

---

---

## VIDEO FIRST: HOW GULF NEWS IS REINVENTING ONLINE NEWS VIDEO

Sabir HAQUE<sup>1</sup>

---

---

### Abstract

Online Video is a crucial component of the new media landscape accounting for much of the web traffic to mainstream news organizations website and social media platforms. Most of the news organizations have been building resources over the past years raising their proficiency in handling video. Today, services such as Facebook Live and Periscope adds live streaming functionality on News Organizations social media platforms. However, traditional news organizations face intense competition from digital native brand such as Vox Media and Huffington Post, as they as they both have the same goal: Getting more people to watch their video. The recent changes to Facebook ‘newsfeed’ algorithm have worsened the fate of legacy news publishers. In this paper, we analyze the strategies employed by Gulf News in the UAE to create compelling, shareable video content for online and social media. Based on semi-structured interviews with video producers, news editors, and journalist, the study found that Gulf News has steadily embraced and adopted new technology. Its early forays into digital video have placed Gulf News at a commanding position as they prepare for the next wave of disruptive technologies.

**Keywords:** Journalism, Online News Video, Social Media, News feed.

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD, Associate Professor, School of Media & Communication, MAHE Dubai, UAE, sabir@manipaldubai.com, ORCID No: 0000-0001-9516-7062.

*Makale Gönderilme Tarihi: 16 Nisan 2019. Makale Kabul Tarihi: 26 Mart 2020.*

*Makale Türü: Araştırma Makalesi*

---

---

## İLK VİDEO: GULF NEWS ÇEVİRİMİÇİ HABER VİDEOSUNU NASIL YENİDEN YARATIYOR?

Sabir HAQUE

---

---

### Öz

Online Video, ana haber kuruluşlarının web sitesine ve sosyal medya platformlarına giden web trafiğinin çoğunu oluşturan yeni medya ortamının önemli bir bileşenidir. Haber kuruluşlarının çoğu geçtiğimiz yıllarda video oluşturma konusundaki yeterliliklerini artırarak kaynaklar oluşturuyor. Bugün videoda düzenli haber başlıkları üretiyorlar ve Periscope ve Facebook Live gibi hizmetleri kullanarak canlı yayın sağlıyorlar. Bununla birlikte, eski yeni yayıncılar, her ikisi de aynı hedefe sahip oldukları için dijital yerli haber yayıncılarının yoğun rekabetiyle karşı karşıya kalmaktadır: Videolarını izlemeleri için daha fazla insan almak. Facebook'ta "newsfeed" algoritmasında yapılan son değişiklikler, eski haber yayıncılarının kaderini kötüleştirdi. Bu yazıda, Gulf News tarafından BAE'de kullanılan çevrimiçi ve sosyal medya için çekici, paylaşılabılır video içeriği oluşturmak için kullanılan stratejileri analiz ediyoruz. Video üreticileri, haber editörleri ve gazeteci ile yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelere dayanarak, Gulf News'in sürekli olarak yeni teknolojiyi benimsediğini ve benimsediğini tespit ettik. Dijital videoya yaptığı ilk baskısı, Gulf News'i yıkıcı teknolojilerin bir sonraki dalgasına hazırlanırken emrinde bir konuma getirdi.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Gazetecilik, Online Haber Videosu, Sosyal Medya, Haber Akışı.

## Introduction

It's an exciting time for news video consumers online. At one end are the startups such as BuzzFeed, Mashable, NowThis, Vox Media, Huffington Post, Upworthy and the numerous few bursting into the online and social media landscape in less than a decade. On the other end are the legacy news media led globally by The New York Times, The Washington Post and Network News Organization. Locally every country with a decent Internet Penetration will offer its digital readers the choice of engaging with news video produced by both ends of the spectrum. Internet Video consumption has been on the rise evident from the study by (Purcell, 2010) which estimates over 70% of all internet users watch or download online videos and 14% of them post videos themselves. The long-lasting effects of such a phenomenon were starkly evident during the Arab Spring as the success of citizen videographers bought together citizens for anti-government protests shaking the very foundation of long-standing regimes. Legacy News organization tided over the first wave of disruption by news websites are now navigating through the second wave of disruption characterized by the rise of social media and video-enabled Internet (Pablo J. Boczkowski, 2004; Domingo, 2008; Kalogeropoulos, Cherubini, & Newman, 2016; Meeker & Wu, 2017).

