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# DIGITAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

# UNDERSTANDING HOW HARIAN JOGJA NEWSPAPERS FACE THE CHALLENGES OF MEDIA DIGITALIZATION

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#### Abstract

The print media industry is experiencing a decline in circulation. One of the causes is advances in communication technology or digitization. This research aims to describe how Harian Jogja faces the challenges of media digitization. This research uses the Media Ecology Theory initiated by McLuhan to help broadly describe the phenomena that occur. The method used is qualitative with a phenomenology approach which is used as an analytical tool. This research shows that Harian Jogja is trying to create a new alternative to enable their agency or company to survive in any conditions and situation. The Harian Jogja print media is trying to shift its marketing strategy to non-print form. The Harian Jogja creates a strategy in presenting news, namely regional news, and also an ABC reporting strategy, namely Accurate, Actual, Brief, Balanced, Clear, and Complete.

Keywords: Harian Jogja; Newspapers; Media; Digitalization.

#### Introduction

The Alliance of Independent Journalists (*Aliansi Jurnalis Independen*, AJI) in 2018 recorded a decline in the percentage of print media circulation from 2011 to 2017 which reached 28.18% (Manan, 2018). Likewise, data from the Press Companies Union (*Serikat Perusahaan Pers*, SPS) shows that the decline in circulation that occurred between 2013 and 2017 reached five million copies. In 2013, print media circulation was recorded at 22.4 million copies. However, in 2017 it fell to 17.2 million copies. More specifically, newspaper circulation fell from 9.6 million copies to 7.1 million copies from 2013 to 2017. A survey from the Global Web Index (Pusparisa, 2021) noted that there was a decline in the audience of conventional media. The number of newspaper readers in the first semester of 2019, which reached 54.7%, fell to 49% in the second semester of 2020.

Readers of print media tend to be older individuals, while the younger generation, starting from the millennial category, prefer audio-visual media (Hadiyat, 2019). This threatens the position of the print media industry, including newspapers. Furthermore, Nielsen noted that digital media audiences have exceeded print media readers (Reily, 2017). The impact is that print-based media suffers losses. The phenomenon of declining interest in print media is not only felt by print media industry players in Indonesia. Print media has begun to be abandoned by readers who are switching to internet-based media (Romadhoni, 2018). In the United States in 2022, it will be recorded that every week two newspapers will close (Romana, 2022).

On the other hand, the number of internet users in Indonesia is increasing. The Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (*Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia*, APJII) showed survey results that stated in 2014 internet users in Indonesia had reached 88.1 users. In 2016, the number of internet users increased to 132.7 users (APJII, 2016). This increase is increasingly rapid until the internet penetration trend in Indonesia reaches 77.02% in 2022 (Pahlevi, 2022). The rapid development of the internet is the main trigger that allows people to access online media more easily and cheaply (Kusuma, 2016). Nuh (2019) stated that several print media companies in Indonesia could not continue their business, due to their inability to capture the market amidst the proliferation of internet-based media

Digital-based media has characteristic advantages compared to conventional media. This advantage is that it tends to be more up-to-date compared to other types of mass media. Apart from that, internet-based media also has a broad capacity, is flexible, interactive, and documented, and can also be connected via hyperlinks. This is different from print media which still relies on sheets of paper to publish information (Romli, 2017). This phenomenon spreads to the calculation of individuals who have to spend relatively more money than using internet-based media. Access to newspapers is also reduced because there are fewer mobile newspaper sellers (Qorib, Kello, & Effendy, 2020).

One of the factors threatening print media is the rapid development of information and communication technology which has produced internet-based media. However, the phenomenon of the collapse of print media companies is not solely due to the trend of society loving this new media. However, print media is not strong enough to innovate to offer wider space for industrialization. At the same time, internet-based media offers what print media does not (Pamuji, 2019).

