Journal of Journalism, Media Science & Creative Arts
ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 3, Issue 2, Page 72-85 December 31, 2023

Enfolding Digital Media under the Umbrella of Information, Interpretation, and Surveillance

Dr. Wirsha Shahid,
Assistant Professor,
Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science & Technology,
Wirshauddin@yahoo.com

Dr.Fouzia Naz,
Associate Professor,
University of Karachi
Fouzianaz@yahoo.com

Dr. Uzma Qazi,
Assistant Professor,
Iqra University,
Uhqazi@gmail.com

Abstract

Digital media gives people access to a wealth of information and has a big influence on how modern society is shaped. Understanding the impact of digital media requires an understanding of three key concepts: information, interpretation, and surveillance. Information is defined as data and facts disseminated via digital media. Its significance stems from its capacity to enlighten, instruct, and involve people. Making sense of information and assessing its importance are all part of interpretation. Surveillance is the keeping an eye on things and gathering information with the goal of using it to manipulate or control people or groups. While there are advantages to information, interpretation, and surveillance, there are also significant drawbacks. These include questions about the accuracy of the information, potential biases and restrictions in interpretation, and privacy and security issues with surveillance. Digital media must be viewed critically, with information, interpretations, and practices related to surveillance being assessed.

Keywords: Digital, Information, Interpretation, Surveillance, Media, Public, Influence

Introduction

Pakistan has seen a significant change in the dissemination and reception of information, as well as in public discourse and opinion, as a result of the advent of digital media. The emergence of digital technologies has facilitated the development of novel and varied media formats, such as blogs, websites, social media, and online news sources. This has posed a threat to established media outlets like television and print newspapers and opened up fresh channels for expression and communication.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

The expansion of free speech and the democratization of information have been two major effects of digital media in Pakistan. People can now share their thoughts and experiences with a larger audience through social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, which has led to a more inclusive and diverse public conversation. Additionally, it has given underrepresented and marginalized communities a voice and enabled them to take part in public discourse.

Since it gives people access to a wealth of information and influences how they interact with the outside world, digital media has grown in significance in today's society. It is vital to take into account the interconnected ideas of information, interpretation, and surveillance in order to comprehend the function and significance of digital media.

Growing Significance of Digital Media

Digital media has become increasingly important in Pakistan in recent years, transforming the ways in which people access information and connect with one another (Zaidi, 2018). The rise of digital media has also given a voice to marginalized groups, including women and youth, who can use social media to express their views and connect with others (Khan, 2019). But the proliferation of false information and hate speech on social media platforms has also raised serious concerns in Pakistan, where some claim these platforms are to blame for the country's rising levels of divisiveness and violence. (Safi, 2018). The growing significance of digital media in Pakistan's social and political sphere calls for a critical analysis of the opportunities and challenges it presents, as well as the development of strategies to encourage ethical and responsible usage.

Data and facts shared and communicated through digital media are referred to as information. Information in digital media is valuable because it can enlighten, educate, and involve people while offering them fresh viewpoints and insights that help them make wise decisions. Global information sharing and access are now possible thanks to digital media, opening up new possibilities for research, cooperation, and creativity.

Making sense of information and figuring out its importance and meaning is referred to as interpretation. Digital media's dynamic nature, individual and collective biases and perspectives, algorithms, and other factors all influence how information is interpreted. The value of interpretation in digital media resides in its capacity to assist people in navigating the deluge of information at their disposal and in making defensible decisions. Similarly, the term surveillance describes the keeping an eye on things and gathering information, frequently with the goal of using it to manipulate or control people or groups. Digital media is rife with surveillance as people and organizations are continuously gathering, evaluating, and disseminating data and information. The value of surveillance in digital media resides in its capacity to inform and sway individuals and groups while also enhancing safety and security.

Digital media as Participatory Platform

The creation, sharing, and consumption of information has been completely transformed by digital media, impacting industries like journalism, entertainment, and education. (Jenkins, 2006). Social media, video-sharing websites, mobile apps, and other platforms and technologies are all included in the category of digital media. Digital media's participatory nature, which allows users to create, share, and interact with content in a variety of ways, is one of its main characteristics. (Bruns, 2008). As a result, digital media has contributed to the emergence of a new culture of participation, in which users are no longer just passive consumers of media but active participants in the creation and dissemination of information. However, digital media is not without its challenges, including issues related to privacy, surveillance, and information overload (boyd, 2011; Van Dijck, 2013).

