



2023 세계기자대회

WORLD JOURNALISTS CONFERENCE 2023

24(Mon) - 29(Sat) April 2023

Conference I

The Challenge of Journalism
for the Regional Development

- Biography
- Presentation Material



WJC World
Journalists
Conference
2023

2023 세계기자대회

25(Tue) April 2023

Conference I

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Moderator



CHO Sung Kyum

Chungnam National University
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Korea

Professional Experience

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- © 2008–2022 Director, The Center for Asian Public Opinion Research & Collaboration Initiative, Chungnam National University
- © 2019–2021 Dean, the Graduate School of National Public Policy, Chungnam National University
- © 2015–2016 President, Korean Society for Journalism and Communication Studies
- © 2014–2016 Dean, College of Social Sciences, Chungnam National University
- © 2012–2014 Director, Institute of Social Sciences, Chungnam National University
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- © Editor, the Asian Journal for Public Opinion Research
- © Secretary General, the Asia–Pacific Communication Alliance

Conference I

Speaker



KIM Jun Yong

Busan Ilbo
Journalist
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Educational Background

- © Hankook UNIVERSITY of Foreign Studies
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Diplomacy (Feb 2015)

Professional Experience

- © Busan Ilbo
 - Society Department (NOV 2018 – NOV 2022, NOV 2023~)
 - Digital Media Department New Contents Team, 2030 TEAM (NOV 2020 –NOV 2022)
 - Oceans and Fisher Department (NOV 2019 – NOV 2020)

Award-winning Career

- © 13rd, 14th Korean Christian Press Award
- © 2022 Local Newspaper Conference (Grand Prize)
- © 313rd, 329th, 332th, 336th, 386th Journalist of the Month Award
- © 22th, 25th, 26th Il-Gyeong Award (Grand Prize)
- © 50th, 54th Korea Journalist Award
- © 2019, 2023 Korea Newspaper Award

Writing Work

- © “Sanbok Laundry – Taking Stories Instead of Laundry Fees”
(Busan Ilbo, May 2022 – Oct 2022)

Speaker



LEE Sang Bae

Busan Ilbo
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Educational Background

- © BUSAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
Bachelor of Arts in Media Communication (Feb 2019)

Professional Experience

- © Busan Ilbo
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Award-winning Career

- © 2023 Korea Newspaper Award
- © 54th Korea Journalist Award
- © 26th Il-Gyeong Award (Grand Prize)
- © 386th Journalist of the Month Award
- © 2022 Local Newspaper Conference (Grand Prize)
- © 14th Korean Christian Press Award

Writing Work

- © “Sanbok Laundry – Taking Stories Instead of Laundry Fees”
(Busan Ilbo, May 2022 – Oct 2022)

Conference I

KIM Jun Yong & LEE Sang Bae

[Invaluable stories for the laundry fee – Sanbok Laundromat]

“How about we open 'Sanbok Laundry'(a laundromat on Sanbok Road)?”

This was the humble beginning of the Sanbok Road Laundromat, established by a journalist and a producer of Busan Ilbo. “Sanbok Road” and “laundromat”—are two words that describe us. We wanted to be paid with stories instead of money. During our six-month journey, more precious stories than we could have imagined piled up in the laundromat.

■ Busan, the City of Mountains

Busan is well known as a coastal city. However, as the name “Busan” includes the word san (mountain), it is also a city of mountains with hills found throughout. Residents live in villages at the foot of mountains and hillsides. The winding road connecting these villages is called Sanbok Road.

The 22 km-long Sanbok Road is a testament to Busan’s history. When the Korean War broke out in the 1950s, refugees flocked to Busan, the temporary capital at that time. Busan’s flatlands weren’t large enough to accommodate all the refugees, so they climbed the mountains and built shacks. In the 1970s, during South Korea’s industrialization, people gathered on Sanbok Road once again as numerous workers came to Busan, mainly around the Busan Port. Sanbok Road was a “bedroom community” for port laborers and female workers in rubber factories. Although living conditions were poor on the hillside, it was a precious haven for workers seeking jobs.

When the factory closed, people left Sanbok Road one after another. In 2023, Sanbok Road now looks like a deflated balloon, retaining its appearance without villagers. The remaining residents aged as time passed, and the once-bustling houses were left untouched and empty. It is now appreciated more as a tourist attraction for its beautiful

KIM Jun Yong & LEE Sang Bae

night scenery than as a residential area.

We wanted to hear the true stories of Busan hidden in Sanbok Road. Instead of stories written and photographed in history books, we wanted to document vivid, real-life stories.

■ A Laundromat Run by a Journalist

“Should we go there every day and visit the elderly?” “Which Sanbok Road village should we go to?”

We thought we could only vaguely hear the stories of Sanbok Road through a common reporting approach. Inviting the residents and listening to their stories via administrative organizations as “the way we used to do” would be no different from existing published articles about Sanbok Road. Thus, we devised an idea to directly enter the community without waving our press passes or cameras.

“All right, let’s open a facility that residents need and run it ourselves.”

Sanbok Road is in poor condition—only a handful of bus routes serve the villages, and rusty water sometimes comes out from faucets. Infrastructure such as water pipes and electricity, which are taken for granted in a city, bears the traces of a long passage of time. Suddenly, I recalled the elderly women doing laundry in cold water in the freezing winter during my coverage on Sanbok Road as a social affairs journalist. I thought, “If we open a coin laundromat on Sanbok Road like the ones in the city, wouldn’t the residents come to do their laundry?”

That’s how we opened the laundromat in Hocheon Village on Sanbok Road in May 2022. We renovated a small 10m² vacant house to make it a vibrant and attractive laundromat for the residents to visit with great convenience. When we said we would open a laundromat for reporting purposes, the company hesitated at first. However, they gladly supported our “greater purpose” of listening to the stories in Sanbok Road. After a month of construction, the world’s first laundromat run by a news media was unveiled.

Conference I

KIM Jun Yong & LEE Sang Bae

■ Diving into the Real Stories of Busan

“Hello, ma’am. How are you?” “Good afternoon, sir. It’s a blue blanket, right?”

As soon as the door opens, we switch to “staff mode.” We check the residents’ laundry and record the number and type of laundry on a whiteboard. Residents usually come to the laundromat with heavy items, such as blankets and padded jackets, in a golden wrapping cloth or basket. The two washing machines and two dryers in the laundromat are constantly in use. After putting the laundry in the machine, we sit down with the elderly residents who have struggled up the steep stairs and offer them beverages and refreshments.

There is no specific topic. Starting with why this summer is so drought-stricken and hot, we talk about their children who visited over the weekend, their stories about the old neighborhood, the time they worked at the rubber factory downtown, and when they first got married. For the first month after opening, we worried about how we could start a conversation—but time proved to be the best way to open the “door to the heart” of the elderly residents on Sanbok Road. Every day from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., receiving laundry and saying hello to each other, the elders have become like our own parents and, before we knew it, started sharing their stories.

So how much is the fee at the laundromat? It’s free. The elderly pay for their laundry with stories, not money. An old woman in front of us, who had brought her laundry today, used to be a female factory worker at a shoe factory near Busan Port, which we read about in history books. An old man who says he’ll pick up his laundry tomorrow at 5:00 p.m. used to be a village repairman when the urban regeneration of Sanbok Road began. The laundry fees they pay are invaluable stories that span over 40 years and cannot be converted into monetary value. The pancakes they offer on rainy days and the refreshing watermelon on hot days as a token of appreciation add warmth to their stories.

KIM Jun Yong & LEE Sang Bae

■ Why Local Journalism Exists

Every Tuesday, we uploaded stories from the laundromat in articles and videos on YouTube, newspapers, and web portals. Every week, we recorded the precious moments spent with the elderly who visited the laundromat, listening to their old stories, watching the latest movies together, and taking photos. Although it was called a laundromat, it soon became the living room of the Sanbok Road community. The most common reaction we received throughout the six months was, “I am impressed. I had no idea that Busan Ilbo could do things like this.” There were also generous compliments on how the effort “is creative” and “has opened a new horizon for local journalism.” Some even considered it the path local newspapers should take and the reason behind the existence of local journalism.

There’s a derogatory term for journalists called “giregi,” a combination of the words “gija,” which means journalist, and “tsuregi,” which means trash. It’s probably a new term that originated as journalists who don’t properly investigate or write became more prevalent in society. As such a derogatory term for journalists was created, we think it’s an honor to be praised for our efforts to listen to real stories more sincerely and closely through the laundromat.

What we wanted was to convey a genuine narrative through the laundromat. We believed that although we could hear the “story” of Sanbok Road through conventional means, we could not truly hear the “real” one. We think that recording stories from a specific region or area is something we, who have lived and breathed alongside local history, can do well.

