been bolstered by a millennium. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Facebook have now all released a feature called shorts or reels, which are short 30-90 second videos that one can post featuring any content they are aiming for or interested in. This particular feature plays a significant role in this boost of micro trends because, unlike macro trends cultivated over the years, micro trends are short-lasting trends that may surface worldwide one day and disappear the next, and the short-span of reels and shots give them precisely the space and community to thrive in. They can also be called the "internet tsunami". Micro trends have proved how one small micro-detail like a meme, hashtag, picture or headline can spark a global outrage and bring out overnight trends. This has forced the public to be more critical of the storytellers, demanding them to be more adaptive, agile, and experimental with their stories and trends.

Benefits of Micro trends in Ratio to Storytelling

Micro trends, without any denial, have spurred an innovative challenge to the art of storytelling across all mediums. Platforms like TikTok videos and Instagram reels have gained popularity for their fast-paced yet compelling way of presenting a story to consumers in seconds. At the same time, podcasts and long-form videos are always present for those seeking a lengthy, in-depth dive into the story. Creators who have mastered the art of storytelling through these diverse platforms have the opportunity to connect with the audience on a broader and more diverse scale. Interactive storytelling has also gained attention for blending traditional narratives with participatory elements.

Video games and Virtual Reality (VR) experience campaigns allow audiences to participate actively in the story being narrated. This immersive experiential format aligns with the microtrend-driven desire for novelty and engagement, pushing the boundaries of how stories are experienced.

The Future of Storytelling as Opposed to Micro trends

As technology continues to evolve, the base footing of storytelling will not only undergo significant evolution but may also face threats or radical changes; the scope of storytelling might expand further, or the legacy of storytelling may even cease to exist. Either way, artificial intelligence on the digital landscape has created more innovative possibilities, like personalised experiences and more content tailored to individual preferences. However, this raises the question of the role of human authenticity and creativity in storytelling. Striking a balance between innovation and integrity will be crucial for creators navigating this landscape.Successful creators and brands will be those who can harness the momentum of micro trends while crafting narratives that resonate beyond their brief lifespans. Combining the immediacy of trend-driven content with universal themes ensures that stories remain impactful and enduring.

In this era of micro trends, storytelling is more dynamic than ever, with uncompromising accessibility to the public. While its fast-paced nature threatens the art of storytelling, it also offers unparalleled opportunities for creativity, connections, and innovation. By efficiently utilising the potential of micro trends whilst staying true to their timeless storytelling principles, the creator can navigate this evolving landscape and continue to inspire, inform and innovate. The future of storytelling lies in delicately balancing the principles of the striking appeal of fast-paced videos and the timeless endurance of stories, capturing both moments and ages.

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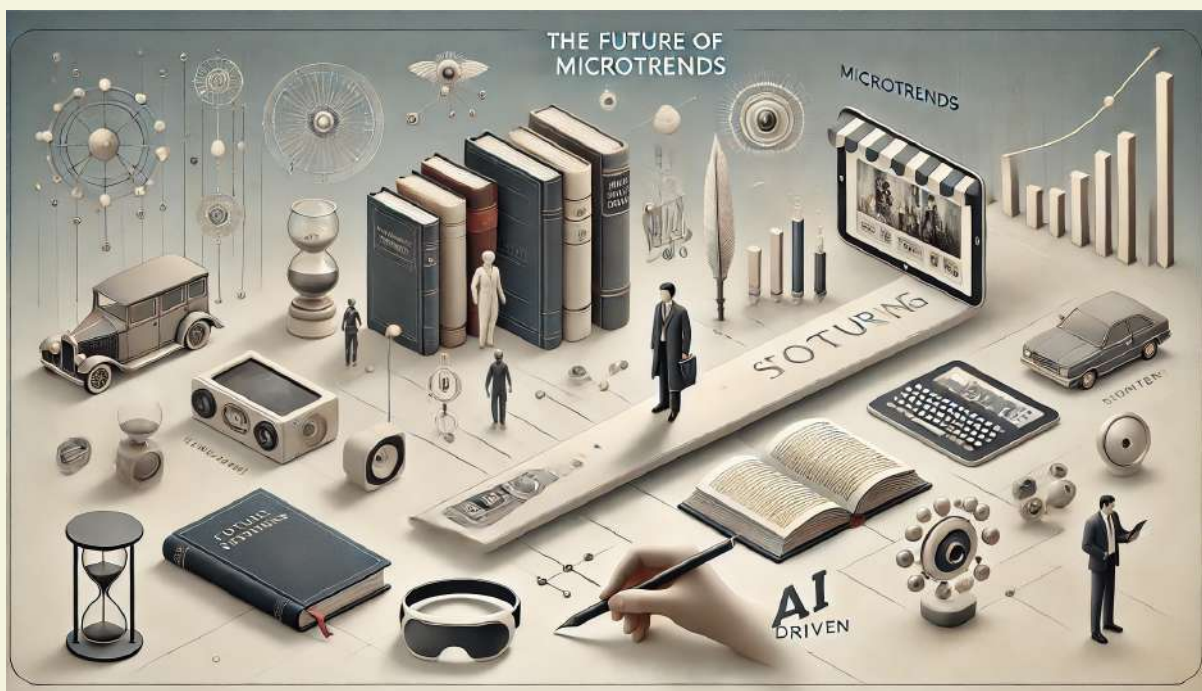
The Role of Hybrid Work Models in Retaining Media Talent

By Kiara Tharayil

We live in a world that has a demanding, fast-paced, and constantly evolving media industry. Deadlines are tight, and the need for creativity is at an all-time high. Retaining and maintaining talent has become a challenging task in the media workspace that runs on rapid innovation and constant content demands. Traditional work environments once served as a foundation for creative agencies, from production houses to newsrooms. However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced organisations to make changes and adapt to those changes as quickly as possible. This is where the concept of the hybrid work model comes into play. It is a found middle ground between working both in-office and remotely, and today, it has emerged as a form of balance that employees and organisations require. For an industry that thrives on quick, innovative, and creative solutions, the hybrid work model offers a more promising approach to retaining the talent that persists in this sector.

The Dynamic Nature of Media Work

While dissecting the work-life balance of media professionals, it can be seen that, unlike the standard 9-5 corporate job, media professionals live their professional lives on a very erratic schedule. This is because a breaking story is not waiting on one's office hours, nor is it waiting for one's burst of creative inspiration. This is where the traditional work model fails to understand the dynamic nature of working in such a high-speed work environment. The hybrid work model recognises the need for flexibility in such a workplace that caters to the needs of the industry.

Balancing Collaboration and Focus

The life of a content creator or a social media manager demands brainstorming and a lot of creative ideation with their team, which would obviously be better-headed in person. However, creating impactful campaigns would also mean the need for focus that could only be achieved in solitude. This flexibility is only possible with a hybrid work model that focuses on bringing about a balance between individual productivity and the collaborative nature of media work.

Reducing Burnout and Supporting Mental Health

The most significant advantage of working in a hybrid workspace is the reduction of burnout among its employees. Being exposed to negative news or emotionally draining stories and situations, a hybrid work environment goes beyond just boosting productivity by addressing the mental health concerns of those who work in such a high-pressure work environment.

Working remotely for a few days allows employees to create a healthier balance between their professional and personal lives.

Allowing people the ability to take a mental breather reduces the overall stress that comes from working in such a fast-paced industry. This focus on mental health creates a workforce that is not only productive but loyal to their employees by making them feel valued and supported.

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Overcoming the Challenges of Hybrid Work

There are definitely many concerns that pop up during a critical examination of such a work model. An important point brought up is the fact that this industry thrives on spontaneous interactions—those "watercooler moments" that lead to innovation and unexpected ideas. However, a hybrid workforce does not eliminate those opportunities and those interactions; it simply redefines them. We live in an overtly connected society, making the world tiny. The media sector has found its way to stay connected and establish new relationships with organisations and people far away from their city by using virtual meeting rooms, check-ins, and even informal group chats to stay connected constantly. Interactions in offices can be used for further brainstorming and ensuring that the collaborative aspect of this type of work remains intact. Those efforts make the hybrid workplace a more seamless experience.

The Human Side of Hybrid Work

From pets interrupting video calls to the sound of laughter from one's kids in the background, it weirdly adds a human touch to a lot of professional interactions that are always very stressful. It reminds us that work doesn't necessarily have to be as rigid and formal and can be both productive and fun. This move to a hybrid workspace is no longer just a temporary fix; it's a means of evolving, attracting, and retaining talent in the industry. The narrative of a hybrid work field is compelling and oddly ironic when it comes from an industry built on storytelling. Adapting and innovating is the only way one can grow and develop. Seeing a future where a work field negates the need to be cooped up in an office 9-5 would allow media companies to make for a more creative and sustainable industry.

