

# Exploring the Evolution and Impact: A Research Inquiry into the Decade of Digital Journalism in India

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## ABSTRACT

The rise of the digital era in journalism increased with the blossoming of electronic communication tools and platforms. The news organisations have discovered an overabundance of new opportunities in information delivery, as well as the challenge of interweaving data privacy and security with innovation. As of now, as many as 80% of Indians consume news on the Internet, primarily through the social media and instant-messaging services. The large-scale use of services like Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube has allowed news organisations to offer regular updates to consumers on current events, bypassing barriers of time and accessibility. India's large and thriving news media is going digital. Spurred by an exponential increase in Internet use and digital advertising, a number of digital journalism startups have been established in recent years.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, data journalism, digital media, internet, journalism, revolution

## Introduction

Journalism originated as the reportage of current events, specifically in printed form, i.e. newspapers. However, boosted by the massive growth in technology and electronic communication over the past decade, its scope has expanded and its definition has evolved into an all-encompassing domain of information. The current stage on that evolutionary ladder following print, radio, and television is digital journalism, the most widely used and popular driver of news consumption in today's world. Journalism has undergone significant transformations in recent years, primarily driven by the digital revolution. The rise of social media and increased public access to information has brought new challenges and opportunities for journalists. As of now, as many as 80% of Indians consume news on the Internet, primarily through the social media and instant-messaging services. The large-scale use of services like Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube has allowed news organisations to offer regular updates to consumers on current events, bypassing barriers of time and accessibility. In fact, advancements made in chat-bots have also made it possible to deliver curated news, stock market updates, and other relevant information, tailored specifically for the individual consumer, on WhatsApp and Messenger.

As the 21st century marches on, different types of journalists and media outlets will continue to evolve in response to digital journalism trends. The concept of popular media developed during the 1900s, starting with radio and newspapers in the first half of the century, before television's domination in the 1980s and 90s. The turn of the 21st century saw the rise of a new journalism medium for a new millennium: the internet. Revolutionizing global commerce and communication seemingly overnight, the internet has also

fundamentally changed how journalists and media outlets operate. Old-school journalism outlets have found it difficult to adjust, but newer types of journalism have flourished in a media landscape that's almost unrecognizable from a few decades ago.

Journalism has changed rapidly in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The traditional ideal of journalism was for reporters to serve as independent sources, attempting to deliver the news in a fact-based, objective manner. While this tradition remains intact in some news avenues, increased access to technologies has led to the proliferation of citizen and activist journalists who openly have a bias or point of view, but still attempt to promote that perspective through a lens that includes fair framing, editing, and reporting. Some also take advantage of these technologies to advance propaganda under the guise of news. Now, anyone can create a blog and put an opinion out into the world, where it can go viral without any fact-checking or editing. Journalists in the digital age must operate in a world where the news cycle moves faster. As a result, striking a balance between timely and in-depth reporting is often more difficult.



Modern journalists need a few indispensable tools to get the job done.

1. Computers with internet access allow journalists to write and file stories and run professional audio, video, and text editing software from global locations.
2. Videoconferencing software: Journalists need to connect with far-flung subjects, sources, and editorial teams.
3. Smartphones: Smartphones allow for enhanced audio, video, and data transmission capabilities. They also make it easier for citizens to get involved in the reporting process.
4. Social media data tracking: In-depth visualizations of clicks, shares, and interactions tell journalists what stories are trending and where research is needed.

To facilitate speedy, accurate reporting, modern journalists use various recent inventions and innovations: **Internet:** Before the digital age, reporters had to either call in their stories or drive to the newsroom to type it out, and then submit it to their editors; after that, the story would have to find its way to the printing press. Now, the internet means journalists can file stories on location from a phone or laptop, allowing organizations to get breaking news on their websites within minutes of it happening.

**Specialty software:** Modern programs and apps allow journalists to do everything from video editing to graphics work, research, and transcription from the comfort of their living rooms.