Video Sharing site YouTube has influenced the news organization's attitude towards online video while Facebook has clearly outlined the importance of video content on its NewsFeed (Plantin, Lagoze, Edwards, & Sandvig, 2018). Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced that Facebook would transition into a 'Video First Platform' in 2017. However, it was back in 2014, when Zuckerberg hinted that the site's newest challenge was to prepare more Video rich format on people's feed. At the Facebook's F8 developer conference in April 2016, Zuckerberg said in 10 years *"video will look like as big of a shift in the way we all share and communicate as mobile has been."* (Hunter-Hart, 2017). By 2017, people were already watching 100 million hours of video on Facebook every day. The data is consistent with the Cisco Visual Networking Index study in 2017 which found that 75 percent of mobile data traffic will come from video content by 2021 (Cisco, 2017). Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat places the video at the heart of their strategies for growth (Girod, Ericsson, Resnik, & Färber, 2002). The growth also attributes to Facebook's expansion to new video formats and live streaming capabilities. The acquisition of Oculus (VR Device maker) is starting to see the dividends, as more than 1 million hours

of video was seen on Samsung VR gear alone. Are news organization and the journalist prepared for the next stage of digital convergence?

Since Facebook Live became widely available in 2016, news organization have been experimenting with the social media network live stream option to draw audiences to their Facebook page. It provides an opportunity for news organizations to bring in the broader audience – which is another incentive for publishers to maximize their reach. Social Media platform offering live streaming option is very alluring since it requires only a smartphone with internet capability and the app (Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2012). What used to be a complex technical feat, requiring a broadcast camera, satellite uplink is today reduced to just tapping an app and going live. The result is a brand-new world of video stories that challenge the visual narrative of eyewitness accounts within and outside. Once passive witnesses can now become active witnesses providing journalist to amplify an event and reach out to live audiences (Zelizer, 2007). Mobile technology has transformed journalistic work sparking a new mode of newsgathering where a journalist can record and deliver stories from the field instantaneously. (Jeske, Briggs, & Coventry, 2016).

The pressure of the digital convergence represented by digital and multimedia journalism afflicts both newspaper and television news organization as the audience for both are dwindling. Moreover, the long-standing differences in the workplace model for both journalistic sub-groups take an interesting turn as they both intersect when producing video stories. (Mary A Bock, 2012) outlines the difference between the Newspaper and Television Journalist nature of video narratives:

*Newspaper journalists are taking advantage of their temporal freedom on the web to create longer, more mimetic video stories that let the images and subjects reveal themselves. Television journalists, still slaves to the clock, continue to use the diegetic form, using a direct and declarative language to tell the audience what is unfolding before it. (p.12)*

For the consumers of online news video, the information acquired is referred to as “getting there” or “being there.” Reading an online news story is considered as “getting there,” and watching an accompanying video is considered “being there.” (Wise, Bolls, & Schaefer, 2008). When a video is attached with a written piece in convergence journalism, the reader and story tend to get closer, and the very nature of its ‘shareability’ denotes a new means of news delivery and consumption.

In convergence journalism, an attached video to a written piece will bring the readers closer to the story and due to its 'shareability.' (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016) the likelihood of that story shared on social media platforms brings us into the discussion of the new means of news delivery and consumption.

Social Media platforms and news publishers are more enmeshed than ever before. Pre-dominance of social media witnessed different media competing for news delivery, but nowadays news produced in one medium would get distributed and shared across mediums. It's a common practice today as a video clip delivered by television broadcasters will be available on its podcast station, website and its numerous social media platforms. Digital technology drives the convergence of various media forms (Friedberg, 2002).

Visual can increase engagement which is often the primary objective of news publishers. Facebook says live videos generate ten times more comment than regular ones. News publishers are progressively pushing live videos to their subscribers. Audience led form of journalism is by no means a new phenomenon anymore but posting live videos on social media platform has made one-touch publishing a regular feature of the contemporary media environment. It creates a narrative string of live documentation, and due to its social circulation, the issue is picked up by a news organization, which in turn leads to further social conversation. Live Video is creating a cycle of social media videos, which has led to news publisher's media coverage of the event thus generating heightened public awareness (Tang, Venolia, & Inkpen, 2016). Facebook has spent more than 50 million dollars in 2016 paying publishers and celebrities to create a LIVE video on the social network. These deals make sense for a TV studio and movie houses which already make long-form videos for TV, but it's unclear if digital publishers will take the bait. Such moves by social media platform raise the question on behalf of news publishers if they have enough staff to create live videos and how much they are ready to scale such efforts (Kalogeropoulos & Nielsen, 2018).