Generation Z: The Architects of Digital Storytelling in the 21st Century

By Khushi Mohanty

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, commonly known as "the digital transformation," has fundamentally changed consumer markets by placing technological platforms at the centre of consumption. While this transition has affected several generations, Generation Z—those born between 1997 and 2012 —is particularly notable as the frontrunner of this content revolution. With a fundamental grasp of digital platforms, Gen Z effortlessly redefines the art of storytelling by merging creativity with algorithms. This paper explores Generation Z's approach to content creation in this digital age, the tools that support their creativity, and the obstacles they encounter, finally emphasising their revolutionary effect on the media environment.

Both Gen Z and Millennials play major roles in this digital age, and each generation possesses distinct characteristics. Gen Z, in particular, excels in creating impactful content within the tight limitations set by platforms such as X (formerly Twitter)'s character limits or TikTok's short video format, demonstrating their capacity for creativity under pressure.
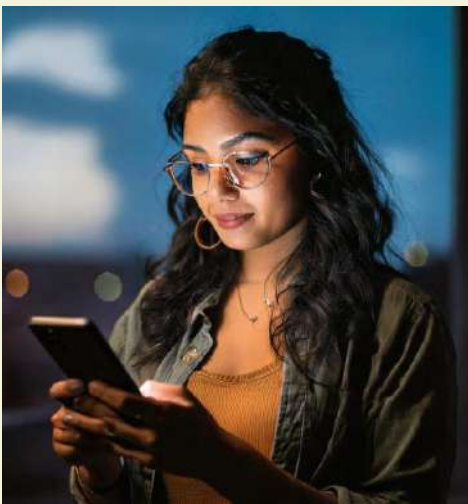
A study conducted by ZeroCarter reveals that 98% of Gen Z possess a smartphone, with 50% spending more than 10 hours online each day. In addition, 40% admit to being completely reliant on their phones. Supporting this data, professor and keynote speaker Ryan Jenkins mentions in his blog that 45% of American Gen Z individuals own a smartphone by the ages of 10-12, with 91% bringing their phones to bed. Jenkins' research also indicates that 92% of Gen Z stream Netflix, with 38% using the service daily; 91% rely on YouTube, 75% on Gmail, 66% on Snapchat, 65% on Instagram, and 61% on Facebook. A notable trait of Gen Z content creators is their versatility across platforms. Popular platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok are important to their creative expression.

Gen Z creators easily adjust their content to fit each platform's unique audience and format. A significant factor contributing to Gen Z's creative mastery is the availability of digital tools, which has made content creation more extensive. Applications such as Canva, CapCut, and Adobe Express have made design and editing easier, allowing even novices to create high-quality content. These accessible platforms reduce the barriers for aspiring content creators, making the creation more reachable than before. Artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT aid in brainstorming and scripting. At the same time, platforms such as Canvas Magic Design effortlessly produce visual templates, improving both the creative and production elements of content creation (Smith, 2023).

Social media algorithms are critical for content visibility and success. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok use refined machine learning to personalise user feeds according to engagement trends, affecting how content is viewed. These algorithms also influence the strategies of content creators, who optimise their posts to fit with platform inclinations. For example, Gen Z creators carefully time their posts, select strategic hashtags, and adjust their content to achieve the highest visibility. Statista (2023) emphasised that 87% of Gen Z creators depend on analytics to enhance their strategies, displaying the significance of comprehending and adapting to the constantly changing digital environment.

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Even with their creativity, Gen Z creators encounter considerable obstacles. One important challenge is sustainability in content production. The rapidly changing nature of digital trends compels creators to constantly generate content, which can lead to burnout. A survey conducted by The Influencer Marketing Factory (2022) found that 68% of creators face challenges with consistency due to this pressure.

Monetisation is another major challenge. Although platforms like YouTube and TikTok provide revenue-sharing models, many creators depend on sponsorships, which can be unreliable. Besides, the gig economy poses risks of financial instability, with numerous creators being undercompensated for their work.

Lastly, the implications for mental health are also associated with ongoing online visibility. Gen Z creators deal with examination, cyberbullying, and the stresses of cancel culture, all of which add to emotional strain. A report from Common Sense Media in 2021 revealed that 56% of Gen Z creators experience anxiety regarding their online presence.

The future of content creation by Gen Z is set for exciting developments. Emerging technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) will increasingly blur the boundaries between creators and their audiences, promoting immersive storytelling experiences.

For instance, platforms like Snapchat and Meta are already incorporating AR features to enhance user engagement (Rakowski, Mesburg, 2024). AI-driven tools that can analyse audience preferences will enable creators to provide personalised content, resulting in greater engagement rates. Gen Z's focus on collaborative creativity also indicates a transition towards co-created ecosystems, where audiences are actively involved in the content process.

Generation Z has changed content creation into a bright, democratised environment that balances creativity, technology, and audience involvement. Despite facing sustainability, monetisation, and mental health challenges, their influence on the media environment is clear. As they continue to innovate and adapt, the digital generation is not only producing content—they are influencing the cultural narratives of the future.

For Generation Z Content that Thrives

By Ayantika Goswami and Ekjot Kaur Mehta

The new generation, popularly called Gen Z, is deeply immersed in the digital fabric and cannot exist without it. Creating content for such an audience requires a fresh approach, one that is authentic, innovative and interactive. Due to the changing dynamic, digital storytelling and content creation are constantly shaped based on audiences' preferences. Content that is relatable, unfiltered, and depicts real experiences reaches a broader audience than overly polished content. As a result, authentic storytelling is becoming a must for brands and influencers to build trust and create engagement, as seen by the rise of a culture of vlogs and behind-the-scenes footage. Another interesting development is the hike in short-form content creation. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts thrive because Gen Z prefers concise yet engaging content. Short-form videos allow creators to deliver powerful messages within seconds, which aligns with the generation's attention span shaped by constant digital exposure. This has also led many filmmakers and brands to craft impactful, bite-sized narratives. Immersive technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality and 360-degree videos are gaining popularity. Stories invite the viewer to become a part of the creation process. Brands have also started utilising filters, polls, and social media challenges to gain direct access to and involvement with the audience. 'Gen Z' actively contributes toward content creation through hashtags and challenges, often co-creating with brands or other users. This enhances relatability and community engagement, as users feel directly involved. Campaigns collaborate with user-generated content (UGC) to increase their reach, as seen in UGC-driven challenges like #ShotOniPhone or TikTok dance trends.

Stories are seen as advocates of ideas and the creator's moral compass. An excellent example of this is how content centred around environmental issues or mental health gets promoted more than the usual entertaining form. The rise of micro-influencers is another factor that must be kept in mind. Micro-influencers are creators with smaller but highly engaged audiences. Gen Z prefers quality content and relatability over celebrity appeal. Such creators often cater to niche interests and foster closer connections. Marketing strategies usually integrate micro-influencers to reach more potential buyers since such influencers promote niche products through organic methods on platforms like Instagram or Twitch.

Owing to accessible streaming platforms, this generation consumes content from all across the globe. Stories from various cultures encompassing several narratives and people create a sense of openness and acceptance of various regional differences, blurring the cultural and geographical boundaries. The success of Parasite or Squid Game reflects this global appeal, while art houses and indie films are also quickly on the way to overtaking mainstream industries. On the other hand, personalised content is also rising; this generation expects content to be tailored to their tastes. Advanced algorithms used by TikTok, or YouTube create a highly personalised and unique feed that caters to every user's preferences. Creators and brands utilise such data to deliver targeted and relevant content to broaden their reach for their products or content.

Content creation is, thus, an ever-evolving field shaping itself to incorporate values like authenticity and interactivity. Through short-form videos, immersive experiences, and diverse narratives, creators and audiences become a part of a more co-dependent circle. To succeed in this era, all content should align with GenZ's inclusivity and social consciousness ideals while utilising platforms and their tools to encourage personalisation. As this generation continues to shape digital trends, creators must remain adaptive, ensuring relevance in a dynamic landscape.

Going Beyond Traditional Journalism: The New Outlook

By Shayli Singkh

As in any profession, there is a generalised and stereotypical understanding of what a journalist is and what the job entails. Traditional journalism mainly involved reporting, editing, and anchoring. However, with globalisation and digitalisation, the spectrum has expanded beyond these limited roles.

Though the future of journalism in its 'black and white' form is uncertain, a 'grey' area has emerged in the media field. Blending skills and majors has created new opportunities that are now reforming the concept of what a journalist should be able to do. Employment opportunities are increasing as there is a demand for newer skills, and students are exploring a mixed palette of degrees to take advantage of the latest and unconventional.

Due to the popularisation of the digital medium, how news can be presented has surpassed the age-old guide used by news media giants. Media agencies find themselves in a position that requires them to produce unique stories not only in content but also in presentation to gain readership in this attention-deficit economy. To create an interactive experience, a blend of journalistic and web design skills is required. The demand for this blend is rising as complete digital conversion is dawning upon this generation of journalism. It's not just the name of the organisation that gets a reader to click on a story; the design and the content play an equally important role as each story develops its identity.

