

Digital Media and the Crisis of Credibility: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract:

The abstract includes a contained on the subject within the limits of seven lines This study explores the credibility crisis in digital media, its challenges, and potential solutions. Digital media's impact on information dissemination and society is examined, including the spread of fake news and difficulties in fact-checking. The study aims to identify the reasons behind the crisis and its effect on democracy. It highlights the role of digital platforms, media institutions, and critical reading skills in enhancing credibility and trust in digital information.

key words: Credibility crisis, Digital media, Challenges, Fake news, Fact-checking, Digital platforms.

Introduction:

In today's world, digital media has become an essential part of our lives, transforming the way we communicate and share information. With the advancement of technology and the widespread use of the internet and social media, getting news and information has become easier than ever. However, this ease of access also brings new challenges, particularly in terms of credibility and accuracy. The credibility crisis is one of the most significant challenges facing digital media today. Although digital media offers a quick and efficient way to disseminate information, it often raises questions about its accuracy. It can be challenging for users to determine the reliability of the information they come across online, which can affect their ability to form an informed opinion and make sound decisions.

This article explores the challenges of credibility in the digital media era and highlights the issues it faces. We will discuss various key aspects to address this crisis, beginning with the role of digital media in modern society and its impact on our daily lives. We will then delve into the causes of the credibility crisis, including the spread of fake news and the lack of regulation and fact-checking in the digital world. Afterward, we will examine the impact of the credibility crisis on societies and democracy, discussing how the lack of credibility affects the public's ability to make informed decisions and form their own opinions. Finally, we will consider a few potential solutions to the credibility crisis in digital media, ranging from the role of digital platforms and media institutions in promoting credibility to the importance of developing critical reading skills among users. This article aims to highlight the importance of the challenges facing credibility in digital media and provide some guidance and solutions to enhance credibility and trust in digital information. Understanding these challenges is a crucial step toward achieving a healthy and reliable digital media environment.

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In this context, we turn to the following issue:

How to deal with the credibility crisis in digital media and enhance trust in the information that is received?

We'll explore several questions related to this topic, including:

1. What is the role of digital media in modern society?
2. What is the credibility crisis in digital media?
3. What are the reasons for the exacerbation of the credibility crisis in digital media?
4. How might the credibility crisis impact societies and democracy?
5. What solutions exist for combatting the credibility crisis in digital media?
6. Why is it important for users to develop critical reading skills for digital media?
7. What is the role of institutions and stakeholders in addressing the credibility crisis in digital media?

THE FIRST TOPIC : The conceptual and Theoretical framework of the study

In this study, we highlighted two key concepts: digital media and credibility. We then attempted to link these concepts to the context of the study.

FIRST REQUIREMENT: Concepts to study

Firstly:

1-Digital Media

Digital media is the utilization of digital technology and electronic communication to create and share media content. This encompasses the usage of the internet, social media, blogs, websites, mobile apps, and other digital platforms to spread information, news, and entertainment to the masses.¹

Accessing information and communicating instantly through digital media has become effortless. The interactive content allows users to get information from anywhere and participate in content production while expressing their opinions.

Digital media refers to the widespread use of digital technology to create, disseminate, and consume media content. It encompasses the internet, social media platforms, mobile applications, blogs, websites, and other similar forms of digital media.²

The term "digital media" refers to the utilization of digital technology in creating, disseminating, and consuming media content. This encompasses various digital platforms such as social media, digital applications, the internet, and smart devices. By utilizing digital media, people can easily access information, news, and entertainment and even participate and engage with the content. Undoubtedly, digital media has revolutionized the media and communication industry, transforming the process of information dissemination and communication among individuals and institutions.

¹ Burgess, J., & Green, J. (2018). YouTube and the digital extension of the city: Considering urban geographies of (dis)connection. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 43(4), 586-600.

² Lievrouw, L. A. (2014). *Introduction to New Media Studies*. Oxford University Press.

Secondly

1-Credibility

Credibility refers to the reliability and accuracy of a source or information. Moreover, it encompasses the ability of the public to trust in the information provided and believe in its truthfulness and accuracy.

The Center for Media and Democracy identifies several factors that contribute to credibility, such as¹:

- a- Source of Information:** This means ensuring the source of the information and the credibility of the source itself, such as reliable and professional news organizations, academics, and reputable organizations.
- b- Accuracy and Comprehensiveness of Information:** This relates to the accuracy of the information and its compatibility with reliable facts and evidence-based data.
- c- Transparency and Journalistic Credibility:** This includes the methods of research, verification, documentation of information, and detailing the sources used in news bulletins and reports.
- d- Balance and Bias:** This refers to the ability of information to provide multiple and contradictory viewpoints and avoid obvious biases.