There are still many stories in the region that we need to bring to light. Getting closer to the community and sharing local stories with readers is the responsibility that local journalism must uphold. We hope to see the establishment of a second and third Sanbok Road Laundromat within local journalism, including Busan Ilbo.

Conference I

KIM Jun Yong & LEE Sang Bae



Speaker



MAENG Dae Hwan

Gwangju-Jeonnam Journalists Association
President
Korea

Educational Background

- © Graduated from Honam University (Journalism)

Professional Experience

- © Head of Newsis (Gwangju Jeonnam Headquarters)
- © President of Kwangju Press Center

Award-winning Career

- © 2013 Korea Journalist Award for Regional Coverage
- © 2012 Korea Journalist Award for Regional Coverage

MAENG Dae Hwan

[Role of the Journalism in Fostering Regional Co–prosperity]

The relationship between journalism and news sources is often described as “neither too close nor too distant.” However, in a situation where political, economic, social, and cultural powers are centralized, adhering to this principle can be a challenging agenda for local journalism.

In the face of depopulation in regions threatened by extinction, what approach should local journalism take? While staying true to their fundamental role of monitoring and criticizing their region based on the principle of “neither too close nor too distant”, people familiar with local issues know that providing alternative solutions along with constructive criticisms is of utmost importance. If a region disappears, there is no reason for journalism to exist.

Last year, the total birth rate in South Korea dropped to 0.78, which was the lowest since records began in 1970, down 0.03 from the previous year. Since 2013, Korea has consistently recorded the lowest total birth rate among OECD countries, being the only country with a rate below 1 in 2020. The total birth rate in Korea last year was less than half of the 2020 OECD average of 1.59.

Local areas face an even more dire situation. In Gokseong, Jeollanam–do, the total birth rate was zero last year. In Jeollanam–do, 20 of the 22 basic local governments had a birth count below 1,000, the highest among 17 upper–level local governments.

This year, 49 elementary schools including closed schools in Jeollanam–do, which is

MAENG Dae Hwan

10.4% of the total, had no new students. As the number of newborns declines, facilities such as obstetrics and gynecology clinics, child care centers, and schools likewise decrease, leading to a vicious cycle of decreasing demand. In such circumstances, the approach that local journalism should take is to “provide constructive criticism for the region and offer to solve the problem together.”

The Gwangju–Jeonnam journalism is proposing agendas for regional co–prosperity and development across various sectors of society based on this principle. While local governments are implementing policies to encourage childbirth and support child care, Gwangju–Jeonnam journalism is assessing the effectiveness of these policies and proposing alternatives. Amid a super–aged society, one of the main agendas is to consider case studies around the globe as references for safeguarding the welfare of senior citizens and determine how to apply them locally.

In line with global trends, protecting the environment is also on the agenda. The press covers initiatives to conserve Mudeungsan Mountain, protect the Yeongsangang River, and overcome severe droughts caused by climate change.

As Jeollanam–do is a region with a strong agricultural and maritime industry, the press is focusing its efforts on promoting smart farms and revitalizing the marine industry for future sustainability. Although regional issues are closely linked to those of the capital area and the entire country, politicians tend to pay less attention to regional issues compared to the more populous capital area. This is partly because the local news from less populated regions does not generate as much advertising revenue or news consumption as that of the capital region, causing major newspapers to overlook local news.

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MAENG Dae Hwan

Major Korean newspapers with large circulation mostly allocate only one page to local news. In the past, local news in the Honam region was limited to one page, covering four metropolitan areas: Jeollabuk-do, Gwangju, Jeollanam-do, and Jeju. Of the 15 columns on that page, five were filled with ads, leaving only 10 for news, which typically featured 5 or 7 news stories. Considering that these four metropolitan areas have a combined population of 5 million, this central-biased approach is highly disproportionate.

In contrast, local newspapers focus the majority of their articles on pressing issues within their region. They address questions such as whether local taxes are being spent appropriately, whether local politicians and administrators are working effectively for their region, and what conflicts are happening within the region. Despite many local newspapers struggling with financial losses, they are undoubtedly an essential social tool for promoting regional co-prosperity. Local newspapers must produce high-quality news daily to be chosen by readers. While there are difficulties, such as ownership issues and poor working conditions that can lead to poor quality, many local journalists continue to produce quality news with a deep concern for their region.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Gwangju-Jeonnam Journalists Association, 52.3% of local journalists are “satisfied with their life as a journalist.” This shows that they maintain a sense of purpose in their work despite challenging conditions. However, it is also true that nearly half of the journalists surveyed are dissatisfied, grappling with low wages and excessive workloads.

Local newspapers must focus on producing in-depth local news to increase their influence and survive. Residents show interest in and willingly pay subscription fees for local newspapers that highlight regional issues and seek solutions. At the screening

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of the Journalist of the Year Award hosted by the Gwangju–Jeonnam Journalists Association at the end of last year, news articles on industrial safety, agriculture, politics, the trauma of the May 18 Gwangju Democratization Movement, the international community village, and the reality of foreign worker brokers received awards. Although these articles didn't attract national or international attention, they make a crucial impact on the quality of life of local residents.

The Gwangju–Jeonnam Journalists Association also promoted a project last year to normalize private diplomacy between South Korea and China. In collaboration with the Consulate–General of the People's Republic of China in Gwangju and the Honam University Confucius Institute, the association operated the “China Club” for a year. The program involved journalists learning conversational Chinese and exploring historical sites related to China in the region once a month. The goal was to foster an understanding of Chinese culture among journalists and to promote the normalization of private diplomacy between the two countries. After the THAAD dispute, diplomatic and trade relations have been strained between South Korea and China for several years, as exchanged between journalists. It is essential for local journalists to make efforts in separating politics from private sectors to prevent bias in journalism.

Conference I

Speaker



Mohamed Asmieu BAH

Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
Director of Media and Public Affairs
Sierra Leone

Educational Background

- © BA degree from Fourah Bay College, the University of Sierra Leone
- © Msc in Diplomacy and International Relations from the University of Sierra Leone
- © 2021–2022 Fellow of the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship from the Arizona State University in the United States of America
- © Studied public relations and strategic and crisis communication from the Arizona State University in the United States of America
- © 2013 UN Reham Al Farra Fellow

Professional Experience

- © Senior Journalist, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
- © Public Relations Specialist, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation
- © Director of Media and Public Affairs, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation.
- © 2019–2022 National Secretary General Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
- © Member of several boards
 - Familiar with the procedures of planning, managing and designing public relations programs
 - Expert in crisis and strategic communications
 - Professional in writing for public relations
 - Highly skilled in generating the policies and procedures related to public information programs
 - Excellent grammar and broadcast news writing; organized; excellent on-air delivery;

Mohamed Asmieu BAH

- Television anchor
- Good communication skills
- Strong knowledge on the use and influence of social media
- Skilled in documentary production
- Strong leadership skills

Award-winning Career

- © 2021/2022 Hubert H Humphrey Fellow
- © 2013 UN Reham Al Farra Fellow
- © Several other awards

Writing Work

- © Several articles in Sierra Leonean newspapers
- © Television anchor of the popular TV show in Sierra Leone “The Podium”

Conference I

Mohamed Asmieu BAH

[The Challenge of Journalism for the Regional Development]

Mr Chairman, organizers of the World Journalists Conference, colleague media practitioners from the four corners of the globe, I bring you felicitations from the small West African country called Sierra Leone, one of the nations that had the first television and newspapers in the region.

As a country with rich history because of its early contact with the British colonialists, we were able to register great successes in many fields including journalism, when many countries at that time can only dream of having a newspaper; Sierra Leone's newspapers were read in many cities in Africa. Unfortunately in the 20th century, Sierra Leone cannot maintain and sustain those laurels, as other countries emerged and even have become better when it comes to the practice of journalism than we were.

Background

Sierra Leone is not an island; our media landscape faces similar or worse challenges than its counterparts in the West African region. This topic aims to shed lights on the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation, the first public service broadcaster in West Africa which was established in 2010 after the bloody civil war in the 90s. SLBC was born out of the merger between the then United Nations Radio and the erstwhile state owned broadcaster Sierra Leone Broadcaster Service. It was a recommendation of the Truth and Reconciliation Report for the country to have an independent public service broadcaster which will give fair and equal opportunity to all Sierra Leoneans irrespective of their political or religious inclination.

Mohamed Asmieu BAH

Since its establishment little over a decade ago, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation has striven to serve the people of Sierra Leone through what is now called development journalism. The SLBC has regional stations in all the regional headquarter towns of the north, south, and east.

