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Topic of Research: Planning of news in newspaper organizations: A study of planning, practice and problems

Findings

The internet-driven digital turn has transformed media ecosystems across the world catalysing paradigmatic transformations in journalistic practices including the planning, creation and dissemination of news. The emergence of online platforms compelled news organizations across the country to opt for the convergent or multimedia model. This practice-based dissertation examines how in the decade between 2012–2022, these technological realignments affect journalistic practices. In 2016, the Oxford Dictionary declared ‘Post-Truth’ to be the word of the year, signaling a paradigmatic perceptual shift in media consumers. In the year that post-truth became the word of the year, India enacted the *Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016*, thereby writing into law the longstanding demands of the disability rights movement. Poised on the intersection of these different currents, this practice-based dissertation conducts two research explorations. First, it attempts to understand how newsrooms have changed or been technologically “reoriented” in the words of Martin Eide (2016) to accommodate new journalistic practices. Second, it seeks to understand how, in this moment of transition, news and news stories on issues of disability been presented. In short, the dissertation seeks to understand how the expanded digital footprint of leading newspaper organizations and the reorientation of newsrooms impact on the news narratives related to the representation of the PWDs.

The dissertation engages with this question through semi-structured interviews, textual analysis/close readings of news stories and finally a series of workshops where journalists (with disability and non-disabled), PWDs and other stakeholders participate. The workshop outcomes indicate that some of the significant challenges of the Disability Rights Movement, persists across media platforms. These includes the use of language, terminology and framing by which the media represents and provides visibility to PWDs. This practice-based action-research is both an exploration as well as intervention into make news production more sensitive, inclusive and accurate. The workshops and their outcomes lead directly to the research-creation/creative artefact which is a prototype website titled *Dialogue and Disability* that hopes to work as a guide for those who hope to bring changes in the manner news reports are written.

The first chapter of the dissertation, deals with the impact of digital reorientations in the newspaper organizations leading to several structural and other adjustments and state of disability coverage in the converged news environment through semi-structured interviews with journalists. The findings indicate there has not been significant improvement in the coverage of such stories. The second chapter discusses the participatory workshops in extensive manner and highlights the discussions and outcomes emerged from them. The outcomes of the workshop draw attention to the repercussions that language, terminology, and framing play in the discursive universe of disabilities. The third chapter is dedicated to discussing the creation, limits and possibilities of the prototype website *Dialogue and Disability* which remains open-ended with the potential to keep growing into a source of valuable online resource.