

Tạp chí Lý Luận Chính Trị Và Truyền Thông

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Vietnam's Cybersecurity Law was passed by the National Assembly on June 12, 2018, and officially took effect from January 1, 2019. The law consists of 7 chapters and 43 articles regulating activities to protect national security and ensure social order and safety in cyberspace and defines the responsibilities of relevant agencies, organizations, and individuals.

At the present time, Vietnam has more than 60 million internet users, ranking the 18th in the world in terms of the percentage of the population using the internet and is one of the 10 countries with the highest number of Facebook and YouTube users in the world.”(1) In addition to providing great benefits to individuals, organizations, communities, and countries, social media also bring countless negative effects.

Malicious information pervades many websites. Politically hostile groups as well as other types of criminals have been taking advantage of cyberspace by committing acts of sabotage or profiteering, while threatening and infringing upon national defense and security, social security, property of the State, agencies, organizations, and individuals.

In 2017, the Ministry of Information and Communications had to ask Facebook to remove 107 fake accounts, 159 accounts that slandered and defamed leaders or propagated against the Party and State of Vietnam.(2) These statistics demonstrate the ubiquity and complexity of problems created by Facebook and other social media.

Therefore, the development and promulgation of Vietnam's Cybersecurity Law is an urgent and necessary job. A good implementation of Cybersecurity Law will meet with certitude, "the requirements of cybersecurity work in protecting national security, ensuring social safety and order; preventing and responding to threats to cybersecurity; overcome challenges related to cybersecurity protection; fully and promptly institutionalize the Party's guidelines on cybersecurity; and ensure conformity with the provisions of the 2013 Constitution on human rights, fundamental civil rights and defense of the Fatherland, and conformity with international practices."(3)

Up to this point, the Cybersecurity Law has been officially promulgated for more than six months, and it has been over a year since the Law was passed in June 2018. There has not yet been an investigation into the effectiveness of the media on communicating this law. However, from relatives, friends, and colleagues, it is not difficult for us to determine that not all netizens know and understand the law, or have developed an awareness, appropriate attitudes, and behaviors towards the law and network interaction. With these conditions the role of the press to inform and communicate the Cybersecurity Law becomes especially important.

1. Identifying the role of the press in informing and communicating the Cybersecurity Law to the public

Like most other issues, guidelines, policies and laws, the Cybersecurity Law must reach the public with the press as the main channel. From the time the draft Cybersecurity Law was submitted to the National Assembly in May 2018, the press has begun to draw public attention to this issue by:

- Uploading the full draft law
- Excerpting the introduction of the draft law
- Opening a poll to collect people's opinion on the draft law

Right from this moment, on social media, there have been many opinions about the introduction of the draft Cybersecurity Law. There are many welcome comments, but there have also been many opposing posts. There have even been provocative negative opinions. The 'leftside' opinions are mainly posted on fanpages, on Facebook accounts of reactionary organizations, and on accounts of individuals both living abroad or in Vietnam. In addition, there are reactionary statements in foreign newspapers such as the Voice of America Vietnamese (VOA Vietnamese), as well as the BBC, Radio Free Asia (RFA), and Wikipedia.

Therefore, right from the moment it was published, the press has actively broadcast opinions about its correctness and the need to develop and promulgate Cybersecurity Law. A good example would be the article: "It's easy to understand if they react negatively" in the People's Daily Online of May 31, 2018.

At the time the Cybersecurity Law was officially promulgated by the National Assembly, the press continued to focus on providing official, accurate and reliable information in the following forms.

First, the press reported and provided full-text information about the Cybersecurity Law.

Not every newspaper published the draft law, but when the Law was approved by the 14th National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, during the 5th Session on June 12, 2018, hundreds of radio, television stations, printed newspapers, and online newspapers simultaneously reported on the event. Some online newspapers, which conveyed frequent information on this topic are Nhan Dan, Ha Noi Moi, Communist Review, People's Army, Dan Tri, Soha, Vietnamnet, VnExpress, Legal Online and others. At this moment, when typing the keywords "Cybersecurity Law 2018," or "Content of the Cybersecurity Law," the Internet still returned hundreds of

news articles published in electronic newspapers and magazines. Official websites of Government ministries, departments, sectors, and provinces across the country also got involved.

For example, with the keyword "Content of the Cybersecurity Law," the first results displayed in Google Search are as follows: the diversity of articles introducing the approval of the Law by the National Assembly, the diverse types of newspapers publishing the full text or part of the content of the Cybersecurity Law. The Law had wide coverage in newspapers, helping people to know about its existence and passage. Those interested can perceive the Law in many different aspects and angles. In particular, the community that uses Facebook for business, including individuals and organizations that often must use social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram for work are fully updated on the Law as it is related to their own behavior on the internet.

