

The Fight for Life: The Convergence of the Print Press in the Digital Media Industry

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Abstract

The mass media industry particularly print media in Indonesia comes under heavy pressure to survive in the era of digital disruption. High printing costs, coupled with high distribution costs and employee salaries have caused difficulties for print media companies to maintain their businesses. Some print media companies have opted to shut down their businesses, while others have to survive by making various efficient efforts and diversifying their businesses. The convergence of print media into digital media has offered an alternative to maintain print media as the management of *Telaah Strategis* magazine has done. This research aims to see the efforts made by the management of *Telaah Strategis* magazine to survive in the media industry in Indonesia. The results of this research show that *Telaah Strategis* magazine uses a variety of media convergence models to be able to maintain its task of disseminating information by transforming it into a news portal and digital magazine and appearing in the social media platform. In addition, it also markets its digital magazine at online product sale exchange.

Keywords: Media convergence; mass media; print media; digital industry

Introduction

The print media industry in Indonesia has been experiencing difficult times since 2015. The music magazines Rolling Stone and FHM Indonesia finally published their final editions. Previously, several magazines on lifestyle such as Fitness for Men Indonesia, Auto Bild Indonesia, Esquire Indonesia, and Hai magazine also stopped publishing.

Not only magazines but various newspapers also decided to publish their final editions. *Harian Bola*, a part of Kompas Gramedia, also stopped printing in 2015. Likewise, *Jakarta Globe* and *Sinar Harapan* magazines did the same thing in 2015 and 2016 respectively. Furthermore, *Koran Tempo* for Sunday edition also stopped publishing. In addition, there were mass layoffs at *Harian Seputar Indonesia* in 2017. All of these are indisputable facts regarding

the decline in the print media industry in Indonesia.

Paul Gillin, an information technology consultant from Massachusetts, stated that the print media business model is no longer viable. Economic development is moving against the print business. Print media involves many employees. Therefore, production costs are more expensive than online media. Moreover, nowadays, the younger generation prefers to access the internet rather than buy magazines or newspapers (Kusuma, 2016).

The internet opens up public spaces for citizen participation both professional and amateur in the dissemination of information. Information is no longer exclusive goods to journalists and media. Journalistic work currently can be also carried out by the public. This is an era called by Alvin Toffler, the

futurologist in the 1980s, as prosumption (production and consumption) in which people can be both producers and consumers of information.

According to Stephen J.A. Ward, a professor of journalistic ethics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in his article entitled Digital Media Ethics, the presence of the internet makes today's professional journalists have to share space with Twitter, bloggers, citizen journalists, and social media users. History records that new media always comes along with technological developments.

The internet makes mankind like living in a global village. The internet as a medium has also influenced the way we live, including the way we produce and consume news.

The development of online media currently becomes a threat to newspapers and print media. The rapid development of the internet has encouraged people to easily access online media via their cellphones or gadgets.

The existence of print media begins to be threatened when their loyal readers are turning to online media. Therefore, this reality threatens print media publishers. However, print media has a distinctive character, namely, the news presented is clear, complete, and detailed. In addition, for centuries, print media has accompanied the development of human civilization so that they will be not easily forgotten.

The high number of internet users in Indonesia, including those who use it to read the news, is one of the reasons why the print mass media began to be abandoned. The number of newspaper buyers has steadily declined in the last four years because people thought that information should be free. Therefore, many efforts have been made by the print media to survive (Ritonga et al., 2017; Suraya, 2019; Putri, 2018).

In a newsroom convergence, journalists from various different platforms, e.g. newspapers, online, and television, unite in one news production room. They carry out tasks according to the media platform they manage. In the newsgathering convergence, a journalist in carrying out this model is

required to be able to reach a multitasking level.

By going through special training, journalists are required to be able to complete a work using various platforms in a group. For example, a print journalist must be able to create news for print, online, and television media. In addition, they are also required to take photos or videos (Ritonga, 2007).

Material and Methodology

The type of this study was descriptive research using a qualitative approach with secondary data. Furthermore, the applied research paradigm was constructivism. This paradigm provides the researchers with the freedom to interpret the data according to the researchers' conceptual framework.

The purpose of this study was to provide systematic, factual, and accurate descriptions regarding the facts, properties, and relationships between the phenomena being investigated (Cresswell 2009; Sutopo 2006; Nazir 1988).

The used technique for selecting the informants was a purposive sampling technique in which they are chosen based on certain criteria. Meanwhile, the employed techniques of data collection were interview, documentation, and literature study. The obtained data in this study were then analyzed qualitatively.

A qualitative study emphasizes the meaning, reasoning, and definition of a certain situation (in a certain context) and examines more things related to the daily phenomenon. Furthermore, the qualitative approach also emphasizes the process than the outcome. Therefore, the sequence of research activities can change at any time depending on the condition and symptoms that are found.

The employed descriptive study aimed to criticize the weaknesses of quantitative study and to describe and summarize various conditions, situations, and phenomena that exist in society and become the object of research (Bungin 2013).