The question of ethics plagues the social media network like Facebook, Google and Twitter as it has faced the ire of regulatory bodies on 'Fake News' and online privacy. Social Media Platforms do not adhere to the ethics followed by journalists as such ethical issues include verification, transparency, accuracy, and news agenda-setting. Numerous ethical lapses has tarnished Facebook's reputation when it comes to privacy protection. In March 2018, Facebook was caught in a major data breach scandal in which a

political consulting firm – Cambridge Analytica – pulled out the personal data of more than 87 million Facebook users without their consent.

The regular Facebook user as they go live do not see themselves as journalists nor should they be supposed to. Such unbridled view of the world begs us to become voyeurs. As live streaming videos enhance our experience of the world, they also tend to trade in the ugly and profane.

It's imperative to understand how online news video has: 1) Redefined Traditional News Publishers approach towards video content creation. 2) Enabling the production, distribution of video content freed up by affordable hardware and connectivity 3) Journalistic consideration as the intersection of newspaper and television video storytelling creates new challenges for convergence reporting.

## **Literature Review**

The study of the digitization of news and its implications for journalist and the business of news creation in the 1980s and 1990s mostly considered news production and distribution practices. The changing nature of the newsroom due to its digital editions was documented by (P. J. Boczkowski, 2002) while (Domingo, Quandt, Heinonnen, Singer, & Vujnovic, 2008) investigated into the evolving journalistic culture. From the initial protectionism of the print version of the newspaper to the 'fear-driven' changes to the newsroom, the publishers engaged with the digital media and negotiated its interface with social media. As online media made way for social media, smart devices dominated by the platform such as Facebook and Google took up a large share of advertising and attention. Studies of (Deuze, 2004; Deuze, Bruns, & Neuberger, 2007; Maxwell & Miller, 2011; Nguyen, 2008) provided the grounds of adaptation seen across legacy media publishers and evolution of journalistic values on social media platforms. (Bock, 2011; Mary Angela Bock, 2012) investigates the work practices of video journalist and how they operate for both broadcasters and websites. The way news organizations started producing video content and newsroom grappled with the task of uploading videos online, and its various challenges are well documented. While the difficulties of identifying news stories and letting its consumers also influence the decision-making process provided the continuing changes within the digital context of the media discourse (Doyle, 2015; Schifferes et al., 2014). The 'one-man band' band of a multimedia journalist as termed by (Bock, 2011) faces much resistance in the newsroom as the solo journalist was expected to handle multiple job roles juggling various responsibilities for multi-platform submission.

The shrinking advertising market for Newspapers and Network Television has forced them to relook at the conventional role of a journalist and supporting crew it requires. The hiring of videographers in the legacy news organization is a regular feature, and the demand for a variety of skills associated with convergence journalism is observed (Hoffman, 2013; Pincus, Wojcieszak, & Boomgarden, 2017). Convergence is observed when a journalist can move freely between print and television fulfilling the requirement of a complex media environment. The concept of convergence is a precursor to the various assumptions made on the future of journalism industry (Klinenberg, 2005). The term used for the unification of the various news making process into one unit is “convergence-continuum.” The dynamic model which illustrates the behavior-based partnership between newspapers, TV channels and web-based news organization as they develop cross-media alliances.

News Video and the its access pattern was analyzed by (Acharya, Smith, & Parnes, 1999) when its reception was not widely accepted as today. The researchers observed cyclic access pattern as video watching activity differs between weekends and weekdays. Video Reportage was traditionally within the domain of Television news, with its emphasis on real-time programming, dramatic presentation with reporters on the ground. It contrasted with the textual class of television journalists (Hallin & Gitlin, 1994; McManus, 1994; Singer, 2004) as the adoption of video technology in the print news organization activates tension to the professional identity of a newspaper journalist.

