

**FINAL**

**ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT**

(COVER PAGE)

Session : **August 2021**

Programme : Diploma In Mass Communication (DMCN/DMC)

Course : **COM2131: Digital Media Communication**

Date of Examination :

Time Start : December 7, 2021 (Tuesday) @ 8:00 am

Time End : December 8, 2021 (Wednesday) @ 8:00 am

Duration : 24 Hours

**Special Instructions** :

Answer **ALL** questions

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Material permitted :

NIL

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Materials provided :

NIL

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Examiner(s) : **Mohd Norhazi Mohamed Azlanudin** and Annimalar Muthuraman

Chief Moderator : Mr Wilfred Tan Kwang Shean

*This paper consists of **8** printed pages, including the cover page*

DIPLOMA IN MASS COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME (DMCN/DMC)  
COM2131: DIGITAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION  
FINAL ALTERNATIVE ASSESMENT: AUGUST 2021 SESSION  
24 HOURS TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT

This Alternative Assessment contains **TWO (2)** parts :

Part A : Article Review (40 marks)

Part B ; Case Scenario (60 marks).

**Instruction Part A:** Produce an article review based on the digital-media-communication related article given. You need to analyse the article content, compare the findings with other related scholars' articles and summarize the article. The words range is from 1000 words to 1100 words only. The article review assignment contains 40 marks. Download the article from the Final Assessment folder. Minimum Harvard Style references are 10.

Article Title: **What is Multimedia Journalism?**

Article Author: **Mark Deuze**

Article Year Publish: **2004**

Publisher: **Routledge Taylor and Francis Group**

**Instruction Part B:**

Answer **all** questions.

Each question is 20 marks.

1) Case Scenario 1: **Taiwan Ramps Up Efforts to Raise Public's Media Literacy To Fight Fake News**

TAIPEI - A video of Taiwan's Health Minister Chen Shih-Chung singing into a microphone at a dinner party drew criticism from netizens and an opposition leader when it started circulating online last Wednesday (Nov 10) night. Main opposition party Kuomintang chairman Eric Chu hinted that the minister should resign for being frivolous during the Covid-19 pandemic. But they got one fact wrong.

Last Thursday, before his daily Covid-19 briefing, Mr Chen said the video was taken in June last year, when Taiwan was still seeing low case numbers and there were no restrictions on people's usual activities. While the misunderstanding was quickly rectified, the incident showed how fast disinformation spreads in Taiwan. "Taiwan needs to up its efforts in educating its people on how to identify false information," said Professor Hung Chen-ling, the director of National Taiwan University's (NTU) Graduate Institute of Journalism. She told The Straits

Times: "The rampant spread of fake news and disinformation has grown especially bad in the last few years, and 2018's Kansai Airport incident has shown how harmful fake news can be."

In that incident, Mr Su Chi-cheng, the director of Taiwan's representative office in Osaka, hanged himself after being wrongly accused of neglecting Taiwanese passengers who were stranded in Kansai Airport during a typhoon, while travellers from China were taken care of by the Chinese embassy. The Japanese newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun, reporting on the tragic event, said: "Taiwan is shaken by fake news."

While Prof Hung believes that Mr Su's death has led both the Taiwanese government and the public to reflect on how they should avoid such tragedies from happening again, the ongoing pandemic has seen a rise in the spread of disinformation. A study on disinformation conducted by Sweden's University of Gothenburg names Taiwan as one of the most frequent targets of false news, she noted. Many civic groups have started fact-checking services to help Taiwanese discern whether information shared on social media sites and via messaging apps is fact or fiction. They include Taiwan FactCheck Centre, Cofacts and News Helper. "But less than 25 per cent of Taiwanese have used these fact-checking services," NTU's Professor Wang Tai-li said at a journalism seminar on Friday.

"The other 75 per cent may have heard of disinformation, but they may not know how to distinguish and deal with it."

Some elementary and middle schools have incorporated media literacy lessons in their curriculum to help students identify fake news in everyday life. Meanwhile, journalists and educators are working with tech giants such as Google and Line messaging app to raise media literacy among the Taiwanese. On Nov 4, Taiwan FactCheck Centre announced that it will hold some 600 media literacy workshops over the next three years, thanks to a US\$1 million (S\$1.35 million) donation by Google to fund initiatives to combat disinformation. The workshops will target those who may be disadvantaged by Taiwan's ever-changing online scene, including the elderly, residents living in remote areas and new immigrants. Taiwan FactCheck Centre chairman Hu Yuan-hui said: "Fact-checking isn't all-powerful. It's more important to raise awareness (among Taiwanese), so that they automatically question the news they receive and check the facts."

As much of disinformation in Taiwan is spread via Line, the company has launched several initiatives to combat false news while vowing to maintain users' privacy. New features in the app allow Taiwan's 19 million users, who make up a whopping 80 per cent of the island's population, to report fake news stories or disinformation they receive via Line. In the past two years, some 500,000 reports have been filed, said Line Taiwan general manager, Mr Chen Li-ren. The app also publishes on its news-sharing platform Line Today stories that have been proven wrong.