SLBC regional stations

These stations are headed by managers, who enjoy semi autonomous status. They produce their own programmes; do their own bulletins, their own national news, and local current affairs shows. The stations focus mainly on how to serve the local communities where they are hosted, while the national station in the capital produces news items that meet national taste.

Because of their geographical locations, each station is situated in a region that is dominated by one ethnic group, and programmes are done to fit the taste of the local communities. For instance in the eastern city of Kono, the dominant language is Kono though we have other languages, but many of the programmes are done in that local dialect. Same can be said for SLBC Kenema which is a mende dominated region. The northern stations in Makeni and Magburka also have shows that reflect the Temne language which is predominantly spoken in the north of Sierra Leone.

These stations do not go without their challenges which inhibit their output, but amidst the challenges I can say they have managed to rise above the waters.

One of the challenges they face is resource constraints. These regional stations do not receive budgetary allocations from headquarters in Freetown, though station managers and some members of staff are paid directly from source in headquarters.

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Mohamed Asmieu BAH

The running cost of these stations are borne directly by the stations, this is done through advert from programmes.

In addition to the above, lack of equipment is also another key challenge these SLBC regional stations are facing in the regions. Many of the equipment they have are obsolete and worn out which have almost outlived their usefulness. This lack of modern broadcast equipment is greatly affecting their operations and as a result is leaving them behind in the digital migration of broadcasting.

Reporters of these regional stations do their radio programmes by visiting hard to reach communities, and bring out the concerns and aspirations of the locals and in return host government and NGO officials who roll out development activities.

SLBC Morning Coffee

The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation has one of the most popular current affairs radio programme called “Morning Coffee”. This breakfast show is linked by all the regional stations and correspondents are interviewed all over the country to give news on current affairs from their localities. Morning coffee has stolen the airwaves in Sierra Leone that even non SLBC stations are now linking the state broadcaster to fill their air time.

Challenges facing Sierra Leonean media

The Sierra Leonean media like many in the developing world share similar challenges which range from political interference by the powers that be to the dwindling of funds in advertising and the big elephant in the room, social media which is almost making the role of journalists useless in many parts of my country.

Mohamed Asmieu BAH

- (1) Social media : Nearly everyone now has access to a smart phone, and the holder of the phone is ready to take every shot at any time and everywhere without recourse to ethical and professional standards. The smart phone circulates the news even before the newspaper radio or television could do so. This speed in bringing out the news even where professionalism is killed is making the job of the traditional media very challenging.
- (2) Close related to the above, is the dwindling of adverts in newspapers or radio or television stations. Owners of businesses now prefer to do a short film of their products or services and share them on social media which they believe will be widely viewed than if it were even published in tabloids or aired in radio stations.
- (3) Brain drain : The media in many West African countries are losing some of its best brains to other professions because the grass in the media is not greener. Seasoned editors or veteran anchors of television and radio talk shows are either becoming public relations experts or migrating to other professions which they believe will earn them more money to take care of themselves and their families.
- (4) Low investment : Though the fundamental role of the media is to serve as watchdog of society and as one scholar put it “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comforted”, it should also not lose sight of the business angle of the media which if neglected will lead to media poverty. In Sierra Leone investment in the media has come in drips, and those who have ventured to invest have found it hard to keep themselves afloat especially during the last two years when inflation has led many businesses to close down. The prevailing inflation has hit media owners seriously be they electronic or print, as for the later the price of printing materials have more



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than double, while advertisers will tell you they are unable to pay for adverts because their businesses are struggling. Radio and television stations on the other hand are spending more than two thirds of their income on fuel. In such a grim environment, the media's survival is on a knife edge.

Speaker



Pablo LEÓN

EL PAÍS
Journalist / Writer
Spain

Educational Background

- © 2008 Master's Degree in Journalism, UAM / EL PAÍS
- © 1999–2004 M.SC and B.SC in Environmental Sciences UAH
- © Universidad de Alcala de Henares (Madrid)
- © Erasmus in Technische Universitat Darmstadt (Germany)

Professional Experience

- © 2009–Present EL PAÍS International Desk,
- © 2005–2008 Insider Tour Berlin (Berlin)
- © 2007 Jan–Jul Paracas National Reserve (Peru)
- © Previously in : EL PAÍS Semanal (Weekly Magazine) ; Long Stories; Local Madrid.
- © Blog founder, I Love Bicis (Sustainable Mobility)

Conference I

Pablo LEÓN

[Only Local News: How regional news can save Journalism]

In the 21st century, humanity lives under constant threat. Climate change, surveillance capitalism, the power of big tech, inflation... Next to this feeling of lack of control and loss, in the world we are witnessing the rise of political polarization; misinformation; manipulation and the irruption of populisms. Some of this radical extreme right movements have threatened democracy with violent actions after the candidate they voted for lost the elections as it happened in the US or Brazil.

Paradoxically, these radicals justified their coups as a fight for democracy and freedom. They didn't do it in a cynical way, but rather convinced that these coup outburst were the way of avoiding a national catastrophe. It is a lie, a manipulation, Lying is not a new human thing. But even the narrative they used was neither a new one.

British writer, George Orwell – author of the dystopian 1984, the Big Brother's one, and the one that broke sales records after Donald Trump's triumph in the 2017 presidential elections– set in his book a series of principles that rules in the hard totalitarian society he describes: “War is Peace. Freedom is Slavery. Ignorance is Strength”. The slogans are promoted by the Ministry of Truth, who precisely works to hide the truth and change it for a bunch of lies of State.

Orwell (1903–1950) was volunteer in the Spanish Civil War and witnessed World War II from London. At that time he was very concerned about the world. In 1936 autocracy had already installed in Spain and threatened to devour the whole Europe from Germany. Meanwhile, in Russia, Stalin had already made it happen. For the writer, totalitarianisms needed several ingredients; lies (and propaganda) were key ones. Orwell was a journalist and was worried about the trivialization and the siege of the truth: “The truth is vanishing from the world”, he stated. It has barely been a century from Orwell's words and the truth is once again under attack. Meanwhile, the

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media companies are not only in crisis –When hasn't it been?–, but it also suffers from a serious from serious citizen disaffection.

During the 21st century we have witnessed the Internet's transformation, especially social networks, in a weapon that “is trying to manipulate our emotions, change our way of thinking, our way of acting, and who we vote for”, sums up the Philippine journalist Maria Ressa, 2021 Nobel Peace Prize.

(I was lucky enough to interview her, recently)

Ressa like Orwell is worry for the truth. She is also concerned about the polarization and considers that “society suffers a radicalization process spurred by algorithms that not only encourage oblivion, but also the substitution of reality for the so called ‘alternative facts’”. A truth à la carte and that only feeds back from opinions like yours. And by not exposing yourself to other opinions, you demonize them. You become more intolerant, more radical.

“Without facts, there is no truth; without truth, there is no trust. And without trust there is no shared reality. Thus, there can be no full elections, there can be no democracy, because voters are being manipulated by power. That is happening all over the world.”

Digital disruption broke the traditional news ecosystem while the pandemic accelerated that digital disruption. “A process of disintermediation has accelerated it, has put an end to the monopoly of traditional interpreters [press, radio, TV] of reality”, as Daniel Innerarity and Carme Colomina explain in the study *The truth in algorithmic democracies*.

“The news and opinion universes collide, get more confused and hybridize with new content. The perception of facts is mediated by emotions and the truths are of free choice. This transformation is not explained only by the crisis of traditional media systems, but also by the new algorithmic order that largely controls the selective

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Pablo LEÓN

predetermination of information. How does it affect the democratic system that public debate takes place in privately owned technological spaces?

We have seen it with Twitter. Also, with Facebook. And now with TikTok.

“Fake news spreads more easily [than the truth] and testimonials on TikTok make the truth more attractive,” explained Iulia Mendel, former spokesperson for President Volodimir Zelensky, Kiev’s social media strategy.

At the very beginning they all seemed interesting tools for journalist and journalism; all have ended up serving to spread hoaxes and lies, in addition to damaging journalism. How is this damage healed? How do you recover the trust of the people? With closeness, transparency, empathy, connection. With local journalism. With journalistic projects that help reconnect with people. People should be aware that healthy journalism is linked to healthy democracy.

After years of globalization, we are now witnessing a kind of post-globalization time. In this new era people get more and more interest in local stuff. As long the coronavirus invited us to stay at home, we rediscovered our neighbourhoods. Our local life becomes more relevant therefore we demand more information about it. More close, truthful, transparent, and useful local information.

In addition, there are many local stories whose impact is global. There are many places in the world [Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea itself, Spain or many countries from Latin America] whose local news have global impact: we could talk about urbanism in Barcelona, sleeping problems in Seoul, the mobility model from Paris or the demonstrations in Paris. All of them are local news but all of them talk also about the world. They are glocal news.