Cartoons, Comedy and Animation have become convenient and impactful modes of storytelling. Not only do they bring in a personalised touch, but they also create a memorable imprint. Unlike the stereotypes of over-powering the news, comic and animation-based journalism can effectively convey complex issues forthrightly and with humour, For example, "Persepolis and Maus".

At the end of the day, the press has to sustain itself financially, which would require promotions, reach and building an identity for each of its units. The new generation of journalists incorporates skills from fields like marketing, branding, and public relations to understand better how a news organisation functions while being a well-rounded professionals who can acclimatise and perform in any media sector. A marketing executive for a news organisation is a basic example, where a candidate with a marketing and journalism background could be placed above other applications due to their well-rounded nature.

As the media industry grows, journalism will remain dynamic and ever-evolving, integrating seamlessly into various domains. Blending skills to create opportunities is becoming increasingly common in multiple fields to create opportunities, media not being an exception. Traditional boundaries defining roles are blurring, and skills increasingly overlap. In this context, career success may not be solely determined by a degree but by the distinctiveness and expertise one brings to the table. Today's media professionals can choose to be agents of change, adapting to the continual evolution of journalism. This blending of roles and skills will create a new path, away from the mainstream one, for innovative forms of storytelling and shaping the future of the field.

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Beyond Traditional Practices: The Digital Context

By Shreelekha Basarkar and Jiah Dsouza

Traditionally defined, journalism involves compiling, generating, and delivering news through newspapers, magazines, television, or radio. While these elements remain integral to the profession, there is much more to it than meets the eye. With the ever-changing digital landscape, emerging journalistic practices offer fresh perspectives diverging from mainstream media in curation and distribution.

Newsletters stand as one of the most prominent examples of unconventional forms of journalism. Delivered via email, they offer content tailored to specific interests, allowing writers to engage directly with their audience, thereby creating a more personal connection beyond what traditional media offers. The funding model for newsletters is another factor that sets them apart. Traditional media outlets often rely on advertisements or corporate sponsorships, which might impede the organisation's editorial decisions. Newsletters, however, usually operate through subscription-based or crowdfunding models, such as Substack. Such models allow them to explore controversial or sensitive issues that the mainstream media might avoid if it does not suit their funding interests

Through personalised and niche-driven content, newsletters surpass the editorial pressures typically seen in traditional media rooms. Satirical journalism is another unconventional practice that employs humour, irony, and exaggeration to critique, cover pressing issues, and provoke thought. Unlike traditional journalism, which strives for objectivity, satirical journalism often takes a clear stance, challenging political systems and the media. This, in turn, democratises the news medium, offering a more entertaining and interactive alternative to traditional news.

News Laundry, a platform initially focused on written critiques of mainstream media, has expanded into podcasts, video discussions, and YouTube content, reaching an even larger audience. It relies on the revenue coming from consumers through subscriptions rather than advertisers, giving it the freedom to produce content without external pressures. Initially, Dhruv Rathee, a popular figure in online journalism, gained fame through his YouTube channel, where he shared his views on several current issues. Along with him, we see the rise of several independent channels on YouTube that delve into niche issues typically overlooked by prominent media outlets.

News storytelling is a narrative form of journalism wherein creators focus on presenting information and straightforwardly reporting the news. Unlike the traditional inverted pyramid structure, which prioritises the most critical information at the beginning, news storytelling often employs linear structures, following a clear beginning, middle, and end.

While some argue that the inverted pyramid should still be the standard, the linear approach can often serve as a better alternative, offering a more structured and compelling way to deliver news. News storytelling usually operates on platforms like Instagram and YouTube rather than traditional outlets such as television, newspapers, or magazines. It can also encourage audience participation through comments or even direct messages.

The evolving media landscape has, thus, redefined journalism by giving way to atypical career opportunities that go beyond reporting, writing and disseminating news. These new paths have placed digital intermediaries right in the centre of the news environment. Platforms like Instagram, Twitter and YouTube are now occupying front seats in news curation and as news sources rather than just informing the public.

It is undebatable that unconventional careers in journalism are pushing the limits of the industry and creating new opportunities for those open to exploring different paths. These opportunities make journalism more rounded and give journalists the freedom to tell under-reported and insightful stories, offering audiences fresh and engaging viewpoints. As the digital age continues to grow, journalism stands at the crossroads of tradition and innovation, shaping a more connected and interactive future.
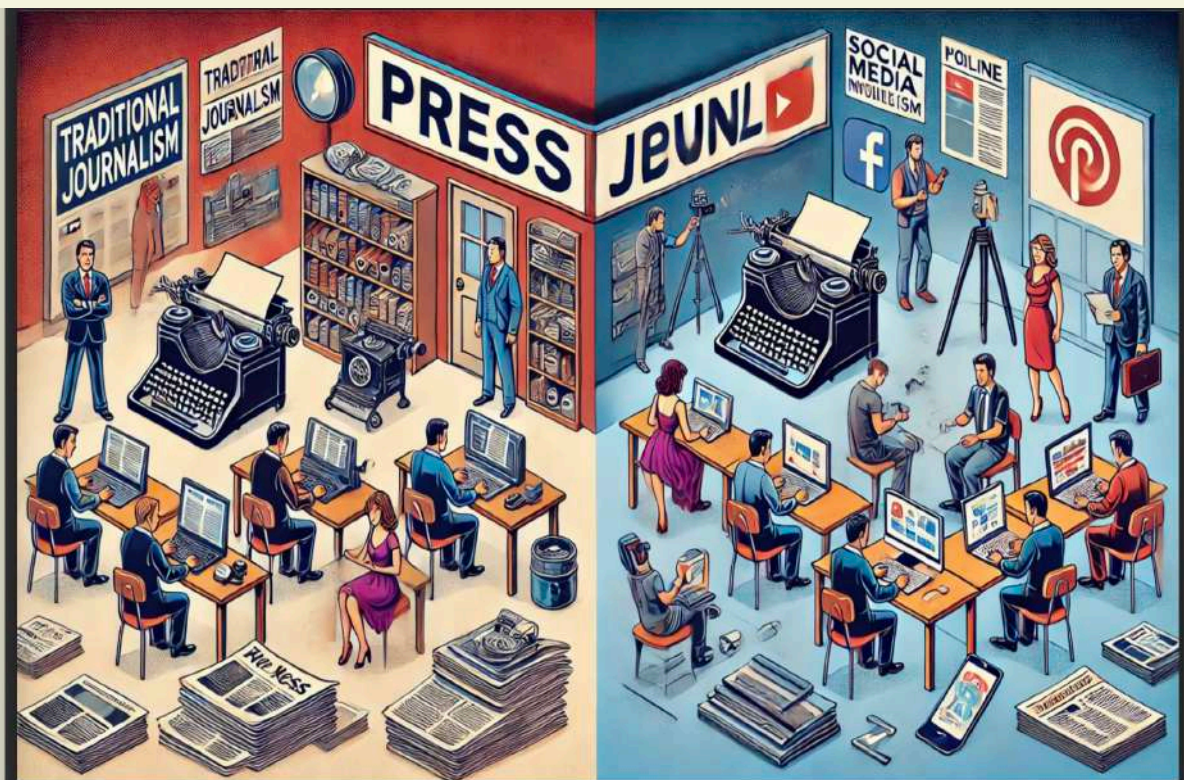
Humanising Brands Through PR: The Role of Authentic Storytelling in Building Consumer Trust

By Nandini Mukherjee & Siya Rawal

In a world saturated with corporate messaging, consumers have developed a discerning eye for authenticity. Today's consumers seek more than just products; they are drawn to brands with which they can form meaningful connections based on trust, shared values, and emotional resonance.

Public Relations (PR), acts as a bridge between brands and their audiences, transforming them into more relatable entities, and shaping how they are perceived. This article will explore how brands use PR to create compelling narratives to humanise brands while also examining successful examples. It will also examine how authentic storytelling fosters brand loyalty and consumer trust, emphasising its role in modern marketing strategies.

How Does Authentic Storytelling Strike a Chord with the Audience?
Storytelling in PR has emerged as a powerful tool for brands to connect deeply with consumers through narratives that reflect real-life experiences and values. In fact, research shows that people are more likely to remember stories than mere facts or statistics. A prime example is Paper Boat, an Indian beverage brand that taps into nostalgia through its Drinks and Memories campaign. By evoking childhood memories and linking them to its products, Paper Boat not only cultivates emotional relatability but also positions itself as a custodian of culture and heritage.

Likewise, brands like Cadbury have capitalised on this with campaigns like Kuch Meetha Ho Jaye, which associates the product with moments of familial joy and celebration. By framing chocolate as a symbol of togetherness, Cadbury did not just sell chocolates but also emotions. These narratives work because they evoke emotions and embed the brand into the consumer's memory as a symbol of shared values or cherished experiences.

PR professionals use various strategies to humanise brands, ensuring their narratives resonate with audiences. One approach is the emphasis on human interest stories that highlight the people behind the brand. Even narratives showcasing employee experiences or customer testimonials create a sense of authenticity, as seen in Zomato's efforts to spotlight the lives of its delivery partners. Similarly, user-generated content builds credibility, bringing real voices into the brand's story, and fostering a sense of community.