McLuhan's Media Ecology Theory (West & Turner, 2010) explains that society depends on technology and media. The social order of a society is based on its ability to deal with emerging technology. Research discussing media and digitization has been carried out by several researchers. Nurhasanah & Alkatiri (2019) studied the strategies of Depok newspapers in anticipating online media. The results of this research explain that Radar Depok's strategy is to carry out visual innovation, contain the latest rubrics for certain moments, and have online media. Next, Pangaribuan & Irwansyah (2019) studied Indonesian print media during the Industrial Era 4.0. The results of this research show that print media is gradually starting to move towards digital and utilizing the Internet of Things (IoT). Likewise, Dzulhilma (2021) studied the Gorontalo Post media convergence as a strategy to survive in the digital era. The results of his research show that Hargo.co.id is a form of convergence for the Gorontalo Post print media to survive in the era of online media development. Gorontalo Post survives by strengthening investigative and other in-depth coverage. Meanwhile, hargo.co.id uses Google Analytics to measure its existence amidst the development of online media. Apart from that, Kuswanto (2020) conducted research on the existence of newspapers in the online media era. The research conducted by Kuswanto attempted to describe the existence of the Metro Jambi newspaper in the era of online media development. Apart from that, this research also describes the strategy of the Metro Jambi newspaper in maintaining its existence and facing threats from online media. This research found a result that the Metro Jambi newspaper is still popular amidst the onslaught of internet-based media.

From the research that has been conducted, this research attempts to fill the gaps in previous research. This research focuses on Harian Jogja media related to the challenges of media digitalization. Harian Jogja was founded in 2008 and will continue to survive in 2024. Harian Jogja was published starting from May 20 2008 along with Hari Kebangkitan Nasional by the Bisnis Indonesia publishing group. This newspaper is the third community newspaper from Bisnis Indonesia after Solopos and Monitor (Irwanto, 2016). This research aims to describe Harian Jogja's way of dealing with opposition to media digitization.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

McLuhan (West & Turner, 2010) states that the media is quite powerful in an individual's view of the world. Media Ecology Theory emphasizes that technology constructs communication culture through media. Society cannot escape technology and technology remains central to all areas of profession and life. Likewise, Bugeja (2005) states that the media and individuals or society are related to learning, and the system is symbolic. The content becomes biased in the process. Media ecology theory views the media as the message itself. The power comes not only from the content of the message but also from the media itself (McLuhan, 1964).

The assumptions of Media Ecology Theory include that the media surrounds every action in society. Then the media improves human perception and organizes human experience. Apart from that, media from a Media Ecology perspective, media unites the whole world through technology (West & Turner, 2010). In simple terms, Media Ecology Theory focuses on the impact of technology on society. McLuhan (1964) stated that the law of development of media technology causes something to become outdated. Internet-based media makes other previous media obsolete. Technological advances in the media sector are forming a global village.

The global village is the idea that humans can no longer live in isolation, but will always be connected by instant and continuous electronic media. McLuhan's media ecology theory relies heavily on media history. McLuhan considered that the media of a certain period were very important in organizing society. McLuhan identified four separate periods. The media not only organizes society or humans but also the media can tempt society because of its messages. Both messages are conveyed through the media, and the media is the message itself (West & Turner, 2010).

The Internet enhances and changes society in different ways. First, the internet has the potential to enhance several senses, including sight and hearing. Second, the existence of the internet increases the accessibility of information. Third, the internet can increase class division. Fourth, the decentralization of authority also has the potential to be enhanced by the internet (West & Turner, 2010). The construction of organizing society through technology gives rise to the phenomenon of technopoly. Technopoly is a term coined by Postman (1992) which means humans live in a society dominated by technology.

#### **Material and Methodology**

This research refers to an interpretive paradigm with a descriptive qualitative approach. The interpretive paradigm looks at truth from the perspective of real experiences related to people in a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009). Bogdan and Taylor (Moleong, 2018) explain that qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or verbal words from objects that can be observed.

This research uses the phenomenological method as an analysis tool. Phenomenology is the study of life experiences when experiencing a certain reality of various things in the world (Laverty, 2003). Research data was obtained from interviews with people responsible for the Harian Jogja marketing division regarding their experiences in maintaining the Harian Jogja. Interviews were conducted informally and openly. This is intended so that the phenomena experienced can be obtained in-depth (Moustakas, 1994). An interview refers to a conversation with a specific purpose carried out by two parties, namely the interviewer who asks questions and the interviewee who provides answers to the interviewer's questions (Moleong, 2018). Data analysis was carried out in three stages, namely reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data reduction is carried out by simplifying rough data in the field. The data presentation process is carried out by narrating the experiences of Harian Jogja workers in facing digital-based media challenges. The final stage, namely concluding, is carried out by reviewing the data obtained so that an intersubjective agreement is reached.