The conformation of thought starts from the knowledge of reality. At the beginning of the 21st century, this depends on the degree of accurate and well-articulated

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information that we receive and assimilate. This information can come through a truthful means of communication or virally through social networks. Local, close, and useful journalism is a good antidote to this viral lies. Also, a brave new beginning for the development of a prosperous country.

Conference I

Speaker



Poramet TANGSATHAPORN

Bangkok Post
News Reporter
Thailand

Educational Background

- © Bachelor of Arts in Language and Culture (International Programme), Chulalongkorn University (1st Hon), Thailand
- © Master of Arts in International Studies, University of Durham, the United Kingdom

Professional Experience

- © Bangkok Post News Reporter (2021 – present)
- © Freelance content writer on LGBTQ+ rights (2019 – 2020)
- © Project Coordinator at BioAsia Ltd. (2017 – 2018)
- © English/Chinese tutor

Award-winning Career

- © 2022: Awarded as Asian Top ten finalist on “Journalism for Equitable Asia” – “Patpong on its Last Legs”

Writing Work

- © Publish news and article on newspapers daily.

Poramet TANGSATHAPORN

[The Challenge of Journalism for the Regional Development – Thai Journalism and local issues reporting.]

Introductions:

Undoubtedly, digital disruption had accelerated the consumers and journalists on how to consume and produce the news, respectively. Surprisingly, the democratization of digitalization has allowed the consumers to become the news reporters themselves to report what they had seen and exposed what beneath the carpet or left underreported. Yet, due to the heavy centralization of information by the government, the media ownership, consumer and the regulations had caused those local issues, which were the cornerstone of the regional development, were watered down, or left under the carpets again.

Therefore, this article would explain the challenge of Thai journalism facing in reporting local news and issues and suggest the way out to ensure that the local voices would not be left behind.

Challenges

Government

Thai government has long been treated as the central sources of news and information providers as it functions at the policy makers which shapes the directions of the country, especially during this time when Thailand is about to have general elections in a few month and it has just announced house dissolution on March 20 this year. At the same time, outside the parliament, the political parties are heavily doing promotion to gain the vote in the next term. Therefore, news has primarily focus on how Gen Prayut would win the PM position again for another term, or even the discredit among politicians such as the former politician and massage palour tycoon Chuwit Kamolwisit attacking the Health Minister Anutin Charvirakul over legalized cannabis scheme and the fight still

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continue, or the news would focus over how each party would win the vote through their populist policies. Or, even worse, the news such as the disagreement between 3 musketeer Gen Prayut, Gen Prawit and Gen Anuphong Phaochinda has kept reporting just to focus on where they have a fight or not and tried to dramatize it.

Furthermore, as this election is talked to be the game of change in Thai history after 8 years of Prayut regime, people are much anticipated and receptive about news on elections, including the dramas circling around the elections. Therefore, the media has to respond to the consumers' demand by reporting on such topics to gain more view counts and sponsorships.

From these examples, it has watered down many significant news that necessary for people to stay informed, such as there was no news reported on the newly infected HIV case in Thailand has risen 52% without any causes. Or even the local southern Thai news agency named "the Motif" was raged by Internal Security Operations Command claiming the news agency published news that is "detrimental to national security".

Media organizational culture

Continuing from the previous topic, to respond to the demand of the consumers, the journalists have to prioritise the topic that are in public interest. Furthermore, due to the limited human resources of each organization, therefore, the news reporters are unable to cover the regional or local issues as they must serve the public interest and, importantly, to get more view counts from every click on the news link.

Additionally, Thai media agencies are often compared each other daily to make sure that they do not miss any news or topics that any other agencies have. For example, every news agency will have the huge table with every newspaper laid on the top which will allow the news editor and the journalists to compare their information with others. Such things may be considered as problematic if the editors are obsessed or having "must have like other" mentality. Such mentality would lead to the demand of the

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editors who want to be the same as other by demanding the journalists/reporters, who have strong interest in reporting the local issues, to report on news to serve editors' interest, which sometimes the topic the editors want is not significant compared to the local issues.

There are some occasions that the local news has made to the front page, if the topic is significant to the national security, for example, the mass shooting in the kindergarten in Nongbualamphu and caused more than 25 kids death. Even if reporters had a chance to report on such topic and help the society find the way out to prevent such tragedy, however, sometimes the editors demand more drama over the substantive lesson from such incidents. Some news agencies have focused on how to gain more like or view count from their news through the tears of news sources who had already lost their love ones. Such reporting does not only violate the rights of news sources, but also does not lead to the substantive and constructive solutions to help local achieve the development, as the news agencies treats the local issues not different from "human zoo".

Media censorship and suppression of freedom of expression.

Thailand has long been known as the place where media freedom and freedom of expression is very limited. During the Covid-19, the media freedom and freedom of expression has been tightened than before. Thailand has some of regulations has censored the people, including media and may face the legal consequences, including the young people, such as the infamous 112 article (Lese Majeste), Section 116 on sedition (the legal offences against the national security which lead to imprisonment not over 7 years), SLAPP lawsuit against the activists, including journalists, defamation law, or even the physical and verbal attacks from the authorities.

Furthermore, the regulations such as 112 and 116 are quite vague. 112 allows everyone, even if they are not Royal Family members, to weaponize the article if they feel upset toward the claims against monarch, and what kind of offensive word are

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considered as offensive to Royal Family, 116, which share the same logic to the 112, that if any actions/piece of information seems to “raise unrest and disaffection amongst people”, they can face the legal consequences.

Additionally, Thailand has recently established “Anti Fake News Center” to ensure the centralization of information and to monitor those who would seem to be detrimental to the national security, which it is hard for the journalists to make a move when they have to report on topic as they are afraid that they may face legal consequences.

In down south, the local news agencies had faced the attack by Internal Security Operations Command and accused them as separatist or the criminal of the southern insurgency. Recently, March 13, 2023, Tharnto police station had issued warrant against Mr. Manawari Na-go, the Watani News Editor, and Mr. Muhammad Hafisi Sa-lae the news reporter for live broadcasting the issues on southern insurgency. On the PR Facebook page of Internal Security Operational Command 4th Division had released statement that what they had done was not considered as “unfair and mistreatment” and demand the people to be cautious of information released outside from them.

The creditability of local news

Although the local news agencies are able to attain some status, however, there are several times that they fall on objectivities as they may report on only their sides without asking other stakeholders. Therefore, many would find that local news may be filled with bias.

Furthermore, they may lack professionalism in productions. This could be explained that, unlike other major news agencies, they are lacking financial support on technologies and travelling cost.

Solutions:

The solutions to help the local news to prosper and ensuring no one would be left behind would be following;

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1. It is necessary to create a network among journalists or news agencies across the nation/region/countries to ensure that the local news agencies gain political leverage or backup from the major/mainstream agencies.
2. It is required the regulations and systems reform to ensure the freedom of expression and media freedoms, as well as, establishing the funding to help the journalists from legal prosecutions, or funding to help on professions.
3. Organizing the cross media training by the major news agencies to help the local news agencies to work professionally.



2023 세계기자대회

WORLD JOURNALISTS CONFERENCE 2023

24(Mon) - 29(Sat) April 2023

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Leadership in the Digital Transformation Era
and the future of Journalism

- Biography
- Presentation Material



WJC World
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2023

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25(Tue) April 2023

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Journalists
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2023 세계기자대회

Moderator



JUNG Min Ho

Journalists Association of Korea
Head of International Relations Department
Korea

Educational Background

- © Graduated from University of Missouri
– St. Louis with a bachelor's in communication degree (2011)

Professional Experience

- © Former digital content editor of The Korea Times
- © Worked mostly at the city and politics desks of The Korea Times since 2012

Award-winning Career

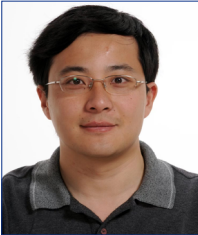
- © Annual Best Journalists Award from The Korea Times (2016, 2018)
- © Best science article of month from Korea Science Journalists Association (December 2016)

Writing Work

- © Co-author of Medical Pioneers of Korea (2019)

Conference II

Speaker



ZHOU Ning

Xinhua News Agency
Deputy Chief Editor of the New Media Center
China

Educational Background

- ◎ Master degree (Sociology) Purdue University of U.S.A.
- ◎ Master degree (Journalism) Renmin University of China

Professional Experience

- ◎ Xinhua News Agency, the Head office
- ◎ Xinhua News Agency, the Inner Mongolia branch
- ◎ Xinhua News Agency, the Economic Reference News
- ◎ Xinhua News Agency, the New Media Center

Award-winning Career

- ◎ China News Award
- ◎ Beijing News Award

Writing Work

- ◎ 《Talking about the Cultural of Traditional Chinese Medicine(2017)》
- ◎ 《Five Years of Organ Transplantation in China(2020)》

ZHOU Ning

[Xinhua News Agency on Smartphone]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon,

First of all, I would like to thank the Journalists Association of Korea for organizing this grand event for journalists worldwide and providing us with a platform for free expression and communication. I am delighted to share a brief presentation on “Leadership in the Digital Transformation Era and the Role of the Media in Local Development.”