Credibility of News Reported Through Digital Media

According to a study conducted by Cogent Arts and Humanities on the extent of media credibility, most of the respondents in the study considered mainstream media to be more reliable compared to digital media in terms of reportage on the politics beat, approximately 50.4%, while most respondents used digital media for entertainment and other types of soft news that is 60%. The reasons attributed to the reliability of mainstream media were cited as results showing that most of the participants (98.8%) consider the authenticity of news on various factors including accuracy and timeliness (Salaudeen & Onyechi, 2020).

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

Another reason for the existence or rise of misinformation through digital media is that social media users and information receivers are not media literate in terms of not being able to identify when fake news is being circulated. As another study conducted showed two separate groups – one group was named the control group which included non-technical media users and the second group was known as the experimental group which consisted of journalists and reporters. Both groups were given the same pieces of information where they had to decipher the real from the fake news. Those who received training as journalists could identify the false news or inaccurate information comparatively better than those who did not receive journalistic training.

Scope of Research

The digital media is evolving platform all over the globe which needs to be studied on daily basis as it is changing so rapidly. When it comes to its function, they will remain the same no matter how the core values of digital media keep changing. These kinds of researches will enhance the value and importance of this interpretive platform. This study delves into how digital media functions in terms of information interpretation and surveillance and the features, perspectives, and characteristics of digital media in Pakistan

Research Questions

1. What are the underlying mechanisms of digital media's function in information interpretation and surveillance?
2. What special qualities and viewpoints of digital media exist in Pakistan that affect the dynamics of information and methods of surveillance?

Research Objectives

1.To study how digital media functions in terms of information interpretation and surveillance.

2. To study the features, perspectives, and characteristics of digital media in Pakistan

Literature Review

Information, Interpretation, and Surveillance:

Placing digital media under the informational purview means classifying digital content—websites, videos, photos, and social media posts, among others—as information. This classification recognizes the role that digital media plays in the spread of information and its increasing significance in our daily lives.

In the past, information was primarily shared through books, newspapers, and other traditional media. (CIT) However, with the rise of the internet and digital technologies, digital media has become a dominant source of information. It is easily accessible, highly interactive, and provides a wealth of information on a wide range of topics. According to Rogers (2013), the function of information in digital media is to facilitate communication, exchange of ideas, knowledge, and data between individuals and organizations. Digital media provides a platform for the creation, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of information in various forms, including text, images, audio, and video. The availability and accessibility of information in digital media have transformed fields such as education, journalism, business, and entertainment, and have contributed to the democratization of information and the emergence of participatory culture (Boyd, 2011; Bruns, 2008; Jenkins, 2008).

Digital media should be used responsibly and ethically, which is why it is important to classify them as information. Analyzing the sources and veracity of information found in digital media is key, just like with any other type of information. This entails evaluating the reliability of the source, screening for prejudices, and confirming the veracity of information before taking it at face value.

The categorization of digital media as information also highlights the need for digital literacy. In a world where information is readily available, it is important for individuals to have the skills and knowledge to navigate the digital landscape and effectively access, evaluate, and use digital media.

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

Digital media under the umbrella of interpretation refers to the view that digital content. This perspective acknowledges the role of individual perspectives, biases, and context in shaping the meaning and interpretation of digital media. The insinuations of media practice research have more to do with relationships between media ritual, media meaning, and the role of interpretation (on the part of both the subjects of research and communication scholars themselves) than they do with discussions over causality or audience studies. (Anderson, 2020)

In contemporary times, interpretation turns out to be more visible to the masses because it was linked with the two World Wars and the broadcasting of political and diplomatic negotiations that would change the face of the world and reorganize the shifting of power and the zones of ascendency and inspiration. (Effrossyni, 2021)

The digital media's classification as interpretation emphasizes how critical media literacy and critical thinking are. People must realize that digital media is a reflection of the opinions and prejudices of those who create it, not something neutral. People can prevent themselves from being duped by inaccurate or misleading information and gain a more complex understanding of the world by realizing the significance of interpretation in digital media.

