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Musa Sabedini

University for Business and Technology - UBT, musasabedini@hotmail.com

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The Challenges of Online Journalism, the Impact of Social Media and Fake News

Musa Sabedini

UBT – Higher Education Institution, Lagjja Kalabria, 10000 p.n.,
Pristina, Kosovo

Online journalism not only today and now, but also in the future will be having numerous challenges, professional challenges, ethical, technical challenges and even time challenges. Online journalism has democratized and advanced the media in general, has made it easier to get information, made it faster to publish information, made it easier to read all the news, and more. However, Online Journalism has also caused an "earthquake" in daily journalism, which is described by numerous amateur errors. As well as online journalism has become accessible and practical, at the same time it has become dangerous to the public and with numerous unethical and unprofessional blows.

Furthermore, the main challenge of Online Journalism remains the non-verification of information, which should be the primary criterion before the portals make their publications and postings on their websites.

Failure to verify the information at a given point has many consequences as we automatically enter the range of media that post fake news and that is wreaking havoc in the media world in many ways

Accuracy and verification of information are the basis of good journalism, without excluding the practice of strong ethical principles.

Another challenge of Online Journalism remains the lack of professionalism and human resources. Inexperienced journalism is dominated by inexperienced journalists, as well as lacking staff to write about specialized fields and delicate spheres.

The fact that a publisher and editor can be anyone inside a portal also creates uncertainties in the reporting or reliability of the news, many times ethically as well .

One of the challenges facing online journalism is the fight against bogus news, known globally as "Fake News". Unsolicited news usually appears at events of great interest to the public or in the wake of it. This is because the media exploit the curiosity of the mass for various benefits. Most often, the victims of fake are uninformed citizens, mainly with low levels of education, with social, psychological and economic instability.

To talk about fake news first we have know how to do the real news and the news built on professional criteria and standards.

On June 25, 2019 there was newsflash from Kaqanik from a portal or social network about a wolf attack on a child. The news was very vague and did not specify any sources. The "sensational" news spread quickly on social media and initially seemed to be fake news as it was unproven. The portal simply lacked professionalism because it reported on shocking news in the style: "The child was bitten by a wolf by carrying the child 10 meters and he wanting to take it with him."

Writing

23:47 / Tuesday, June 25, 2019

The 5-year-old in Hani i Elezit is attacked and snatched by a wolf, finally rescued by his uncle

Rural areas in our country continue to be endangered by wildlife.

In Dimca village of Hani i Elezit, a 5-year-old child is bitten by a wolf, local media reports.

According to reports, the child was out of life danger, as he was attacked by a wolf near the house and carried 10 meters trying to be taken away.

Fortunately, the 5-year-old is rescued by his uncle.

<https://indeksonline.net/5-vjecari-ne-han-te-elezit-sulmohet-dhe-rrembehjet-nga-ujku-por-shpetohet-nga-axha-i-tij/>

So in the absence of professional criteria and standards, this news that was actually true automatically entered the fake news list, until a few hours later the official notification was given by the police..

The news lacked the essential questions: Who reported that the wolf bit the child, who indicated that the child was carried 10 meters, etc. The news had no confirmation either from official sources, such as police, doctors, family members or witnesses. Furthermore, had the journalist written the village where the incident took place to verify whether the case really happened.

And the news turned out to be true because police had confirmed it a few hours later.

Police report

Attack from wild animals

Village Dimca, Hani Elezit 25.06.2019-18: 20. The K-Albanian male victim was reportedly attacked by a wolf while he was herding livestock. The victim sustained bodily injuries and initially received medical assistance in the emergency of Ferizaj / Uroajtevac and was subsequently taken to UCKK for further medical treatment.

Another case that really shows how dangerous and unverified the fake news is, is the reporting on the accident in Gjilan on March 7, 2019. Bombastic headlines on most portals: "Terrible accident", "A lot of injured and dead", "Accident was a terrorist act", "Accident was caused by Serbian driver from Serbia" and many other scandalous headlines.

When reporting on serious tragedies, the journalist must rely on facts and arguments using all possibilities and serving first-hand information.

Currently in Kosovo, every professional journalist needs less than 5 minutes to verify any news. The bombastic headlines with fake news create confusion, uncertainty and panic in the public and to the reader.

Personally, within 17 minutes I have explained the whole tragedy with the truck. The reporting was based on statements from the police, the prosecution and the hospital, and from the news in Rajonipress all local and central media were then served and based.

The speed of publishing news is a disease for many portals and this can hardly be eliminated so quickly. Subsequently, it is better to be second, but more accurate than the first and not correct. In America the main pillar of journalism is the reporting of verifiable facts, and this is the key that must apply to us as well and that has been a huge struggling for some time now. Simply report objectively and clearly and be persuasive of the sources and do not misuse or misinterpret them.