In Beijing, China, there is an ancient and mysterious city axis that has heard the morning bell and evening drum of the Bell and Drum Towers and seen the red walls and flying snow of the Forbidden City. In the past, if you wanted to witness its magnificent beauty, you had to travel thousands of miles to catch a glimpse of its charm.

But now, no matter where you are, you can experience the grandeur and elegance of the Beijing City Axis by simply interacting with Xinhua News Agency’s application, a smart digital news product called “Digital City Axis.” It aims to use new technologies such as big data, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, blockchain, knowledge graphs, and new creative industries to explore the historical and cultural connotations of the Beijing City Axis and tell the story of China’s commitment to digital protection and inheritance of cultural heritage.

Integration, innovation, and development are the themes of the current development of major media outlets in China. Xinhua News Agency President Fu Ha said that Xinhua News Agency should make good use of the benefits of information technology and mobile internet, integrate awareness throughout the entire news reporting process, and promote the perfect integration of “content + technology + inspiration + aesthetics.”

“Digital City Axis” is precisely the direction that Xinhua News Agency is taking to build an international first-class new media institution by creating mobile, technological, digital,

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and intelligent content experiences, relying on the advantages of “Xinhua News Agency on your mobile phone,” and strengthening the construction of independent terminals and social matrixes.”

As an important carrier of ‘Xinhua News Agency on mobile’, Xinhua News Agency’s Chinese–language client has been downloaded 440 million times, ranking first among mainstream media in China; Xinhua News Agency’s English–language client has been downloaded 15.6 million times, linking the news gathering and editing capabilities of various departments of the headquarters and branches throughout the country and even globally.

Based on this, Xinhua News Agency’s client integrates resources, innovates communication agency business, builds self–controlled platforms, and leads with high–quality content. It presents all–media digital products in forms such as text, images, charts, videos, H5, AR, VR, MR, MV, and SVG, in a comprehensive manner.

As the “Army Group” of “Xinhua News Agency on Mobile”, Xinhua News Agency’s new media platforms, including the dedicated line for new media (with more than 500 clients), WeChat (with approximately 40 million followers), Weibo (with approximately 109 million followers), Douyin (with about 60 million followers), Kuaishou (with approximately 38 million followers), WeChat Video (with about 3.2 million followers), and the social media matrix on Bilibili, have a total coverage of over 1 billion users. Among them, Xinhua News Agency’s official Weibo account is the first authoritative information source; its WeChat public account ranks first among news–related public accounts of mainstream media in China. Douyin and Kuaishou have become top media accounts with high traffic and active followers among various short video platforms in China. The social media matrix overseas has a total of 270 million followers.

As the “Light Cavalry” of “Xinhua News Agency on Mobile,” we are building the Metaverse Industry Alliance and exploring a new paradigm for media integration

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and development. Through an effective alliance mechanism, we are consolidating the consensus and joint efforts of the manufacturing sector, media, academia, and technology companies, collaborating and integrating resources, and providing effective support for the conception and incubation of related media, government and enterprise projects. Taking innovation as the first driving force for development, we are making practical explorations to build a digital China.

As the “Aggregation vanguard” of “Xinhua News Agency on mobile”, the “On-site Cloud” platform is an innovative communication service that is essentially a mobile application. Journalists can easily initiate a holographic live broadcast and efficiently collect live streams, text, images, and videos with just a mobile phone. Currently, On-site Cloud has developed into China’s most prominent news live broadcast platform and content aggregation production platform, with nearly 5,000 institutional users. The peak number of daily live broadcasts exceeds one thousand, and a large amount of reporting data flows into the headquarters.

Xinhua News Agency has also established the “Everyone can be a photographer” social public governance platform, encouraging citizens to participate online. Users can easily reflect on local issues and hotspots related to grassroots social governance through their mobile phones, just like posting on Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. The “Ask the Journalist” platform also focuses on journalists and excavates news behind the scenes as the main social function. Currently, over 1,000 Xinhua News Agency journalists participate in this platform, answering tens of thousands of domestic and international questions from netizens.

From using the digital channels of Xinhua News Agency to live stream the national treasures at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding in Sichuan to connecting live to the “Village BA” rural basketball league in Guizhou, China, which is as popular as the NBA in the United States, from the innovative data news report

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“Ten Dimensions of China” released at the scene of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, to the rap song “Heading to Spring” developed with AIGC technology at this year’s Two Sessions... These diverse digital integrated news products greatly enhance the Xinhua News Agency’s ability to report in an all–media format and showcase the real China to audiences at home and abroad.

As Chinese journalists, we have always focused on strengthening the technological empowerment of news product production per the core business of Xinhua News Agency and are building a batch of news and communication application technology platforms with global influence.

For example, we are constructing the world’s first intelligent editorial department, which is essentially based on artificial intelligence technology and characterized by human–machine dialogue, to completely reconstruct news production in all aspects, processes, and systems.

Additionally, we have launched the world’s first AI synthesis anchor, which is a lifelike digital news anchor that can work 24/7 simply by inputting text. We have also developed a political cartoon robot with independent intellectual property rights that can produce animated short videos quickly and efficiently, much like creating a PowerPoint presentation. Previously, producing a five– or six–minute animated product would take at least five or six days, but with our technology, people with zero technical or drawing skills can accomplish this in about five or six hours.

Undoubtedly, ChatGPT–4, recently developed by OpenAI, has attracted widespread attention. Some experts and scholars have told me that ChatGPT has significant advantages in some areas, accelerating in terms of how artificial intelligence can become a useful infrastructure: First, by using large–scale universal training, it has analytical capabilities to encode, understand, store, process, and reason, and has developed to the cognitive level. If ChatGPT is connected to various business systems

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through APIs, all industries, software, digital systems and the two can be deeply integrated; second, it is open to entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises for application capabilities, accelerating the rapid development of the industrial ecology. ChatGPT is a model of open source, cooperation, and crowdsourcing, and most of the training data it uses are open-source datasets. Open source also promotes the common development of the entire industry rather than technology being monopolized by a few companies.

In addition to its advantages, ChatGPT also has some hidden dangers: First, the authenticity of the content generated by artificial intelligence still needs to be improved. It may generate some texts that seem smooth and credible but lack effective verification mechanisms, and some content may even be fabricated. For example, when ChatGPT answers user questions in legal issues, it may invent some non-existent legal provisions; second, the rapid iteration of artificial intelligence poses challenges to network security. For example, ChatGPT may lower the threshold for network attacks. It cannot carry out network attacks itself, but can be used as an auxiliary tool to search for various attack codes. There is a possibility of increasing the risk of large-scale attacks such as “power outage”, “oil cut-offs”, and “broadcast interruptions” on such a basic infrastructure that connects billions of product applications.

As journalists, in the next stage, we need to continue to focus on the development and innovation of artificial intelligence in large-scale model technology, large-scale model research and storage, computing power, operating systems, and electronic data resource construction. On the one hand, we should cautiously apply the latest achievements of artificial intelligence in news production and on the other hand, report the latest developments in artificial intelligence to the general audience.

At the same time, we do not need to feel inferior or even fearful. We must recognize soberly that although the media landscape, public opinion ecology, and communication



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targets have undergone profound changes under the impact of new media and new technology, the rule that “content is king” remains unchanged, no matter how advanced or diverse the means of new technology are in the era of digital transformation.

As a news journalist, in a breaking news situation, you must go deep into the scene to obtain first-hand information promptly. In deep research, you must vigorously conduct research and practice physical, visual, mental, and writing skills. You must go deep into the fields and find your roots among the people to obtain the most accurate, authentic, and effective first-hand information, rather than relying on second-hand information generated by artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT, and strive for the most fundamental attribute of news—truthfulness. This is something that no iterative technology can replace.

Finally, I wish this conference complete success!

Thank You.