Interpretation plays a critical role in digital media, as users engage with media content and create meaning from it (Manovich, 2001). In particular, Jenkins (1992) notes that interpretation is a decisive aspect of participatory culture, as fans engage in creative forms of interpretation and contribute to the production of media content. Additionally, Kress (2003) argues that interpretation in digital media is shaped by the multimodal nature of digital texts, which require users to make sense of a range of different sign systems. Bolter and Grusin (2000) additionally propose that the "remediation" process that sees older media forms transformed and integrated into new media environments—thereby necessitating new forms of interpretation—is what distinguishes digital media.

The emergence of technologically assisted simultaneous interpreting was met with mitigated enthusiasm from the proponents of the consecutive mode. (Effrossyni, 2021)

In addition, the categorization of digital media as interpretation also has implications for media creators and producers. It emphasizes the responsibility of these individuals to be transparent about their perspectives and biases and to present information in an accurate and responsible manner.

The concept of surveillance pertains to the ongoing tracking and monitoring of digital content by different entities such as individuals, corporations, and governments. This classification recognizes the growing trend of using digital media as a surveillance tool, along with the possible dangers and repercussions associated with it.

The emergence of digital technologies has simplified the process for governments and corporations to keep tabs on and trace the online activities of individuals. Concerns regarding security, privacy, and power abuse by those with access to this information have arisen as a result. For instance, businesses may use digital media to track customer behavior and target advertising, while governments may use it to monitor citizens and quell dissent. Digital technologies have advanced rapidly over the past few decades, changing almost every aspect of human life.

From smartphones to social media, digital technologies have become deeply embedded in contemporary societies, influencing the ways in which people communicate, work, and interact with one another (Castells, 2010). The growth of digital technologies has enabled people to connect across borders and share information instantaneously, leading to new forms of collaboration, innovation, and cultural exchange (Rheingold, 2014). However, the rise of digital technologies has also given rise to new challenges, including concerns about privacy, security, and the impact of automation on jobs and economic inequality (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). As the development and diffusion of digital technologies continue, it is important to critically examine their potential benefits and drawbacks and to explore ways in which they can be harnessed for the collective good.

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

Digital media's classification as a surveillance tool emphasizes how important it is for people to understand the possible dangers and repercussions of their online behavior. It's critical to comprehend the ways in which digital media can be used to track and monitor people and to take precautions against security and privacy breaches. This could entail limiting the amount of personal information they give to businesses and other organizations, utilizing encryption, and exercising caution when sharing information online.

Surveillance is an unescapable function of digital media, with the capacity to monitor and track individuals and groups online (Lyon, 2018). As Andrejevic (2013) notes, surveillance in digital media operates through a process of data collection and analysis, as users leave traces of their activities and preferences online. This data is then used by commercial and government actors for a variety of purposes, including targeted advertising, social sorting, and law enforcement (Haggerty & Ericson, 2000). Furthermore, Gitelman (2014) argues that the notion of "raw data" in digital media is an oxymoron, as data is never neutral but is rather imbued with the values and interests of those who collect and analyze it. The rise of datafication and dataveillance in digital media has given rise to concerns about privacy, power, and control in the digital age (Van Dijck, 2014).

The classification of digital media as surveillance bears consequences for governments and policymakers. In order to guarantee that the use of digital media for surveillance is open, responsible, and compliant with human rights and civil liberties, it emphasizes the necessity of strict privacy laws and regulations.

Digital media has revolutionized the way masses access and receive information. In today's world, digital content, such as websites, videos, images, and social media posts, plays a central role in shaping our understanding of the world. However, digital media is also a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, encompassing aspects of information, interpretation, and surveillance.

The use of digital media for surveillance purposes has become increasingly common in recent years, with commercial and government actors collecting data on users for a variety of purposes, including targeted advertising, social sorting, and law enforcement (Haggerty & Ericson, 2000). As Andrejevic (2007) notes, surveillance in digital media operates through a process of data collection and analysis, as users leave traces of their activities and preferences online. This data is then used by these actors to make decisions about individuals and groups, potentially leading to discrimination or other forms of harm. The rise of datafication and dataveillance in digital media has given rise to concerns about privacy, power, and control in the digital age (Van Dijck, 2014). In light of this, data collection, analysis, and usage practices in digital media environments require increased accountability and transparency.