In addition, a descriptive study also describes a phenomenon or various separate phenomena. Therefore, researchers will not consider that the circumstances are not on purpose (Moleong, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to find out the convergence model used by *Telaah Strategis* magazine to prepare a digital platform to face the growing digital media. Moreover, it was also to find out the type of digital platform chosen for content conversion from the *Telaah Strategis* magazine.

Result and Discussion

Conventional mass media such as magazines tend to be one-way, while personal interactive habits have become a tradition. However, interactive new media has enabled technological adoption in the middle of society.

In addition, humans always want their political, social, and cultural existence to be known to others easily. These conditions can be fulfilled by the interactivity communal functions provided by new media through networked and interactive communication.

As a result, the one-way consumption applied by magazines has turned into integrated consumption in social group discussions and mass media so that this social function can be fulfilled by online media, while magazines will be ignored as priority information sources.

Therefore, the audience begins to abandon the magazines if they are not integrated with information and communication systems linked to social networks on the internet. Magazines will still be used as a secondary source of agenda-setting and a source of information in society. The consumption of magazines that more symbolize a certain class in society will make it difficult for them to compete with online media.

A new culture in the use of time is provided by online media. Consumption of news using online media is now not only in spare time but also during important or basic hours because it is used as a means of work. The limitations of time, space, and reach are no longer exist so that the echo will be broader and have no barriers like the effect of conventional media.

Telaah Strategis Magazine was published for the first time in 1989 based on Certificate of Registration (*Surat Tanda Terdaftar - STT*) No. 1433 SK/Ditjen PPG/STT/1989 on June

29, 1989, with the ISSN Number of 0852-9663. This magazine is fully owned by the Alumni Family Association of Indonesian National Defense Institute (*Ikatan Keluarga Alumni Lembaga Ketahanan Nasional Indonesia - IKAL*).

The purpose of *Telaah Strategis* magazine is as a means of disseminating and developing thoughts, especially those concerning strategic issues in the life of the nation. This *Telaah Strategis* magazine is published every three months in the print media.

The management of the *Telaah Strategis* magazine is as follows: Police Commissioner General (Ret) Togar Sianipar. as the General Leader, Bambang Sutrisno as the Deputy General Leader, Nieta Hidayani as the Business Leader, Lucky Ali Moerfiqin as the Deputy Business Leader, Sugiyanto Haryo Semangun. and Jay Singgih as the Heads of the Promotion and Advertising Marketing Department, and Masita as the Head of the Finance Department.

Furthermore, the Editorial Composition of *Telaah Strategis magazine* is as follows: R. Ritonga, as the Chief Editor, Zackir L. Makmur and Nur Budi Hariyanto, as Managing Editors, and reporters and correspondents from various regions in Indonesia.

Telaah Strategis Magazine also has an editorial board consisting of Rear Admiral Estu Prabowo, Rear Admiral (Ret) Soemindiharso, Djohari Lubis, Erina Tobing, and Dwi Hernuningsih.

The office of the *Telaah Strategis* magazine is located at Jl. Merdeka Selatan, No. 10, Central Jakarta. At least, there are four basic processes carried out by the stakeholders of *Telaah Strategis* magazine when deciding the convergence of media from print to online media. Those four processes are (1) determining the platform to be used based on the stated mission and vision of the program, (2) estimating initial production costs, (3) estimating profits and calculating the impact of risks from the transition of media, and (4) performing regular distribution of articles, photos, and graphics on predetermined platforms.

News Portal

Through the news portal, the limitations of time, space, and reach are no longer exist so that the echo will be broader and have no barriers like the effect of conventional media such as newspapers and magazines.

Based on the explanation from informant #1, the decision to publish in an online form is the right choice to disseminate news quickly, efficiently, and cheaply compared to the print form. The printed version is still retained. However, the contents are in the form of a study or analysis concerning a strategic issue. Such content has been a hallmark of the *Telaah Strategis* magazine.

The management of *Telaah Strategis* magazine uses WordPress as a news portal system. The news portal of *Telaah Strategis* magazine can be accessed at <https://telaahstrategis.com>. WordPress is a news portal for content management system created and launched in 2003 by Matt Mullenweg and Mike Little. In the business world, WordPress is managed by a company named Automattic.

The content management system of WordPress allows journalists to submit news, photographers to upload news photos, editors to conduct news editing, and managing editors to publish articles online or upload images. Furthermore, the system will store various uploads with codes and then save them in a database.

Social Media

Meanwhile, social media were known in 1978 when the bulletin board system (BBS) was invented by Ward Christensen and Randy Suess. This board system allows users to connect with other people using e-mail or upload and download files through the software available at that time. The BBS is the beginning of a virtual community in a limited scope. At that time, internet connectivity worked by using a telephone line connected to a modem.

The emergence of many social networking sites basically begins from an initiative to connect people from various backgrounds from all over the world.

About 26 years later, the BBS as social media was replaced by Facebook. This new

social media is founded by Mark Zuckerberg and some of his classmates at Harvard University, namely Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes, on February 4, 2004.