Speaker



Thaïs CHAIGNE

France 24
Journalist
France

Educational Background

- © Master Degree in Journalism in Sciences po Paris (2021 class)
- © Master Degree Politic Science in Paris II Panthéon Assas (2019)
- © Bachelor degree of Litterature in Sorbonne Université

Professional Experience

- © The Observers of France 24 (since 2020)
- © ENTR (since 2022)
- © Liberation « Checknews » (2020–2021)
- © Heidi,news and Geneva Solution (2020)
- © France television – Beijing office (2019)

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Thaïs CHAIGNE

[“The Observers of France 24” : a model to address the challenges of the digital era]

At the Observers, we have been working for 15 years with a network of more than 5000 citizens through social medias all over the world. Our newsroom has been shaped in a constantly evolving digital landscape. Our newsroom might provide some hints on how journalists can meet the challenges ahead.

When I heard that the theme of this conference would be revolving around “the future of journalism” and the “digital era”, the subject that immediately popped into my mind was the keywords everyone is talking about: “ChatGPT” and “AI”, the so-called rivals that journalists should be looking to beat or work in tandem with. So, out of curiosity, I decided to ask ChatGPT to answer this topic – for the first time, I used the infamous online AI tool.

Its answer seemed well-thought-out: “With the rise of the internet, social media, and mobile devices, news organizations have had to adapt their practices to stay relevant in a rapidly evolving media landscape.”

But everything felt empty. There was no texture, no examples, and no basis in real life. It was just a good talker, presenting itself well. And then I realized that this is exactly the issue with digital-rooted information today. Yet, ChatGPT made some good points: we are surrounded by huge amounts of information in the digital age. The challenge for journalists is to tame this jungle of facts that has emerged on social media. It is a new frontier full of new stories to put out and new tools to discover.

Thaïs CHAIGNE

Luckily, I don't need to look far to see how newsrooms can position themselves to take on this constantly evolving digital landscape. For the past three years, I've been working with the FRANCE 24 Observers team, which was established in 2009. Back then, The Observers created a project based on "collaborative journalism": people reach out to us with information, photos or videos that they saw online or took themselves and we can share their stories with journalistic legitimacy. Today, we have over 5,000 "Observers" all over the world. Hundreds more reach out to us on our WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and email inboxes. Our team can communicate with them in French, English, Spanish, Arabic, Farsi or even Mandarin.

To give an example, I recently worked on a story about the security situation in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This story was inspired by our Observers who reached out to us on WhatsApp to share the horrific images of a massacre that took place in the province of Ituri. The same images had already been shared online. Still, thanks to our network and a bit of cross-sourcing and interviews, we were able to document the situation in the province in a way that had more impact than unverified images online. Social media is full of everyday people from all over the world who have stories they want to share, but they don't always have the skills, journalistic training or legitimacy to do so. That is how journalists can position themselves as a way to turn social media coverage into news content with verification, cross-checking, storytelling and analysis. That reminds our audience what journalism is really about.

This type of journalism also allows us to cover stories even in places where journalists cannot travel or work freely: Mali, Burkina Faso or Iran for example. Since the death of Mahsa Amini in Iran, my colleague Ershad Alijani has done an incredible job covering

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Thaïs CHAIGNE

the situation in Iran. He was able to carry out an investigation on how a French–Italian company created shotgun casings which were found by our Iranian Observers who sent photos to our newsroom. He then worked with sources inside Iran, France and Europe as well as digital tools to make a report which would have been difficult to cover from inside Iran.

Often, we journalists are the ones who are reaching out to potential Observers and trying to contact people online. This is the case for me because I cover Asia, where FRANCE 24 and The Observers have a relatively small audience, unlike Africa. This is how I was able to find my Observers in South Korea – from feminist activists who are trying to denounce misogynistic attacks on Twitter to foreign students fighting against racial or religious discrimination.

Reaching new frontiers with open–source intelligence (OSINT)

Another way to take advantage of the digital era for journalists is to learn how to use new digital tools to go even further in our stories. Open–source intelligence is the second pillar of our work at The Observers. My colleague Liselotte Mas was, for instance, able to track China’s elusive fishing fleets fishing off the coast of the Galápagos Islands when nobody could see them. How did she do it? She first received many images from our Observers, inhabitants of the island, who were finding more and more empty Chinese plastic bottles and pieces of trash on their beaches. She used this information in tandem with different tools that track boats like “Global Fishing Watch” and was able to determine that they were fishing illegally. We also very often use satellite images to confirm our Observers’ information. I for instance used “FIRMS”, the NASA map that provides near real–time active fire data to cross–reference reports that several villages were burned – and they were.

Thaïs CHAIGNE

Our experience with constantly verifying images we publish has also provided us with expertise in the field of fact-checking that has been recognized by the IFCN (International Fact-Checking Network). And even there, we are doing our best to include the audience. Fact-checking is, of course, integral to the very basic aspects of what all journalists do. But we can also help to educate people to understand how we use verification to share the truth. It's even more important as over the years, we have faced new challenges, such as deep fakes, and more recently, AI-generated images.

Both collaborative journalism and fact-checking are ways that journalists can remain accessible and trusted in our current media ecosystem. This also serves to maintain or regain the trust of a wary public that might see the media as a removed elite group.

Drone pilots

My experience at The Observers has also helped me to identify the biggest challenge of working in this digital world. The fact that you can be present without physically being on the ground is a unique aspect of modern journalism. Journalists are constantly confronted with horrifying images and testimonies from all over the world. One day, I'm speaking with a refugee in Cox's Bazar, in the midst of the panic that followed a huge fire, the next week with a refugee near Goma fearing for the life of his family... but when you hang up the phone, you are in an office in Paris. Although facing these situations in real life is undoubtedly worse, experiencing them on a daily basis from afar can create a different kind of psychological distress that many journalists experience, and newsrooms need to cope with.

This whole situation reminds me of American drone pilots, who spent their days at war, experiencing death and trauma, but come back to their peaceful life in the evening. Not

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only do they experience post-traumatic stress, but this disconnect between working hours and private life can be extremely hard to handle. As journalists working with people all over the world, we are not spending all day at war, but we do have contact with many people in distress, who call us all the time.

Some of my fellow journalists believe that “real journalism” only happens when you go on the ground to report in person. In French, there is even a pejorative term for desk journalism – “journalism assis” or sitting journalism. But I believe that more people should pay attention to how the digital world makes desk journalism a new frontier of opportunities, opening up the world to journalists, not matter where they may be sitting.

Speaker



LEE Ga Hyeok

JTBC
Journalist
Korea

Educational Background

- © Humphrey Fellow (a Fulbright exchange activity funded by the U.S. Department of State), Arizona State University Cronkite School of Journalism
- © BA in English Education, Seoul National University

Professional Experience

- © JTBC morning news anchor
- © Fact-checker at JTBC (International Fact-Checking Network Signatory)
- © Staff Reporter at JTBC
- © Staff Writer at JoongAng-ilbo Newspaper

Award-winning Career

- © Award for TV Journalist of the Month (Aug. 2022)
- © Award for Journalist of the Month (Nov. 2016)

Writing Work

- © The day, the place, the people (Korean version in 2017, Taiwanese version in 2019)

Conference II

LEE Ga Hyeok

[What does it take to be a newsroom leader in the digital age]

Before I begin, let me tackle the title of our discussion – 'digital transformation'. I searched past media-related articles, and it has been well over 10 years since the topic of 'digital transformation' appeared in the Korean media. Now, isn't it too late to talk about 'digital transformation'? The very first probationary training for JTBC's new reporters is about the digital newsroom. Prior to the traditional broadcasting training you and I know so well, such as on-the-spot coverage practice, audio recording, and on-site relay training, the first step on becoming a journalist in Korea is to learn the digital content production and distribution. For them, digital is not a phase they 'transition into' from any form of the past, but the beginning, and the end, and everything in between of media; however, it is also a reality that 'digital transformation' is still a lively discussion issue. I've been thinking about it for a long time, but it's still difficult to realize, and it's a very difficult task with a long way to go.

Two Keywords of JTBC's digital strategy: Mobile and On-site

I cannot say for sure that JTBC is the best example, but I am proud to say that it is one of the media outlets in Korea that are actively trying. Recently, JTBC newsroom is focusing on Mobile strategy. We mainly produce videos in short-form and mid-form. We are posting them on almost every social media out there to reach consumers.

First of all, the short form, named 'Newsseuk' which means a quick glance at news in Korean, consists of a minute or so. Reporters simply film news contents in vertical with their smartphones on site. The most important selling point in this short vertical video is 'the scene'. Journalists have to report on key sites that are not easy for YouTubers, who are now considered as competitors of journalists, to access: such as inside parliamentary halls, inside government buildings, battlefields in Ukraine, and large-scale forest fires. It

LEE Ga Hyeok

is also essential to deliver difficult issues in easiest way possible, as if a reporter is doing a video call to their friend. Producers and editors then post them to various platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok operated by the JTBC newsroom in real time. For 'Newsseuk' to be sustainable, both filming and production must be done with a sense of speed.