Credibility is the degree to which information or a source can be trusted. It is an important factor in evaluating the quality and reliability of information and media sources. According to the Institute for American Art, Science, and Technology, a credible source is one that is based on knowledge, experience, and scientific research, and is transparent and honest in its reporting. Credibility can be assessed by a number of factors, such as the source of the information, the clarity and documentation of the information, and its consistency with existing knowledge and facts.²

SECOND REQUIREMENT: The Role of Digital Media in Modern Society

The modern era heavily relies on digital transformation as it is crucial in transforming and developing the media sector and the ways information is transmitted. Digital media pertains to the use of digital technology in producing, distributing, and consuming media content. It is characterized by providing quick and comprehensive access to information, interactive content, and enabling users to participate and communicate. The role of digital media in the modern era involves changing access to information. In the past, access to information was limited to traditional media such as newspapers, television, and radio. However, with the development of digital media, individuals can now easily access information online from anywhere and at any time.³ Through digital media, people can access a diverse range of multimedia content such as text, images, sound, video, and animation. This allows individuals to consume content in a way that suits their personal preferences.⁴

The rise of digital transformation has made it easier for people to interact with and share digital media content. Users can now express their opinions and share their experiences through

1Center for Media and Democracy. (no publication date). "Principles of Credibility." Retrieved June 28, 2023, from https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/Principles_of_credibility.

2 The Institute for American Art, Science, and Technology. (no publication date). "Credible Source Definition." Retrieved June 28, 2023, from <https://www.iast.edu/credible-source-definition>.

3 Cornford, J., & Robins, D. (2002). Complexities of convergence: The case of the digital media in everyday life. *New Media & Society*, 4(2), 147-164.

4 Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. NYU Press.

comments and shares on social media and various sharing platforms.¹ The impact of digital media extends to public discourse and societal advancements. It serves as a potent instrument in fostering open communication and sharing diverse viewpoints and knowledge among people and communities. Moreover, digital media empowers individuals and organizations to spread awareness and advocate for social, political, and cultural transformations.²

The use of digital media plays a critical role in the development of technology and innovation within the media industry. It continuously adapts to meet the needs of users and enhance their experiences. Advanced technologies, like artificial intelligence and virtual reality, are examples of how digital media is improving and evolving.

THIRD REQUIREMENT: The Credibility Crisis in Digital Media

The credibility crisis in the digital media industry refers to the difficulties encountered in validating the accuracy and reliability of information in the digital space. This issue has become increasingly significant due to the widespread use of social media and various digital platforms that allow anyone to easily share news and information. As a result, there is a vast amount of information available, making it challenging to verify its authenticity. The credibility crisis in digital media can be seen in various forms, including the propagation of fake news and misleading information. This poses a significant challenge for digital media users, who must differentiate between reliable content and misinformation. The spread of fake news can create confusion and undermine public trust in the media³.

In the world of digital media, information is often posted hastily without proper journalistic vetting. This can cause the proliferation of false information and worsen the issue of credibility.⁴

A lot of online platforms rely on algorithms to customize content based on users' interests. However, this can create a "filter bubble" where users only see content that confirms their existing beliefs, limiting exposure to diverse ideas and opinions.⁵

One of the biggest problems in digital media is the lack of transparency and credibility in news sources. It's often hard to tell where news comes from or if it's trustworthy. Unfortunately, some people take advantage of this and spread false information without providing clear sources.⁶

In order to address the credibility crisis in digital media, numerous organizations and initiatives are striving to promote journalistic verification, media education, and establish ways to identify fake news. It's important for users to also cultivate critical thinking abilities and seek out trustworthy sources to ensure the accuracy of information.

1 Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A., Levy, D. A. L., & Nielsen, R. K. (2020). Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2020. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

2 Silverstone, R. (2006). Media and morality: On the rise of the mediapolis. Polity Press.

3 Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking. Council of Europe.

4 Tandoc Jr, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2018). Defining "fake news": A typology of scholarly definitions. *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 137-153.

5 Fletcher, R., Cornia, A., Graves, L., Nielsen, R. K., & Newman, N. (2018). Measuring the reach of "fake news" and online disinformation in Europe. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

6 Ward, S. J. A. (2019). Fake news, disinformation, and misinformation: A conceptual review. *Political Communication*, 36(4), 1-22.

