

## Some Challenges in Digital Transformation in Vietnam Now



Nguyen Minh Ngoc

University of Prince Edward Island, Canada

**ABSTRACT:** Journalism is a field in society that will have to undergo digital transformation according to the general development trend, and even develop into a digital media economy. Digital transformation in journalism is not simply a mechanical release into the digital environment. Still, digital transformation is the processing of information obtained from the digital ecosystem, while also facing a number of difficulties such as human resources, finance, fake information, etc. The article focuses on presenting some key features of the current state of digital transformation in journalism, raising challenges in the digital transformation process in the journalism sector, and making some recommendations to transform the field of journalism more effectively in the near future.

**KEYWORDS:** digital transformation, journalism, challenges

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Many studies have shown that digital transformation is the transition from a traditional model to a technology model of big data, cloud computing, and the internet of things (IoT). This is an inevitable trend in today's world. In that context, countries around the world, especially developing countries like ours, are facing both opportunities and challenges: either getting ahead in the Fourth Industrial Revolution or falling behind, further and further behind if the digital transformation process is not promptly grasped and implemented. Digital transformation creates a fundamental and comprehensive innovation in the activities of the whole society, penetrating into all areas of people's lives and living and working habits. Therefore, digital transformation is not simply a process of digitizing and upgrading the application of information and communication technology, but a turning point, a quality development that creates a great breakthrough in development. economy, society, and human life.

In the digital transformation, the press and media play an important role, with the mission of propagating properly, fully, and promptly about the Party's guidelines and policies, the State's laws, creating consensus and social trust, and creating internal resources to successfully implement national digital transformation. At the same time, journalism is also a field in society that will have to undergo digital transformation according to the general development trend and even develop into a digital media economy. The trend of digital transformation in the world as well as the internal requirements of the press sector in Vietnam means that, besides the advantages, there are also challenges related to human resources, financial resources, etc. in the process of digital transformation of journalism in Vietnam. The article makes a small contribution to highlighting some difficulties and challenges in the process of digital transformation in the field of journalism and gives some recommendations to make digital transformation more effective in the field of journalism in the coming years.

### 2. OVERVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODS

#### *A literature review*

Digital transformation has been studied extensively all over the world and is still new in Vietnam. Mike Friedrichsen and Yahya Kamalipour (2017) analyzed different digital transformation processes in journalism and news media. By studying how these processes stimulate innovation, the authors identify new business and communication models, as well as digital strategies for a new environment of global information flows. Thu Thuy (2021) analyzed and presented the context of the digital transformation of the press sector in Vietnam, affirming that digital transformation is a global trend and an irreversible process. Newspapers need to change to adapt quickly to the new era. From the perspective of journalism management, Truong Thi Kien (2021) has raised opportunities, challenges, and solutions for digital transformation in journalism in Vietnam. Pham Van Kien (2022) analyzed the advantages and challenges of digital transformation of the press in Vietnam and commented that the press agencies needed to have a suitable approach to digital transformation to avoid the situation. Mechanical stereotypes follow general trends and movements but also avoid indifference and lack of interest in this issue.

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### *Research Methods*

The author uses a combined qualitative research method, collecting and synthesising data from sources from scientific works published in scientific journals. At the same time, the author observes the actions of the government in the process of promulgating policies to transform the number of journalism fields in Vietnam in the current period. From the process of analyzing the challenges of the digital transformation of the journalism sector in Vietnam, the author draws some recommendations to make the digital transformation of the journalism sector more effective in the near future.

### 3. RESEARCH RESULTS

#### *3.1. The Current State of Journalism's Digital Transformation in Vietnam*

Recognizing that digital transformation is an inevitable trend in the world today, on June 3, 2020, the Government issued Decision No. 749/QĐ-TTg approving the "National Digital Transformation Program to 2025" with an orientation to 2030". Clearly, digital transformation is an inevitable process in Vietnam in order to accelerate the modernization of the distribution system, improve the competitiveness of enterprises, and promote market development in the future. country as well as export. Decision defining a vision for 2030 Vietnam will become a digital, stable and prosperous country, pioneering in testing new technologies and models, fundamentally and comprehensively renovating the management and administration activities of the government, production and business activities of enterprises, people's ways of living and working, developing a safe and humane digital environment, widespread. The National Digital Transformation Program has the dual goal of developing a digital government, a digital economy, and a digital society, as well as forming Vietnamese digital technology enterprises with global competitiveness. specific base number. On that basis, the Decision identifies six perspectives, six tasks, and six fundamental solutions for digital transformation; nine development tasks for digital government; five tasks for development solutions in digital economy; and seven tasks for developing digital society; and identifies eight priority areas for digital transformation, including healthcare, education, finance, and banking; energy; natural resources and the environment; and industrial output. Outline the picture above to see that, if the above goals, indicators, and tasks are implemented, they will contribute to creating a new, modern, fundamentally and comprehensively renewed Vietnam in almost all areas of the country. life according to the effectiveness of the digital transformation process.