As part of Facebook’s own admission, Video get priority over other forms of media, and it’s been well documented (Kant & Xu, 2016). News publishers are forced to change their social media strategy as it gets constantly shaped by the platform companies (Kleis Nielsen & Ganter, 2018). The focus on video by news publishers is driven by the fact that over the years, there has been a significant increase in the consumption of online videos. Video on Demand services is threatening the traditional domain of Network Television. The success of Netflix at the cost of conventional TV Network is an excellent example of how video-on-demand services and video sharing websites will dominate the future (Allen, Feils, & Disbrow, 2014). None of the video-on-demand or social media platform focuses on news content. Most of the growth in online videos are limited to third-party social media platforms. As per (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2016) study, a majority of the consumers still prefer text over video. Be it video or writing; the news publishers need to maintain a strong presence on social media, as it is

increasingly the place where they can distribute content and engage with their readers. Based on the above discussion, we ask:

RQ1: Do the online readers prefer video over text when it comes to news consumption on social media platforms?

RQ2: Use of the news portal and social media platform to deal with Breaking News Situations and Daily News Bulletin.

RQ3: How has Facebook Live or similar services helped to increase the engagement with readers? Has it redefined the role and function of a journalist?

RQ4: What is the investment in workforce and resources in the news video production and how is it energizing the digital advertising for the news publisher

RQ5: What are the future strategies to deal with augmented reality and 360-degree immersive video?

## **Methodology**

To understand the way news video became a part of legacy news organizations in the UAE, Gulf News is naturally the first choice for being the most widely circulated and most widely followed news portal in the UAE. The selection of the team members from Gulf News was based on a detailed discussion with senior editors of the news outlet. Based on their recommendations, the team involved with the news video creation process and social media curation were contacted for an in-depth interview. The interviewing process is believed to be the most effective as established by (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002) where a journalist is good subjects for an in-depth interview, the study conducted eight in-depth interviews with Senior Editors, Digital Content Editors, Video Managers and journalists who closely work with the social media team.

The interviews began with semi-structured questions relating to opportunities and challenges of the news production process, specific incidents of breaking news and how the staff dealt with the situations; questions on investment and advertising revenue was only discussed with senior editors; specific questions on video technology was aimed at news video producers only; while reporters were quizzed on the newsroom structure and practices on ground.



The interviews were conducted by telephone between August 2018 and December 2018 by the author. Each conversation began with an introduction and relevance of the study for journalist and video producers on the ground. Next, the author proceeded with the semi-structured questions, which was shared with the participants beforehand, followed by a probing question leading to an in-depth discussion on the study's primary objectives. Each interview ranged between 45 to 1 hour. The Question development was based on the literature review and was modified for a UAE perspective relating to the news routines of journalists.

The audio recording of the full interview was transcribed. Personal identifiers were removed only for the journalists as they were promised anonymity. The researcher has written permission of the senior hub editor, who besides being one of the participants, delegated a digital content editor and video manager for the interview. One interview text was used to assign codes to a section initially, modifying and adding codes as the process went on. Relations were identified between the codes and emerging themes revealing the similarities and differences in the data(Tanner, Forde, Besley, & Weir, 2012). The themes which emerged from all the interviews included:

1. Drive for convergence journalism in the newsroom and how Gulf News have benefitted being its early adopter
2. Tackling Content distribution across various platforms and workflow followed in Gulf News during breaking news situations and narratives for news video.
3. Monetizing content and the role of various social media platforms with its limitation
4. Strategies for increasing engagement with its readers and innovative measures to drive engagement in particular after Facebook's changes to its algorithm
5. Types of new video formats which has made Gulf News successful and its ethical considerations
6. Role definition of Multimedia Journalist and How Gulf news is preparing for the future.

## **Findings and Discussions**

It's imperative for a news organization to achieve "economics of multifirmity," as (Doyle, 2002) explains the cross-media expansion so that the same content can be shared through a "common distribution infrastructure." It will enable organizational and technical amalgamation of

the newsroom where a multi-skilled journalist can help expand the newsroom capabilities for new media technologies.

### **Gulf News: Building Convergent Newsroom**

Meher Murshed, Senior Hub Editor at Gulf News with over 30 years of experience and having spent 20 years in Gulf News itself, speaks nostalgically about the massive operation in 2007-08 when the entire Gulf Newsprint and digital operations came under one roof.