FOURTH PEQUIREMENT: The worsening Credibility Crisis in the New Media

The credibility crisis in digital media is getting worse due to several factors, primarily the spread of fake news and misinformation. Social media and digital platforms make it easy and fast to publish content, enabling individuals and groups to spread inaccurate information without proper verification.¹ In the digital media space, the absence of proper verification and confirmation procedures can create time and resource constraints that hinder accurate information verification before publication. Relying on untrustworthy sources or the inability to verify news and information accurately can worsen the credibility crisis.² Researchers suggest that the digital world is diverse and fast-paced. The constant emergence of new technologies and platforms has resulted in a vast amount of information and news that is hard to monitor and verify. As a result, efforts to verify information are scattered, and there is a higher chance of spreading inaccurate information.³

Numerous digital media outlets rely on advertising and funding to sustain their financial needs. However, this reliance on financial support can potentially impact the publishing and editing process. To attract more viewers and readers, platforms and websites may resort to clickbait headlines and engaging content, instead of ensuring the accuracy of the source and information.⁴

FIFTH REQUIREMENT: The Impact of the Credibility Crisis on Societies and Democracy

The crisis of credibility in digital media can have a profound impact on societies and democracies in various ways. This is because digital media plays a crucial role in shaping and influencing public opinion and decision-making. Below are six primary ways in which the credibility crisis may affect societies and democracies:

- a- Lack of public trust:** When the public loses faith in digital media, it can lead to a lack of trust. This causes people to become more doubtful and less likely to be influenced by the media, resulting in a decline in trust towards institutions such as the government and political parties. It can also hinder communication and decision-making within communities.⁵
- b- The spread of misinformation and fake news:** The spread of fake news and misinformation is causing a credibility crisis in digital media. When people are unable to confirm the accuracy of the information and its sources, they become vulnerable to media manipulation and deception. This can negatively affect their ability to form opinions and make political and social decisions.⁶
- c- The impact of filtering and social segmentation:** In the digital world, people have the ability to tailor their sources of news and information to their own preferences and biases. However, this can result in the creation of a "filter bubble" where individuals only encounter information and opinions that align with their own views, reducing their exposure to

1 Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. Op, cit.

2 Tandoc Jr, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. Op, cit, 137-153.

3 Fletcher, R., Cornia, A., Graves, L., Nielsen, R. K., & Newman, N. Op, cit.

4 Ward, S. J. A. Op, cit, 1-22.

5 Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Economic Perspectives*, 31(2), 211-236.

6 Benkler, Y., Faris, R., Roberts, H., & Zuckerman, E. (2018). *Network propaganda: Manipulation, disinformation, and radicalization in American politics*. Oxford University Press.

alternative perspectives. This social segregation can lead to increased extremism and division, and impede productive communication and public discourse.¹

- d- Threat to democracy and political process:** The credibility crisis in digital media poses a threat to democracy and the political process. Fake news and misinformation can distort public records, falsify facts, and have an impact on elections and political campaigns. This may result in a lack of political knowledge and civic engagement due to inaccurate information being spread.²
- e- Impact on social and cultural divisions:** The credibility crisis in digital media could worsen and result in heightened social and cultural divisions. The dissemination of fake news and media manipulation may cause individuals to become more entrenched in their beliefs and widen the gap between different social and cultural groups. This could impede effective communication and collaboration.³
- f- Threat to human rights and public safety:** There is a potential danger to human rights and public safety when the credibility crisis in digital media worsens. Disinformation and fake news can be used to fuel hatred, violence, and discrimination. Additionally, inaccurate information regarding public health issues like disease outbreaks or fake alternative treatments can jeopardize public safety and put individuals at risk.⁴

Promoting journalistic fact-checking, media literacy, and digital skills amongst the public is crucial in addressing the credibility crisis in digital media. Digital platforms need to take up social responsibility in combating fake news and offer transparent mechanisms for verifying sources and information. Moreover, it's essential for governments, institutions, and individuals to work together to promote transparency and credibility in digital media while supporting independent journalism.

SIXTH REQUIREMENT : What are the Solution to the Credibility Crisis in the Digital Media

The credibility crisis in digital media is a major challenge, but there are a number of possible solutions to address this crisis. These include joint efforts between digital platforms, journalism, and users to achieve transparency and fact-checking. Here are some of the proposed solutions:

- a- Promoting journalistic fact-checking and credibility:** It's important for media organizations and journalists to prioritize accurate and reliable fact-checking. This involves verifying sources and information to ensure the news being published is truthful. Utilizing available fact-checking tools and dependable databases can also improve the systematic verification process. Promoting credibility in journalism is crucial.⁵
- b- Public awareness and digital skills promotion:** Raising public awareness and promoting digital skills are critical in combating the credibility crisis. It's important to emphasize the significance of verifying and critically analyzing information. Additionally, promoting public

1 Tandoc Jr, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. Op, cit, 137-153.

2 Ward, S. J. A. Op, cit, 1-22.

3 Leshner, G., & Lee, C. (2019). Fake news and "fact-checking": A critical examination of US news media practices. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 12(1), 5-24.

4 Tsfati, Y., & Ariely, G. (2014). The Internet and public knowledge: The effects of broadband on political participation. *Journal of Communication*, 64(2), 193-214.

5 Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. Op, cit.