**Videoconferencing software:** Applications like Zoom and Google Meet allow journalists to conduct interviews and staff meetings remotely.

**Smartphones:** Arguably the most important tool in modern journalism is the smartphone, most commonly iPhones and Android devices. Capable of shooting images and video, recording audio, accessing the internet, and more, journalists can produce professional work.

**Social media:** Journalists use social media networks, such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, to promote their work, stay on top of breaking news, seek sources, and interact with the public.

**Digital recorders and transcription services:** In the early days of modern journalism, reporters had to rely on shorthand to accurately quote a subject, not an easy task when listening to a politician's speech or a star player's postgame interview.

**Digital cameras (dual purpose):** When cameras were film-based only, journalistic photography was an expensive, time-consuming practice reserved almost solely for professionals. Now, with the proliferation of digital and smartphone cameras, almost everybody has a dual-purpose device that can take both high-definition photographs and video.

No matter the role, the digital journalism era has brought wholesale changes to the industry. Here's how the digital age has affected different types of journalism roles and how they've adjusted.

### 1. Data Journalism

Data journalism is a new term coined these days is the use of data analysis, visualization, and other techniques to uncover newsworthy stories. With the increasing availability of data on different topics, data journalism has become a popular trend among journalists. By using data and visualization tools, journalists can identify trends and patterns in various fields such as finance, healthcare, and politics. Data journalism also enables journalists to verify facts and figures. To present complicated information in an understandable way this is very useful technique. However, data journalism requires specialized skills and resources. Despite these challenges, data journalism is a growing trend and no doubt the future of journalism.

### 2. Mobile Journalism

Mobile journalism commonly known as MoJo, is the practice of using mobile devices including smart phones and tablets, to create and distribute news content. With the growth of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Periscope, MoJo has become a popular way of reaching audiences who prefer to consume news on mobile devices. MoJo allows journalists to break the news then and there. However, the ease and accessibility of mobile technology also raises ethical concerns about the veracity and accuracy of the information shared on social media. but this can be take care of with the sense of responsibility.

### 3. Virtual and Augmented Reality

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) have become increasingly popular in the journalism industry, providing immersive experiences for audiences. VR and AR technology enable journalists to create immersive 360-degree videos and virtual reality experiences that transport viewers to different locations. In several media houses AR is in practice with malafide intention, hence this is also emerging as a trend in journalism.

### 4. Automated Journalism

Automated journalism involves the use of computer programs to generate news stories automatically. Automated journalism is particularly popular in sports reporting and financial news, where the data is

often structured. It poses a challenge to journalistic ethics, such as accuracy, impartiality, and transparency. Critics argue that unlike human journalists, computer algorithms cannot have the same level of critical thinking and creativity required to produce compelling, engaging news content.

### **5. Audience Engagement**

Audience engagement is an emerging trend in journalism, where journalists and news organisations are focusing on building relationships and engaging with their audiences. With the rise of social media and user-generated content, audience engagement has become a critical component of journalism. Now a days it is a common practice that journalists are using social media platforms to share news stories, engage in conversations with audiences, and gather feedback on the topics that matter most. News organisations are also using audience engagement strategies to generate revenue, such as offering premium content and online subscriptions, building communities of readers, and hosting live events.

### **6. Fact-checking**

Over a period of times fake stories had filled the social media and somehow started effecting the main stream media. But as they say, ‘Necessity is the mother of invention’. Fact-checking is another emerging trend in journalism. With the rise of fake news, journalists have recognized the importance of fact-checking to ensure the accuracy of information they publish. Fact-checking allows journalists to verify data and statements made by politicians, scientists, and others to ensure that they are true and not misleading. Fact-checking also helps to build trust between journalists and their audiences. News organisations are increasingly using fact-checking teams to scrutinize information before it is published. Fact-checking has also led to the emergence of new websites and organisations that are dedicated to checking facts for accuracy.