Personalisation further enhances the impact of PR-driven storytelling. Brands tailor their narratives to reflect the cultural, regional, or demographic nuances of their target audience, ensuring the message feels relevant and relatable.

Advocacy and social impact also play an integral role in modern PR campaigns. When brands align themselves with societal causes, they not only demonstrate shared values but also position themselves as catalysts for meaningful change, as exemplified by Tata Tea's iconic Jaago Re campaign, which addresses social issues such as voter awareness and gender equality. Through this, Tata Tea demonstrates how PR can encourage dialogue around important social issues while boosting brand awareness.

Measuring the Impact of Authentic Storytelling

The effectiveness of authentic storytelling in PR can be measured through several methods. Consumer trust is a key metric, with studies like Edelman's Trust Barometer consistently revealing how trust influences purchase decisions. Brands that reflect their values through authentic storytelling often see significant improvements in trust and loyalty.

Digital engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments provide another tangible measure of storytelling success. Campaigns that evoke emotional responses often perform better on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. For instance, Paper Boat's nostalgia-driven campaigns have garnered significant social media attention, resulting in emotional connections translating into brand loyalty.

Authentic narratives that mirror human experiences and shared values are what allow brands to establish trust, encourage loyalty, and create meaningful connections with their audience. However, authenticity must go beyond a marketing tactic; it needs to align with a brand's actions and stories to maintain credibility. Brands that fail to deliver on their promises risk losing the trust and credibility of consumers. In the words of the adage, "People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it." It is in this light that PR professionals, as keepers of a brand's voice, must communicate the 'why' with integrity and transparency, creating not only compelling narratives that inspire trust and loyalty. By humanising brands, PR bridges the gap between the intent of corporations and consumer needs; therefore, brands are still made relevant, relatable, and genuinely impactful in the lives of their audience.

The Evolving Newsroom: Meeting Gen Z's Hiring Expectations

By Avika Patel and Samreen Siraj

In today's world, balancing Gen Z's expectations in the hiring landscape is crucial for maintaining growth in the media industry, given that it engages with the current audiences to keep them invested while simultaneously offering prospective viewers a platform. Considering the workforce transitions over time, it creates a bridge for emerging talents to enter the industry. Striking this balance is essential to facilitate a cohesive and peaceful work environment.

As Gen Z has started to enter the industry, they have certain expectations from their working environment. A few include equality in finance and gender inclusivity, followed by creative freedom, which fosters this generation's interests and ideas without being forced upon them, thus ensuring efficient two-way communication. They also expect a flexible working schedule to be productive, and these are a few of the non-negotiables that Gen Z looks forward to in the workplace.

On the other hand, previously seasoned professionals preferred a more rigid work environment that valued hierarchical structures, and they often sought stability and security in their jobs. Balancing these two perspectives allows establishments to develop a multi generational workforce that meets all these requirements by capitalising on each person's unique skills and expertise. For example, how McDonald's had to adapt its menu to the Indian market, the same way British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) had to flatten its hierarchy to appeal to Gen Z by promoting cross-departmental collaboration, training and mentorship programs, including them in the process of decision-making which empowered them as employees, to create digital content which overall contributed to fostering open communication and innovation.

In the newsroom's evolving hiring landscape, the younger generation has easier access to a wide range of information, which helps them acquire a background check about the particular establishment, creating transparency. Just like how users on Tinder have access to profiles, photos, bios, and reviews, which help them evaluate whether someone aligns with their beliefs and values, younger job seekers can research if certain companies are compatible with them through online platforms like Linked In and Glassdoor, this process goes both ways. Potential employers also have access to profiles with background information and references about job seekers so they can cross-check them.

Gen Z has given rise to a new era in the newsroom environment and influenced them in several significant ways. Since this generation was born in the digital age, they are inherently tech-savvy and very well acquainted with emerging technologies. They prefer to consume and publish news through multi-media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and online news organisations in a more interactive way using visual storytelling rather than traditional newspapers, TV, or radio. Due to this, newsrooms have had to adapt by focusing more on digital reporting to engage younger audiences. According to the statistics for 2024, news consumption through print media has become 40%, TV is 46%, and online platforms, including social media, have become 71%. This indicates the shift from print media to digital media.

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Another example is the corporate sector's rising investment in digital media through developments like the Adani group's acquisition of digital platforms, such as BQ Prime, which recognises this shift. Internal collaborative communication is another change that Gen Z brings to the table. Their willingness to work in teams and interact with diverse ideas fosters this collaborative culture in the newsroom. Additionally, their digital communication skills contribute to audience engagement by creating compelling content and interacting with their followers, which helps them connect and develop a sense of loyalty.

In today's changing hiring environment, media companies must balance Gen Z expectations and newsroom requirements to remain relevant and competitive. Newsrooms can establish an efficient and effective work environment by adopting technological integration, providing flexible work hours, cultivating an inclusive culture, promoting multi generational partnerships, and directing corporate objectives. This balance ultimately drives the organisation's success in the changing media landscape.

Journalism to OTT: The Evolution of Niche Content

By Riti Krishnan and Vyom Ramani

This shift toward niche content in media, prevalent both in journalism and film now being transmitted into OTT platforms, represents an evolution in the media. This broad focus on individual audience segments heralds more significant shifts within society and technology, opening up new channels for creators and distributors yet also creating challenges.

Beyond Journalism

While journalism has long been at the forefront of audience segmentation, other media types, especially films platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ presents an even more straightforward example of the niche catering to specific audience interests, ranging from regional stories to genre-specific films or series.

The Role of OTT Platforms

OTT platforms have revolutionized film and television content consumption through personalized recommendations and diverse catalogues. Traditional broadcasting fears losing its appeal as a "one-size-fits-all" platform, while OTT platforms use data insights to deliver tailored, niche content for specific audiences.

For example, OTT platforms' investment in regional content, such as Sacred Games from India, Squid Game from South Korea, and La Casa de Papel (Money Heist) from Spain, divulges dedication to specific demographics while not shying away from global viewers. These productions are niche in language and region, but they also tell fresh themes and narrative techniques that the intended audience understands. Similarly, services like Disney+ have played to their fandoms, creating original series and movies specific to franchises such as Marvel and Star Wars. These content productions target deeply invested fan bases, illustrating how niche programming can drive subscriber engagement.

Niche Films: Indie to Hollywood

Niche, independent films have found their place in cinema. Indie films aim for specific themes, cultures, or social issues that may prove attractive to people who want alternatives to big-budget blockbusters. Recent success stories like Everything Everywhere All at Once show how niche stories with innovative narratives and representation can resonate with a broader audience while staying true to their core audience. Such a film that wouldn't otherwise get theatrical releases gets an avenue to distribution with OTT platforms. With OTT, indie movies and genre-specific content can be streamed directly to consumers, opening access and giving filmmakers and audiences equal footing.

Niche Genres and Communities

The niche genres have also emerged as crucial in interacting with diversified audience groups. For example, in horror, there has lately been the observed diversification of specialized sub-genres: psycho-thriller (Hereditary), social commentary horror (Get Out), and cosmic horror (The Lighthouse).

Science fiction and fantasy have become diversified with offerings such as The Expanse and Shadow and Bone; each catered to specific fandoms and styles of storytelling. Niche content is also encouraged through specialized category leaders, such as LGBTQ+ films and series, anime, and period dramas. Crunchyroll, a pure niche OTT service for anime viewers, has been a massive success. OTT platforms become community platforms by default, moving beyond passive consumption of content.

Challenges and Opportunities

While niche content offers immense potential, it also poses challenges. Balancing niche appeal with financial sustainability is crucial for filmmakers and OTT platforms. Catering to particular audiences can limit immediate reach but may foster long-term loyalty. Additionally, the proliferation of niche content risks fragmenting audiences into isolated bubbles, reducing shared cultural experiences. As seen in journalism, this empowering phenomenon can create challenges in promoting broader societal dialogue. Conversely, niche content allows creators to innovate and experiment, often resulting in groundbreaking work that resonates far beyond its initial audience. Moreover, by addressing underrepresented stories and voices, niche media contributes to greater cultural diversity and inclusivity in entertainment.