"Since the Covid-19 outbreak, the view rate for this section has grown four times," said Mr Chen. The feature is also available for users in Hong Kong, Thailand and Indonesia. Mr Chen added that the company has also been developing interactive lessons and games for teachers to use in media literacy lessons in school, and Line hopes the children will share what they learnt with their parents and grandparents. Taiwan FactCheck Centre's Mr Hu said: "All stakeholders need to be involved - members of the public, the media, tech companies, fact-checking organisations, academia, the government."

– taken from *The New Strait Time Asia* (2021)

### Question 1

Based on the case scenario above, explain **EIGHT (8)** possible methods that can combat fake news to spread to the public.

#### 2) Case Scenario 2: **Public Trust In The Media Is At A New Low: A Radical Rethink Of Journalism Is Needed**

A recent report by an independent panel on the ethics and credibility of South Africa's news media makes for worrying reading. The panel, headed by retired judge Kathy Satchwell, was commissioned by the South African National Editors' Forum following a series of ethical lapses by the Sunday Times. The paper dominated the country's media landscape for over 100 years. As the largest by circulation, it was also considered the most powerful newspaper. The lapses included factual inaccuracies in reports on allegations of police killings as well as reports on alleged illegal deportations of Zimbabweans. Another major story was about an alleged 'rogue unit' within the South African Revenue Service. The panel found that the newspaper had 'failed in the most basic tenets of journalistic practice'.

These failures included not giving any – or adequate – opportunity to affected parties to respond to the stories pre-publication. Others included failing to seek credible and sourced validation of the allegations made against individuals. The panel concluded that the failures had caused great emotional and financial harm to the people concerned, their families and their careers. The newspaper has since apologised for the reports, and retracted them. Having ethical lapses on such a major scale can only further erode the public's trust in the media. More recently, investigative journalist Jacques Pauw's admission that allegations he had previously made in a Daily Maverick column were based on distorted facts led to a widespread outcry. It was pointed out that Pauw not only undermined his own credibility, but also further eroded trust in journalism.

It is clear that South African journalism has much work to do to rebuild this lost trust. Not only for their own sake, but in view of the growing crisis of disinformation. The panel's report refers to the Global Disinformation Index which suggests that 41% of South Africans distrust the media. And a worrying 70% have problems distinguishing news from "fake" news. So, how should this rebuilding of trust be done? Clearly not by merely superficially papering over ethical

cracks, nor overhauling the well-functioning media regulatory system. While apologies for and corrections of mistakes are important to show public accountability, journalists should also recommit to the principles underlying these processes. The country's press code highlights the public interest as the central guideline. This entails, aside from striving for truth, avoiding harm and acting independently, the reflection of a multiplicity of voices in the coverage of events, showing a special concern for children and other vulnerable groups, and being sensitive to the cultural customs of readers and the subjects of reportage. This emphasis on diversity of voices and awareness of social context should be the starting point for any attempt to regain the public's trust. As the code states at the outset: The media exist to serve society.

One way of doing this is to adopt an "ethics of listening". I explore this in my new book *The Ethics of Engagement*. The central theme of my argument is that journalists must reach beyond their usual audiences to include those that normally appear only on the margins of media coverage. And they must review how those voices are reported, and how they appear in the media. This approach will result in a more genuine dialogue and an approach that's more participatory. This could, in turn, contribute to a thorough reassessment of the media's relationship with the public in a way that could rebuild trust.

There are some examples of how this could be done. For instance Heather Robertson, former editor of *The Herald* newspaper in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province, conducted a series of listening exercises attended by community members, opinion leaders and journalists. Some interesting case studies can also be found in Australia, where community media journalists, media scholars and activists teamed up to design a "listening programme". To some extent these projects are similar to the much older tradition of "public journalism". It provides that the media should address citizens not merely as spectators or victims, but empower them to solve their problems. One way this was done was to host public discussions and facilitate meetings to support deliberative democracy. More recently, the potential for digital media platforms to connect journalists to audiences has also been explored. Applying this approach in South Africa would have major benefits. The country is socially polarised and highly unequal. Making the extra effort to actively listen to voices outside the journalists' normal target audiences, especially marginal voices, would transform the narratives being shared. This would help journalists gain wider social legitimacy among those who may feel the media is disconnected from their everyday lives.

But ethical listening doesn't merely accommodate voices from marginalised communities, only to treat them as victims or as objects of pity. Instead, it requires a fundamental revision of the relationship between journalists and their various audiences, one in which power relations are radically revised or overturned. A more reciprocal relationship with their divergent audiences would require journalists to let go of their desire to control the narrative, or tendency to listen only to obtain answers to questions already formulated. Of course, this does not mean that journalists no longer have any say over their reporting. Nor that they don't have to take any ethical responsibility for the questions they ask. The difference in this kind of listening is that it creates a true dialogue, in the sense that the responses are allowed to alter, shift and speak back to the original agenda rather than made to fit into it. Listening can, therefore, be seen as fundamental to democratic politics because it constitutes a public sphere premised on participation, tolerance and inclusion.