Digital media has provided a platform for information to be disseminated to a global audience at unprecedented speed and scale (Pavlik & McIntosh, 2019). However, this has also led to concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the information being shared. The function of information in digital media is to provide knowledge and insight to the audience, but the sheer volume of content being created and shared makes it difficult to verify the accuracy and reliability of every piece of information (Woolley & Howard, 2016). Because of this, the role of interpretation becomes crucial in guaranteeing the accuracy and dependability of information. In order to determine the accuracy and applicability of information, interpretation entails the analysis, evaluation, and synthesizing of that data.

Interpretation is central in digital media to assist viewers in sifting through the deluge of information and identifying trustworthy sources from dubious ones (Lazer et al., 2018). Digital media consumers can make sure the information they consume is accurate and dependable by critically analyzing and interpreting it in a deliberate and knowledgeable manner.

Research Methodology

The qualitative methodology was employed where structured-interviews were taken as the primary tool. Moreover, secondary research was also led to make it comprehensive. The interview was conducted with the experts of digital media who mainly work in the field and are experienced as well.

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

Discussion and Conclusion

Digital media is a vast repository of information, providing access to a wide range of knowledge and perspectives on a multitude of topics. With the rise of the internet, digital media has become a dominant source of information, replacing traditional sources such as books and newspapers. However, the abundance of information in digital media also raises questions about the accuracy and reliability of this information. It is crucial for individuals to critically evaluate the sources and accuracy of the information found in digital media and to be aware of the potential for false or misleading information.

Digital media has impacted a lot as compared to other platforms. Taking the example of the phase where newspaper was the major element of every house. People used to watch current affair programs and headlines, were the main components of being informed but now people have switched towards social media platforms for getting interpretation and knowledge. Now, everyone is utilizing modern mediums for updates, which is a big impact and has become source. When it comes to people's ideologies, it does not mean the news is fake or real, if the news is from digital media platform it effects or moulds the opinion of masses. The followers of digital media believe in the content of it which can be easily seen on trends. On the other hand, it was also analysed that now people want information or knowledge then specific news. The networking has become very strong on this platform but this platform needs to be refined as well. This platform is taking unnecessarily help of sensationalism which is leading towards negative things in the society.

Digital media is not a neutral or objective representation of reality but rather a reflection of the perspectives and biases of its creators. Digital media is shaped by interpretation and can present multiple perspectives on a single topic. This highlights the importance of media literacy and critical thinking, as individuals must understand the role of interpretation in shaping digital media and approach it with a critical and interpretive lens.

Regarding the positive side of digital media and the dissemination of news. It has been observed several times that a lot of stories are published on digital platform first, then on traditional media and a lot of actions are taken rapidly when news stories are published on new platforms especially regarding basic necessities and rights. It was also analysed that digital media plays significant role in highlighting any local and international news. Two examples were quoted by an expert, the one is about Isreal-palestine war and the matter of missing persons that a lot of stories, features, blogs, vlogs have been published on digital platform as compared to the traditional one. Another relevant example was also quoted by an expert that some of the programs are providing informative content on which media houses were not able to talk before.

When it comes to ethical values within digital media, it was studied, most of the content is published depending on unethical values where is a need of code of conduct by government or by any authority because people have started taking it as entertainment platform than information one.

It was also determined that low quality content is being created for the purpose of engagement and Traffic for instance, violence, extremism, harassment cases, abuse cases or personal religious matters are being highlighted without any restriction and ultimately which is against of principle of journalism. Here for digital media, self-censorship is important to adopt for the betterment of society. According to an expert, a lot of news are published within some seconds for the purpose of engagement and then they are deleted as well once they are proven false. The usage of Informal language has become very common in digital media.