In recent years, Vietnamese newspapers have grown rapidly in number, both in print and electronic publications. Besides the positive aspects, such as the amount of information being given more, more diverse and richer, the reality also shows that the repetition of information occurs quite often in newspapers (both printed and electronic). "Technology" exchanges information between a number of newspapers or general information sites, and the phenomenon of "messaging information" tends to increase. Readers are somewhat reduced because of duplicate information. Worse is the sensational news, attracting customers with many different "tricks". This situation requires the press to promptly correct it so as not to deviate from its principles and purposes or be deflected.

Before the impact of digital transformation, our country's press needs to pay special attention to the needs, psychology, and habits of readers. Each newspaper should aim to best serve its specific target audience, in accordance with its principles and purposes, and avoid diluting or duplicating information. The urgent issues of society that are mentioned, reflected on, and addressed in various forms of press must persuade, attract, and trust readers. It is information written by genuine, honest journalists who are attached to the revolutionary cause and the renovation of the country. The press, with its noble mission, needs to have many new information methods to help the press public strengthen their trust, their bravery, alertness, and self-resistance against hot, pressing issues. exposed in life and in the face of false, distorted, and fabricated information. New requirements in the context of digital transformation also require innovation in the organizational structure and operational processes of press agencies. It is necessary to have a digital transformation strategy for the press at the macro level and in each press agency (for example, for printed newspapers, the digitization process is reflected in the investment in the development of electronic newspapers, the application of newsrooms, etc.). electronically in the internal publishing process). Therefore, press agencies need to build a model of a converged newsroom and a multimedia press agency, taking digital publishing as the center, dividing the duties of personnel accordingly, with unification between print (or radio, television) and electronic publishing departments. creating high-quality journalistic content, big data journalism, using artificial intelligence technology to create valuable experiences for the press and public (including digital experiences). Newspapers take advantage of the digitization process to have high-quality, reliable journalism products, creating the best utilities for readers in accessing and using information, spreading and gaining the upper hand on the Internet. Real space and cyberspace are becoming the most important mainstream information flows in social life. As of November 30, 2021, the number of press agencies that have an electronic version is 259/816 (newspapers and magazines have two types of print and electronic formats: 230; independent electronic press (29 not available in print); 72 radio and television operating licenses; and 05 television operating units do not have their own television broadcasting infrastructure. In addition, 224 press agencies (central: 164; local: 60) have set up general electronic information pages, including press agencies that already have electronic forms. There are 227 specialized pages from 88 electronic press agencies, including: 178 specialized pages from 62 central press agencies and 49 specialized pages from 26 local press agencies. However, there are still many press agencies that do not have an electronic version or an electronic information page, specializing in pages mainly focusing on the magazine block, especially scientific journals. Currently, a number

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of press agencies have pioneered digital transformation with typical digital technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), IoT, Cloud, Bigdata, etc. These digital technologies have been creating an environment for journalism to develop according to journalistic trends: personalization of content; multi-platform; mobile journalism; social journalism; data journalism; creative journalism; super press work. Some press agencies are quite successful, becoming modern multimedia press units such as Vietnam News Agency, VOV, VTV, or Vietnamplus, VnExpress, Zing. Some local newspapers have also initially changed, such as: New Hanoi, Liberation Saigon, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Thanh Hoa, Bac Ninh, and Tuyen Quang. However, besides that, there are also many press units, especially industry and local newspapers, that are slow to digitally convert for various reasons, of which the most difficult stage is technical infrastructure, funding, and human resources [4].

Currently, cross-border content platforms are making domestic newspapers gradually lose their revenue sources and reduce the influence of the press in terms of information. The content must follow the traffic (view), causing the quality of the content to decline, not following the principles and purposes ... These platforms hold full control and manipulate the algorithms for displaying content and advertising, making anyone using their platform have to follow their rules of the game, of course only to their advantage (both in terms of revenue and data), without serving Vietnam's national interest.

Cross-border platforms all believe that cross-border content is a free flow, so it is not dependent on the management policies of countries. The decrease in traffic leads to a decrease in online advertising revenue displayed on the web platform. According to SimilarWeb, in the last 6 months (a statistical period from April to the end of September 2021), the traffic volume of Vietnamese e-newspapers decreased by 11% on average.

