

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

أهمية الإعلام الرقمي في تكوين المجتمعات الافتراضية وتعزيز ثقافة الحوار

Kenza Megdoud^{1,*}, Fella Mekiri²

¹ Lounici Ali University of Blida-2- (Algeria), K.megdoud@univ-blida2.dz

² Lounici Ali University of Blida-2- (Algeria), fella.meki.univ-blida2@gmail.com

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Abstract:

This study aims to understand the importance of digital media in the formation of virtual communities ,and how these two concepts can be integrated to achieve a culture of dialogue, In this context, digital media plays a pivotal role in the formation of virtual communities by transcending geographical boundaries, and bringing individuals together around shared interests, thus enabling the exchange of knowledge and the formation of collective identities, It also promotes a culture of dialogue by providing open discussion spaces such as social media platforms and forums, We are now witnessing the immense influence these generations ,Digital media is no longer merely a tool for communication or news exchange, This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview by highlighting the importance of digital media in our current era, identifying its methods for shaping public opinion, and recognizing the opportunities and challenges facing media institutions in the digital age.

Keywords: Digital media, public opinion, virtual communities, culture of dialogue, media institutions

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فهم أهمية الاعلام الرقمي في تكوين المجتمعات الافتراضية، و كيف يمكن لهذين المفهومين التكامل فيما بينهما لتحقيق ثقافة الحوار، و في هذا السياق الاعلام الرقمي له دورا محوريا في تكوين المجتمعات الافتراضية، من خلال اسقاط الحدود الجغرافية و جمع الافراد حول اهتمامات مشتركة، مما يتيح تبادل المعرفة و تكوين الهويات الجماعية، كما يعزز ثقافة الحوار عبر توفير مساحات نقاش مفتوحة، مثل منصات التواصل الاجتماعي و المنتديات ، أصبحنا اليوم أمام تأثير هائل باتت تملكه هذه المنصات في تشكيل الرأي العام ، فالإعلام الرقمي لم يعد مجرد أداة للاتصال ، بل أصبح فضاءً واسعاً يوجّه العقول، ويصنع الاتجاهات، ويؤثر في السلوكيات اليومية ، و بهذا سعت الدراسة الى توفير رؤية شاملة و هذا من خلال تسليط الضوء على أهمية الإعلام الرقمي في عصرنا الحالي ، و التعرف على وسائله في توجيه الرأي العام و وكذا التعرف على الفرص و التحديات التي تواجه المؤسسات الإعلامية في العصر الرقمي.

كلمات مفتاحية: الاعلام الرقمي ،الرأي العام، المجتمعات الافتراضية،ثقافة الحوار،المؤسسات الاعلامية

* Kenza Megdoud ^{1,*}, Fella Mekiri²

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

1. Introduction

Digital media has become one of the most powerful tools for influence and guidance in virtual societies, especially with the spread of the internet and the development of social media, the importance of investing in future generations through this media becomes clear, not only by teaching them how to use it, but also by guiding them towards producing meaningful, conscious, and value-based content.

They can, in turn, invest in it, Young people are the architects of the future, and if empowered with digital skills and critical thinking, they can become leaders in building more conscious and progressive societies, Digital media is not merely a means of disseminating news, but a platform for shaping awareness, fostering a culture of dialogue, and unleashing creative energies, making investment in it an investment in the future of the entire nation.

Digital media has become an indispensable part of daily life, allowing individuals to stay informed about current events and interact with this information instantly and seamlessly, This development has not only transformed traditional media but has also created new tools and platforms, such as social media and online news sites, which now exert a powerful and direct influence on shaping public opinion.

This digital interaction enables the public to access diverse information and multiple sources, enhancing public awareness and contributing to shaping societal attitudes toward various social, political, and economic issues. Media institutions, as well as governmental and private organizations, increasingly rely on these platforms to reach the widest possible audience and steer discussions in line with their goals and visions.

Consequently, digital media has become a key tool in shaping public opinion, used carefully to influence issues and deliver messages quickly and effectively.

Furthermore, digital media helps organizations and individuals tailor their messages to reach precisely targeted audiences, using tools such as data analytics and audience identification, thus ensuring effective impact. This approach allows decision-makers and media outlets to reach specific population groups and discuss important issues directly, thereby increasing the effectiveness of shaping public opinion.

