



The Impact of Digital Transformation on Communication Officers in Algerian Institutions: An Analytical Approach

أثر التحول الرقمي على المكلف بالاتصال في المؤسسات الجزائرية: مقاربة تحليلية

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Article abstract:

This study aims to analyze the digital challenges faced by communication officers within Algerian institutions, given their direct impact on the performance of communication functions in both the public and private sectors. The research focuses on highlighting the importance of restructuring communication roles and developing digital skills in line with the accelerating demands of the digital environment.

To achieve this, the descriptive-analytical method was adopted by reviewing relevant academic literature and empirical field studies, with the aim of diagnosing the current state of digital transformation and its effects on the duties of communication officers within the Algerian context.

The study concluded that it is essential to enhance the digital competencies of communication officers and improve the technical and organizational environment within institutions. These measures would contribute to achieving effective integration into the digital era and ensuring more efficient and responsive institutional communication with audiences.

Keywords: Communication Officer, Digital Transformation, Digital Skills, Institutional Communication.

ملخص المقال:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل التحديات الرقمية التي يواجهها المكلفون بالاتصال داخل المؤسسات الجزائرية، لما لها من تأثير مباشر على أداء الوظيفة الاتصالية سواء في القطاع العمومي أو الخاص. وتركز الدراسة على إبراز أهمية إعادة هيكلة الأدوار الاتصالية وتطوير المهارات الرقمية بما يتماشى مع متطلبات البيئة الرقمية المتسارعة. لتحقيق ذلك، تم اعتماد المنهج الوصفي التحليلي من خلال مراجعة الأدبيات الأكاديمية والدراسات الميدانية ذات الصلة، بهدف تشخيص واقع التحول الرقمي وأثره على مهام المكلف بالاتصال في السياق الجزائري. وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى ضرورة تعزيز الكفاءات الرقمية للمكلفين بالاتصال، وتحسين البيئة التقنية والتنظيمية داخل المؤسسات، بما يساهم في تحقيق اندماج فعال في العصر الرقمي وضمان تواصل مؤسسي أكثر نجاعة وفعالية مع الجمهور.

كلمات مفتاحية: المكلف بالاتصال; التحول الرقمي; المهارات الرقمية; الاتصال المؤسسي.

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Introduction:

In recent years, institutions have witnessed a fundamental transformation in communication patterns due to rapid technological advancements, where a variety of communication technologies have been integrated, which the digital communication officer relies on. (Noskova & Kulikova, 2019, p. This transformation includes the use of texts, audio, video, and illustrations within an open work environment based on network connectivity, which has contributed to reshaping the institution's information infrastructure. This digital transformation has positively reflected on task performance by reducing time and effort, to the extent that it has become a fundamental cultural and technological pillar in the contemporary institution.

In the same context, the topic of digital transformation in Algerian institutions has become a priority for specialists in media and communication sciences, especially in light of the efforts of high authorities in Algeria to connect physical institutions with the digital environment, with the aim of facilitating monitoring operations and combating corruption, Qutb, 2021, p. 1220) (in addition to expanding the tasks and responsibilities of the communication officer, either fully or partially. This is achieved by adopting modern communication channels and employing advanced skills that become increasingly complex day by day, leading to the expansion of the meanings of these skills and the development of their methods and forms. (Aflih & Al-Najjar, 2025, p. 50)

In order to accurately understand the nature of the tasks assigned to the communication officer in a digital environment, it is necessary to analyze the factors affecting the effectiveness of communication within the organization, which include all interactions related to the transfer of information, whether between employees or between the employee and customers. Digital transformation enables employees to communicate with multiple individuals simultaneously without additional effort, thereby enhancing the efficiency of institutional communication. (Sivunen & Laitinen, 2019, p. 45)

Despite the importance of this transformation, its impact on the communicator remains one of the research gaps that most previous studies have overlooked, (Rabeh, 2022, p. 101) which mostly focused on aspects such as job satisfaction, professional engagement, stress, technology adaptation, and job burnout. Based on that, this research seeks to highlight the digital challenges faced by communication officers in Algerian institutions and strategies for developing his skills and ability to interact with technology, (Naimi & Yousif, 2022, p. 110) ensuring effective adaptation and achieving the required job performance. Based on that, the core issue of this research is: **What are the main digital challenges facing the communication officer in Algerian institutions? How can his skills be developed and his role structured to face these challenges?**

Study objectives: Through our discussion of this topic, we have outlined specific objectives as follows :

- A statement on the nature of digital transformation and the most important requirements for its realization.