At first, Facebook is only used for a limited circle on the campus. However, it quickly expands to the area of Boston, then all over the United States, and finally to the world, including Indonesia (Wilson, 2012).

Facebook allows its users to upload various forms of text, photos, attached files, and videos. Not only Facebook, but YouTube is also a social media for sharing videos.

YouTube is a video sharing site headquartered in San Bruno, California, United States. YouTube is founded by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim. Those three are former employees of PayPal, an online buying and selling website.

Previously, Chen and Karim were from the same campus, namely the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Meanwhile, Hurley studied at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, United States. They founded YouTube in February 2005. After only a year, the site had been bought by the giant virtual world explorer, Google Inc, in late 2006.

Besides Facebook and YouTube, another popular social media is Instagram. Unlike its two predecessors, Instagram can only be run on mobile devices such as smartphones in the form of a software application.

This app is a photo and video sharing social network like any other program. However, the most distinguishing thing is that the photo display of Instagram is characterized by a square frame.

Instagram was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and launched in October 2010. The name of Instagram, according to them, is a combination of 'instant camera' and 'telegram'. Instagram can be installed on various operating systems and can be downloaded from the Apple App Store, Google Play, or Windows Phone Store.

In its further development, social media currently has become a means of activity that is categorized as digital marketing because it contains a lot of marketing content.

One of the fundamental elements of these social media sites is their social networking

functions and services. Social networking services provide connectivity services through sites, platforms, and tools that serve to facilitate the establishment of social networks or relationships between various people who have the same interests, activities, backgrounds, intentions, goals, or correlation in the real world.

The management of *Telaah Strategis* magazine utilizes three social media platforms, namely Facebook Page with a URL address <https://www.facebook.com/telaahstrategis/>, Instagram with the account name of @telaahstrategis and a URL address at <https://www.instagram.com/telaahstrategis/>, and YouTube with the account name of *Telaah Strategis* and a URL address at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJLiyfNxqC2h2SR1kT85Y0w>.

Digital Magazine via Google PlayBook

Google PlayBook is a product of the Google Inc. company which specializes in internet services and products. The products provided are searching engine, cloud computing, software, and advertising.

Google Inc. is managed by Alphabet Inc. which also manages Calico, Google Ventures, Google Capital, Google X, and Nest Labs. Google PlayBook has the main office at 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, United States. Apart from that, it also has another office in Dublin, Ireland.

In the agreement with Google Inc., the management of *Telaah Strategis* magazine, which is referred to in this agreement as to the publisher, provides a digital copy of an official title that is selected to be accessible for sale to end-users under the agreement. It is that Google Play Books will be in all publisher content in the associated official title.

The publisher content means all content in the official title, including but not limited to all text, images, photographs, illustrations, materials, and artwork contained in either the official title or on each jacket and cover.

In this agreement between the management of *Telaah Strategis* magazine and Google Inc., the publisher will submit the official title to Google (or Google Group Company appointed by Google) in a digital

format approved by Google. The publisher will submit the official title for the first phase to Google within 30 days since the effective date.

All official title submissions are conducted based on instructions from Google notified from time to time and using costs borne by the publisher. The publisher must also provide technical support freely, as reasonably necessary to transfer any official titles.

The publisher agrees that Google relies on Google PlayBook pricing information provided by the publisher to ensure that the digital magazine is sold at a price that complies with applicable fixed price regulations.

The publisher uses features provided by Google in the Publisher Account as may be updated from time to time or any other method agreed between the parties to communicate the fixed final price of digital magazines and information related to each Google PlayBook to Google in regional currencies worldwide.

For digital magazines sold through the Google Play Books service, the agreed sales revenue sharing is 52 - 48 percent. The Google Group Company will pay the publisher 52 percent of the digital magazine sale price or fixed final price as applicable for regional sales worldwide using the pre-agreed currency.

Google gives the management of *Telaah Strategis* magazine access to Google PlayBook sales reports in a format generally available to other publishers. Detailed information about the data provided by Google Group Company can be accessed at any time in the selected date range via internet access.

The *Telaah Strategis* magazine for issue #139 will be the first digital edition distributed through Google Playbook on May 14, 2019. The magazine can be accessed via the URL <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=N6qXDwAAQBAJ>. This digital magazine is distributed without reducing the printed edition page which is 52 color pages.

Conclusions

The media convergence carried out by *Telaah Strategis* magazine through news

portal websites, social media, and electronic magazine editions through Google PlayBook is an answer to the demands of the media industry in the digital era. Media convergence is a must in order to be able to compete in the current aggressive digital media era. Print media must prepare various platforms to continue to maintain the existence of the brand, to maintain the continuity of the vision and mission of the publisher, and to obtain profits so that the publishing business can continue.

Collaboration with other companies is needed to continue synergizing by sharing business models. The management of *Telaah Strategis* magazine has demonstrated the ability to collaborate with international companies, i.e. Google Inc., in publishing digital editions. Cooperation is needed to complete the technology, articles, photos, and videos that one company does not have and to support media convergence. The continuity of the print magazine entity is a continuous focus for the editorial crew, editorial board, and print media business management.

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