Thanks to its flexibility and high interactivity, digital media has become a key component in raising community awareness, making it an effective tool not only for news dissemination but also for education and positive influence on society through discussions of social, economic, and political issues.

1.The importance of digital media in our current era:

The role of digital media in the modern era is represented in its superior ability to transcend geographical and cultural boundaries to reach a global audience in moments, which constitutes a revolution in the world of communication compared to traditional media that relied on newspapers, television and radio(خليل، 2014، صفحة 25) .

Thanks to the internet and the proliferation of smart devices, news and digital content can now be published as events unfold, allowing the public to follow them in real time, whether those events are local or global, Social media, for example, gives the public the

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

opportunity to become an active participant in disseminating news and information, whether through comments, sharing content, or even creating it themselves.

This direct and continuous interaction allows for the formation of collective opinions on multiple issues at record speed and contributes to the development of a renewed and evolving collective consciousness (علي، 2015، صفحة 95).

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Digital media platforms excel in several aspects, including their high dynamism and direct interaction, Social media, for example, gives the public the opportunity to become an active participant in disseminating news and information, whether through comments, sharing content, or even creating it themselves, This direct and continuous interaction allows for the formation of collective opinions on various issues at record speed and contributes to the development of a renewed and evolving collective consciousness

Digital media today is a pivotal tool in shaping and influencing public opinion in profound and rapid ways, enabling unprecedented access to information and fostering direct interaction with the public, Thanks to technologies such as live streaming and exclusive coverage, media organizations and individuals can transmit news as it happens, allowing the public to form opinions about events in real time, without relying on traditional media outlets that require more time to cover and disseminate news.

1.1.The Impact of Digital Media on Public Opinion:

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Media organizations and individuals can report news as it happens, allowing the public to form opinions about events in real time, without relying on traditional media outlets that require more time to cover and disseminate information(محمد، 2007).

One of the most significant aspects of digital media's impact on public opinion is evident during major crises, such as natural disasters or political upheavals. In these situations, digital media provides comprehensive and immediate coverage of events. This enables the public to follow developments in real time, empowering them to understand situations and take immediate action.

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

For example, when a major event occurs, millions of people turn to social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for updates and breaking news, accelerating the exchange of opinions and leading to the formation of diverse public stances.

Regarding social and political issues, digital media provides a space for collective discussion, where individuals from diverse cultures and ages can express their views and participate in dialogue on various topics. This interaction creates an environment of mutual influence, where people can exchange ideas and form shared perspectives on public issues, whether local or global.

This type of collective dialogue is considered a factor in shaping public opinion and highlighting the most important issues, which in turn can influence decision-makers and public policies.

Furthermore, digital media uses data analytics tools to gather information about audience interests and behaviors, enabling organizations to understand the most engaging trends and topics and tailor their media messages effectively for greater impact.

With these tools, media outlets can tailor content to suit the needs of each segment, increasing engagement and enhancing the role of digital media in shaping public opinion in ways that align with the rapid evolution of the digital age.

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1.2.Digital Media in Shaping Public Opinion:

Numerous digital media outlets contribute to shaping public opinion thanks to their unique features, such as instant interaction and global reach. Among the most prominent of these are:

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are key tools used by digital media to disseminate and share information among users instantly and interactively. (مناني، 2021، صفحة 223)

These platforms allow users to express their opinions and engage with news and events through likes, comments, and shares, contributing to the widespread dissemination of information and the formation of shared opinions on specific issues.

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

Online news sites allow individuals to follow news as it happens, thanks to their speed in delivering and updating news in real time. These sites help cover global and local events, enabling the public to follow events wherever they are.

Blogs and podcasts play a significant role in expressing personal opinions and stances on societal issues. Blogs allow bloggers to present diverse perspectives on various topics, enabling the public to become familiar with a range of viewpoints and form their own.

Similarly, podcasts offer audiences the opportunity to listen to in-depth analyses and discussions on diverse subjects, enhancing their understanding and awareness of these issues and influencing their opinions.