### 3.2. Some challenges

In the digital transformation, the press plays an important role in propagating, promoting, and raising awareness of ministries, branches, the whole political system, and the people about the effect, influence, and efficiency of the transformation. to all aspects of social life.

Along with all levels, sectors, and the whole country, the press has also pioneered the digital transformation process and achieved many results in the application of science and technology. In addition to the achieved results, at present, the press and media in general and each press officer in particular are facing countless difficulties and challenges on the road to digital transformation.

Firstly, technical issues, technology, serving the digital transformation process.

In fact, the software of the equipped newsrooms is mainly used in the direction that each software meets an activity in the journalistic process. There is no link to create a unified environment. It creates a flow of data and information between stages in the reporting process. Some requirements for building a content management software system (CMS) shared for both print and electronic newspaper publishing are still too difficult. Lack of technological autonomy, forcing reliance on partner technology. The newspaper-making style of officials, reporters, and editors of many press agencies has formed a habit that is difficult to access and change to a new style, while recruiting new employees is not an easy job.

Second, about financial and human resources.

Currently, the economic activities of the press are facing many difficulties, especially after the past 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Revenue has decreased, and the financial ability to cover digital transformation activities is really a big challenge. Meanwhile, to invest in technology, modern equipment, and especially good personnel, one needs a lot of funds and resources. Furthermore, due to the inequality between domestic press and cross-border platforms and changing user habits, cross-border platforms dominate. A very important market share of advertising is now shifting from news agencies to cross-border platforms. The press agencies only have a small market share, leading to a decrease in revenue. Newspapers are facing great challenges in terms of decreasing print volumes and declining advertising revenue. At the same time, a series of economic and public policies, human resource management, and income distribution have been formed on the old mechanism for many years and need to be renewed or adapted to the requirements of the market.

Currently, human resources have not met the requirements due to confusion, lack of initiative in providing information to the press, especially the requirements of information discipline. The qualifications and skills for applying science and technology and analyzing data and information in human resources have not yet been met. challenges due to changes in users' habits, habits of accessing information sources, and behaviors of receiving information. Access to information and information sources has been shifted from previous traditional sources of information, such as printed newspapers and printed and electronic magazines, to new forms, such as through smartphones and tablets. or through social media channels that are dominating the cultural and spiritual life of the people.

On the other hand, with the development of digital technology, social networks have also developed very strongly. Currently, the term "citizen journalist" is no longer strange to the public and was born on the basis of social media, giving the public the ability to open a personal information channel. At the same time, they operate as journalists, self-providing, promoting, and spreading their journalistic products to the community. The advantage of citizen journalism in Vietnam, as well as the general trend in the world, is that it provides more multi-dimensional information to readers besides the official media channel. Therefore, people have the right to express their personal opinions and actively contribute to the discussion on common social issues.

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According to a report by Vietnam Digital, as of June 2021, there are 68.8 million people accessing the internet. There are 72 million social media accounts. It is estimated that every day, more than 65% of Vietnam's population uses Zalo regularly for communication, work, and study purposes. There are also social networks: Mocha (12 million), Gapo (6 million) and Lotus (2.5 million).

The development of information technology infrastructure has helped social media develop strongly, blurring all boundaries, changing the relationship between the press and readers, and promoting the application of technology in journalism. In the past, Vietnamese readers received one-way information, they lacked a mechanism to monitor and respond to information from the press (or ineffective monitoring and feedback at interactive sections among officials). Most online newspapers do not reflect the reality of the reader's psychology, and most online newspaper accounts deploy "comment" and "like" sections under each article. Thanks to informative data from readers' feedback, newspapers can strive to find interesting topics that are more closely related to reality and readers' lives. With a more accessible approach to the public, it is easy to create a common forum for the public to discuss issues of mutual interest. The spreading speed of social networks helps the press to accelerate and spread widely to the people, requiring the journalistic workforce to improve professionalism in professional activities.

Third, the reduction of the influential role of the press in cyberspace.

Social networks are good support for traditional newspapers, effectively using their networks to provide true and necessary information to the public. After that, major newspapers simultaneously investigated and exposed the matter to the public. Thanks to receiving timely information, the incident was handled by the authorities with the right people, bringing confidence to the people. Therefore, many wrongdoings of organizations and individuals were discovered, helping the mainstream press and the government to step in to handle the violations. Social networks also actively contribute to promoting debates, to effectively verify information, attract the public to pay more attention to the socio-economic situation, and thereby realize the democratic principle: "People know, people do, people discuss, people inspect."