To make it easy and simple for readers, many newspapers have effective ways of communicating the most important information, such as specialized Q&A, consulting sections, or legal column as on cand.com.vn. The Voice of Vietnam invited experts to answer questions related to the Cybersecurity Law in programs on VOV1 and VOV2 with titles such as: "What entrepreneurs need to do when the Cybersecurity Law takes effect from January 1, 2019," (VOV1, August 22, 2018); "How to manage cross-border services when the Cybersecurity Law has just taken effect," (January 5, 2019). Vietnam Television opened several Q&A and comment sharing sections. The online newspaper of VTV also published many consulting articles, such as: "Cybersecurity Law – the legal framework for transparency in e-commerce," (November 19, 2018); and "How does the Cybersecurity Law handle the threat that exists in cyberspace?" (June 15, 2018). The People's Army newspaper published articles such as: "We cannot deny the Cybersecurity Law," (June 18, 2018); "The development of the Cybersecurity Law is absolutely correct and necessary." (June 19, 2018); and "Bangladesh Newspapers welcome Vietnam's new Cybersecurity Law." (June 26, 2018).

By using many forms of distributing information, genres, and voices of people, experts, and researchers, press agencies have provided comprehensive information on the Cybersecurity Law. Thanks to the press, the information about the new Law has become popular to the public. The people have been guaranteed the right of access to official information.

Second, the press explained and communicated the meaning, values, and practice of the Cybersecurity Law

Along with providing information, newspapers also focused on communicating and explaining the law so that people understand the value, meaning, importance, and impact of the Cybersecurity Law.

In this field of online communication, the most used genres are commentary, discussion, interview, and expert opinion. For example, on VTV.vn, the search with the keyword "Cybersecurity Law," brings about 13,200 results within 0.21 seconds. These search results show mostly comment categories such as: "The need to promulgate the Cybersecurity Law" (June 11, 2018); "The Cybersecurity Law - An important legal 'shield' for the environment," (June 17, 2018); "There is no such thing as the Cybersecurity Law seriously harming Vietnam's economy," (June 12, 2018); "The Cybersecurity Law makes an important contribution to the stability of national security," (May 30, 2018); "Vietnam needs to promulgate the Cybersecurity Law soon" (May 29, 2018), and so on. On VOV1.vn there are the following articles: "Cybersecurity Law: Legal corridor to prevent bad and toxic information," (July 24, 2018); "Cybersecurity Law: Ensuring national security," (June 15, 2018); "Cybersecurity Law: Ensuring people's interests and national security," (June 26, 2018); and "The Cybersecurity Law was passed, adding a legal corridor in ensuring information security," (June 13, 2018).

On the websites of nhandan.org.vn, qdnd.vn, tapchicongsan.org.vn, and vietnamplus.vn, there are dozens of commentaries with similar themes, content, and expressions. For example, "The provisions in the content of the Cybersecurity Law of Vietnam are necessary and align with global trend on legal regulations to ensure cybersecurity; meet practical requirements to proactively prevent, detect, curb, and handle acts of infringing upon cybersecurity, ensuring that operations in cyberspace do not cause harm to national security, social safety and order, legitimate rights, and benefits of organizations and individuals, and particularly, do not hinder people's healthy and legitimate freedom of the internet and free speech in Vietnam."(4)

"The Cybersecurity Law has absolutely nothing to do with freedom of expression. There is no law that provides regulations to protect the legitimate rights and interests of organizations and individuals using new network information like this. Never before have children's rights been protected like this in online information. The Cybersecurity Law emphasizes the protection of the legitimate rights and interests of individuals and organizations on network information. There are no provisions to impede free speech. Only individuals who give false, fabricated, or insulting information according to the 29 articles of the Penal Code will be handled."(5)

By offering analysis and commentary, the press helps people to understand the topic, strengthen their beliefs, and have a positive attitude to receive and change their behavior in accordance with the provisions of the law.