1.3. Digital media has the power to shape public opinion for many reasons, including:

Wide and rapid access:

Digital media gives unprecedented ability to reach a global audience in moments, enabling the widespread and incredibly fast dissemination of information.

Impact on public discourse:

These platforms foster public discussions on specific issues, leading to the formation of public opinion on the topics under discussion. For example, a particular news item or issue can become a matter of public opinion simply by being widely circulated on social media.

Interaction and the formation of virtual communities:

Digital media allows for the formation of communities around shared issues or interests, leading individuals to influence each other's opinions on a particular topic and to unify opinions on issues of concern to society.

Access to multi-source information:

Thanks to the internet, the public can compare different sources, verify news, and form personal opinions based on what they find relevant from various information sources.

This means that digital media possesses a set of effective tools that directly contribute to shaping public opinion. Communication via social media relies primarily on rapid interaction with the public, allowing users to share content and express their opinions through likes and comments, thus promoting the dissemination of ideas and contributing to the formation of public opinion (البياني، 2014، صفحة 76).

Influencer marketing has made influencers a key part of digital media strategies, as they leverage a broad audience base to convey specific messages and shape public opinion on various issues, whether political, economic, or social.

Live streaming allows media platforms to connect instantly with their audience, enabling them to provide live coverage of current events and discussions, and fostering audience interaction through questions and comments.

Big data analytics:

Digital media relies on data analytics techniques to understand audience preferences and interests, which helps in crafting content that aligns with those interests. Data analytics enables the design of targeted messages that enhance audience engagement and increase the likelihood of widespread dissemination.

Visual content:

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

Short videos and visual content are among the most effective tools for shaping public opinion, as they contribute to capturing audience attention and conveying ideas simply and smoothly.

1.4.The Importance of Digital Media in Forming Virtual Communities and Promoting Dialogue:

Digital media plays a vital role in forming virtual communities that allow individuals to interact around shared issues and similar interests, thus contributing to enhanced public discussion and dialogue.

These virtual communities facilitate the exchange of opinions and ideas, thereby strengthening the impact of digital media in unifying public opinion on specific issues or bringing about social change.

It can be said that new media emerged as a result of the historical evolution of traditional media and internet and media technologies, The integration of these two fields led to a new concept that leverages the characteristics of media in terms of communication, information dissemination, and knowledge sharing, while simultaneously utilizing the opportunities offered by new technologies to become more present and widespread, enabling greater participation and interaction across all segments of society.

New media is a collection of modern technologies that rely on the internet and, at the same time, on the foundations of media and communication, There are generally **three main services that new media provides to users:**

a. Communication:

From one person to another, from one person to a group, or from one group to another, and so on, for personal or public purposes.

b. Interaction:

Use for entertainment or learning, for social, cultural, and political purposes.

c. Media and Information:

The use of the internet to disseminate and retrieve information, which encompasses a wide range of human and intellectual activities, Several types can be defined as part of new media, and it is noteworthy that there is significant overlap between these concepts (المقدادي، 2013، صفحة 93).

The interconnectedness, interdependence, and the use of each other's characteristics make attempting to categorize these technologies a complex undertaking that requires careful consideration

The internet possesses several characteristics that make it an effective tool, including its interactive nature, the difficulty of controlling and censoring websites, the vast social base of its users, and its lack of geographical and political limitations.

Furthermore, it has transformed the audience from passive, anonymous users and consumers of media messages into active participants in shaping those messages, encouraging greater democracy in society.

It has also led to the convergence of various media outlets and made media freedom an undeniable reality.

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

Furthermore, it is based on multimedia media characterized by widespread reach, global accessibility, audience fragmentation, asynchronicity, and communicability regardless of the content creator's specifications and standards.

Among the fundamental features of social networks is their ability to enable individuals to practically discover their interests, seek solutions to their problems with others who are similar to them or have gone through similar experiences, share their expertise and experiences, send emails via social networks, and provide comprehensive and immediate information on issues of interest to the social network

It facilitates the process of monitoring what is published or broadcast in the media or on websites about the issue, provides information to journalists about many of the issues it raises, helps those in charge of these networks to recruit volunteers to participate in the political issues and events they care about, collect donations and obtain financial support from citizens, and allows for getting to know people who offer assistance in public life and acquiring new and diverse knowledge.