Social networks, with their quick, widespread nature and multi-dimensional interaction regardless of time and space, are having a strong impact on the whole society, becoming a great force that can create changes. positive. Worrying social consequences such as Facebook, Youtube, and Twitter in recent years have become forums for organized protest movements and political and ideological struggles. The downside of social networking is that it also has many shortcomings. That is, information is flooded on social networks without control, not bound by operating standards like mainstream newspapers and published information. largely unverified. It also created conditions for people who do not share political views and hostile forces to propagate false information, affecting the prestige of our Party and State. Therefore, the role of the mainstream media in shaping public opinion and gathering the masses must be enhanced.

However, a bad phenomenon on social networks is emerging, such as: swearing, swearing, smearing, "disguising", and personal attacks on cyberspace are "deviation" expressions, attracting attention. a large number of followers in cyberspace, overwhelming the importance of the country's information and social life. It is an institutional challenge when a large number of followers become "crazy fans" who can turn to "attacking" state agencies and mainstream media in many ways. [4]. Fourthly, in the context of digital transformation that has created so much fake information as today, with too much disturbing information, the challenge is the opportunity for press officers to prove their identity. And they can also create more trust in the public through accurate information and refuting false information. Therefore, the challenges of digital transformation capacity in the production and creation of journalistic products are considered the core challenges in the journalism industry. Digital transformation in the production of press products plays an extremely important role. The challenge in the fight against false information and wrong views is that, in many cases, the persuasion and effectiveness are not high due to the lack of uniform and synchronous coordination between agencies. related responsibilities. The phenomenon of widespread fake news from social networks is creating pressure on news agencies to carry out their mission of leading and guiding information.

### 3.3. Recommendations

Based on the above-mentioned legal and practical basis, the draft Strategy for the Digital Transformation of the Press to 2025, with an orientation to 2030, identifies common goals, targets to 2025, and targets to 2030. Accordingly, journalism develops in the direction of multi-platform, multi-media, and multi-service; developing digital press products, digital content distribution platforms, and mastering content distribution platforms in cyberspace. People, organizations, and businesses can access information in the digital environment according to their needs, anytime, anywhere, without restrictions on space, time, or geographical location. To implement the strategy's objectives, the draft defines a number of groups of tasks and solutions, which include specific tasks and solutions and are closely related to each other during the implementation of the strategy.

Firstly, raise awareness and strengthen propaganda.

It is necessary to raise awareness of information and communication managers, leaders, reporters, and editors of press agencies from central to local levels on the important role and urgency of implementing digital transformation of the press in sync with the national digital transformation program. In addition, strengthening propaganda, praising and honoring organizations and individuals that have made positive achievements in the process of digital transformation in order to share experiences, spread and replicate

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Second, perfecting mechanisms, policies and legal regulations

Review and propose amendments and improvements to the system of legal documents on the press to meet the requirements of press digital transformation. Review and propose amendments and improvements to the system of relevant legal documents in order to promote the digital transformation of newspapers.

Third, develop digital press products.

Utilizing scientific and technological advancements in automation to promote the content production process; designing and developing new information product models on various platforms to increase interaction with readers; and distributing information content faster, wider, and more accurately in accordance with reader needs.

Fourth, develop the digital platform.

It is necessary to build tools/platforms to collect, process data, evaluate, forecast, monitor and monitor press quality; and build social media assessment indicators based on the impact of information. establishing a platform for the exchange of journalistic data.

Fifth, ensure network information security for systems, applications, and platforms for digital transformation of the press.

Deploying solutions to ensure network information security for systems, applications, and platforms for digital transformation of the press; information security management and supervision; and data security, capable of self-screening and detecting malicious code attacks.

Sixth, develop and improve the quality of human resources.

Accordingly, it is necessary to develop and issue standards for training programs in the fields of journalism and information at higher education levels, meeting the requirements of digital transformation; develop new training codes; and review and update the content of training programs in the fields of journalism and information related to digital journalism.

Digital transformation in general and digital transformation in journalism is still a human issue. Specifically, here are managers and employees. When the manager of a press agency has not paid attention to the issue of digital transformation, the agency itself cannot have the spirit of digital transformation. The attitude of the head of the agency determines many factors involved in the digital transformation. Therefore, even leaders who manage press agencies need to be trained to instill the spirit and be ready to face the process of digital transformation of the press.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The digital transformation of the press is a mandatory trend and the work of every press agency. Not every agency will be successful, and it is normal and natural to retain only strong, qualified press agencies to operate and grow. The challenges posed by the digital transformation of the press in Vietnam also pose problems that are not easy to solve for managers, researchers, and media agencies. The digital transformation of the press requires The State ensures the basic foundations, conditions, and institutions to protect, manage, and develop the press in the new space. Therefore, the role of the state is to lead and create the foundation, set up institutions, and support resources, but it does not replace the press agency.

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