The case of the attack of the Roma woman, that precisely happened because of the fake news with a lot of pomposity from some serious portals also, clearly showed the lack of professionalism and proved once again the need to verify the news is the main weapon of any medium.

The consequences were numerous in this case. Ethics was violated, fake news was given and the woman was brutally attacked.

The news is reliable, accurate, impartial and useful to society if it is based on essential criteria. News needs arguments, power and credibility. And who does this to make the news look powerful? The mind and knowledge of the journalist, because he is the most responsible person, whether the news will be liked by the reader or even if the news will be misunderstood by the audience.

Another false and fabricated case, but published on the front pages of our portals, was allegedly the escort accident (police escort) of Minister Ekrem Mustafa.

The way it was reported for a few minutes by our portals creates ethical concern because this news was unverified and deliberately bogus, and similar cases do great ethical damage to genuine online journalism.

"Minister of Internal Affairs escort accident", "Minister of Internal Affairs Ekrem Mustafa accident, details are given", "Minister Mustafa is not injured, but these MIA officials were ".

Only if you read these three headlines, you do need more to understand more about how much damage we do to journalism by this way of reporting. Online journalism has its own criteria, it has its own reporting standard, which if my colleagues respect it, they have no problem of developing and promoting genuine online journalism.

Even the case of two missing policemen in Kaqanik has shown a lot of unprofessionalism in the online media. There was a lot of unverified news that was not based on the statements of competent people.

So online media should develop a professional side to deal with fake news, news that is defamatory and offensive.

And there also must be a positive solidarity between the media and the journalists reporting on online journalism, and this can happen when each of us gets the courage to distant ourselves from the fake news by rival al portals.

There are many other cases where fake news is deliberately given by groups of citizens. We have such cases especially with border residents while reporting on social networks in the style of "Serbian gendarmerie raiding houses in the border area", but when the dedicated journalist gets the job and asks the police authorities what the gendarmerie is about, it turns out that the fact is the Kosovo Police, the one that raided the Albanian houses and not the Serbian gendarmerie.

Just fake news is a challenge in modern times and every day we ask the delicate questions of how to verify fake news, slander and insult.

Among the concrete actions to be taken to prevent fake news are: the registration of print and online media by the relevant institutions, the identification and registration of administrators of various news sites and the imposition of legal penalties, and possibly the resolution of the problem with the news False, it is also related to media education.

"Like" journalism that is hurting journalism and society

Many of the social media commentators when it comes to these media scenes usually blame it on the portals, on the grounds that everything is being done for a "like".

It does not exclude this present opportunity as the speed of news on portals has some pros and cons.

The fact that a publisher and editor can be anyone inside a portal also creates uncertainties in the reporting or reliability of the news, even ethically.

The only scandals in this field come from this very category, which is to prioritize click war. This category proves that the main goal is to follow the Like course as a way to reach the audience and realize the financial side.

And here we have a defect present where the most incompetent people talk about portals. A journalist, editor, lecturer, professor who has not experienced working and becoming a daily online journalist, he finds it difficult to understand, let alone talk about, online media. We all unfortunately become experts, online media scholars.

Portals that do not verify news from social networks are mainly victims of those posts.

Accuracy and verification of information, a practice in extinction

"The fake news from anyone and wherever they come from, is aimed at convincing the citizen and for the material benefit of the citizen. Among the concrete actions to be taken to prevent fake news are: the registration of print and online media by the relevant institutions, the identification and registration of administrators of various news sites and the imposition of legal penalties".

The solution to the problem with fake news is through media education.

The journalist's experience, knowledge and professional training help the ethical side

Journalism is a profession that is constantly in front of the eyes and judgments of the public and of crucial importance in this case is the integrity and power of the media.

Not everyone can become the owner of a portal. I insisted and proposed that at the time of registering a portal, whether as an individual business, the main criterion be the graduated faculty of journalism for the founder of the portal. Why do I say this and why is this necessary? A student who has gone through academic filters and attended the necessary lectures in the field of ethics, how to report from all situations, he will never make the initial mistakes that will substantially damage the way he reports.

The speed of publishing news is a disease for many portals and this can hardly be eliminated so quickly. After all, it is better to be second, but accurate, than to be first and incorrect.

It is very important that in such cases, ie reporting as it happened to the Roma woman, the media should not display prejudice or emotion. It takes three minutes to verify an event in Kosovo today, let alone more. We live in a time when technology is very advanced and we just need to know how to use reporting techniques.

I have also followed cases of deaths, murders or suicides, where portals and newspapers have made scandals. In the case of Hamdi Sopa, for example, I came across an extremely strange title. "Hamdi Sopa is killed and full stop."

It is very useful and healthy for the journalist in the field not to be overwhelmed by the emotions that the event itself creates, but to remain impartial and fair to the parties at all times. It is always advisable to give space to the parties we are reporting on, for them to state their views, and in particular to avoid hate speech.

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