### **7. Collaborative Journalism**

Collaborative journalism involves the cooperation among various media outlets, reporters, and experts to gather information and tell a story. Collaborative journalism can take on many forms. It might involve reporters from different media outlets working together on a single story, or it could involve a news organization working with experts or academics in a specific field. Collaborative journalism can produce more in-depth and thorough reporting and can help to build strong relationships between different media outlets.

### **8. Solutions Journalism**

Solutions Journalism is another trend in journalism that focuses on solutions to problems rather than just reporting on them. Solutions journalism involves highlighting the good news stories and reporting on solutions to problems that are working effectively. It aims to provide hope and promote positive attitudes that may inspire and motivate individuals to take action or force change in their communities. Solutions journalism often requires a change in attitude by journalists, who are used to reporting on negative news. By focusing on solutions and positive news, journalists can highlight what is working well and draw attention to areas where progress is being made.

### **9. Personalisation**

Personalisation is becoming increasingly important in journalism as news organisations strive to tailor content to meet individual reader preferences. By understanding readers’ preferences, news organisations can also tailor their advertising and monetization strategies more effectively. However, Personalisation also raises concerns about filter bubbles and echo chambers. If news organisations only serve content that aligns with readers’ existing beliefs, it can limit their exposure to diverse perspectives and lead to a lack of understanding or empathy towards different viewpoints.

### **10. Citizen Journalism**

Citizen journalism refers to the participation of ordinary individuals in the process of news gathering, reporting, and sharing. With the advent of smart phones and social media platforms, anyone can now capture and share news events in real-time. Citizen journalism has played a significant role in breaking news stories and providing eyewitness accounts in situations where traditional journalists may not have immediate access. However, citizen journalism also presents challenges in terms of accuracy and verification. Unlike professional journalists, citizen journalists may not have the resources or training to verify information thoroughly.

### **11. Media Literacy**

Media literacy is a growing trend that emphasizes the importance of educating audiences about critically analysing and understanding the media they consume. With the increasing prevalence of fake news and misinformation, media literacy programs aim to equip individuals with the skills necessary to identify reliable sources, evaluate information, and differentiate between fact and opinion. News organisations play a crucial role in promoting media literacy by providing transparent and accurate reporting, highlighting their fact-checking processes, and engaging in public discussions about media literacy.

### **12. Transparency and Accountability**

Transparency and accountability have become key priorities for news organisations as they strive to build trust with their audiences. News organisations are now expected to be transparent about their sources, reporting processes, and potential conflicts of interest.

### **13. Interactive Journalism**

Interactive journalism allows readers to engage with news content through interactive features, such as quizzes, polls, and interactive graphics. It promotes user participation and allows readers to explore stories at their own pace and based on their interests. Interactive journalism can be an effective way to increase audience engagement, as it encourages readers to interact with the content and take an active role in the storytelling process.

### **14. Artificial Intelligence in Journalism**

Artificial intelligence (AI) is beginning to play a larger role in journalism, particularly in areas such as automated news writing, content recommendations, and fact-checking. AI algorithms can analyse data and generate news articles in a fraction of the time it would take a human journalist. This is particularly useful for data-driven stories or reports that require a high level of accuracy and consistency. While AI has the potential to streamline work-flows and enhance journalism, there are also concerns about its impact on job displacement and the potential for bias in algorithmic decision-making. It is crucial for news organisations to use AI responsibly and ensure that human journalists continue to play a central role in storytelling and maintaining editorial standards.

### **Digital Journalism Skills**

Having a smartphone and the right editing software is a good way to start off in the field of modern journalism. However, tools without the ability and know-how to use them won't matter much in an ultracompetitive field. Some skills that can help lead to a career as a journalist in the digital age are:

**Investigation:** At its core, journalism is a storytelling profession, and the best stories aren't always obvious. They often require hours of interviews, chasing down sources and leads, going down dead ends, and trying new paths. Whether working for a major news organization or paving their own route, the ability to hit on a story and track it to its conclusion is the hallmark of good journalists.