The Future of Niche Content in Films and OTT

As analytics and AI recommendation patterns improve, content creation will become increasingly hyper-personalized. Eventually, OTT platforms will move in with even more micro-niche content levels, like interactive storytelling or region-specific documentaries. Filmmakers will continue to find ways to get their movies before the ideal audience through film festivals and streaming platforms, creating a bond between creator and consumer. The rise of niche content is changing the face of media-from journalism to films and OTT platforms. It reflects the evolving demand for a globalized yet deeply individualized audience. Niche media will continue to be at the edge of innovation as the boundaries of storytelling expand, reshaping how stories are told and experienced worldwide.
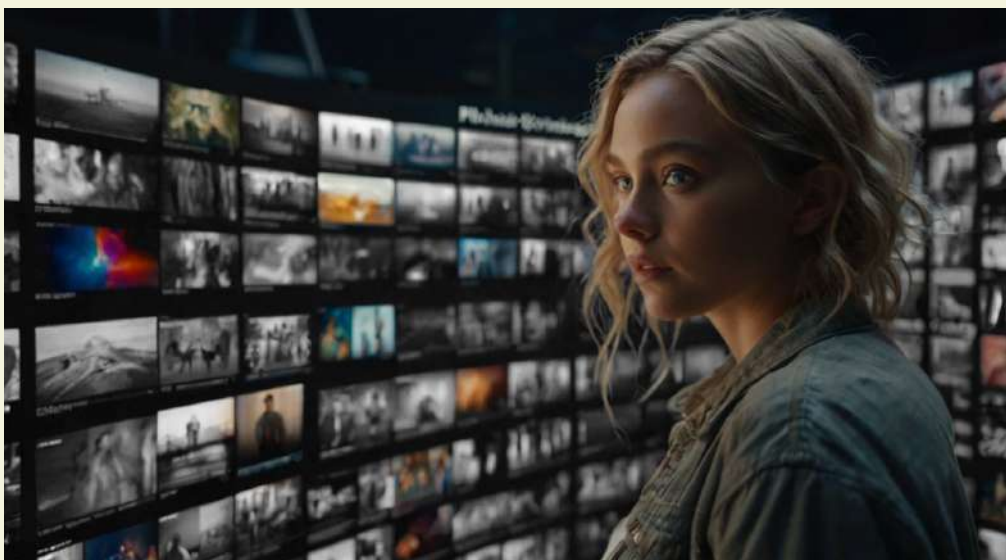
Revolutionising Corporate Communications in the Digital Age

By Aadya Parashar

In today's digital world, the concept of corporate communications has entirely reshaped to interactive, dynamic, real-time conversations from traditional press releases and bland announcements. They have become the soul of how companies interact with their audiences, shape their identities, and build lasting trust. But what is driving this shift? And how can businesses keep up in a world where one tweet can make or break a brand? As we stand on the cliff of a new era, exploring new trends and technologies that will redefine the future of corporate communications is crucial. This paper discusses forces revolutionising how a brand connects to its audience and how companies can stay ahead.

> *"If your business is not on the internet, then your business will be out of business"*
> – Bill Gates

The Changing Landscape of Corporate Communications

Have you ever wondered why the way companies and brands communicate seems to have an almost personal connection with their audience? That is no coincidence. Social media platforms, AI-driven insights, and real-time data have redefined companies' interaction with their audience. At the same time, cultural shifts are demanding authenticity. Understanding these dynamics and considering the impact of the changing generations, millennials and Gen-Zs expect companies to prioritise value and look beyond profit. This demand for transparency and meaning has transformed communication into an instrument for forging more profound connections.

Key areas Shaping the Future

Technology is now the lifeblood of this changed dynamic. Amongst them are artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, block chain, augmented reality, and virtual reality (AR/VR) game-changers. AI and machine learning are helping enterprises analyse consumer data automatically, predict behaviour, and bring in personalised content. Spotify's "wrapped" playlist, a blend of the consumers' listening behaviour, is a solid example of this, making them return for more. Often associated with cryptocurrency, block chain is pivotal in improving corporate communication with transparent, secure, and reliable immutable records, encrypted shares, and efficient workflows. From creating immersive content for stakeholders to indulging audiences, companies are no longer bound by the limitations of physical presence. Be it IKEA's AR app or LensKart's virtual try-on feature to connect with the global audience, AR/VR proves to be a masterclass.

Regarding social media and influencer marketing, social media platforms are not just an option now, as they play a major role in shaping brand narratives. On one hand, Instagram and YouTube allow brands to showcase products through fun and engaging visuals, on the other, Linked In has become the go-to platform for professional outreach and thought leadership. Who better to be the ambassador of your brand than the people behind it? Employees can be the best advocates in building brands' reputations and influencing consumers, media, regulators, and the public. With the company's internal tools, IBM, for example, empowers its employees to share the company's milestones and personal stories on Linked In. Similarly, companies like Microsoft use Linked In to share industry insights, employee stories, and leadership advice. By blending social media and employee advocacy, companies can connect with people more personally and meaningfully, creating a ripple effect of trust and authenticity. A proud employee's voice resounds much louder than any corporate statement.

Challenges and Ethical Considerations

With great power comes significant responsibilities. The tools shaping the future also have flip sides. Misinformation and fake news can spread like wildfire. In a sea of emails, ads, and notifications, digital overload is a concern. With too much content to consume, standing out requires meaningful and well-timed communication. And so is the protection from harmful narratives, which can be attained through prioritising truth and transparency. Another concern is data privacy, which is no longer just a buzzword but an inevitability. With increasing alarms about how personal data is collected, used, and stored, consumers are more protective of their information than ever. Introducing regulations like GDPR has put brands on notice: handle data carefully or face the repercussions.

Success and Failure

The case of Yahoo is an epic. The data breach of its millions of users led to its downfall. From accusations and class-action lawsuits to paying millions of fines, yahoo faced it all and was shattered. This instance shows how cardinal is data privacy. One company that exemplifies the transformative influence of corporate communication in the digital age is Tesla. Not just the slick electric cars or daring innovations, but the company's CEO, Elon Musk, serves as a prime extension of its brand. His Twitter feed is a direct hotline to the audience, playing a mammoth role in Tesla's accomplishments, and has become the cornerstone of Tesla's communication tactic.

In this new age, corporate communications are dynamic and AI-driven, requiring authenticity and transparency. Therefore, to be on the edge, organisations must adapt to new technologies, be employee-centric, and adhere to the safety of the consumers for the best turnout. From chat bots, immersive experiences, and personalised advertisement to data privacy, reputation, and brand building, corporate communications sum up all and have more to be explored. All these developments boost efficiency and strengthen stakeholder bonds to survive in today's increasingly digital world. After all, it is not just about communication but connection.

Shaping the Future: Attracting and Retaining Youth in Media Workspaces

By Triya Doshi and Felisha Bhattacharjee

In today's post-pandemic world, the upcoming generations and future corporate employees have learned to adapt to the volatile market trends. Corporate organisations are responsible for building a healthy and friendly work environment in the media spaces, making the youth comfortable at work. This article discusses strategies to synchronise work settings with the youth's aspirations.

Understanding The Youth's Ambitions

Media work environments allow the youth to display creativity, self-expression, and strong influence through social media. Employers need to support and provide a platform to match their goals. Laying out an environment where creativity is appreciated would motivate them to generate better, engaging narratives. Today's youth are continuously challenged for being socially conscious and criticised for questioning traditional mindsets. Employers must recognise the importance of providing artistic freedom to the youth to build efficient and effective relationships.

Adapting To Innovative Technologies

Young professionals are constantly tracking how technologies are growing by the day. Artificial intelligence (AI), Augmented Reality (AR), and Virtual Reality (VR) are a few of the most spoken technological advancements currently; providing the right equipment to the youth to efficiently produce work using such technologies would attract a whole new set of youth who possess extreme passion towards technology—imparting an environment where the youth can collaborate with these technologies to come up with exceptional work outcome. Tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, and photoroom. ai can revolutionise content writing, film making, graphic editing, data collection, and customisation.

Setting Up An Inclusive Work Environment

Diversity, inclusivity and equality are not just trendy terms; it is essential for today's youth to feel respected and valued in the work environment, despite their background, for example, gender, race, age, colour, or sex. One of the criteria for the youth is to know if the workplace aligns with their desired societal progress when choosing their work organisation. Having a diverse team breaks stereotypes and prejudices. Media outlets need to ensure they promote different candidates for leadership positions and show the young workers that anybody can move up in the company. Inclusivity and diversity are the right things to do and give a competitive advantage.

Prioritising Mental Health and Work-Life Balance

The media industry is characterised by its high-paced - high-stress environment, which very often makes it difficult for professionals in the industry to strike a healthy balance between their personal and professional lives. Incessant deadlines, odd working hours, and constant creative pressure make the perfect concoction for burnout, which, in the long run, inevitably hampers productivity and employee retention.

In today's world, achieving a healthy work-life is of utmost priority to individuals of all industries as they realise the critical impact of sound mental health in sustaining long-term success. As influential Media Companies, the best way to support and propagate these ideas would be to adopt flexible working hours and a hybrid work model. One prominent example would be The Walt Disney Company and its Flexibility @Disney program as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility. Companies can work on such initiatives to empower employees to help them streamline their professional commitments without compromising on their personal lives, ultimately inducing intrinsic loyalty within them.

Incorporating Youth into Decision Making

Young professionals bring new ideas and a fresh perspective to the table, and their active involvement in strategic and creative decision-making becomes an essential asset for media firms. The younger generation stays on top of emerging trends, cultural shifts and technological advancements. Their ideas can change how media content resonates with today's more extensive audience.