- Attempting to clarify the concept of the communication officer and studying the traditional roles assigned to them in Algerian institutions .

Highlighting the digital challenges faced by the communication officer within the Algerian regulatory context .

- Attempting to provide practical mechanisms for restructuring communication roles within Algerian institutions in line with the requirements of the digital environment

Importance of the study:

This study gains particular importance in light of the rapid digital transformation that is reshaping institutional practices worldwide, as it has fundamentally altered communication



processes, expanding the responsibilities of communication professionals from traditional information dissemination to managing dynamic, interactive, and data-driven digital interactions. As a result, a significant skills gap has emerged between traditional competencies and the complex requirements of digital environments, highlighting the urgent need to redefine professional roles and enhance digital capabilities to ensure the adaptation and effectiveness of institutions in this new context.

Study methodology:

The descriptive-analytical approach was adopted in this study through a review of relevant academic literature and statistical reports issued by specialized research centers in this field. This approach was used to clarify the nature of digital transformation and its requirements, in addition to focusing on the communication officer and the traditional roles assigned to them in Algerian institutions. Finally, the study analyzes the main digital challenges faced by the communication officer in the digital environment

This research focuses on digital transformations and their impact on institutional communication, and on the shift in the role of the communication officer from merely a transmitter of information to a manager of complex digital interactions. Through a review of the relevant scientific literature, this research work was built around three main axes to answer the fundamental question, with the first axis being an introduction to digital transformation and its requirements. The second axis focused on the communication officer and the traditional roles assigned to them in Algerian institutions, and finally, it analyzed the main digital challenges faced by the communication officer in the digital environment.

1. Conceptual Approach to Digital Transformation and Its Requirements

1.1 The Concept of Digital Transformation:

Digital transformation represents one of the most prominent contemporary trends in the modern era. It is no longer considered a luxury or optional choice but has become an inevitable necessity for survival in a market characterized by fierce competition and rapid technological advancement. The success of digital transformation requires a clear strategic plan, continuous training of personnel, and the selection of appropriate digital tools to achieve institutional objectives effectively. In this section, we aim to explore the concept of digital transformation and outline its key requirements.

Digital transformation has been defined as a comprehensive program that reshapes the internal operations of institutions as well as the manner in which services are delivered to target audiences, making them faster and more accessible (Wahhabi & Qara, 2022, p. 2). This definition is notable for its emphasis on the dual dimension of digital transformation. It extends beyond the modernization of internal organizational processes to encompass the ways in which services are delivered to citizens and end-users. By adopting an operational and procedural perspective, the definition positions digital transformation as both a mechanism for enhancing institutional performance and a strategic approach to improving service channels, ensuring greater speed, accessibility, and efficiency.

Similarly, Khawathra (2021, p. 109) describes it as “a change driven by the application of digital technology to fundamentally transform operational processes and improve service delivery to beneficiaries in a faster and more efficient manner. It also constitutes an integrated organizational transformation aimed at simplifying administrative procedures, enhancing their quality, and achieving digital maturity”.

Additionally, Jalousie and Mohammadi (2025, p. 630) conceptualize digital transformation as a national project that encompasses all services, institutions, and sectors within a country. Its primary objective is to enhance the provision of essential services for individuals, institutions, and various investments by transitioning from conventional forms of service delivery to smart, digital, and technologically advanced systems. The definition emphasizes the significance of adopting modern technologies and transitioning toward smart, digitally enabled service models, reflecting a broader shift

toward integrating advanced digital solutions and artificial intelligence in service development. Nevertheless, its scope remains limited, as it overlooks essential enabling factors that underpin effective and sustainable digital transformation, including robust digital infrastructure, a supportive organizational culture, and a coherent legislative framework.

A comparative review of the three definitions reveals that, despite variations in scope and areas of emphasis, they collectively converge on conceptualizing digital transformation as a profound and fundamental restructuring of institutional operations and service delivery models. Each definition underscores a shared objective: enhancing speed, service quality, and operational effectiveness.