## **Result and Discussion**

#### Harian Jogja's Strategy for facing digitalization

Harian Jogja print media is different from other print media in Yogyakarta. News headlines presented in other print media are one of the most fundamental differences, according to Nugroho Nurcahyo as managing editor. Harian Jogja's print media, in making headlines, does not necessarily only present news that is currently hot, but the principle of Harian Jogja is that it must present news that is important for the public to know, while other print media always present the same news and only those that are currently hot. Harian Jogja print dares to make different news. The Harian Jogja print media also has a reporting principle that focuses on notifications related to current developments in Yogyakarta, this is one of the principles that Harian Jogja adheres to in providing information that is important for the people of Yogyakarta to know.

Harian Jogja print media has a vision, namely to initiate the dynamics and noble cultural values of the people of Yogyakarta and its surroundings. This vision is accompanied by four missions, namely providing choices for the increasingly diverse Yogyakarta community, encouraging community enthusiasm to develop the region independently, spreading the romance of Yogyakarta for residents

who have been connected with this region, and also increasing the community's critical power to achieve their goals.

The development of online media has caused print media to experience a significant decline in production. This reduction occurred because people in meeting their information needs shifted from print media to digital-based media. Just like what happened in the Harian Jogja print media. Harian Jogja print media has experienced a significant reduction in recent years. Nugroho Nurcahyo, who serves as managing editor of the Harian Jogja, revealed that there was a fairly large reduction, in 2010 The Harian Jogja could print up to 25,000 copies per day and experienced a decline in the last few years, especially in 2022, when it only printed around 7,500 copies per day. This decline made the Harian Jogja print media have to create a strategy to continue to maintain their sales circulation. Basuki, one of the people who often reads the Harian Jogja newspaper, stated that the Harian Jogja newspaper is no longer circulated as much as it used to be, whereas in the past many people consumed news from the Harian Jogja newspaper, and also that in the past there was almost every patrol post in the villages. Harian Jogja newspaper.

The increasingly rapid development of online media also means that the Harian Jogja print media must create a strategy to maintain its existence in society. Pamuji (2019), the onslaught of digital-based media means that print media must respond carefully, such as by creating an effective strategy to anticipate changes that occur. Print media can no longer just rely on topicality, depth, or speed, but print media must think of new strategies that can enable them to survive the changes that will occur. In this case, the Harian Jogja has dealt with the issue of a major change that could pose a threat to the survival of their print media. This has made the Harian Jogja print media think about the strategies they will carry out in the future, whether to maintain their presence in society or future strategies in facing the era of digitalization.

The Harian Jogja print media created a strategy to keep its printed newspapers in circulation. The strategy that Harian Jogja print media is trying to implement is to change the focus and sales segment from retail (individual) newspapers to subscription newspapers, and also collaborate with several institutions to become subscription partners. Like the collaboration that has been carried out with the Unisa campus, where almost every faculty subscribes to the Harian Jogja newspaper.

Harian Jogja print media is also trying to maintain a strategy for maintaining printed copies by establishing collaborations with agencies and campuses that will carry out activities such as graduations. The Harian Jogja print media tries to collaborate with the concept of special coverage so that when news of the event is published in the Harian Jogja media, the agency or campus will buy a large number of copies of the Harian Jogja newspaper.

Regional reporting strategy, the Harian Jogja print media has guidelines that they must always report on regional developments that are their market segmentation. This is one of the strategies of Jogja's daily print media so that it can maintain its existence. Because by reporting on regional developments such as the Special Region of Yogyakarta and its surroundings, people who live in the Special Region of Yogyakarta will always want to buy the Harian Jogja newspaper, Harian Jogja always reports on developments in their area. Informant Basuki, who is a Harian Jogja consumer, also stated that one of the reasons why he often consumes the Harian Jogja newspaper is because he wants to find out about news about conditions or what is happening in the Jogja area.