Companies can create culturally relevant narratives that drive engagement by including and consciously considering the young's voice in editorial boards or brainstorming sessions. Buzzfeed's Tasty, a youth-driven project, is a perfect example. Tasty virtually revolutionised the food content space on social media, particularly YouTube. A team of primarily millennials banked on the short video format to create visually captivating & delicious meals. The massive success of the channel owes itself to the involvement of young voices from that time in ideation, scripting, and production. Organisations can institutionalise youth participation through 'Advisory Boards,' as BBC's Young Reporter Scheme did by inviting young journalists to make their voices heard in deciding strategy.

The media sector can remain vibrant, innovative, and influential if the current media organisations meet the expectations of the current generation while also considering their future goals. Understanding and acknowledging the ambition of the youth will go a long way to attracting and retaining them. The corporates must stay on top of emerging trends, allow experimentation with innovative technology, and promote inclusivity and mental health.

From Pixels to Prose: The Evolution of Digital Storytelling Dynamics

By Sara Dwivedi

Storytelling has evolved parallelly with the advent of new technology. In the 21st century, storytelling has changed even more through digital platforms that make storytelling personal, immediate, and fragmented. Key to this evolutionary trend is the emergence of micro trends, a phenomenon that takes on short-lived, niche forms and ripples through the layers of social media and influence. This paper will discuss micro trends' challenges for modern story authors and balance engaging with trends with meaningful narratives.

Storytelling has always been attuned to technological shifts. With social media, streaming platforms, and technology inviting interactivity, the digital age has paved a new, fast-paced environment for creating content. Stories today are more fragmented, briefer, and closer to fast-moving cultural trends. In this process, micro trends-emerging, niche, short-lived phenomena-are truly and profoundly changing how the world consumes content. And even though these trends often occur with influencers and viral content in play, they insist that creators be nimble, responsive, and authentic on their very surface while maintaining the depth and resonance that great storytelling has always entailed.

Micro trends and Their Influence on Storytelling

Micro trends are rapid, niche phenomena amplified by social media that arise and disappear quickly. Fuelled by viral content and influencers, micro trends influence what stories are told and how they are told. In the digital age, they shape formats and themes that gain traction, encouraging creators to create small, attention-grabbing, and culturally relevant content.

Digital channels like Instagram and YouTube tend to prioritise fast-paced content with attention-grabbing storytelling in short form. Designed to capture instantaneous attention, disjointed narratives undermining the traditional storytelling structure, focusing on the intensity of feelings and long-term emotional grasp, are galore in the contemporary world. Fast, fashionable narratives may lose these emotional layers and complexity of narration, hence, may not be remembered. One of the biggest challenges of the micro trend era is creating ongoing chunks of content relevant to the hottest trend. Unlike good old-fashioned storytelling, which builds over time, digital content often needs to capture audiences' attention, prioritising speed over depth and producing shallow stories obsessed over being attractive or funny rather than developing meaningful themes.

The saturation of content is another problem. As millions of creators respond to the micro trends, the space becomes noisier, and differentiation becomes harder. This makes it highly competitive, and even the most well-crafted story might get lost. Usually, while chasing the latest trends, originality takes a hit for recycled formats and ideas to garner short-term engagement.

Not with standing the related challenges, micro trends also offer tremendous opportunities for innovation in storytelling. Examples include new formats and creative approaches with which digital platforms allow rapid experimentation. By their very nature, short-form content provides possibilities for freely experimenting with humour, aesthetics, and structure that are impossible through longer formats. Micro trends also encourage interactivity, allowing the digital creators to work directly with the audience, producing a co-creation.

Case Study: Nectar Hard Seltzer Success

Nectar Hard Seltzer is perhaps one of the best examples of using micro trends in storytelling: Jeremy Kim-led brand tapped into the cultural importance of Asian American identity for GenZ and the authenticity-seeking genre. Influencer marketing, SMS campaigns, and limited-edition product drops helped build this sense of belonging around a product. Sponsorship in stories becomes possible through user-created content, collaboration, and influencer-driven narratives that relate to real engagement with the audience, making the story dynamic and participative. story. Fluidity allows creators to reach a variety of audiences across multiple formats.

Raw storytelling was the basis of the brand's content strategy. Entrepreneurial journey vlogs and podcasts resonated with GenZ, which demanded transparency and authenticity. By embracing a micro trend such as Asian-American cultural representation, Nectar managed to move away from the competition and capture niche communities while having broad appeal.

The future will witness developments in storytelling based on artificial intelligence and augmented and virtual reality. It will make the experience characterising immersion and interactivity available to the masses. The narrative landscape has diversified and attention-grabbing content according to the demand for relatively swift acts as a counterbalance to the enormous pressure to be relevant while creating meaningful, emotionally resonant stories. In the digital future, storytelling will cross boundaries and possibly new ways to captivate and hold the readers' attention will emerge.The future of storytelling lies in trying to be relevant over changing trends while maintaining some timelessness in the narrative qualities. One major challenge would be to uphold emotional depth and universality in storytelling while trying to meet the speed requirements of digital media content. Storytellers need to be agile yet thoughtful and ensure their stories have the stability that micro-trends cannot achieve.

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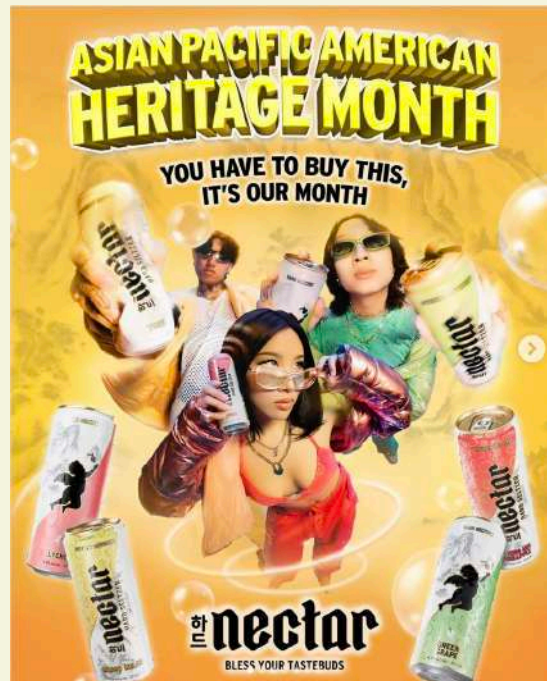
Making Content for the Digital Generation: The Evolved Journalism Building Consumer Trust
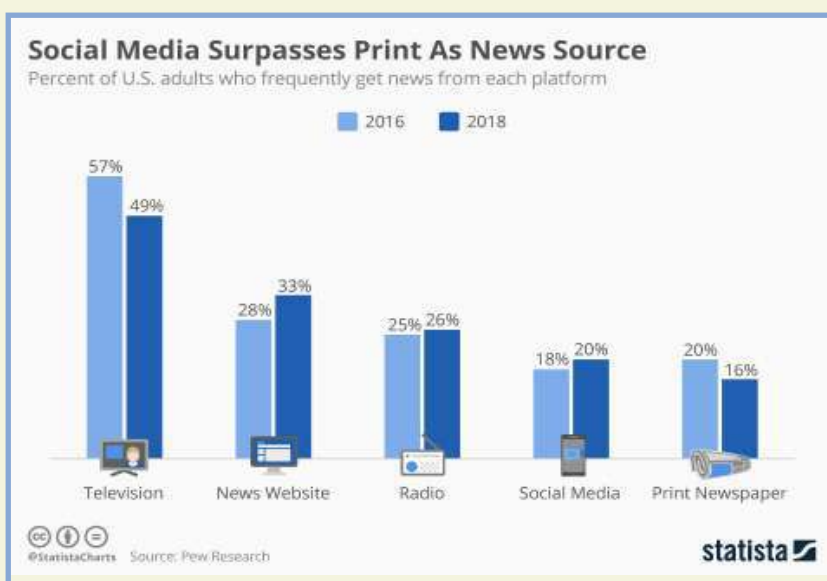
By Prisha Arora

The digitalized generation is changing journalism as it allows millennials and Gen Z to create, broadcast, and frame narratives across the globe. As this shift removes traditional barriers, it also brings along challenges such as misinformation, ethics, and inclusivity. This paper looks into how this generation faces these challenges, analyzes its role with emerging technologies, and gives recommendations for a framework embracing ethical and inclusive storytelling practices. Digital journalism moves beyond the conventions. Media such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter can provide a voice for anyone; however, it requires other duties in the form of ethical reporting, fact-checking misinformation, and inclusiveness. The paper discusses these responsibilities as it tries to look into how technology, cooperation, and audience participation impact current journalism.

Democratization of Media: Voices From All Over

Storytelling in PR has emerged as a powerful tool for brands to connect deeply with The Web has made journalism a do-or-die industry because it proliferated grassroots reporting. Citizen journalism is an example of what happened during the Russia-Ukraine conflict on live updates on Telegram, for instance. Nigerian social media was used by activist movements to expose police brutality that precipitated the #EndSARS protests, for instance. This also leads to the immediate dissemination of misinformation, just like when it happened during the Israel-Palestine conflict where misleading images were sent to public circulation. Verification now reaches into the hands of creators and consumers. Tools such as Google Reverse Image Search and organizations like Africa Check are very important for real-time verification (Africa Check, n.d.; Google, n.d.).