It can also be considered a new platform for self-expression, which increases an individual's self-confidence, in addition to the enormous freedom of expression without fear of any persecution. It also helps individuals adapt to their society and communicate with each other.

It also helps improve the level of discourse and dialogue among members of society, allowing them to express opinions without fear or hesitation. Furthermore, it helps in understanding how others think about different issues, discovering new talents, and supporting decisions, leading to their success or opposition.

It also contributes to cultural rapprochement with other societies around the world, shortens communication distances, and contributes to the globalization of public opinion.

The digital revolution, which has crystallized in information and communication technologies, has provided a new environment for media outlets, helping them enhance their communication and economic capabilities(عباس، 2008، صفحة 168). Thanks to these technologies, media outlets have become more able to reach their audiences through remote printing technologies or by expanding the reach of radio and television broadcasting.

In addition to the ease of receiving communication messages, new technologies have also contributed to reducing the cost of media products and increasing the revenues of media institutions.

With the remarkable technological leap embodied in the Internet and the Web, the media has entered a new era, heralding a new media landscape in which the economics of the media industry are changing, and in which concepts of audience, interactivity, gatekeeping, scoops, and other concepts that have shaped media work over the past centuries are changing.

Like journalism in the rest of the world, Arab journalism has been affected by the changes brought about by the internet revolution in the media industry, The shift from analog to digital publishing highlights the differences in human and financial costs that encourage the move towards digitization.

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

The impact of the digital revolution on media threatens to overturn the observation that new media are integrated with their predecessors (from books to television).

Traditional media outlets have become victims of new media and social networks, which utilize the web as a global space transcending the boundaries of time and place, and overcoming the significant financial constraints that plagued print, audio, and visual media.

Thus, media outlets seem compelled to abandon their old environment and form and adapt to the digital landscape as their revenue streams begin to dry up and their audiences transform from passive consumers to active participants drawn to the digital environment, which can achieve its goals at a lower cost.

From this perspective, we examine the economic aspects that have sustained and sustained media activity for centuries, aspects that are now at a turning point, potentially leading to a complete break with the past.

In terms of production, consumption, and sales, the website offers a turning point, providing an alternative to books, newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. It dispenses with paper, airwaves, and satellites, and is enhanced by its environmental friendliness and optimal utilization of financial and human resources.

Thinking about modern media institutions necessitates viewing them as economic projects subject to feasibility studies that determine establishment and short-term operating costs, as well as potential revenues.

This is because the output of media work falls under the knowledge economy, given that information is a commodity bought and sold, and is therefore subject to production conditions, pricing, and product characteristics.

Marketing, promotion, and other prevalent concepts in the field of commerce, Over the past centuries(45 صفحة 2015، رضا)، the media in general, and the press in particular, have developed economic models to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of their operations.

The spending patterns of most media outlets are similar, particularly regarding human resources.

Media organizations, in terms of technology, content, and publishing, may differ in how they obtain their revenues (advertising revenues, direct sales, subscriptions, and support).

The difference in the economic models of media institutions comes from the difference in the political and economic systems of the countries that host the media outlet, and from its economic nature: for-profit or non-profit, and from its ownership: owned by the state, the private sector, or civil society.

Media organizations have undergone radical transformations in the digital age as a result of rapid technological advancements and the proliferation of digital platforms. These organizations now face significant challenges related to fierce competition, changing audience consumption habits, and declining traditional revenue streams.

However, the digital age also presents exceptional opportunities for growth and development, such as reaching a wider audience and leveraging analytics tools to understand trends. This article will explore the concept of managing media organizations in

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

the digital age, the most significant challenges they face, the available opportunities, and strategies for success in navigating digital transformation.

2. Media Organizations in the Digital Age:

Managing media organizations in the digital age means adopting innovative strategies and advanced technologies to keep pace with the rapid changes brought about by the digital revolution in the media industry.

In this era, media organizations are required to adapt to new production and distribution models, relying heavily on digital technology, artificial intelligence, and data analytics to understand their audiences more deeply and deliver tailored content that aligns with their needs.