Informant Nugroho Nurcahyo in his statement also explained that they are trying to maintain market segmentation which is currently still alive and still exists. There are government agencies that continue to allocate funds to be used for purchasing or subscribing to newspapers, this is being used by the Harian Jogia print media to continue to maintain the existence of their newspaper.

The Harian Jogja print media, in maintaining its existence and also facing the onslaught of online media, is also trying to create new strategies and innovations that are applied to its daily newspapers. This innovation aims to attract readers to remain loyal to reading the Harian Jogja newspaper and not switch to online media. Creating attractive and attractive layouts is one of the innovations that Harian Jogja is trying to implement to continue to exist, but this attractive layout innovation also does not violate layout principles in the world of journalism. This layout innovation is named DE, which is dynamic and elegant.

The Harian Jogja print media in making news has a principle called ABC, namely, Accurate, Actual, Brief, Balanced, Complete, and Clear. This principle is consistently applied by the Harian Jogja print media to continue to attract reader interest so that it can also survive the onslaught of online media.

Harian Jogja print media tries to create a new alternative to enable their agencies or companies to continue to survive in any conditions and situations. The Harian Jogja print media starting in 2020 is trying to shift its marketing strategy to non-print, what is meant by non-print here is Harian Jogja trying to make a breakthrough that is not only focused on being an agency or company that disseminates information, this breakthrough is called digital migration. Harian Jogja in this case tries to position itself as a company operating in the service sector.

The Covid-19 pandemic is the beginning of new strategies and breakthroughs being implemented. Jogja's Daily Strategy, which is called digital migration, opens a service related to the digital world and media, and the market segment for this breakthrough is agencies or institutions, whether government or private, that are not yet aware of the digital world and media. These services include providing live streaming facilities, making short videos (campaigns), making talk shows, and most recently Nugroho Nurcahyo said that Harian Jogja even received billboard-making services.

### Obstacles Harian Jogja faces digitalization challenges

In maintaining its existence amid the growing onslaught of online media, print media has made them experienced several obstacles. The Harian Jogja print media, especially in this case, also experiences obstacles in maintaining its existence. The decreasing market and decreasing demand for print are the only obstacles or problems that the Harian Jogja print media feels in maintaining its existence. However, in this case, the Harian Jogja print media continues to manage its print media because print media is still one of the biggest sources of income for the Harian Jogja in terms of business.

The decreasing income or income is one of the impacts that is being felt by the Harian Jogja print media. However, according to information from informant Nugroho Nurcahyo, income from print media is currently still one of the largest incomes in the Harian Jogja. This reduction in the number of printed copies has made Harian Jogja try to create innovations to continue to maintain their existence, and also shift their focus to digital-based media in preparation for when print media will no longer be of interest to the public.

Print media's existence is now increasingly threatened, this is triggered by technological developments which are increasingly prevalent in every region of Indonesia. Digitalization triggers significant changes in the process of seeking information in people's lives. More and more people are now turning to digital-based media to meet their information needs. This makes the existence of print media increasingly faded in people's lives and also makes print media less popular with the public. The public's shift in seeking information from online media has also reduced the sales circulation of print media.

The Harian Jogja print media, in maintaining its existence, has also created a strategy, namely focusing on making regional news. Harian Jogja print media has guidelines that they must always present news that is important for the people of the Special Region of Yogyakarta and its surroundings to know. Nugroho (2009) explains that media that sees the closeness of its readers and also presents regional issues becomes interesting and continues to be followed by readers. The strategy carried out by the Harian Jogja print media aims to influence the public so that they always subscribe to the Harian Jogja newspaper, the Harian Jogja newspaper always provides information regarding conditions and developments in their area. Pamuji (2019) states that a media with its reporting can easily influence and create new thoughts in its readers. The strategy carried out by the Harian Jogja print media is also in line with the nature of media ecology theory, that a communication process can influence human perceptions and feelings (West & Turner, 2010).