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digital skills, such as the ability to analyze sources and information and verifying their accuracy before sharing or commenting, is essential.¹

- c- Cooperation with digital media platforms:** To combat the spread of misinformation, it's important for digital media platforms to work together with press and media organizations. These platforms can offer various tools and features that help promote transparency, verify sources, and make it easy for users to access reliable information.²
- d- Promotion of government and regulatory initiatives:** It is important for governments and regulators to establish a set of laws and policies that address the issue of fake news and promote trustworthiness in the digital media. Collaboration between the public and private sectors can lead to the development of powerful and efficient solutions.³
- e- Encouraging international cooperation:** To combat the credibility crisis in digital media, it's important to foster international cooperation. Countries, media organizations, and digital platforms should exchange knowledge, experience, and preferences to achieve comprehensive and inclusive development.⁴

SEVENTH REQUIREMENT: The Impact of Developing Critical Reading Skills for Digital Media Users

Having the ability to critically read digital media is crucial in today's age since numerous individuals depend on it for information and communication. The following are some reasons that emphasize the significance of acquiring these skills:

- a- Distinguishing between reliable and unreliable information:** In this age of constant information flow on the internet, it can be tricky to discern what information is reliable and what is not. By honing critical reading skills, individuals can scrutinize sources, assess the content and differentiate between trustworthy information and rumors or fake news.⁵
- b- Understanding different media messages:** Developing critical reading skills is essential for understanding and analyzing various messages conveyed through digital media. By being mindful of the underlying commercial, political, or cultural motives behind specific content, users can make informed decisions and avoid being misled by misinformation.⁶
- c- Critical analysis of multimedia:** The analysis of multimedia is important as digital media encompasses various forms of communication, including text, images, and videos. By utilizing critical reading skills, one can effectively analyze these media, interpret the intended messages, and engage in critical thinking.⁷
- d- Protecting privacy and digital security:** Learning critical reading skills is essential for safeguarding privacy and digital security, particularly with regards to personal information online. Users can acquire the ability to recognize phishing emails, malicious links, and other potential threats to keep their information secure.⁸

1 Tandoc Jr, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R Op, cit, 137-153.

2 Fletcher, R., Cornia, A., Graves, L., Nielsen, R. K., & Newman, N. Op, cit.

3 Ward, S. J. A. Op, cit, 1-22.

4 Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, Op.Cit, 211-236.

5 Hobbs, R. (2010). Digital and media literacy: Connecting culture and classroom. Corwin Press.

6 Jenkins, H., Clinton, K., Purushotma, R., Robison, A. J., & Weigel, M. (2009). Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century. MIT Press.

7 Livingstone, S., & Third, A. (2017). Children and young people's rights in the digital age: An emerging agenda. *New Media & Society*, 19(5), 657-670.

8 Buckingham, D. (2019). The media education manifesto. Polity Press.

EIGHTH REQUIREMENT: The role of institutions and stakeholders in addressing the credibility crisis in digital media

The issue of credibility in digital media is becoming increasingly important as information is manipulated and misinformation spreads widely. To combat this, institutions and stakeholders have a vital role in promoting credibility in the digital environment. Media organizations can work to strengthen journalistic standards and fact-check news before publishing it. By adopting reliable and double-checking fact-checking methods, they can provide trustworthy content for readers. Research institutions and educational centers can contribute to developing data analysis and artificial intelligence tools to detect and track the spread of fake news. Raising awareness of verification skills among users can also help to distinguish between reliable and unreliable news. Governments can enact legislation and laws that regulate the publication and spread of fake news, and impose penalties on individuals and entities that promote such news. Technology companies can also develop mechanisms to filter misleading content and verify the accuracy of information published on their platforms. Cooperation between media organizations, research institutions, governments, and technology companies can significantly address the crisis of credibility in digital media and ensure the provision of accurate and reliable information to the public.¹

Conclusion :

To sum up, the crisis of trust in digital media is a complex issue that stems from various factors, such as rapid technological advancements, changes in audience behavior, and political interference. In order to tackle this crisis and improve trust in the digital realm, it is vital for institutions and relevant entities to work collaboratively and make joint efforts to ensure that accurate and reliable information is provided to the public.

To achieve this goal, some important recommendations that can be followed include improving journalistic standards and fact-checking practices before publishing news, developing data analysis tools and artificial intelligence to detect and track the spread of fake news, raising awareness among users about fact-checking skills, and enacting laws and regulations that regulate the dissemination of fake news and impose penalties on those who promote such news. It is also essential to establish mechanisms to filter out misleading content and verify the accuracy of information posted on platforms.

By implementing these recommendations, we can effectively contribute to enhancing trust in digital media and ensure that accurate and reliable information is made available to the public.

¹ The Digital Crisis of Trust: A Report on the Misinformation Ecosystem", published by the Media and Communication Studies Network (March 2020).

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