



ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence

UPDATE ON THE INFORMATION DOMAIN

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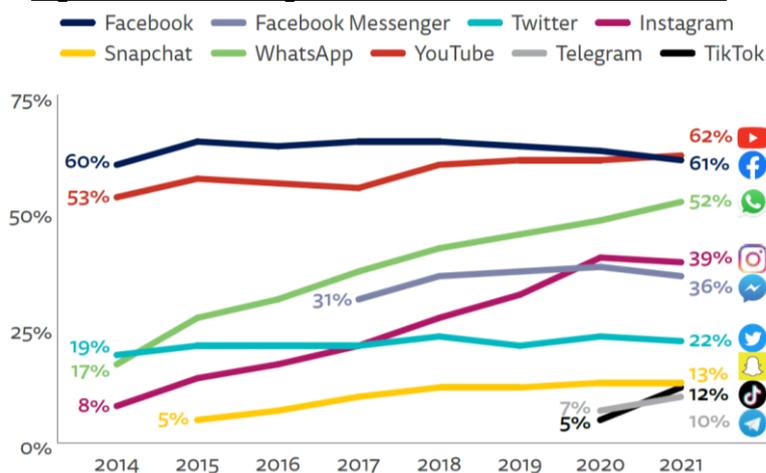
The Evolving Role of Traditional Media in the Digital Age

INTRODUCTION

1. Over the past few decades, many countries have witnessed rapid urbanisation and technological advancements. The emergence and increasing popularity of social media platforms have led to a significant shift in news and information consumption, from traditional media sources to new media. The increase accessibility to the internet has allowed social media platforms to act as a dominant force in shaping public discourse.

2. As social media platforms gained prominence (see Figure 1 for global usage trends of social media platforms), traditional media faced the challenge of adapting to changing consumer preferences and consumption patterns. The linear one-way communication model that characterised traditional media was surpassed by the interactive and real-time nature of social media, resulting in many gravitating towards new media platforms that offer immediate updates, personalised content, and interactive features.

Figure 1: Global Usage Trends of Social Media Platforms



3. Traditional media has long adhered to a monologue communication style, disseminating information unilaterally from source to audience without any feedback, participatory or interaction options. While this approach once dominated, the introduction of new media has led to more interactive and dynamic forms of news dissemination. Furthermore, online news outlets embrace real-time updates, allowing them to stay relevant and competitive, particularly in delivering breaking news. In contrast, printed newspaper may struggle to keep pace with the rapid dissemination of information, exacerbated by a noticeable shift towards news delivered by influencers, rather than journalists, via more accessible, informal and entertaining formats.

SHIFT TOWARDS VISUAL CONTENT AND MULTIMEDIA FORMATS

4. The Reuters Digital Report 2023 recorded the falling consumption of traditional media such as TV and print, while new media¹ consumption has grown steadily across different countries. The transition reflects not only changing consumer preferences but also a fundamental shift in communication styles.

5. To keep pace with the digital trend of new media, print publications like magazines have included QR codes on their pages, enabling readers to actively engage with digital content, and instantly access supplementary materials such as videos. Traditional media organisations have also reviewed their strategies and adapt to the changing landscape.

Notable Observations Within Southeast Asia

6. For instance, traditional media organisations such as *The Straits Times* and *The Jakarta Post*, have expanded their online presence and integrated multimedia elements, such as videos, infographics and interactive features into their articles and reports (see Figures 2a & 2b for examples).

¹ This includes video versions of regular press releases that typically contain important news, announcements, or updates from companies.

Figure 2a: The Straits Times Incorporating Multimedia Content in Short-Video Format on TikTok