Harian Jogja print media experienced a very significant reduction in printed copies per day. In 2010 the Harian Jogja print media was able to print almost 25,000 copies in one day, and experienced a reduction in 2022 when the Harian Jogja print media only printed around 7,500 copies in one day. This reduction indirectly indicates that the existence of print media is increasingly threatened. The decreasing number of printed copies is not only happening in the Harian Jogja print media. Romadhoni (2018) stated that print media is increasingly experiencing a reduction in terms of sales circulation and readers, this is happening not only on a national scale but also on an international scale. This reduction occurred due to technological developments, which influenced people to switch to meeting their information needs from print media to online media. McLuhan (Widodo, 2019) stated that technological developments can influence human life.

Harian Jogja print media, in maintaining its existence amidst the development of online media, has created a strategy, namely rejuvenation or appearance innovation. Harian Jogja print media in creating a layout has a concept called DE, namely Dynamic and Elegant, but with a note that it upholds the layout principles. Tom Lincy (Nugroho, 2009) states that there are five principles of good layout, namely proportion, balance, contrast, rhythm, and unity. According to Nugroho Nurcahyo, the layout rejuvenation strategy carried out by the Harian Jogja print media is aimed at preventing readers from getting bored with the physical form presented, so that it can attract public interest in always subscribing to the Harian Jogja newspaper. Sitoresmi (2021) states that an attractive layout presenting image and text elements in a simple, attractive, and easy-to-read manner, aims to attract the reader's interest and make it easier for the reader to accept the information presented. Meanwhile, attractive layout is a supporting factor in reader satisfaction, which makes readers not turn away from daily newspapers. In the view of media Ecology theory, this occurs because humans are not outside the media, but humans are within the media environment itself (Ashari, 2018).

Harian Jogja print media, which has focused more on developing online media, also aims to become a development that provides a wider reach of information to the public, in other words, can influence communication through various media. McLuhan (Suprayitno, 2020) stated that society develops as technology develops so if society and the media also follow existing technological developments, the reach of information will become wider. In other words, technological developments can influence communication through the media.

Harian Jogja, amidst the development of online media, is trying to create a new alternative strategy to enable their agencies or companies to continue to survive in any conditions and situations. Harian Jogja at the beginning of 2020 tried to shift its marketing strategy to non-print, what is meant by non-print here is Harian Jogja trying to make a breakthrough that does not only focus on being an agency or information dissemination company, this breakthrough is called digital migration.

According to Nugroho Nurcahyo, the Harian Jogja has created a multiplatform media development strategy, in other words, the Harian Jogja has focused more on developing its online media, namely harijogja.com. This shift in focus aims to maintain its existence and also anticipate the increasingly rapid development of online media. Jogja's Daily Strategy, which focuses more on developing online media, is in line with what was conveyed by Pangaribuan & Irwansyah (2019) who stated that print media must now create a multiplatform strategy to be able to face competition and also maintain its existence. Apart from that, the more consistent online media reporting on harijogja.com can make the market segmentation of Harian Jogja wider. People from all over the world can find out the information presented on the digital media harijogja.com, this can make Harian Jogja continue to exist even in different media packages. In this way, Harian Jogja can bind the world, or in the assumption of Ecological theory, Harian Jogja Media has become a media that unites the world with its content spread throughout the world via the internet. In this context, McLuhan (West & Turner, 2010) stated that all events that occur in various parts of the world can be known by other parts of the world.

The digital migration made by Harian Jogja aims to make them not only focus on the print media industry they own but also make them move to other fields such as providing services. Harian Jogja receives services such as making short videos (campaigns), providing talk show creation services, and providing live streaming venue services. Jarvis (Sugiya, 2012) stated that the media industry, especially print media, must create a new strategy if it does not want to be marginalized. Print media cannot be limited to paper and cannot only focus on print media. Print media must be able to develop itself in other aspects and also define itself from its medium. The innovations and strategies implemented by Harian Jogja are broadly the same as the assumptions of Media Ecology Theory. McLuhan (West & Turner, 2010) stated that media cannot be viewed in a narrow concept, media must be viewed in a broad concept. The increasingly rapid development of the internet can also be utilized by print media to maintain its existence, by creating a media convergence strategy. Media convergence is a combination of conventional media such as print media with digital-based technological developments. Resmadi & Yuliar (2014) stated that media convergence is the involvement of technology in the development of mass media.

