

Digital Transformation in Education and Training of Human Resources in Journalism and Communication

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Abstract: *The demand for journalism - communication in general and its content production in particular is growing rapidly and continues to develop in the digital era. Both public and private organizations need to interact and engage with different groups of customers and partners via digital platforms and social media. Currently, organizations and businesses are in “hunger” for communication and content-creating employees. This demand is forecasted to skyrocket in the coming years. For journalism - communication training institutions, this presents both opportunities and obstacles. Digital transformation in journalism - communication training is not limited in digitization and technology application, but also involves urging training institutions to reassess their performance as well as training products provided to the market and the society in general.*

Keywords: *education and training; journalism and communication; digital transformation.*

1. Digital transformation in journalism - communication

Digital transformation involves the integration of technology into problem-solving, leading to increased operational efficiency, targeted audience engagement, and a competitive advantage in the market, thereby transforming all aspects of the organization. This process represents a total and comprehensive change in the way individuals, organizations, and eventually society live, work, and produce, based on digital technology⁽¹⁾. This concept was introduced and became popular during the era of the Internet booming. It especially describes a comprehensive innovation in the way organizations and businesses operate in all aspects such as supply and demand, production, collaboration, customer relationships, and creating new businesses with a completely new way of doing things.

Organizations and units in different fields are applying digital technology for various purposes. There are models to evaluate the effectiveness of digital transformation through the following factors: dynamic strategy (changeable), exploiting all available resources (human resources, technology), and quantifying

the success of the digital transformation process (identifying measurable and achievable goals)⁽²⁾. Hence, the role of individuals involved in the organization's digital transformation is extremely important.

In recent years, Vietnam has become one of the leading countries in building a national digital transformation program. One of the key tasks identified in the Resolution of the 13th Party Congress is to “promote the research, transfer, and application of scientific and technological advances and innovations, especially the achievements of the Industrial Revolution 4.0; implement national digital transformation, develop the digital economy, improve productivity, quality, efficiency, and competitive strength of the economy”⁽³⁾. The “National digital transformation program by 2025, orientation to 2030” was approved by the Prime Minister in Decision No. 749/QĐ-TTg dated June 3, 2020, with specific objectives such as developing digital government, improving operational efficiency and effectiveness, and ensuring that Vietnam will be among the top 50 countries in e-government by 2030. The program also aims to improve the competitiveness of the digital economy and contribute to 30% of GDP, with the proportion of the digital economy in each industry and field reaching at least 20%, and annual labor productivity increasing by at least 8%...⁽⁴⁾. This proves that the trend of digital transformation is irreversible in the current development process of the world and Vietnam.

The explosion of technology, especially the advent of the Internet, has revolutionized the way information is collected, produced, stored, and distributed. It has changed the volume and speed at which information flows around the world and created a flat world with a sea of diverse information. Vietnam is evaluated as one of the 20 countries with the highest Internet usage rate in the world with 72 million users in January 2021, equivalent to 73.7% of the total population⁽⁵⁾. By using a mobile device connected to the internet, each user, or “a citizen journalist,” has the ability to post, update and spread information on social networks. They can create journalistic products in many forms, such as videos, news articles, photos, or participate in the press production or press release process using many other tools. Beside the values of enhancing connection, sharing and accessing information, and creating a “global village,” it also creates information chaos with many consequences for society. The problem of fake, bad, and toxic news greatly affects the perception of information recipients, causing many of them to have a biased view, causing division and leaving “scars” in society.

As a dynamic industry closely following the development of times, journalism - communication is transforming itself, integrating digital

technology and comprehensively changing from content to implementation method to contribute to changing habits and responding to the needs of the target audience. On the production side, people in journalism - communication are increasingly integrating new skills to be able to actively interact with the public in the process of co-creation and co-production⁽⁶⁾. In terms of reception, the public in the digital media era consumes online content using various devices, which necessitates manufacturers to consider different respective formats and techniques. A journalism-communication agency that understands the nature of the times, has systematic orientations, and retains its identity in the digital transformation process, will have the opportunity to increase its coverage in the market and capture its audience in the future.