Mid-length 'New Deep' is a descriptive news content. It was created to contain deep-cut that is difficult to digest in a minute-long short form or a TV report limited to 2 minutes. Even if a journalist covers hundred issues, the reality is that less than 10 of them can be included in a report. Reporters can overcome this challenge through this mid-length videos. At the same time, news consumers can easily access quality content that contains reporters' in-depth coverage. For 'New Deep', JTBC set up a single-person studio with simple recording equipment and lighting in the newsroom. The reporter can enter the empty studio at any time, turn on the camera, and shoot. This also requires post-production work such as editing and subtitles, but it is quickly distributed to various platforms after minimal work by dedicated personnel.

Being a newsroom leader in the digital age: more requirements, more responsibility

Many outlets, including the JTBC newsroom, are focusing on mobile strategies. Each media company is thinking about ways to supply content constantly and quickly. It is not enough to expect members to actively participate. This is because the competition is getting fiercer as time goes on, and there are already too many jobs given to one journalist. How should the newsroom work in this situation?

We need to change the finish line. In other words, we need to get out of the traditional working structure that runs in one direction only for the evening prime time news. We need to get away from the perception that supplying mobile content is the job of 'some online journalists'. All reporters must transform into 'digital reporters'. To do this, the top

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decision-maker in the newsroom needs to empathize 'mobile first' and continuously deliver the message to 'not work only for the evening prime time news' to both middle managers and field reporters. For news organizations such as JTBC, which are performing well in the mobile news market, the traditional approach of 'TV news is the most important, mobile content is secondary' does not work. Even in the digital space, orders are given, and decisions are being made promptly.

The essence of successful newsroom leadership so far, has been that judges quickly and accurately, and to operate charismatically from the newsroom to the field. The general-like aspect of the battlefield was a symbol of traditional newsroom leadership; however, being a newsroom leader in the digital age has become a tougher position that needs to have more capabilities. The leader should pay attention to the latest trends beyond generations and judge and decide against a "completely different group" rather than a group that has been recognized as a news audience.

First, newsroom leaders in the digital age must have a clear understanding of their digital audience. Currently, each news organization has a unit that analyzes its users through multiple digital indicators. After receiving that analysis regularly, leaders need to actively respond to people who use our content on mobile. The decision makers must deliver the analysis results to the newsroom colleagues who produce and supply content. This is the first step toward becoming a truly digital newsroom that operates on "objective data" rather than "decision maker's taste."

Second, newsroom leaders must step up to harmonize the organization. The traditional newsroom was a homogenous group of members: journalists. But newsrooms in the digital age are a precarious mix of multifunctional members. Also, this is an organization where journalists are no longer the core members. In a digital newsroom organization, it is difficult to know what roles and responsibilities each member has.

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LEE Ga Hyeok

In addition, the 'generation gap' in the newsroom is becoming more bipolarized. New employees who recently joined a media company are not 'legacy media' users. They never had the experience of subscribing to a newspaper, and they have never had the habit of watching the TV news every night. But many of the people they work with in the same space still think "our main product is the evening news." Ultimately, it is the assignment given to the leader on how to lead the divided members well and how to bring about smooth communication between the members.

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Speaker



RYU Hyun Jung

Chosun Ilbo
Head of Digital Planning Team
Korea

Educational Background

- ◎ Graduated from the Department of Journalism and Communication at Yonsei University
- ◎ A PhD candidate with a master's degree from North Korea Graduate University

Professional Experience

- ◎ Staff Writer, The Electronic Times
- ◎ Head of Technology and Science Section/San Francisco Correspondent, Chosunbiz
- ◎ Editor-In-Chief, ITChosun
- ◎ Head of Digital Planning Team, Chosun Ilbo
- ◎ Secretary, Korea IT Press Club
- ◎ Visiting Journalist, The Linux Foundation

Award-winning Career

- ◎ Awarded 'Best Paper Award for Masters/Doctorate Thesis
- ◎ Awarded with the Plaque of Appreciation for Contribution to the Technologist's Society

Writing Work

- ◎ Special Feature – 4th Industrial Revolution: Login to the Matrix (2017)
- ◎ Special Feature – Green Growth Report (2011)
- ◎ Super Pumped (2020, Supervised)
- ◎ Scenario Korean Peninsula 2019~2029 (2019, co-authored)

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- © TechTrends 2018 (2018, co-authored)
- © Late in Industrialization, Early in Informationization (2016, co-authored)
- © The Race against Machines (2013 ,translated)
- © Eric Schmidt (2011, co-authored)
- © Google vs. Naver, The Search War (2008, co-authored)

Conference II

RYU Hyun Jung

[Leadership in the Digital Transformation Era and The future of Journalism]

Introduction

Gwanghwamun, Seoul, the venue of the World Journalists Conference 2023, is a historic place where professional Go player Lee Sedol and artificial intelligence AlphaGo fought the battle of the century 7 years ago. At the time, I was a journalist covering the match. Even for a journalist who had long covered the information technology (IT) sector, Lee Sedol's first game loss came as a shock. Despite predicting AlphaGo's victory, I shook his head as if I had just witnessed the defeat of the entire human race by a machine, and thought of his 10-month-old daughter: 'She is going to live with artificial intelligence for the rest of her life....'

All of us who have experienced 'chat GPT' may know. The living with artificial intelligence is not an issue for the next generation, like my daughter who turned 7 this year. It's an issue for everyone on the planet right now. Just 80 years after Claude Shannon, the father of the digital computer, devised a way to mathematically process messages, humanity is moving from the first age of machines that took over human physical labour to the second age of machines that take over human mental labour.

The takeaway

Today, the future of leadership and journalism in the age of digital transformation is the future of leadership and journalism in the age of artificial intelligence. General purpose AI (AGI) – not the kind of AI that excels in the specialized domain of like Go play, but the kind that excels in almost everything humans have struggled with – is upon us, and the pace of its evolution is accelerating.

I'm a journalist who has covered information technology, and I'm responsible for my company's digital strategy. I find it both exhilarating and hugely responsible to observe, experience, and adapt to an inflection point in human history.

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Leadership at this critical time boils down to two things. First, the relentless innovation of the media industry, and second, the intrinsic responsibility of journalists, which is greater than ever. And herein lies the future of journalism.

In order to foster innovation within the media industry, a simple replication of the success formula of digital companies, which emphasizes fast execution, collaboration between reporters, developers, and designers, and efficient database management, is no longer sufficient. Instead, media organizations must undertake a radical overhaul of their processes by leveraging artificial intelligence to significantly reduce the burden of mundane writing and other routine tasks. By doing so, journalists will be freed to concentrate on generating original and factual stories.

Throughout history, technology has served as a catalyst for transformation in both story formats and dissemination, as evidenced by the terminologies behind media missions such as “chronicle,” “telegraph,” and “post.” The advent of artificial intelligence technology, however, is expected to yield changes that surpass the print revolution, which led to the emergence of the modern state and the Reformation. It is apparent that significant alterations will occur in the production, distribution, and business models of stories. In fact, one esteemed journalist has suggested that with the introduction of general purpose intelligence, the redesigning of every website will become necessary.

The inherent responsibility of journalists in the era of AI is significant. Already, the proliferation of AI-generated fake news online is rampant, exemplified by headlines such as “Pope in Balenciaga Puffer,” “President Trump Arrested,” and “Zuckerberg as Meta-CEO at Louis Vuitton Fashion Show.” In the face of this deluge of disinformation, fact-based journalism produced by proficient journalists will serve as the final stronghold of humanity and possess inherent value in itself. Devoid of fact-based news, we recognize that the output of AI will be nothing more than an accumulation of fake news amplified by more fake news, constituting a garbage heap.

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Journalists should also be concerned and alert to the broader issues of human existence and its relationship to technology: countless jobs will be lost and created because of AI; curricula created in the industrial age of the 20th century will become obsolete, increasing the worries of parents raising children; Policy on welfare may necessitate significant reform, and the prevalence of cyber warfare may considerably expand the realm of defense. Outdated regulations will often stand in the way of artificial intelligence making amazing scientific discoveries, meaning there will be an explosion of areas for journalists to cover. The Financial Times (FT) recently established a new editorship position for AI news, a noteworthy development.

Journalists' scrutiny of power remains important. If power manipulates input data, whether it's political power, social power, or platform power, then AI will come to us based on manipulated data. Dictators and terrorists may use AI to their advantage. OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has expressed his fears of the worst-case scenario for AI with the phrase "the dawn of nuclear war".