Managing digital media organizations also requires focusing on creating multi-platform communication channels, such as websites, applications, social media, and online streaming.

To ensure content reaches the widest possible audience, this management requires developing flexible policies and strategies that keep pace with emerging trends such as interactive media and live streaming, while balancing content quality with speed of dissemination.

Furthermore, digital management must be based on fostering collaboration among different teams using modern tools to improve productivity. Building partnerships with technology and digital marketing companies is also crucial to maximizing the use of available tools.

Overall, managing media organizations in the digital age is not merely a technical process, but a comprehensive transformation in thinking, planning, and execution to ensure survival in a competitive environment and to achieve a positive impact on the audience.

2.1. Opportunities for Media Organizations in the Digital Age:

a. Reaching a Wider Audience:

Thanks to the internet and digital technology, media organizations can easily reach a global audience. Digital platforms such as websites and social media enable the immediate and widespread dissemination of content without geographical boundaries, increasing opportunities for reach and influence (محمود، 2015، صفحة 33).

b. Direct Interaction with the Audience:

Digital technology provides effective means of communication with the audience through comments, polls, and live broadcasts. This interaction enhances organizations' understanding of their audience's needs and helps them deliver content that better meets their expectations.

c. Generating Revenue from New Models:

Innovative revenue models have emerged in the digital age, such as paid subscriptions, targeted digital advertising, and content marketing. These models help media organizations diversify their revenue streams beyond traditional methods.

d. Analyzing Data to Understand Audiences:

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

Media organizations can use data analytics tools to gain a deeper understanding of audience behavior. This helps them refine their content strategies, deliver personalized content, and increase audience loyalty by accurately meeting their expectations.

e. Leveraging Artificial Intelligence Technologies:

Artificial intelligence technologies offer opportunities to improve the efficiency of media operations, such as automating routine tasks, analyzing trends, and creating data-driven content. They also help enhance the user experience through intelligent recommendations.

f. Expanding Across Multiple Platforms:

The digital age allows media organizations to publish their content across multiple platforms, such as podcasts, videos, and mobile applications. This diversity gives audiences more choices and strengthens the organization's impact in various areas....

2.2.Challenges Facing Media Organizations in the Digital Age:

a. Rapid Shift to Digitalization:

With the rapid development of technology, media organizations are finding themselves compelled to shift from traditional to digital media. This requires significant investments in digital infrastructure and training staff on new tools and platforms.

b. Intense Competition:

The media industry is witnessing a growing number of digital platforms, making competition for attracting and retaining audiences fierce. Independent platforms and social media networks add further pressure on traditional media organizations.

c. Reliance on Digital Advertising

Advertising is the primary source of revenue for media outlets, but with the proliferation of ad blockers and increased competition for digital advertising, organizations are finding it difficult to generate sustainable revenue.

d. Changing Audience Behavior

In the digital age, audiences seek fast, personalized, and interactive content. Organizations that rely on traditional models struggle to meet these expectations, leading to audience loss to other platforms.

e. The Spread of Misinformation

In an era of rapid information dissemination, media organizations face a significant challenge in maintaining credibility and distinguishing between real and misleading news, requiring rigorous fact-checking and high standards of accuracy

f. Cybersecurity

Media organizations are vulnerable to cyberattacks that could lead to the leakage of sensitive data or the disruption of their services. Protecting data and securing systems has become a fundamental challenge in the digital age.

g. Adapting to Artificial Intelligence Technologies

While artificial intelligence offers significant opportunities to improve productivity and analyze audiences, its use requires substantial investment and a thorough understanding of how to integrate it into media operations without compromising content quality.

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

2.3. Successful strategies for managing digital media organizations:

a. Develop a clear digital vision:

A media organization must have a comprehensive digital vision and strategy that guides its operations and defines its objectives. This vision includes a clear understanding of market trends, the target audience, and the nature of the content the organization will offer across various digital platforms.

b. Adopt advanced technology:

Adopting modern technologies such as artificial intelligence and data analytics contributes to improved productivity and content personalization based on audience interests.