**Research:** Research and investigation, although cut from the same cloth, are different skills. While investigators track down leads and work sources for new information, research involves studying books, old newspapers, and other media as background for stories. Like investigations, research stages can take weeks or months to discover a story's full background, or to gain a proper appreciation of the bigger picture.

**Written communication:** You can be a great interviewer or video editor, but without the ability to write a compelling script or story, technical abilities won't matter. Writing will always remain a central tenet of journalism, and the best journalists all have the ability to file a strong story on deadline, even if their focus is in a different area.

**Basic web design:** Using programs such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, and Adobe Illustrator, journalists can create graphics, video backgrounds, illustrations, and data visualizations to supplement their work. Although blogging platforms make it easy for independent journalists to establish their own sites cheaply, the ability to personalize a site and make it stand out makes a great first impression and can help hold readers' attention.

**Self-motivation:** Newsrooms are shrinking, and more journalists are working remotely or for their own publications. For self-publishing or entrepreneurial journalists, it can take several years of working around the clock to build up enough of a following or subscriber base to make a living, much less to grow their operation.

**A/V editing:** Digital journalists need to know how to compile video, audio, images, and graphics into informative, captivating, compact multimedia stories — called “packages” in newspeak — for broadcast or the web. Understanding camera basics and proper framing and lighting doesn't cost journalists any extra but will make their product look professional; the ability to use the right postproduction programs to add graphics and enhance video and sound is also becoming commonplace.

### **Digital Journalism Start-Ups in India**

Indian journalists, technologists, and entrepreneurs are working to develop different content-based (the Quint, Scroll), aggregation-based (InShorts, DailyHunt), or non-profit (The Wire, Khabar Lahariya) models for doing journalism fit for a digital India. Based on interviews with people involved in these starts-ups, and with others working in and around digital journalism in India, as well as material from news coverage, academic research, and industry publications, it shows that the rapid growth in internet use and digital advertising has been accompanied by a large number of new start-ups. They are developing distinct content and mobile-first and social-first approaches to distribution and are facing strong competition from both legacy media and large international technology companies when it comes to building a sustainable business.

### **The Future of Digital Journalism**

What will journalism look like in the next century? While change is inevitable, it's clear that the internet and digital age are here to stay, and humanity will continue to find new ways to connect and interact as the 21st century goes on. The journalists in the digital age are going to have to continue to adapt. New technologies, platforms, and tools are sure to pop up over the years, and the best journalists will find ways to work them into their repertoire or explore new niches in the field. Journalists in the next 10 to 20 years will need the same curiosity, writing skill, and ability to discern the facts as today's journalists, though they'll need to increasingly lean on digital film, photo, and editing skills, as well as their own ability to

“build their brand.” While the top names in the field may be able to stick to one specialty, other journalists should look to explore new areas and take on new challenges.

### Conclusion:

Journalism in the Digital Age: A Constant Evolution in the field of journalism has evolved from its pre-industrial revolution beginnings to its current iteration of citizen journalism and media conglomerates. Journalists and journalism students of the 21st century need to be ready to adapt to new platforms and technologies and stay in tune with the public consciousness to perform their jobs effectively. While journalists may face an uncertain future, avenues for entrepreneurial people with an understanding of technology and humanity to tell compelling stories will always exist. No matter what they call themselves, that’s certainly the definition of journalism.

In conclusion, these additional emerging trends contribute to the evolving landscape of journalism, presenting unique opportunities and challenges for journalists and news organisations. By embracing Artificial Intelligence, mobile journalism, collaborative approaches, and other innovative practices, journalists can adapt and thrive in an ever-changing media ecosystem while upholding the fundamental principles of journalism.

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