At this critical juncture in history, what we need more than anything else is an all-hands-on-deck dialogue. The role of journalists cannot be overstated in leading the dialogue between ethicists, computer scientists, lawyers, psychologists, historians, and others, introducing them to the public, and creating protocols for safe AI.

It's also important for the world's media to work together internationally. Journalists covering global and humanitarian issues need to help each other pool the world's wisdom, and in a world where advances in AI have removed language barriers, this is entirely possible.

Media organizations should collaborate to demand that large tech companies driving AI provide just compensation for the content produced by journalists. Additionally, the media should work in tandem to secure funding for journalism, serving as the final stronghold against the pervasive spread of fake news. These efforts are integral to the

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process of establishing ethical standards for humanity in the era of ubiquitous AI.

Conclusion

General-purpose AI will revolutionise the way we do everything we do, ushering in a world of efficiency and insight never before achieved by humankind. It will dramatically reduce the time needed to explore the complex problems we need to solve, such as climate change.

At the same time, as the recent urgent proposal by more than 2,000 academics and computer masters to halt training on AI systems more powerful than GPT-4 for at least six months, general purpose AI could destroy the order that humanity has built over the ages and plunge us all into a dystopian world.

Humanity's destiny was never written in stone, but is something we are all shaping together. Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, once said, "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without a press, or a press without a government, I should not hesitate to prefer the latter." If the architects of modern democracy were asked to choose between "general purpose AI without a press" and "general purpose AI without a press," they would choose the latter without hesitation, because general purpose AI without a press is the path to dystopia, where humanity truly loses to the machines.

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Speaker



Anupa Kurian MURSHED

Gulf News
Senior Digital Content Planning Editor
United Arab Emirates

Professional Experience

- © Part of the core Digital Transformation team of Gulf News, its Digital Subscription team and heading seven sections that create unique content daily, which is part of the Digital Subscription content bouquet.
- © Launched and currently managing e-commerce section for Gulf News
- © Developed and implemented reader content strategy, Ethics Policy, and Social Media Strategy
- © Created and launched Gulf News' twice-daily tablet editions
- © Set up Gulf News' Readers' Desk, its Community Journalism network, internship programme and the Social Media Team.
- © The editor of the first higher education weekly newspaper by Gulf News
- © Worked as a daily beat news reporter, and feature writer

Anupa Kurian MURSHED

[Newsroom Leadership and Journalism in the Time of AI]

I did an interesting exercise for this presentation. I asked ChatGPT what are the challenges that newsrooms are facing. It came up with aggregated points that resonated with what I had listed, based on my experiences in newsrooms:

Digital evolution: Accepting and adopting new technologies and trends. Exploring new platforms, adapting to a moving reader base on them – it has been a constant process for over a decade now, with no sign of deceleration. It is exhausting at some point, but this is where a newsroom's leadership comes into play. If innovation is at the core of their strategy, then all else will follow. At Gulf News, we realized this early on and pursued it with dedication. If not, we knew that the newsroom would have to shut down, eventually. The world would move on and we, as market leaders, refused to accept that.

Fake news and misinformation: Gossip, hearsay and opinion have now taken on a scary life of its own, feeding into the mob mentality of social media platforms and messenger applications such as WhatsApp.

People no longer seem to trust traditional media, as implicitly as they used to. Many feel that there might be some motive, underlying bias in the content put out by legacy media. So, they believe the conspiracy theories faster. Are they to blame fully? No, there are examples, globally, of this opacity from media houses.

However, if your newsroom makes fundamental journalistic principles such as transparency and accountability as part of its core strategy, then this will not be an issue. Trust will happen – truth does that.

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Financial sustainability: Programmatic pays pennies, display advertising is highly competitive, so new revenue models must be created. In the absence of that, sometimes transparency is not fully achieved. The fine line dividing advertorial content and editorial gets a bit blurred. In some countries, the politics and social structure of the nation also plays in. Does this mean it leaves newsrooms with no option but to fall prey? No, not if your newsroom leadership is clear in its vision. Not if the newsroom management understands the need to invest and build – now is the time we are setting the foundation of a new era in journalism. And that cannot be done on weak structures. Take the New York Times – it is a classic study of a management that learned from its past and invested in its future. They faced serious financial issues but did not lose sight of the fact that to build a tomorrow, you must pay today.

And their biggest success story has been the paywall or digital subscription, which is tough to deliver in a day and age wherein the average reader will pay an OTT platform but will not shell out for news. Gulf News has gone through the same learning – our paywall is over a year old, but we have managed to beat global standards for registration rates, conversion, and churn. How? It is the result of a unified vision from the newsroom leadership, especially the CEO and Executive Editor. There has been no faltering but a steadfast communication from the top down.

Diversity: We want our newsrooms to reflect the community make-up we serve but quite often this is not true, be it in the West or the East. This too might result in content that does not bring in all perspectives. But does this bring a certain bias to what is published? Not if your newsroom is aligned because then there's awareness of shortfalls and a concerted effort is made by everyone to fill those gaps. And this again comes from newsroom leadership – inspiring your teams to go above and beyond.

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Artificial intelligence: Coming back to ChatGPT, it missed one very key issue that is looming over newsrooms across the world – new AI models like ChatGPT itself.

To illustrate it better, we recently had a problem where a publication seemed to be picking stories from our archives, tweaking it a bit and publishing as their own. Just enough changes were being done to escape the label of ‘copyright violation’. This is unacceptable and we are behind a paywall, which makes it an even bigger problem. They had previously declared that they were employing ChatGPT to write some of their stories.

We thought, was this the case? And carried out a series of investigations, including putting their stories through the AI Text Classifier. It turned out that it was a plain case of good old copying and pasting, with technology playing no role. It is daylight thievery, and we plan to act.

This was not AI, however, this kind of plagiarism among other issues is one of the biggest concerns with content generated by Artificial Intelligence – it could work against creativity and come up with wrong and biased information as it is just an aggregator not a fact-checker.

Recently, I got a pitch from a PR team saying that they have a tech entrepreneur who had created malware using ChatGPT and wanted to show how it was done, to help protect against it.

All of this sets the warning bells ringing, making us wonder – have we just opened Pandora’s Box in our quest to evolve and get ahead, driven by the need to generate revenue and be sustainable. It is a fight for survival, survival of the brand, survival of how journalism needs to be practiced.

In March, the International Center for Journalists in the US, released an article on the pros and cons of ChatGPT. It talked about how it would help non-native English-speaking journalists, especially to understand concepts and to generate questions.

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But there was a caveat – you cannot fully trust what it shows you, AI cannot replace humans, you need people to check, evaluate and take that final qualitative decision, It is a tool and that's how it needs to be looked at.

It brings us right back to the problem of fake news, misinformation, and content bias. Most importantly, how does this tie in with leadership as a media house and the future of journalism?

Initially it was social media, Facebook to be precise, news houses took a step into this world of chatrooms – wondering on how to use it to their advantage.

For us, in particular, it was a long hard decision – did we want to just grow in numbers or build an organic audience that looked at our social platforms as a source for news. We went with the latter, but what that meant was we grew at a relatively slow pace compared to our competitors, especially initially.

We refused to indulge in sensationalism, boosting or any other artificial manipulation of the algorithm because experience has taught us that it does not stay in the long run. Quality content sustains, no matter which platform and must be accompanied by a clearly defined strategy. Don't confuse the readers.

Over time we have grown to be the only media house in the UAE with a cumulative social media reach of over 5+ million – and it is organic. Juxtapose that number next to a country population of 10 million+ (Source: Global Media Insight, 2023) and that gives you a clear indication of the leadership influence that Gulf News exerts in the Middle East. Like I said, it was not easy, it needed a consistent, content-focused strategy while incorporating and adapting to trends, technologies, and tools. The key words – sustained innovation but managed by following the fundamental tenets of journalism. Everything was fact checked, proofed, bias cleared and double sourced – no matter what the competitors did.

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Would the team have managed that on its own? No, we succeeded because it was a consistent thought process that was filtered down from top management to the very last employee.

And therein lies the core truth of what the future holds for newsrooms and journalism at large – media houses, its investors, journalists, and support teams including finance and marketing have to all function on a unified heartbeat. The end goal must be the same – to sustain a brand, its leadership, through quality and trusted content.

Leaders must ensure everyone is inspired to come along on this exciting new journey filled with challenges, unexpected surprises, and successes, too. The unity of vision is imperative.

This holds especially true in the digital age. You cannot talk about transparency, accountability, and truth in your journalism, while working at cross purposes when it comes to advertising or marketing content. And the fundamentals of journalism must be adhered to always, no matter what – fact-checked, double sourced and the who, what, when, where and why of it all answered.

To use the Latin phrase, 'Unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno', which means all for one, one for all. And that's the core of what a successful newsroom of the future will be.