Human resources play a particularly crucial role in the digital transformation process. A study of major US newsrooms has shown that integrated journalists with multiple skills are in high demand as newsrooms undergo digital transformation and business model changes⁽⁷⁾. Specifically, among four skill groups (traditional skills, creative skills, adaptive skills, and communication skills), recruitment demand in large newsrooms is still biased towards traditional skills, especially writing skills. However, the need for creative skills, particularly multimedia skills, is necessary for any type of journalism. Other creative skills, such as social media publishing, web development, content and audience analysis, and the use of the Python programming language, are also frequently required. This finding also indicates that in the trend of shifting to a media-focused environment where people have multiple channels to search for information, such as social networks, skills that promote interaction between the public and journalism-communication are also given special attention. Various other studies also show that journalists are increasingly expected to perform multiple tasks and roles simultaneously⁽⁸⁾.

Digital transformation is also reflected in the core activities of the newsroom, which involves innovating the organizational structure, operational processes, and the mindset, determination, and commitment to change of the leaders of the news organizations. Many press agencies around the world, including Vietnam, have taken specific actions such as building a converged newsroom and a multimedia press agency, with digital publishing at the center, and increasing public engagement and interaction.

The newsroom model that prioritizes electronic newspapers and digital information channels has completely transformed the structure of newsrooms,

with reporters now being versatile and able to write for all types of media. An example of this is The Daily Telegraph in the UK, which has been very active in building a converged editorial office and launching many converged media products. When reporting on an event, this newspaper uses multiple formats simultaneously, including articles, images, sounds, videos, and graphics, while also linking to social networking sites to publish information in a timely and systematic manner, making it easy for the public to follow and grasp information. Many major newsrooms around the world have gradually developed and integrated different media platforms, including The New York Times (USA), Österreich (Austria), and Expressen (Sweden).

In Vietnam, VietnamPlus electronic newspaper is one of the leading organizations in digital transformation with pioneering technologies applied in the field of journalism - communication. They use Chatbot to interact with readers and other external parties, and have introduced breakthrough products such as RapNewsPlus, Timeline, NewsGame, and Podcast. VietnamPlus is also a pioneer in collecting high-quality content fees in Vietnam, with the expectation that this fee collection will support the newspaper's efforts to convert regular readers to paying readers⁽⁹⁾.

2. Opportunities and challenges for digital transformation in journalism - communication training

The success of learning platforms like Coursera, AcademyX, and data warehouses like ResearchGate and JSTOR shows that “digital education” is fully qualified and has the potential to become the future of education, especially higher education. Digital transformation in the education sector, which involves the application of digital technology, is based on the purpose and organizational structure of the educational institution, and can take three main forms: the application of technology in the classroom (e.g. classroom facilities, teaching tools), the application of technology in teaching methods (e.g. Smart Classroom, Gamification, Programming), and the application of technology in management (e.g. management and operation tools).

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital learning platforms, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, LMS system which are making online learning easier, more interactive, and more experiential. With the development of technologies like 5G and AR/VR, the learning experience will be pushed to even greater levels, potentially creating new forms of online learning experiences that replicate the feeling of learning in a live classroom. These platforms also demonstrate that the trend of flip training is becoming

increasingly popular, whereby the role of the lecturer is shifting from teaching directly to guiding learners to self-study and self-discovery⁽¹⁰⁾.

Vietnam had issued many regulations and implemented activities to strengthen capacity and create a favorable basis for digital transformation in education, particularly in higher education. The Ministry of Education and Training had promptly issued many documents related to training implementation, distance assessment and quality assurance in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, continued to review and improve teaching methods for online and distance learning; develop electronic learning resources, improve the capacity of lecturers to meet the requirements of this method. Aspects of assessment such as instructions for building the exam system, tests, question banks for online exams and assessment tests were also mentioned. In particular, new circulars issued in 2021 have allowed online training for undergraduate, master, and doctoral degrees⁽¹¹⁾.