The panel's report identified much larger, systemic problems in the wider South African media landscape. These include revenue challenges to media outlets, shrinking resources for training and for the effective exercise of editorial checks and balances. It also listed the pressure, fuelled by social media, to break stories ever faster amid competing misinformation and disinformation narratives as well as societal pressures. Linked to the rebuilding of trust should be a strong commitment to support community media and the public broadcaster to add to the diversity of voices. There can be little doubt that ethical lapses have added significant dents to the public's trust in the media. An appropriate response to the ethical problems plaguing the South African media requires thinking about the question of ethics as a more radical project – one which requires a reaffirmation of journalism's central values, a recommitment to media diversity, and exploration of new practices that can reconnect journalists to citizens. These are the tasks that journalists need to take seriously if they are to restore relationships of trust with the public.

- taken from *The Conversation* (February 2021)

## Question 2

Based on the case scenario above, explain **TEN (10)** reasons why some people do not fully trust the news media nowadays.

### 3) Case Scenario 3: **Think You're Reading The News For Free? New Research Shows You're Likely Paying With Your Privacy**

You may already know that every time you go online, your browsing history could be exposed to numerous advertisers and data brokers who then send you "targeted" advertisements. But what about visiting the news websites you trust most? Our current research finds that browsing news-related websites actually exposes you to over twice as much tracking as the rest of the web. The surprising extent to which news organizations subject readers to third-party tracking deserves closer attention. As a society, we often hold news organizations to higher ethical standards. They're not just businesses; they're supposed to provide a vital public service, and they depend on public trust. While the ethics of readers unknowingly "paying" for content with their privacy are certainly questionable, the practice is also indicative of the precarious situation the news industry finds itself in. Meanwhile, the rise of ad-blockers – a hindrance to the business model of news websites – has only further complicated matters.

Here's what's going on: websites frequently allow third parties (primarily online advertisers) to monitor their readers' activities and interests. These third parties use external servers that often employ what are known as "trackers," or pieces of software connected to a "hidden web" that monitors users' activities. Ad networks will then show users advertisements deemed "relevant" based on which websites they have previously visited. That pair of shoes you keep seeing is the hidden web in action: even if the websites appear totally different on the surface, underneath they may be connected by a vast network of trackers. And it's this invisible tracking network

that the struggling online news industry has turned to. It's a story that's been told time and again: as consumers and advertisers have migrated to the web, the longstanding revenue model for ad-dependent news organizations has come under considerable strain. In response, many publishers have resorted to various forms of ethically-murky practices to replace dried-up revenue sources. This could mean publishing native advertising or allowing companies to track what pages readers visit – which they'll then use to create “consumer profiles.”

There seems to be a strange silence surrounding the ethics of native advertising, but online tracking has come under increased scrutiny from regulators and civil society groups.

Meanwhile, heated debates about invasive digital advertising and tracking flared up recently when Apple allowed ad-blocking in the newest update to the iOS mobile operating system. Because ad-blocking prevents publishers from gaining income they derive when ads are clicked, the CEO of the Interactive Advertising Bureau claimed that “ad blocking is robbery” that could lead to an “internet apocalypse.”

Others have suggested that the industry created its own problems with run-amok advertising. A major factor in this predicament is that advertising and behavioral tracking have become so intertwined that users who want to protect their privacy must also block advertisements. For our study, we were interested in understanding the extent to which news sites use trackers. Using Tim Libert's open-source software platform webXray, we loaded web pages to detect all of the third-party servers that may collect user data. To get a baseline measure of tracking prevalence, we first analyzed Alexa's top 100,000 websites.

We found that users were exposed to an average of eight external servers on each site. This means that many hidden third parties (again, usually advertisers) may be simultaneously observing an individual's browsing habits. But even more surprising was our finding that news organizations appear to be among the most active perpetrators of this practice. Our investigation has revealed that among the 2,000-plus news-related websites identified by Alexa, readers are, on average, connected to over 19 third-party servers – twice as many as the 100,000 most popular sites. The outlets facilitating this tracking include the most respected names in the news industry, coast-to-coast. A visitor to The New York Times' homepage is potentially connected to a whopping 44 third-party servers, while visitors to the Los Angeles Times' website get their browsing history leaked to 32 external servers. And if you're planning on checking the forecast on AccuWeather before heading out, you can expect to be connected to 48 third-party servers. Even visitors to public media outlets are not safe. A visitor to NPR's website will be tracked by Chartbeat, Google, Nielsen Online, Moat and comScore.

In general, we found that marquee media brands are no different from the other 2,000 news sites that we examined. It's a problem that's endemic to the entire internet media sector.

While these findings are preliminary, they're in line with recent research, and we've used an established research methodology to shed light on this practice.

- taken from *The Conversation* (2021)

### Question 3

Based on the case scenario above, explain **EIGHT (8)** repercussions of data privacy violation to the readers made by online journalism website.

~THE END~

*COM2131 (F)/ Aug 2021 Session/ formatted*