1.2 Requirements for Embodying Digital Transformation:

The successful implementation of digital transformation within organizations is contingent upon four interrelated and fundamental requirements: human resources, processes, data, and technologies. The following provides a scientific analysis of these core pillars:

A. Human Resources :

Human capital is pivotal to digital transformation, with evidence showing that around 72% of initiatives fail due to limited digital competencies (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). To address this, organizations must invest in recruiting and upskilling professionals in areas such as data analytics, artificial intelligence, and digital project management (McKinsey, 2022). Additionally, fostering visionary digital leadership and cultivating an organizational culture open to innovation and continuous change are critical success factors, as emphasized by Kotter's (2012) change management model and Kane et al. (2019).

B. Process Reengineering:

Recent studies emphasize that effective digital transformation necessitates a radical redesign of organizational processes through advanced digital technologies (Davenport, 2018; Hammer & Champy, 1993, p. 32). This requires institutions to build resilient technical infrastructures that align internal processes with external service delivery systems, supported by robust oversight mechanisms to ensure operational efficiency and service quality (Westerman et al., 2014).

c. Data:

Data constitutes a critical pillar in the digital transformation process, often described as "the new oil" due to its strategic value in decision-making and organizational growth. Institutions are required to adopt systematic and efficient approaches for managing, processing, and transforming data by establishing integrated data management systems and implementing data governance frameworks to ensure the accuracy, quality, and reliability of organizational data.

D. Technologies:

The technical infrastructure forms the essential backbone of digital transformation, integrating hardware, networks, and software to ensure operational efficiency and security. Its success depends on adopting scalable, interconnected solutions such as IaaS, PaaS, and SaaS, which enhance system interoperability, cybersecurity, and organizational agility (Belkacemi & Dhimmi, n.d., p. 4).

1.3 Digital Transformations and Their Impact on Institutional Communication :

Corporate communication has undergone profound transformations due to the digital revolution, shifting from a traditional, one-way model to an interactive, multi-channel system integrated with digital technologies (Castells, 2010). These changes have compelled institutions to revise their communication strategies to align with an environment characterized by immediacy, interactivity, and global reach (Taylor & Kent, 2014). Key features of this digital context include instant communication, multi-platform presence, and active audience participation in content production (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

This shift has significantly impacted communication methods, moving from traditional media to digital marketing, live broadcasting, and interactive content supported by audience-targeting algorithms and digital analytics (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Moreover, audiences have become increasingly aware and engaged, with digital influencers emerging as new communication



intermediaries shaping public opinion, thereby heightening the importance of digital reputation management and proactive crisis communication (Taylor & Kent, 2014; Castells, 2010).

2. The Communications Officer and Their Traditional Roles in Algerian Institutions

2.1 The Concept of the Communications Officer:

Traditionally, the concept of the communications officer refers to the individual or team responsible for managing the flow of information between an institution and its various audiences. This role historically emphasized the unidirectional transmission of information through conventional channels. However, with the advent of digital technologies, this concept has undergone a substantial transformation, evolving to include the management of interactive and participatory communication processes rather than unilateral broadcasting.

According to the Algerian Ministry of Communication (2018), the communications officer is defined as: "The technical and media specialist responsible for preparing institutional communication content, ensuring coordination between management, the media, and the public, as well as managing communication crises and monitoring the institution's public image".

Similarly, the communications officer is also described as: "The professional within the institution tasked with planning, implementing, and evaluating both internal and external communication activities, ensuring the effective dissemination of the institution's image and facilitating its interaction with audiences through traditional and digital media platforms".

From these definitions, it becomes evident that the communications officer functions as a vital intermediary between the institution and its internal and external publics. This role involves not only the strategic planning and execution of communication initiatives but also the maintenance of the institution's image and the management of its interactions with a dynamic and increasingly digital audience environment.

2.2 The Position of the Communications Officer in Algerian Institutions: A Critical Analysis of Function and Context:

The communications officer holds a pivotal role in contemporary institutional strategies, particularly amid the digital transformations reshaping global media systems. Within the Algerian context, however, this position remains constrained by a combination of regulatory, structural, and cultural challenges, as well as disparities in digital infrastructure.