Third, the press refuted distorting and reactionary claims about the Cybersecurity Law. Right from the time the draft Cybersecurity Law was presented, reactionary forces attacked and distorted the law, causing confusion in public opinion. Therefore, the press as the voice of the Party, the State, and the people, has strongly affirmed its ideological function, oriented public opinion, and exposed the enemy's distortions. Many newspapers commented, speaking on behalf of tens of millions of genuine Vietnamese people. "There is no reason to oppose the Cybersecurity Law," (baothienhue.vn, December 26, 2018). "Identify and smash the distortions against

the Cybersecurity Law" (Dantri.vn, July 10, 2018). "The Cybersecurity Law does not control all of citizens' personal information." (cand.com.vn, July 22, 2018). "Beware of the 'campaign' against the implementation of the Cybersecurity Law," (cand.com.vn, October 29, 2018).

In those articles, the authors used a critical tone, which is sometimes gentle but profound, poignant and sometimes strong, steely, tough at the plots and tactics of the reactionaries. For example, in the article "Beware of the 'campaign' against the implementation of the Cybersecurity Law," the author exposes reactionary statements. "Some websites such as RFA, VOA Vietnamese, BBC Vietnamese, a number of blogs and Facebook pages of individuals living abroad with opposing views and thoughts have posted and shared articles of criticism and disparagement such as: "The Communist Party of Vietnam is about to implement the Cybersecurity Law to increase control over the people;" "Draft Decree Guiding the Cybersecurity Law: Ending Life of Enterprises;" "Draft Decree Guiding the Implementation of the Cybersecurity Law: The Law of Dictatorship;" and "The Ministry of Public Security Drafts a Decree Guiding the Cybersecurity Law, People are Worried about Their Personal Information Being Controlled." Many sites even say that there are tens of thousands of people signing 'the petition' to cancel the implementation of the Cybersecurity Law. These people claiming to be 'intellectuals' or 'lawyers,' cite a number of provisions in the Law and the draft Decree, explaining ambiguously or showing knowledge of international law with comments such as "towards a democratic society, and internet freedom." They thereby vaguely refer to the law in a very subjective and short-sighted way. They attribute that, after the revisions, "the essence of this draft has not changed," and that the scope of user data that is required to be stored in Vietnam is still very wide and "the economic cost needed to enforce the law is still enormous and absurd." Some individuals even referred to their personal Facebook page, saying that the draft law represents an abuse of power by the Cybersecurity Department, and saying furthermore that the draft's approach is to consider businesses and people who participate in social media like... criminals!"

After citing sources and identifying the false accusations of reactionary individuals and organizations, the authors raised their objections and affirmed the precision, appropriateness, and advanced values of the law. The structure of the article, the style of language, and the tone of the article mentioned above have become the common writing style of many articles on this topic.

Fourth, to perform the function of information and communication about the Cybersecurity Law, many newspapers have applied flexible methods and forms to attract the attention of the public.

Some newspapers divide the content of the Cybersecurity Law into several parts, publishing each chapter, section, and specific article to reduce the volume of information received by the public. For example, laodongthudo.vn provides information on the Cybersecurity Law in a series of four articles. These were: The 1st article - The need to enact the Cybersecurity Law; the 2nd article - Building a healthy cyberspace; the 3rd article - Basic contents of the Cybersecurity Law; and the 4th article - Meaning and effects of the Cybersecurity Law.

Breaking down the law into its essential components and linking different issues and levels of the Cybersecurity Law is the optimal way to attract readers of online newspapers. With this approach, articles can reflect deeply on an issue, especially on a law that their readers are most interested in, making it easy for them to remember and understand the content in depth. Moreover, by dividing the content of the law, the articles have accomplished the task of combining information, analysis, and commentary into articles with a serious orientation, enlightening the law with a positive perspective for the people.

Many newspapers have focused on the eye-catching, impressive, and positive aspect when discussing the Cybersecurity Law. For example, the online newspaper Vietnamnet.vn uses the form of e-magazine for its articles. With the approach of

turning a serious content into a soft, vivid, and eye-catching presentation using vivid colors, attractive images, combined with clear tables, e-magazine-style articles of Vietnamnet have succeeded in attracting the attention of readers.

2. Some inadequacies on the presentation of the Cybersecurity Law in the press

Although some successes has been achieved in the distribution of information and communication of the Cybersecurity Law, reality shows that the information and presentation in the press about the Law still bear certain shortcomings. Here are a few of the downsides.

First, the press only publishes information about the Cybersecurity Law from time to time. According to the author's research, the press focuses on publishing information about the Cybersecurity Law regularly at the time from May 2018 to December 2018, when the draft law was presented to the National Assembly and officially promulgated. However, since then, the communication of the Cybersecurity Law has almost stopped. On January 1, 2019, when the Cybersecurity Law officially took effect, not many newspapers kept reporting or writing on this topic. This statement can be verified by searching the keyword 'Cybersecurity Law' in the 'search' section of all online newspapers from January 1, 2019 to June 2019.