This research, which examines the existence of the Harian Jogja print media amidst the development of online media, has similarities with several previous studies. Firstly, the research conducted at Harian Jogja has similar results to research conducted at Radar Depok. The innovation strategy for renewing and rejuvenating the appearance of newspapers is one of the same strategies

carried out by Harian Jogja and Radar Depok. This strategy also has the same goal, namely to prevent readers from getting bored and always being interested in the newspapers they create. These two studies have similarities with research conducted in the daily Suara Pembaruan. This similarity is that they both focus more on developing the online media they already have, but also do not abandon the conventional media or print media they have. This is different from Radar Depok which still focuses more on print-based reporting (Nurhasanah & Alkatiri, 2019).

On the other hand, this research is different from research conducted at Radar Depok. This research found a result that the existence of the Harian Jogja print media at this time has dropped drastically due to the shift of readers to digital-based media. In contrast to research conducted at Radar Depok, the results found that Radar Depok did not experience significant problems even though online media was increasingly developing and threatening. Apart from that, this research also obtained different results from research conducted at Radar Depok. Harian Jogja, amidst the current development of online media, has shifted its main focus to the digital-based media it owns, while Radar Depok, amidst the current development of online media, is still focused on its print media and not too focused on the online media they own.

This research also has differences with research conducted in the Suara Pembaruan, the difference is in the digital development strategy carried out. Harian Jogja print media in creating a digital migration strategy does not only focus on developing its online media but tries to enter all lines related to the digital world, such as providing live streaming services, short video creation services (campaigns), to making billboards. The strategy carried out by the Harian Jogja print media was not carried out by Suara Pembaruan. In creating its multi-platform strategy, Suara Pembaruan only focused on developing the news portal they already had.

Lastly, this research has different results from research conducted in the Gorontalo Post and the Metro Jambi newspaper. The difference is that the digital migration strategy carried out by the Harian Jogja print media is not carried out by the Gorontalo Post and Metro Jambi. Apart from that, the Gorontalo Post and Metro Jambi newspapers are still more focused on print media and have not carried out any digital transformation innovations. This is different from the Harian Jogja print media which prioritizes and focuses more on online media but does not necessarily abandon the print products they still have (Dzulhilma, 2021; Kuswanto, 2020).

This research found that Harian Jogja, in maintaining its existence, carried out strategies that were not carried out by the previously researched media. The first strategy is digital migration, this strategy was not tried to be implemented by the media studied in previous research. The digital migration strategy that Harian Jogja is trying to implement is not only to develop its multiplatform media, as carried out by Suara Pembaruan media in the research (Rumata, 2018) but also to create a breakthrough in terms of developing all lines related to the world of media and digital. The Harian Jogja print media views that they are not just a media presenting information or selling newspapers, but Harian Jogja views it as a media that sells services. In this case, the print media opened a service providing live streaming, making short videos (campaigns), and making talk shows, and the Harian Jogja even received billboard-making services.

#### **Conclusions**

The decreasing circulation has prompted the Harian Jogja print media to develop a strategy. First, the Harian Jogja print media created a strategy to change the concept from retail (individual) newspapers to subscription newspapers. This strategy was supported by the Harian Jogja print media strategy which also collaborated with agencies and campuses to subscribe to their daily newspapers. Second, the Harian Jogja print media created a strategy for presenting news, namely regional news, and also the ABC reporting strategy, namely accurate, actual, brief, balanced, clear, and complete. Third, the Harian Jogja print media created a display update strategy aimed at attracting people to buy or subscribe to the Harian Jogja newspaper.

Lastly, Harian Jogja created a digital transformation strategy in which Harian Jogja has focused more on developing the digital media they have, Harian Jogja also created a digital migration strategy which made them not only make Harian Jogja a media for presenting information but also made their media into a media that operates in the service sector. The strategy carried out by the Harian Jogja print media aims to maintain its existence amidst the development of online media. Apart from that, the

strategy carried out by the Harian Jogja print media also aims to influence the public to continue to consume news from their media, both print and digital versions.

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