Digital tools can also be used to enhance operational management, such as automating routine tasks and tracking performance.

c. Producing Diverse and Customized Content:

Digital audiences expect customized content that meets their interests. Therefore, media organizations must offer diverse content suitable for different platforms, such as articles, videos, podcasts, and interactive content, while maintaining its quality and value.

d. Enhancing Social Media Presence:

Social media is a primary channel for reaching audiences in the digital age. Successful organizations leverage these platforms to distribute their content, build relationships with their audience, and analyze trends through direct interaction.

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Successful media organizations strive to diversify their revenue streams through innovative models such as paid subscriptions, partnerships with advertisers, and the launch of additional services like premium content or training courses.

g. Flexibility and Continuous Innovation:

The digital market is constantly evolving, so organizations must be agile and adaptable to rapid changes. Embracing innovation as a core business enhances an organization's ability to meet challenges and capitalize on new opportunities.

2.4. Examples of concrete structures and mediaticues can be used in the number:

a. The New York Times:

This media tradition, which lasts a long time on the digital press, is likely to increase the number of times on the lancet of a performing number model. He developed an interactive application and a rich website with content (articles, videos and podcasts).

It is a major exploitation of the analysis of digital numbers to comprehend the public and respond to these centers of interest, which facilitates the exemplars of the greatest risk of digital transformation.

b. BBC:

The British Broadcasting Corporation has developed a number of digital platforms, including BBC iPlayer, which offers direct and video diffusion services upon request. It is a great response to the presence of social media and content adapters to different platforms when a new public phone comes in, which allows you to access the media payment point.

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

c.Netflix:

When the service is launched as the location of the films by correspondence, Netflix has completed an innovation in its economic model to develop a streaming digital leader.

Thanks to the use of artificial intelligence algorithms to propose personal recommendations, Netflix is available in one of the many media numbers.

2.5.The Future of Media Management in the Digital Age:

Media organizations worldwide are undergoing tremendous transformations thanks to digital advancements that have changed the game in the media industry, Digital transformation is the process of integrating modern technologies such as the internet, artificial intelligence, and big data into all aspects of media operations.

This requires media organizations to adapt quickly to these changes by updating their traditional strategies and investing in new technologies to improve performance and expand their audience base.

These transformations are occurring in several key areas, including changes in content distribution methods, improved news management tools, the development of new advertising formats, and enhanced user experience.

Media organizations that can keep pace with this technological evolution will be able to maintain their position in the digital market, while those that fail to invest in these technologies will face significant challenges to their survival.

Modern Trends in Media Content Management:

Media organizations today manage their content using sophisticated methods that differ significantly from traditional approaches, These modern trends in content management necessitate the use of new technological tools and techniques to increase efficiency and achieve more effective communication with the target audience.

3.Conclusion:

In conclusion, digital media has become a cornerstone in shaping and directing public opinion. It enables the public to access information instantly and directly, thereby enhancing awareness of various issues and influencing their attitudes and orientations.

Thanks to digital media tools such as social media, online news sites, and blogs, it has become possible to activate live interaction between the public and the content, which contributes to disseminating ideas and guiding public discussions on important social, political, and cultural issues.

Digital media provides decision-makers with a deeper understanding of public trends and prevailing opinions, enabling them to make informed decisions based on a better grasp of society's needs and aspirations.

Furthermore, advancements in data analytics and targeted advertising enhance the effectiveness of digital media, allowing content to be tailored to the interests of diverse groups, thus deepening impact and fostering engagement.

As technology continues to evolve, the role of digital media in shaping public opinion grows, making it essential to continuously develop digital media strategies that prioritize social responsibility, transparency, and digital security to ensure a positive impact that strengthens social cohesion and serves the public interest.

However, digital media may also have negative effects in terms of spreading values and customs that may not be compatible with the culture of society, The transformation in means of communication and social interaction has led to a radical change in the ways of communication between individuals, as digital platforms have become the main means of interaction and communication, which may negatively affect traditional social relationships.

The importance of digital media in forming virtual communities and promoting a culture of dialogue

Despite the significant benefits it offers, digital media faces numerous challenges, including the spread of misinformation, privacy violations, and content manipulation.

We conclude that digital media is a double-edged sword; it offers tremendous opportunities for societal development and enhanced communication, but at the same time imposes new responsibilities to ensure its ethical and effective use.

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