In fact, if issues, even important ones are not regularly discussed and communicated, they will be overlooked, because there are so many competing current events and problems on national agenda, which can come and go. The same goes for the Cybersecurity Law. But unlike many other events and issues, if the Cybersecurity Law is forgotten, it means that there will be a continuing risk of cybersecurity violations, threatening national security, and the safety of organizations, individuals, communities, and society. Therefore, the topic of cybersecurity needs to be turned into a regular subject by the press.

Second, the presentation of the information on the Cybersecurity Law in the newspaper is not lively and attractive. It is not easy to turn the policy discussion, which is long and serious into an attractive and lively topic in the press. SEVERAL newspapers have made efforts to communicate the law in an attractive and fresh form, such as using a variety of genres, such as pictures and colorful presentation, however, many others do not. The basic method of presenting information is still: 1) publishing the full text of the draft law; 2) publishing the full text of the Law or quoting the Law; 3) and writing comments. Publishing the full text of the Law provides complete and detailed information, helping readers to understand it thoroughly. Comments are useful, however, these types of articles are packed with technical language so it becomes verbose, making the readers feel heavy, bored, and reluctant to read.

Third, the press has not focused on providing information on the results and effectiveness of implementing the Cybersecurity Law into the daily life of the people. Communicating information from the press is 'one-way' – bringing policies from the top down, giving views and opinions of leaders and experts, without paying attention to the feedback from the localities, and the importance of public opinion. Moreover, the effectiveness of the law in everyday life with typical examples in the implementation of the law, and the experience of implementing the laws on cybersecurity of other countries have not been included, so information about the result of the Cybersecurity Law is not rich or multi-dimensional enough.

3. Proposing ways to communicate the Cybersecurity Law in the present time

From the discussion above, the author proposes some recommendations to promote the Cybersecurity Law in the press as follows:

- Providing information about Cybersecurity Law by main points, while increasing the frequency of distributing information. Each year press agencies organize two or three

vigorous information campaigns to attract people's attention. The Cybersecurity Law communication campaign can be organized at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the year. Of course, to implement this plan, it is necessary to have a unified direction and precise timing from the Central Commission for Communication and Education, the Ministry of Information and Communications to the press agencies.

– Newspapers need to pay attention to increasing the media's appeal about the law. There are many ways to attract readers, listeners, and viewers to this topic. First, online newspapers can take advantage of new media channels, for example, using long-form stories or mega-story to convey realistic results about the implementation of the Cybersecurity Law with specific reports and characters, each placed in a specific context, and vividly expressed through the integration of multimedia language including text, pictures, charts, and video clips. Second, radio and television stations should make use of people's voice in the media to popularize the value and meaning of the law. And third, it is important to take advantage of fanpages to launch information campaigns on the law, because this is where the online community is most active and presents a more chances to interact with the public.

– Forming a team of journalists who can react quickly to situations on social media. By forming a team of journalists who specialize in using social media to collect, evaluate, and react to information, news organizations can quickly respond to evolving situations online. This group of 'social media editors' with specialized skills can quickly detect malicious behavior online, and respond rapidly, providing information to correct the direction of the discussion, thereby ensuring that the Cybersecurity Law is implemented.

– Last but not least, the press needs to make an effort to constantly improve its quality and compete with social media to attract the public. Obviously, there is a fierce competition between the press and social media to occupy the venues of public information. If the press releases information slowly, inaccurately, and unattractively, the public will inevitably migrate to news sources on social media, which will result in their being influenced and attracted by bad and toxic news. In the competition

between the press and social media, the minds and talents of journalists are very much needed, as well as the social responsibility of the press agencies. An effective support of news sources is also the public agents who ensure that the disclosure of information to the press is in accordance with the Press Law. Only the effective support of news sources can ensure that the press can obtain news first, and most accurately to meet the requirement of the masses and handle fake news on the internet.

Tài liệu tham khảo

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- (3) Phuong Thuy, "Cybersecurity law on protecting the values, benefits, and security of the country," See: <http://cand.com.vn/Su-kien-Binh-luan-thoi-su/Luat-Security-managed-manufactured-vehicle-cac-gia-tri-loi-ich-an-ninh-cua-dat-nuoc-467621/>
- (4) "The Law on Cybersecurity is necessary and does not impede internet freedom." (See: tapchicongsan.org.vn, August 3, 2018).
- (5) "Cybersecurity Law contributes to national security, social safety," (See: baosonla.org.vn).