Drawing upon insights from previous academic literature addressing the realities of communication practices within Algerian institutions, it becomes evident that communications officers often occupy an ambiguous and dualistic position oscillating between their role as professional media intermediaries and that of administrative employees subjected to bureaucratic and political constraints. Their status can be critically examined through three principal dimensions:

A. The Legal and Institutional Dimension: Between Restriction and Marginalization:

Communication practice in Algeria is tightly regulated by legal frameworks such as Media Law No. 12-05 and the Cybercrime Prevention Law No. 20-05, which emphasize protection of national interests and prohibit sensitive topics including national security, religion, and territorial integrity, while criminalizing false information dissemination (Media Law No. 12-05; Cybercrime Prevention Law No. 20-05). Additionally, Article 144 of the Algerian Penal Code has been used to prosecute communication officers for offenses such as 'insulting regulatory bodies,' further limiting professional freedoms (Algerian Penal Code, Art. 144). The inconsistent enforcement of laws related to the right to access information, despite Algeria's ratification of international agreements, undermines transparency and fosters a culture of self-censorship among communication professionals, who fear legal and administrative repercussions. This environment hinders the adoption of modern communication practices, including participatory approaches and public accountability (Author,



Year). Furthermore, the institutional framework in public and government-affiliated organizations often relegates communication officers to administrative roles subordinated to hierarchical control, requiring prior approval for public communications, which restricts their ability to engage proactively with media and audiences, especially in dynamic digital contexts.

B. The Professional Dimension: Challenges of Professionalism and Resources:

Communication officers' performance in Algerian institutions is influenced by structural and professional factors such as training quality, resource availability, and professional autonomy. A study by the Centre for Research in Information and Communication Sciences at the University of Oran (2021) found that 68% of officers lacked specialized degrees in media and communication, and 89% of institutions did not offer regular digital skills training. This gap undermines strategic communication, especially amid digital transformation. Additionally, limited material and technical resources restrict the use of advanced tools like digital analytics and reputation management. Administrative dependency confines many officers to transmitting official messages instead of crafting strategic plans. Nonetheless, some major institutions like Sonatrach have started implementing sophisticated models for digital reputation and crisis communication. The lack of a unified regulatory framework further exposes communication professionals to political and administrative pressures (Centre de Recherche en Sciences de l'information et de la Communication, 2021).

C- The Socio-Cultural Dimension: The Conflict Between Tradition and Modernity:

Communication officers in Algerian institutions face a fundamental conflict between the conservative social environment and the demands for media transparency and creativity. A study by Bouzidi (2022) found that 73% of these officers practice self-censorship on sensitive topics like gender, religion, and politics due to fear of social backlash. Meanwhile, digital transformation adds pressure as social media platforms drive 89% of communication crises, with younger digital audiences demanding transparency and quick responses (Algerian Observatory for Digital Media, 2023). Officers often wait for upper management's approval before addressing corruption issues or public health data. This tension between tradition and modern communication demands underscores the need for more flexible, professional communication roles. Some institutions have started positioning communication officers as community dialogue mediators, highlighting the necessity for legislative support, organizational culture change, and specialized training in culturally sensitive communication.

2.3 The Traditional Basic Functions of the Communications Officer in Algerian Institutions:

In the Algerian institutional context, the role of the communications officer (often referred to as a media officer) has historically been confined to a set of traditional, narrowly defined functions. These roles largely reflect the bureaucratic nature of governmental and semi-governmental institutions, which constitute the structural backbone of the national economy. Furthermore, these functions mirror the characteristics of the Algerian media and cultural system, which tends to prioritize centralized information control and unilateral communication practices. The principal traditional functions can be summarized as follows:

•The Information (Transmission) Function:

This function involves the one-way transmission of official information, primarily through the dissemination of data, administrative decisions, and institutional announcements without critical analysis or interpretative commentary. The communications officer typically gathers information from senior management and drafts official press releases, which are then distributed via conventional communication channels. These include printed bulletins, press conferences, and periodic institutional reports, documenting the institution's activities (Al-Arousi, 2020). This information model positions the communications officer primarily as a conduit for administrative data, limiting opportunities for interactive or strategic communication initiatives.