Governments, businesses, and private citizens all use digital media as a tool for surveillance, keeping tabs on people and their online activities. Digital media surveillance gives rise to worries about security, privacy, and power abuse by those with access to this data. People should take precautions to safeguard their security and privacy online and be aware of the possible risks and repercussions of their actions. Governments and lawmakers must simultaneously make sure that the use of digital media for surveillance is lawful, accountable, and consistent with civil liberties and human rights. Furthermore, user-generated content can be produced through digital media, which has helped democratize information.

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

On the other side, it was shared by an expert that Pakistan digital media is not promoting Pakistani culture, tradition and the norms. It is promoting somehow nationalism and extremism at some level. It is just focusing on some elements. It is disseminating entertainment only. There is requirement of code of conduct by any authority that all media houses should follow strictly. It was also studied that how the news is disseminated is more important than the news itself especially on the platform of digital media.

Digital media is playing role like marketing or publicity in terms of content. This platform will have to work out of the box. No glorification can be seen here, though a lot of good works are done at individual or group level but those stories are not covered. In comparison to others, Pakistan's digital media is not standing at the same positions as others are standing even from like under-developing countries. Above all, Pakistan's digital media is somehow copying the trends and patterns of other countries media it is not solely producing it sown informative content.

The phenomenon of digital media is intricate and multidimensional, involving aspects of information, interpretation, and surveillance. In order to approach digital media critically and interpretively, people must have a thorough understanding of these elements in order to make wise decisions about their online activities. Digital media can be a great source of knowledge and viewpoints, but it's vital to use it sensibly and be aware of its risks and limitations.

The importance of these functions of mass communication cannot be denied. The significance falls into all industries from print to digital, almost all news stories and the content contain the elements regarding information, interpretation and surveillance from national to international media organizations.

References

Anderson, C. W. (2020). Practice, Interpretation, and Meaning in Today's Digital Media Ecosystem. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *97*(2).

Effrossyni, F. (2021). Fundamentals of Interpreting. In *Fundamentals of Interpreting*. Patakis.

Jenkins, H. (2006). Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide. *New York: New York University Press.*

Van Dijck, J. (2013). The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media. Oxford University Press.

Andrejevic, M. (2013). Infoglut: How too much information is changing the way we think and know. *Routledge.*

Gitelman, L. (2014). "Raw data" is an oxymoron. *MIT Press.*

Castells, M. (2010). The rise of the network society. *John Wiley & Sons*.

Van Dijck, J. (2014). Datafication, dataism and dataveillance: Big Data between scientific paradigm and ideology. Surveillance & Society, 12(2), 197-208.

Zaidi, S. A. R. (2018). Digital Media and Changing Trends of Public Discourse in Pakistan. Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences (PJSS), 38(1), 31-44.

Khan, S. (2019). Digital Media: Opportunities and Challenges in Pakistan. Journal of Mass Communication & Journalism, 9(1)

Bruns, A. (2008). Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and beyond: From production to produsage. New York: Peter Lang.

boyd, d. (2011). Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics, and implications. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), A Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites (pp. 39-58). New York: Routledge.

Rogers, E. M. (2013). Diffusion of innovations (5th ed.). *New York: Free Press.*

Manovich, L. (2001). The language of new media. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kress, G. (2003). Literacy in the new media age. London: Routledge.

ISSN (Print):2790-9700 ISSN (Online): 2790-9719
Volume 2, Issue 1, Page 1-24, December 31, 2023

Bolter, J. D., & Grusin, R. (2000). Remediation: Understanding new media. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Rheingold, H. (2014). Net smart: How to thrive online. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Brynjolfsson, E., & McAfee, A. (2014). The second machine age: Work, progress, and prosperity in a time of brilliant technologies. New York: W. W. Norton & Company

Lyon, D. (2018). The culture of surveillance: Watching as a way of life. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Haggerty, K. D., & Ericson, R. V. (2000). The surveillant assemblage. British Journal of Sociology, 51(4), 605-622.

Lazer, D., Baum, M. A., Benkler, Y., Berinsky, A. J., Greenhill, K. M., Menczer, F & Zittrain, J. L. (2018). The science of fake news. Science

Salaudeen, M. A., & Onyechi, N. (2020). Digital media vs mainstream media: Exploring the. Cogent Arts & Humanities, 17.