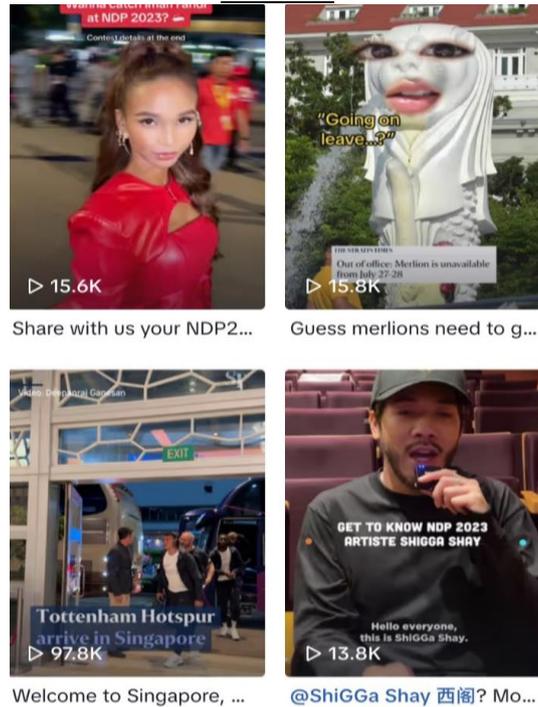
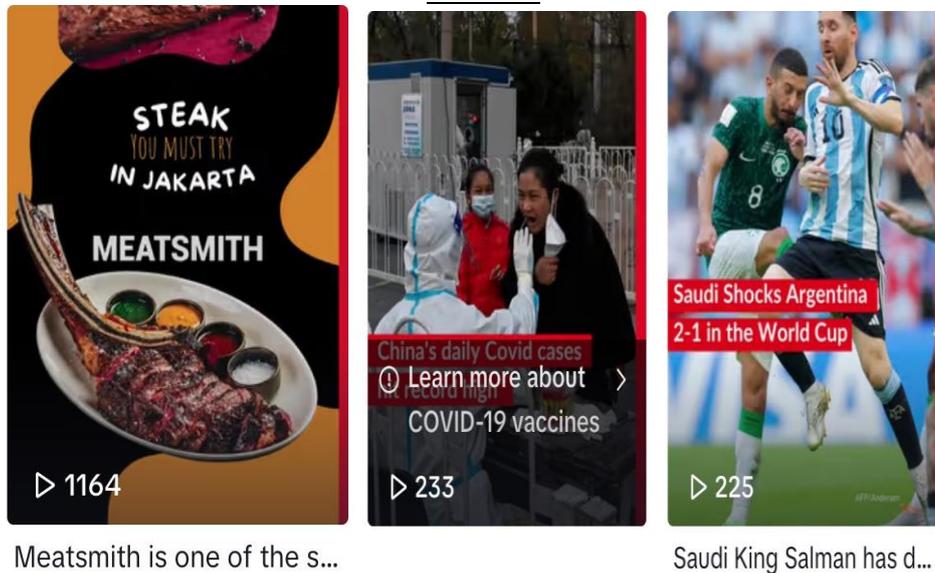
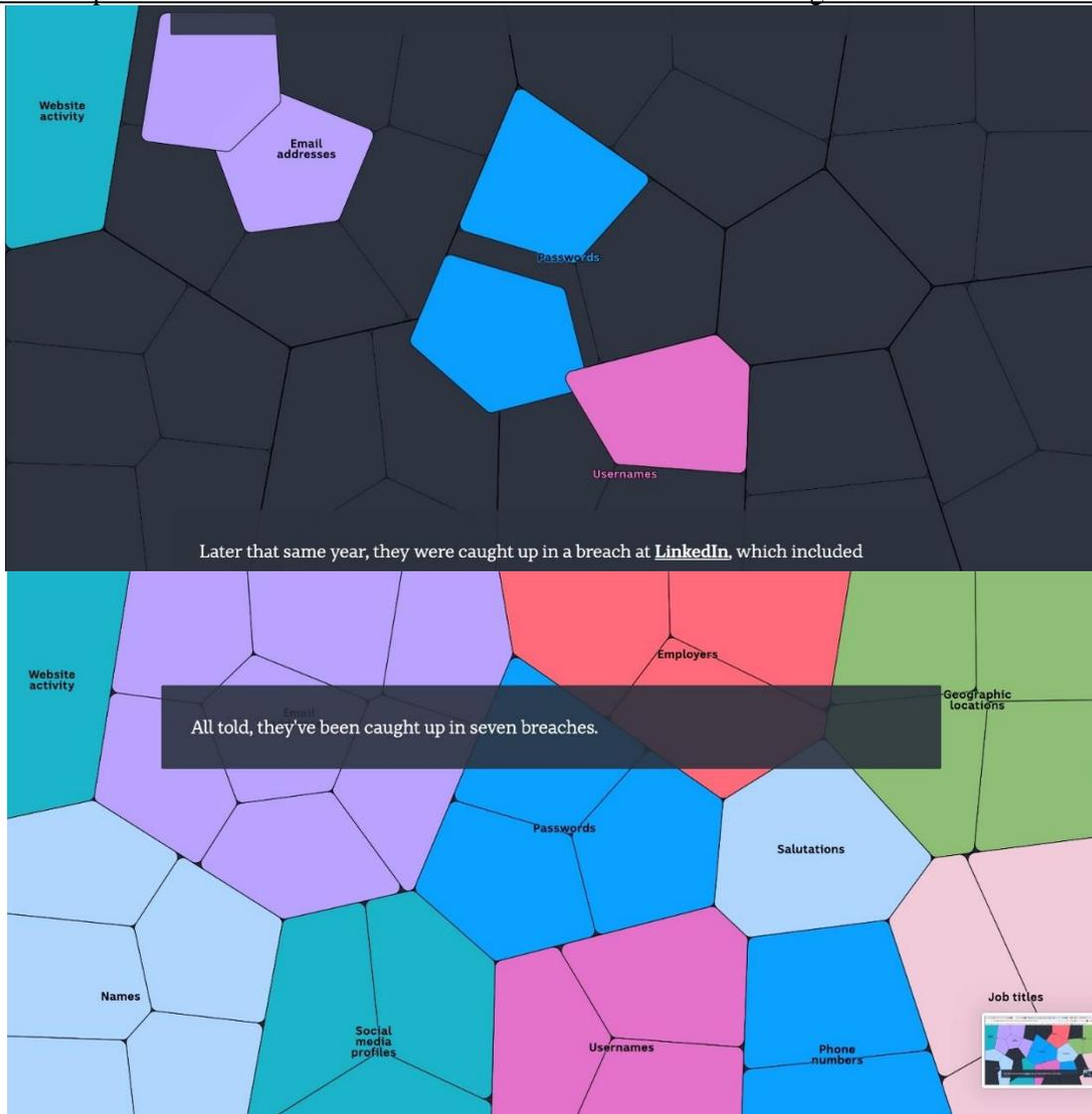