•The Defensive Function:

The defensive function operates as a critical mechanism for preserving institutional image during crises. It is typically defined as "a set of practices aimed at mitigating the negative repercussions

of a crisis by denying responsibility or justifying errors, rather than addressing the root causes of the problem.” Within the Algerian institutional environment, it is frequently observed that communication officers' resort to strategies of denial or justification when managing crises a tendency that often exacerbates situations rather than containing them. These defensive responses commonly follow a sequential pattern.

Firstly, the complete denial approach involves rejecting the occurrence or significance of a crisis, often through deliberate information blackout, particularly in sensitive cases such as corruption incidents. Secondly, the conditional justification approach offers weak or unconvincing explanations, typically attributing failures to vague external factors. Thirdly, the delayed response approach postpones official communication in an attempt to avoid immediate accountability. Collectively, these practices contribute to increased public skepticism, foster the spread of rumors, and lead to severe consequences, including the erosion of institutional credibility, the deterioration of public trust, and the marginalization of the communication officer's strategic role within the organization.

•The Coordination Function:

This function pertains to the organization and management of official communication activities, serving as a primary mechanism for relaying information from the institution to the public and the media. It involves tasks such as organizing field visits for journalists, coordinating interviews with institutional officials, managing public events and official ceremonies, and holding press conferences. In these conferences, communications officers are responsible for preparing press kits, selecting official spokespersons, anticipating potential questions, and assessing media coverage following the event.

However, a review of contemporary practice within Algerian institutions reveals a persistent reliance on press conferences as the primary communication channel, characterized by a unilateral, top-down presentation style with minimal opportunities for interactive dialogue between institutional officials and journalists. Furthermore, most institutions have yet to incorporate simultaneous digital broadcasting technologies, such as live streaming via social media platforms (Zitouni, 2021). This entrenched reliance on traditional, non-interactive communication methods underscores the persistence of the classical model of institutional communication in Algeria, despite the evolving demands of the digital media environment.

Table: Characteristics and Challenges of Traditional Crisis Communication Practices in Algerian Institutions

Criterion	Description	Challenges
Timing	Predominantly reactive communication that occurs after the crisis has emerged, with institutions typically adopting a delayed response approach	Delay in official response increases the circulation of rumors, misinformation, and public anxiety, thereby complicating crisis management efforts.
Content	Reliance on a uniform, official rhetoric that avoids addressing critical or sensitive questions. Communication often lacks transparency and contextualized explanations.	Results in loss of institutional credibility, declining levels of public trust, and the proliferation of unofficial narratives in digital spaces.
Participants	Crisis communication management is generally limited to administrative officials, excluding independent experts, technical specialists, or representatives of civil society.	Limits the technical depth and credibility of crisis communication, undermines comprehensive problem-solving, and reduces public confidence in official statements.

The source: prepared by the researchers



From the above table, we can conclude that the coordination function of communications officers in Algeria faces three major obstacles: delayed response, opaque discourse, and the exclusion of key competencies. These challenges primarily stem from the dominance of a hierarchical, traditional bureaucratic model, which views press conferences mainly as occasions for official announcements rather than platforms for meaningful dialogue and interaction with the public and media.

Moreover, the prevailing legal framework significantly restricts the operational flexibility of communications officers. Many institutional regulations mandate prior approval for any press statement, further limiting the capacity for timely and transparent communication. Consequently, the coordination function remains captive to this traditional bureaucratic paradigm.

However, the accelerating digital transformation and the rising expectations of a more informed and demanding public are compelling institutions and particularly those responsible for communication to gradually move away from these conventional methods. There is a growing shift toward adopting a modern communication model, which emphasizes open dialogue, proactive engagement, and the integration of advanced digital technologies for real-time analysis and coverage. Such a model fosters greater transparency and responsiveness, aligning Algeria with global best practices in institutional communication.

This critical transition, however, requires a concerted political will, supported by legislative reforms that empower communications professionals and promote a culture of openness and innovation within institutions.

3- Digital Challenges for Communications Professionals in Algerian Institutions: Towards Reskilling and Restructuring Roles.