Ethical Journalism in an Algorithm-Driven Framework

Social media algorithms prefer engagement, and sometimes the sensational is amplified more than factual reporting. An example of this is how anti-vaccine conspiracies exploded during the Covid-19 pandemic, spreading lies to millions. Ethical journalism must work against this with accuracy and accountability. Organisations like Bellingcat are examples of such openness, using open-source investigative tools (Bellingcat, n.d.). Accountable digital resources can help journalists remain pertinent without compromising their commitment to the truth.

Social Media Surpasses Print As News Source
Percent of U.S. adults who frequently get news from each platform

2016   2018

Television: 57% / 49%
News Website: 28% / 33%
Radio: 25% / 26%
Social Media: 18% / 20%
Print Newspaper: 20% / 16%

@StatistaCharts Source: Pew Research   statista

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Page No 66

Cooperation and Multimedia Narrative Building

Journalism nowadays is collaboration-based. The Panama Papers investigation is indeed a perfect example of power cross-border teamwork in an attempt to unravel complex narratives (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, 2016). Multimedia storytelling allows for complicated issues to reach the human side and is emotionally captivating; for instance, data journalism and AR simulations (The New York Times, n.d.). However, information overload and reduced attention spans of the digital age challenge journalists to balance engagement with substance, as seen in the BBC's "Explainers" series.

Role of Technology in Journalism

Artificial intelligence (AI) and data-driven tools have transformed journalism, offering efficiency and creativity. Tools like Storybench streamline content creation and data processing, but unchecked algorithms can perpetuate bias and misinformation. Transparency is important, with journalists mentioning the role of AI in content creation. Tools like Datawrapper enhance accessibility and trustworthiness through data visualizations.

Action-Enabling Journalism: Solutions Journalism

Solutions journalism reframes societal problems based on solutions. For example, community-led climate initiative stories change the narrative from hopelessness to hope. The approach inspires optimism, which creates public contributions towards positive changes in society.

Ethical Personal Brands

In the digital age, journalists build personal brands on platforms like Twitter and Linked In. Hasan Minhaj shows how personal branding can make journalists more influential. It's integral for journalists to manage self-promotion so that they do not lose credibility.

Representing Diverse Global Voices

Despite amplifying diverse voices, digital platforms often continue to perpetuate social inequalities. Marginalized voices, such as Indigenous perspectives on climate change, remain inadequately represented. Platforms like AJ+ by Al Jazeera amplify underreported stories from the Global South, emphasizing the need for equitable representation (Al Jazeera, n.d.).

1.4 Why Newsrooms Use AI

We can see that there is a wealth of activity and development happening, but why? There were three core reasons given by our respondents:

WHY HAVE YOU STARTED ADOPTING AI TECHNOLOGIES?

To make journalists' work more efficient — 68%
To deliver more relevant content to users — 45%
To improve business efficiency — 20%

NB: Proportion of respondents who mentioned each motivation in their answers.

Conclusion

The digital generation has massive power to mould journalism to be a far more enlightened and inclusive terrain. In embracing collaboration, ethical practice, and new tools, they can fashion stories that inspire and connect. Such power requires the responsibility of bridging differences and encouraging mutual understanding; only in the relentless pursuit of truth, inclusivity, and compassion can this generation take up the challenge to form a better global society.
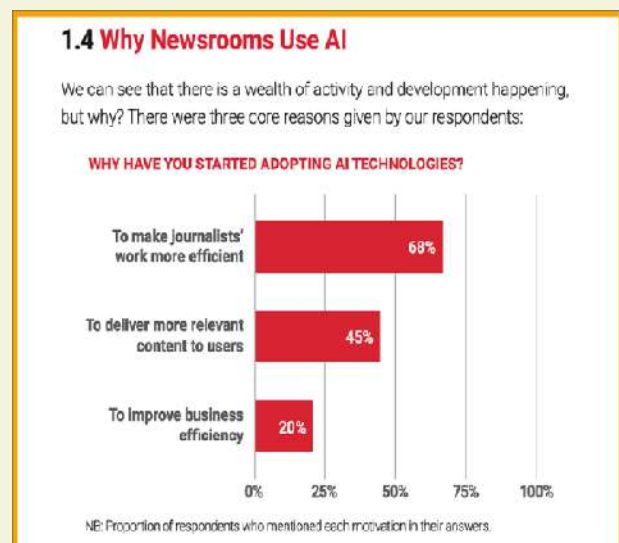
Crafting Stories in the Age of Micro trends: Navigating a Fragmented Audience

By Saanvi Awasthi

In today's social media-driven world, micro trends dominate the landscape. As this landscape complicates, people find that audiences are divided further into narrow interest groups - accentuated by platforms such as social media tools, particularly TikTok and Instagram - it asks an essential question for reporters. How can they craft compelling narratives in this fast-paced, highly segmented environment?

Understanding Micro trends and Their Impact on Storytelling

Micro trends are defined as extremely brief, extremely specific movements or interests within a given sphere, which last for just a few months or years. The emergence of TikTok and Instagram, where algorithms drive the content and have short-form content, also fosters the production of super-specific subcultures. This has resulted in ignoring stories that do not directly connect with one's interest.

Effects of Micro trends on the Art of Storytelling

Storytelling should adapt to the short-lived lifespans of micro trends. It should be much shorter to be effective and to make a huge impact over small moments. Moreover, the contents have to be engaging as they have to capture the audience's attention and invite interaction. User-generated content, participatory campaigns, and interactive experiences are, therefore, critical approaches to reach today's consumers. Despite the challenges, micro trends do offer unique opportunities. It has generated personalisation and inclusiveness. So many identities, preferences, and values unite for communities to view themselves.

Brand Authenticity and Connection

Storytelling enables brands to identify with micro trends so that the brand may exhibit authenticity and shared values. Such campaigns reflect cultural sentiments that make them truly connect with audiences. However, this alignment must remain genuine to avoid appearing opportunistic or out of touch.

New Platforms and Mediums

Innovative platforms like podcasts, Virtual Reality/ Augmented Reality (VR/AR), short-form videos, and gamified content push the evolution of storytelling forward. They present new means of connecting to fragmented audiences. However, the speed of changes necessitates rapid adaptation. The stories may turn outdated right away and need innovations at a rapid pace as well. The chances of stories becoming outdated require creators to be both agile and vigilant.

Content Saturation and Ethical Considerations

The overabundance of content poses another challenge. To stand out, stories must combine creativity, emotional resonance, and brevity. At the same time, the prevalence of micro trends introduces an ethical dimension to storytelling. Misinterpretation or ignorance of trends within their cultural context brings inappropriate representation or appropriation. Authenticity and cultural sensitivity have to come in handy to avoid ethical wrongdoings. Striking the right balance between creativity, emotional impact, and ethical integrity ensures stories resonate meaningfully without causing harm.

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Strategies for Effective Storytelling

To thrive in the age of micro trends, storytelling has to shift gears. Stories should engage their audiences, either by using participative elements or discussion rooms, which promotes a sense of ownership and participation. Stories must appeal emotionally, striking a balance between creativity and authenticity for lasting impact. Advanced technology such as artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics and AR/VR can further enhance storytelling, enabling audiences to adapt to the changing audience preferences.

Storytelling scope in the age of micro trends is vast and complex. Offering unparalleled opportunities for innovation yet demanding adaptability, vigilance, and a deep understanding of cultural dynamics, this is feasible only by balancing universal appeal with localised relevance. Micro trends are thus changing the art of storytelling into a dynamic, fluid practice that reflects the cultural zeitgeist. In embracing new changes, the teller can craft a story in a world where change happens fast and multifaceted.

Creating Concise Narratives: Storytelling in the Era of Micro trends

By Amanda V James

In the current era, technology has grown to the point where it aids instant gratification and continuously lowers the attention spans of youth. With the ease of swipes, the rise of micro trends has emerged amid the current tech-obsessed world. Therefore, with these rapidly rising technological advancements along with perpetually shifting definitions of culture and popular culture, storytelling is undergoing a profound transformation today. Netizens, businesses and storytellers across professions have noticed a rise of micro trends over the recent years that have reshaped how narratives are crafted and consumed and, more importantly, how narratives must be crafted to reach the consumer effectively. Today's audiences are more connected than ever and demand more concise, quick and engaging content than ever - which poses both challenges as well as opportunities, making it essential to explore the scope of storytelling within this context.

Understanding Micro trends

Changes in consumer behaviour and short-lived interests, i.e., have a quick rise and fall, are referred to as micro trends. The earliest naming of this rising trend, known as micro trends, was in 2024 and was noted to have appeared in the beauty and fashion industries, accelerated by social media platforms like TikTok. While fashion micro trends included aesthetics such as 'Cottage core,' 'Barbie core,' and 'Old Money,' these micro trends soon made their way into cultural slang. In the current digital age, these trends are primarily facilitated by social media platforms, where information spreads rapidly.