Figure 2b: The Jakarta Post Incorporating Multimedia Content in Short-Video Format on TikTok



7. Traditional media sources have also harnessed the potential of interactive content formats. Unlike traditional static articles, interactive content allows users to actively engage with the information. This involves elements such as clickable maps, quizzes, interactive timelines as well as data visualisation. For instance, news articles covering technical topics such as data breaches could incorporate interactive content to capture the audience’s attention. See Figure 3 for an interactive article by *ABC News* that illustrate how breached data can be used to piece together a detailed picture of an individual’s identity as users scroll down the article.

Figure 3: Example of an Interactive News Article that Piece Information Together While Users Scroll Down



Source: *abc.net*

8. Other interactive features could include a comments section where readers or viewers can engage with the content by sharing their thoughts, opinions or feedback on the news article or piece. In this sense, it transforms news consumption from a passive act into an active and engaging experience.

9. According to a LinkedIn report, research has shown that interactive content tend to have a considerable edge over static content, generating approximately two times more engagement. As users engage with the content, they are more likely to spend more time with the material, leading to increased visibility, and higher levels of engagement.

ASSESSMENT

10. That said, new media is often seen as a double-edged sword. While it allows for news to be circulated quickly, the propensity for fake news is also higher due to the ease of information sharing on digital platforms. Hence, traditional media are considered as a trusted source of information by many – primarily due to their rigorous editorial processes prior to publication. As *NST* reported, traditional media often serves as the primary source of news and information for the older generations who may be less digital literate.

11. Essentially, without the right approach to crafting and promoting press releases, important announcements can go unnoticed, resulting in misinformation and mistrust. In this endeavour, the incorporation of infographics or interactive content to traditional static articles emerges as a tool to foster enhanced interaction and connection with the audience. According to *govpilot*, government and policymakers can transcend the barriers of dense text by adopting these visual aids to convey information that resonates with the target audience. Therefore, it is important for government officials and policymakers to employ a balanced approach, utilising both traditional and new media channels to reach a wider audience – of all age groups – in order to accomplish their public communications objectives.

12. For example, Vietnam has effectively incorporated new features to traditional media by adopting digital tools to disseminate policies, and information to the public. According to *Vietnam News*, most of Vietnam's information sources have expanded its distribution to include digital platforms, incorporating interactive features such as infographics, images, videos, chronological timelines and mutex clips – commentaries displayed through subtitles on copyrighted music – to provide visual aid for readers.

13. The adoption of these strategies by traditional media not only caters to the changing expectations of the digital-savvy audience, but also aligns with the prevailing trend of information consumption. In an era where attention spans are limited, and information is abundant, infographics and interactive content offers a streamline, visually stimulating, and engaging means of communication.

CONTACT DETAILS

All reports can be retrieved from our website at www.acice-asean.org/resource/.

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