3.1 Weak Digital Infrastructure:

One of the primary obstacles to successful digital transformation and effective corporate communication in Algeria between 2023 and 2027 is the inadequate digital infrastructure, especially in rural and interior regions where internet connectivity is unstable, bandwidth is limited, and advanced technologies like 5G are scarcely available. These deficiencies hinder real-time communication and efficient use of digital media. Despite national initiatives to expand fiber optic networks and Algeria's relatively strong position in the Arab Digital Economy Index ranking 12th regionally in digitization and 9th in technological skills with a score of 40.28% the pace of implementation lags behind global digital advancements. A 2022 field study at the University of Oran found that 47% of communications staff in public institutions experience technical difficulties related to internet access, limiting their ability to manage social media, transmit real-time data, and use cloud communication tools. This gap reveals a disconnect between governmental digital transformation ambitions and on-the-ground realities, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive infrastructure upgrades to enable effective digital communication within Algerian institutions (Wahhabi & Qara, 2022, p. 9).

3.2 Lack of Training in Digital Tools (Insufficient Advanced Digital Analysis Tools in Institutions)

It is widely acknowledged that communication professionals in Algeria face a significant lack of specialized training in advanced digital analysis tools. Vocational training predominantly emphasizes traditional communication technologies while neglecting essential digital competencies. These include proficiency with integrated Content Management Systems (CMS), digital analytics platforms such as Google Analytics and Hootsuite, digital campaign management, and engagement measurement tools.

A study by the Higher School of Journalism and Communication in Algiers (2021) found that 62% of communications professionals are not skilled in using digital content management and analytics tools, limiting their capacity to develop and implement effective digital communication strategies. As a result, many local administrative bodies within Algerian



institutions rely on basic and free tools like email to manage digital communications, mainly due to insufficient funding or a lack of awareness regarding the importance of modern software solutions such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems and interactive scheduling and analytics platforms.

Furthermore, an internal report from the Ministry of Communications (2019) highlighted a significant deficiency in technical investments within communication institutions. The absence of continuous professional development programs exacerbates this knowledge gap, undermining the preparedness of communication personnel to adapt to the fast-paced changes of the digital media environment.

3.3 Lack of a Unified and Clear Digital Strategy in Algerian Institutions:

Algerian institutions, both public and private, face significant challenges due to the absence of a clear and integrated strategic vision for digital communication. This gap often leads to reactive and improvised decisions lacking measurable objectives, primarily because of weak coordination, lack of coherent communication policies, and the marginalization of communication departments from decision-making processes. Digital communication is frequently viewed as a supplementary tool rather than a strategic, essential element of institutional frameworks (University of Constantine, 2020; National Institute for Comprehensive Strategic Studies, 2023). Consequently, many institutions suffer from fragmented messaging, poor audience engagement, and insufficient use of major social media platforms. Studies reveal that approximately 70% of institutions lack structured digital communication plans and dedicated budgets, while 78% of public sector bodies do not have formal written communication policies. This deficiency weakens institutional public image and impairs their ability to influence public discourse effectively in a competitive digital environment.

3.4 Legal and Regulatory Challenges Legal:

Uncertainty remains a critical challenge for communication professionals operating within the Algerian digital environment, primarily due to the absence of a clear and updated legal framework regulating digital content and defining legal violations online. This legal ambiguity often leads practitioners to adopt excessive self-censorship and cautious engagement, especially when dealing with sensitive topics or responding to public feedback. The lack of comprehensive knowledge about relevant laws concerning freedom of expression, privacy, and accountability further compounds this issue. According to a survey by the Ministry of Communication (2023), 72% of communication professionals reported practicing self-censorship out of fear of legal consequences, while 58% avoided sensitive issues, and 35% had faced legal summons related to digital publications. These challenges are intensified by contradictory and overlapping legislation, such as the Media Law, Cybercrime Law, and Personal Data Protection Law, which have not been adequately updated to reflect the rapidly evolving digital landscape. Scholars Ben Amroush Farida and Hamidi Hayat (2022) stress the necessity of enhancing awareness among communication practitioners regarding legal, ethical, and regulatory standards to reduce legal risks and protect institutional reputations.