Gen Z's preference for short-form content over traditional long-form media has played a significant role in driving their growth. Micro trends, being short-lived and specific, are both a response to cultural changes and a catalyst for them. They are heavily influenced by social media platforms, where content that goes viral sparks immediate interest and engagement among audiences. It is evident that storytelling has been and will be a central force in understanding the complexities of modern communication. However, its form will be more frequently influenced by changes in audience preferences and technological advancements.

The Relationship between Storytelling and Micro trends

Storytelling, which has been an essential part of human communication, must adapt to remain relevant and has started to do so in recent years. In an era of micro trends, the question arises of how journalists adapt to these new demands- demand for brevity, speed, accuracy, and immediacy. Journalists and journalistic organisations have adapted to a brief and impactful model of journalism- news portals like InShorts reduce news stories to bite-sized, easily read and understood articles. Another example of journalists adapting to the latest demands by audiences is how independent journalists, like Faye D'Souza, who run their news agencies, post short news updates on their social media accounts, which are easily accessible and quick to read for readers. With attention spans dwindling, today's content has become concise yet impactful. Be it journalistic organisations shortening content to fit social media platform needs (short-form video content or shortened stories), movies being shot to fit short-form video proportions, or creating trending audios and dance sequences

Increasing dependence on Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts and TikTok videos, among numerous other platforms, has come from their rising viewership and engagement, which have been the primary cause for lowered attention spans. Such a transition not only meets the demand for short-form storytelling but also fosters the emergence of new content creators who specialise in this format.

However, this relation between storytelling and micro trends brings the challenge of condensing complex narratives that resonate with audiences immediately. Since these platforms have popularised micro trends, creators must be conscious of micro trends in their content creation. Today's audiences also seek authenticity, apparent in the popularity of reality TV shows, slice-of-life cinema, and vlogs, among other formats. The authenticity of content resonates deeper with the audience, making them feel seen and heard and helping them relate to the media they consume. With advancements in media, we have transitioned from multimedia to transmedia. With the presence of content creators across platforms, today, there is transmedia, which brings different mediums into one piece of content. Along with keeping up with ever changing micro trends, storytellers of today have to adapt to this new format of media. This innovative integration is transforming storytelling today and is gaining traction against popular short-form micro trends.

The internet, multimedia, and social media platforms, among many other advancements, have led to information overload and consumer bombardment. This information overload creates an urgent need for concise, engaging and accurate information to navigate through all the fake information circulating the internet. Adapting to micro storytelling as a critical strategy to stand out in today's crowded media landscape and reach wider audiences can be advantageous to content creators, journalists, and filmmakers. By integrating visual elements into authentic and brief content, one's storytelling can have a more lasting impact on today's media scene. The scope of storytelling in the era of micro trends is vast. By embracing micro-storytelling as a strategy and prioritising brevity, authenticity and engaging visual content, brands and creators can effectively and efficiently pave the way through contemporary media consumption.

Innovation Under Pressure: The Role of Deadlines in Creativity

By Sirin Azad

Balancing creativity with deadlines is a challenge that both students and professionals in media-related fields face. Novel ideas, coherent narratives, and engaging advertisements are all products of creativity. At the same time, deadlines encourage timelines and responsibility. However, balancing the two is nothing short of a herculean task, especially for a student trying to understand the nuances of the field or a media professional juggling multiple projects. This research article examines how creativity can be balanced with deadlines.

The Interplay Between Creativity and Deadlines

Creativity is the basis for most media professions. In writing a press release, creating a campaign, or authoring an investigative report, creative ideas that are executed in a timely manner are crucial. However, this process is not always linear. Deadlines create a structure, helping individuals reduce the amount of time it takes for them to brainstorm, ideate, and refine ideas. Coming up with a unique concept for a PR campaign for a product launch requires originality. The campaign must be delivered on a certain schedule if the client's timeline is to be accommodated. This makes it essential to balance creativity and deadlines. Similarly, journalists are frequently under pressure to write gripping pieces on breaking news in short periods of time. Sometimes, the need to fulfil deadlines stifles creativity, resulting in work that is uninspired and formulaic.

Lessons from the Field: Real-Time Innovation

The attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, forced news organisations to innovate in real-time. News anchors and reporters had to convey the gravity of the situation while simultaneously providing updates on the evolving crisis. Many news outlets used multiple camera angles, live feeds from the scene, and expert analysis to keep viewers informed and engaged.

Strategies for Balancing Creativity and Deadlines

The key is to plan well and ahead of time. It can be helpful to divide larger projects into smaller, more manageable tasks, each with its own mini-deadlines. This makes it easier to allot enough time for both ideation and implementation. For instance, a feature piece requires designated days for writing, research, interviewing sources, and revisions. A journalist can allocate an appropriate amount of days or time for each step accordingly. The twenty-first century is marked by digital innovations designed to make people's lives easier.

There are several technologies available to media professionals that can be used to enhance efficiency and creativity. Software such as Asana or Trello saves time, while tools like Grammarly and Canva improve the product's quality and streamline creative processes. Collaborative efforts yield faster results. This can be observed in journalism and public relations classes, where students usually work together in groups, dividing tasks and exchanging ideas amongst themselves. New ideas are allowed to flow freely, overcoming creative boundaries. As a result, deadlines are met without sacrificing quality.

Overcoming Roadblocks

It is natural to hit a few roadblocks along the way. Recognising these constraints can help overcome them. Establishing attainable objectives within the stipulated time helps maintain consistency and prevents last-minute loose ends. It is a proven fact that organising one's work and setting feasible goals improves efficiency and the quality of work. This can be further improved by following an incentivised system (such as positive reinforcement), where one is rewarded for achieving small tasks. Despite its limitations, a deadline is just as important as creativity. They teach people to prioritise their work, promoting discipline and avoiding burnout or fatigue.

Case Studies: Creativity Under Constraints

Experience is the best teacher in managing creativity and deadlines. Nike's "Just Do It" and Dove's "Real Beauty" are two iconic campaigns that demonstrate innovative thinking under constrained time frames. Nike managed to time its impactful campaign to coincide with the Olympics, resulting in a record number of sales. A lot of the campaign's success can be attributed to Nike's adherence to strict timelines and the brand's slogan, "Just Do It," which encouraged people to embrace fitness as a lifestyle. Dove took note of the current cultural climate and launched a campaign to promote realistic beauty standards. Dove advocated for inclusivity through its "Real Beauty" campaign, which featured real women in place of models. Timely execution, supported by brilliant innovation, was instrumental in its monumental success.

Deadlines should be seen as opportunities for creativity rather than as inhibitors. Certain skills are acquired via practice and tenacity, something that deadlines help nourish. For media students, finding the right balance between deadlines and creativity would mean a lot in their training. While creativity fuels innovation and distinguishes exceptional work, deadlines provide the structure necessary to bring ideas to life within a specified time frame. This balance prepares individuals for the dynamic, high-pressure demands of the media industry, where every second counts. In such circumstances, the ability to harmonise these contradictory forces is not only a skill but an art.

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Postface

The media industry is evolving faster than ever. From the digital revolution to the rise of AI and the ever-expanding influence of social media, today's workspaces are dynamic, challenging, and full of opportunities. For the youth stepping into this exciting world, being prepared isn't just an advantage—it's essential.

The theme for Anukram 2025, "**Preparing for Tomorrow: Readying the Youth for Everchanging Media Workspaces,**" captures this perfectly. It's about more than just keeping up; it's about thriving in a world where change is the only constant. It's about fostering the adaptability, creativity, and resilience needed to navigate a future shaped by technology, storytelling, and human connection.

The **Anukram Book 2025** is a reflection of this vision. Inside, you'll find a rich collection of articles, ideas, and insights—from experts and our own talented students at the Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication. These pages explore the challenges of modern media, the possibilities of tomorrow, and what it takes to succeed in an ever-evolving industry.

We hope this compilation not only informs but also inspires you. Whether you're a student, a professional, or simply someone passionate about media, this book offers a glimpse into the future through the eyes of those who will shape it.

It's with great pride that we present the Anukram 2025 to you. May it spark new ideas, encourage deeper conversations, and help you on your journey ahead.

Happy reading!
Dr. Kavitha Iyer
HOD- Communication Management & Faculty Incharge-Placements

Preparing for Tomorrow:
Readying the Youth for Everchanging Media Workspaces

The media industry is evolving faster than ever, driven by technological advancements, changing audience behaviors, and new platforms of communication. At the center of this transformation lies the youth, playing a pivotal role in shaping and redefining the industry's future.

Future Frame: Perspective on Everchanging Media Workspaces sheds light on how young media professionals are adapting to these shifts, bringing innovation, creativity, and resilience to an ever-changing landscape. From understanding digital trends to embracing new-age storytelling, the booklet offers valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing the next generation of media practitioners