The Ministry of Information and Communications has issued guidelines on the safe use of software and online teaching tools. It has directed corporations, telecommunications, and information technology enterprises to research and develop solutions for online teaching and learning platforms, as well as digital learning materials. The Ministry is also supporting schools and lecturers to access high-speed, safe, and user-friendly digital infrastructure and services for Internet access. Additionally, telecommunications businesses are being directed to consider reducing or exempting Internet access charges for teachers, students, and school service and management systems, server rental service prices, and bandwidth for distance training in universities⁽¹²⁾.

Furthermore, the Prime Minister has issued a draft decision approving the master plan for the development of the network of press, radio, television, electronic information, and publishing establishments for the 2021-2030 period, with a vision by 2050 which sets a goal that 100% of press agencies carry out digital transformation by 2030. In particular, press agencies will comprehensively innovate their operations, operating a model of a converged and multi-media newsroom in line with the development of advanced science and technology worldwide. The press will take advantage of the digitization process to produce quality journalism products, using Big Data technology, Cloud Computing, Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and more to create engaging experiences for the public, and to become an important mainstream information flow in social life⁽¹³⁾.

This is an essential condition and a vital foundation for the development of journalism - communication education and training environment, with

important policies to develop and improve the environment, infrastructure, and equipment. With a field that requires high adaptation and movement, journalism - communication training institutions are expected to quickly embrace the trend of digitization and digital transformation of the whole education system.

The first factor for digital transformation in journalism - communication education and training is the need for *digitization of all input factors* for the educational process, especially learning materials (documents, textbooks, lectures) and data on learners for effective management and evaluation of the learning process and results. Digital transformation goes beyond the simple digitization of resources and includes the transformation of hardware, such as equipment, facilities, and resource management for education and training.

Secondly, digital transformation results in a radical change in the journalism - communication *education and training process*, from classroom management techniques and interactions with learners in digital space to the use of information technology for organizing and deploying teaching methods flexibly. Instructors and students can now use interactive e-learning platforms and social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, for better teaching and learning. This requires research and application of social science knowledge and new educational philosophies in designing content and teaching tools to leverage technology's strengths for personalized training programs.

Technology allows all data about the student's learning process to be tracked and stored, replacing conventional record-keeping systems. This work requires a combination of social science research, new educational philosophies, and innovative content and teaching tool design, to leverage technology's strengths for personalized training programs.

Furthermore, regarding the *learning outcomes*, digital transformation ensures that testing and evaluation in the educational process, including the evaluation of training results, are carried out effectively. Evaluation results and processes must be digitized and implemented using computer-based technology.

Lastly but not least is about the *educational environment*, in which, a supportive policy system at the macro level and educational institution level is necessary for creating an appropriate educational environment for digital transformation. This system should encourage and support the application of new education and training models based on digital platforms and recognize the legitimacy of online training, with a monitoring, management, and quality assurance toolkit in place.

However, creating significant and sustainable changes in education and training for the information and communication field faces several difficulties and challenges. *The first challenge* is the readiness of journalism - communication training agencies to undergo digital transformation, as not all have the resources to invest in modern infrastructure and equipment. *The second challenge* for journalism - communication training institutions is whether they can keep up with new media trends and formats, as communication becomes increasingly linked to data and data analysis. Learners' behavior, particularly among the younger generations such as Gen Z and those that follow, is becoming more elusive, and institutions must consider whether appearing on social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram is necessary to effectively interact with students. As technology continues to evolve and supports teaching and research activities, it is crucial for training institutions to adapt to these changes quickly in order to remain relevant and effective in their educational mission⁽¹⁴⁾. *The third challenge* concerns human resources, including both teachers and learners. Achieving effective digital transformation in training requires a mindset shift among managers and educators to adapt to new contexts, behaviors, and learner needs. For instance, some educators may not have the time to adjust and simply transfer their lesson plans from the physical environment to the digital environment without changing how they prepare lectures or interact with students. Additionally, retaining good lecturers while attracting high-quality candidates to train a professional workforce with the necessary knowledge and skills for the competitive journalism - communication field, which demands adaptation to high technology, is a crucial factor.