3.5 Cybersecurity Challenges and Digital Reputation Management:

In the era of digitization and artificial intelligence, communication professionals face increasingly complex challenges related to cybersecurity and the protection of institutional digital reputation. The escalation of cyberattacks targeting official digital platforms including institutional websites, social media accounts, and professional email systems has amplified the risk of unauthorized access, misinformation dissemination, and the imitation of official pages. Such incidents can severely harm an institution's public image, particularly in the absence of a



specialized digital monitoring team responsible for overseeing and securing the organization's online presence.

Communications professionals are thus tasked with safeguarding both published content and the institution's reputation against hacking attempts and information manipulation. However, one of the most pressing challenges lies in the lack of specialized training in information security. Many communication officers have not received adequate preparation in cybersecurity techniques, leaving them vulnerable to social engineering tactics, phishing attempts, and potential data breaches.

Additionally, many Algerian institutions lack established digital crisis management protocols. In the event of a cyberattack, there is often no clearly defined emergency plan to swiftly recover compromised accounts or mitigate reputational damage, exacerbating the risk of losing control over digital content and communication channels. This organizational vulnerability underscores the urgent need to integrate cybersecurity training and crisis response mechanisms into institutional communication strategies.

3.6 Changing Audience Behavior and Digital Preferences:

Another major challenge confronting communication professionals is the constant evolution of audience behavior in the digital environment, particularly among Algerian youth. In recent years, this demographic has exhibited a growing preference for interactive and visual content, with platforms such as TikTok and Instagram experiencing substantial user growth. By 2023, the number of users on these platforms in Algeria had surpassed 7 million.

Despite this shift, many institutions continue to rely on static, traditional platforms like Facebook or official websites, which remain largely absent from these newer, more dynamic digital spaces. According to the Digital 2023 report on internet usage in Algeria, nearly 60% of Algerian internet users under the age of 30 prefer short-form, visually engaging content (Datar Portal, 2023).

This transformation necessitates that communication professionals acquire new competencies in creative digital content production, particularly in designing engaging audiovisual materials aligned with these emerging preferences. Failure to adapt to these trends risks diminishing the institution's digital reach and influence, ultimately resulting in the loss of connection with a significant segment of its audience base

Conclusion:

In light of the foregoing analysis, it is evident that communication professionals in Algeria confront a series of structural, cognitive, and organizational challenges arising from the accelerating pace of digital transformation. These challenges transcend mere technical or administrative obstacles; they reveal a significant digital divide between the ambitions articulated in public policies and the practical realities experienced by communication practitioners within institutions.

Addressing these challenges necessitates that Algerian institutions adopt proactive strategies aimed at restructuring communication roles, facilitating continuous professional development, and fully integrating communication units into strategic decision-making processes. Such measures will empower institutions to effectively navigate the complexities of the digital environment, enhance their public image, and sustain active, meaningful engagement with an increasingly discerning and digitally literate audience.

To tackle this issue, this study proposes several mechanisms for restructuring communication functions within Algerian institutions, including:

-Enhance the digital infrastructure of Algerian public institutions by allocating a dedicated annual budget within the national financial laws to support the expansion of fiber optic networks and the modernization of high-speed internet infrastructure. The objective is to achieve 90% high-speed internet coverage in public administrations.

- Introduce a unified legal framework for digital communication that aligns with the specific requirements of the digital environment. This legislation should clearly define the rights, duties, and legal responsibilities of communication officers, particularly regarding the publication and management of digital content across institutional platforms.
- Establish a national committee comprising legal, communication, and cybersecurity experts tasked with drafting the proposed digital communication law. The committee should ensure the law is comprehensive, up-to-date, and responsive to both technological developments and the operational needs of public institutions.
- Create specialized digital communication units within public service institutions, equipped with advanced digital data analytics tools and real-time social media monitoring systems. These units should be responsible for managing online public interactions, tracking digital reputation, and implementing proactive crisis communication strategies.
- Develop strategic partnerships with accredited training centers to deliver structured, semi-annual capacity-building programs for communication officers. These training initiatives should address the legal, ethical, and operational dimensions of digital content management, as well as best practices for managing communication crises in digital environments.
- Mandate public institutions to formulate a biennial digital communication strategy, featuring clearly defined, measurable objectives (KPIs) and allocating an independent annual budget for its implementation. These strategies should be tailored to the needs of the institution's digital audience and subject to regular evaluation.

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