3. Proposed solutions for digital transformation in journalism - communication training

In the coming time, in order for the digital transformation process to occur rapidly and seamlessly, and for changes to occur in the organization, activities, and mindsets of both teachers and learners, journalism-communication training institutions need to prioritize the following actions:

First, journalism-communication training institutions need to focus on disseminating, propagating, and raising awareness about digital transformation, and encouraging responsibility and transparency in thought and action. It is also important to foster a collaborative approach towards realizing this transformation.

Second, it is essential to train and develop a group of managers and lecturers equipped with necessary knowledge and skills in information

technology and information security, who can effectively work in the digital environment. They should also continuously innovate teaching and learning methods, integrating digital technology to meet the requirements of digital transformation.

Third, the training program needs to be renovated to include modules that integrate foundational knowledge, theory, and practical skills, while balancing the focus between them. This will help produce media professionals with political and ethical courage, good skills, and the ability to perform a range of tasks. It is crucial to strike a balance between theory and practical skills, ensuring learners receive adequate training before practicing the profession. If the training program is too academic, learners will lack practical knowledge and spend more time integrating skills after graduation. If the curriculum only trains skills, learners will lack background knowledge, social knowledge and especially methodologies, analytical and problem-solving methods, which can lead to writing clichés, has no depth and no unique perspective.

Media professionals should not overlook traditional skills like reporting, writing, legal and ethical understanding, and news literacy⁽¹⁵⁾. However, they should also equip themselves with a full spectrum of digital skills, such as mobile content creation, video and audio production, data journalism, and web analytics⁽¹⁶⁾.

In the trend of newsrooms convergence globally, journalists need to acquire new skills in journalism - communication to report according to the needs and preferences of the public, being prepared to use mobile devices for creating content suitable for smartphones and tablets. This includes having strong writing skills, expertise in video production (knowing how to shoot, edit, and publish videos online), the ability to record and edit audio files, proficiency in data journalism, interacting with the public, and proficiency in web design and web analytics (collecting, analyzing, and reporting web data to understand and optimize web usage)⁽¹⁷⁾. One crucial skill that many media agencies seek is the ability to turn complex data into compelling, easy-to-understand stories with the use of images. Additionally, it is important to note that each member of an editorial office is not a specialized individual, but rather, they must work collaboratively as a team. Therefore, it is important to ensure that students studying journalism and communication are well-prepared for teamwork and collaboration from the very beginning of their university studies.

Fourth, deploying advanced online learning management systems (LMS) to ensure that the entire teaching staff are familiar with digital technologies

and tools to support effective online teaching. This includes digitizing the data of teachers and learners, including testing, evaluation, and reflection on the student management process directly in the network environment. Directing, operating, trading, meeting, and training activities are also carried out mainly in the network environment to fully utilize the benefits of digitalization.

Fifth, it is essential to complete the synchronous network infrastructure, upgrade practical information technology equipment for teaching and learning, and create equal learning opportunities.

Sixth, promoting the development of digital learning materials for teaching and learning, meeting the needs of self-study; promoting scientific research, linking with international partners, and encouraging lifelong learning. However, studying and researching is just one part of a student's journey when attending a university. Students' time for extracurricular and community activities is also important. Like businesses, universities need to care about the customer journey of their students and strive to create good experiences for students along their journey.

Seventh, deploying an educational social network with unified control and orientation, creating a digital environment for connection and sharing among education authorities, employers, schools, lecturers, and students; strengthening international cooperation, cooperating with businesses, creating start-up and innovation centers, and creating conditions for students to have access to new technologies in journalism and communication.

Therefore, to meet the requirements of the new era in the digital context, journalism and communication training institutions will have to undergo a fundamental and comprehensive transformation./.

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