*We pushed digital first. So, from the web first, we pushed digital first. We brought in web stories that went straight online, and we brought in videos. So, there was that significant addition. Moreover, then we were among, and I think we would probably be safe to say, we had the first readers desk. We did reader journalism. So, our readers were like our journalist. A fire broke, or there was an incident, they would send us pictures, they would send us tip-offs. We realized that our readers wanted to play a more significant part in the storytelling. So, with social media today, we get to engage with our readers.*

During Media Convergence, Video Journalism is a natural outgrowth; it is seen to be product and manifestation of technology, organization, and presentation. We have seen newspapers and radio stations publishing videos on their websites. Video Journalism was involved in the newsgathering process. These types of solo journalism were also prevalent in the TV market as well (Potter, Matsa, & Mitchell, 2013). Video Manager, Logan Fish, Gulf News explained the production workflow. A majority of the videos they do supplement the material collected by the journalist on the ground. As the journalist is asking the questions to the interviewee, the videographer will film the interview and then edit it for a specific video story. We have come a long way from the point of view where online journalism was considered as a medium where already produced content is re-aired (Thornton & Keith, 2009). The narrative used for news videos online is a fresh product of original content for the web. Gulf News has aggressively invested in online news videos. These early forays into digital video certainly placed the entire social media team at an advantage, as their technical capability increases opening them up for more experimentation such as Live TV. Keeping a tab on the consumption pattern of their readers is a top priority. As Anupa Kurien, Social Media and Digital Content Editor explains their foray into Live News bulletin on Facebook.

*And then along the way, we also saw how consumption was changing, so we introduced the Facebook live news broadcast. Earlier we used to do the same kind of show, but it was related to a specific story only. It would be a big story, breaking story that is happening, the story will explain what is happening. However, now along with that what we've done is we've started to do daily broadcast, based on the news selection of the day. So, the traditional form of video news storytelling still exist, but we push that content on Instagram's IGTV. Thus, both kind of news goes out and is consumed.*

### **Gulf News: Dealing with new platforms and technology**

Anupa further explains how the content needs to be tailor-made for different platform. That is the key to success in reaching out to the variety of readers available on each platform. So, just posting content, doesn't necessarily mean the material is going to be consumed. It makes the game much sharper, which entrusts a lot of responsibility for the social media managers to know the platform, know the audience. The intention is to be present, wherever the reader is. Gulf News has tried to be relevant in every platform. Be it snapchat or Instagram; the content needs to fit into each platform. She further explains how it deals with the hottest social media platform at the moment: Instagram

*if you look at our Instagram account, we are the highest when it comes to publishing houses in the UAE across the board. It's a myth that people think that young people don't read that young people are not interested in news. The world is theirs, so they are interested. Moreover, it matters to them. It's the way they consume, that's different. Such challenges push us to be a better journalist.*

Gulf News broadcasts live news bulletin on their Facebook Page which covers International, Regional and Local News. Based on their observation of the reader's consumption pattern online, Gulf News introduced the daily Facebook Live News Bulletin. All the participants were optimistic about dealing with Facebook Live which adds the 'live' dimension to social broadcast. (Raman, Tyson, & Sastry, 2018) equals it to YouTube for the simple fact that the video optionally remains available after the broadcast, making it similar to traditional user-generated content. The presence of both professional and amateur hands in this segment makes it a powerful platform to reckon with. News publishers are aware of the engagement potential after the live broadcast is over. News publishers have an edge as

the number of views accounted on Facebook Page account is far higher than regular user accounts.

Logan Fish, Video Manager, adds that live broadcast capability enhanced user engagement and enabled them to give real-time breaking news. The video manager further discussed which videos are most widely viewed in the UAE:

*In terms of what the demand from the consumer would be, we find that the most relevant and sort of viewed videos tend to be things that focus on local stories that appeals to people directly. It could be something as sort of as innocuous as how much its rained today to specific government policy changes in the UAE. So, local stories tend to be the stuff that people want to see more, and in the video medium, we can manage to explain that with visuals which can help a lot.*

Reporters who were part of the study, termed the video stories which are most popular today, also known as Explainer Videos are an example of lazy reporting. These videos are accompanied by music and overlay text which explains the visuals in the news story. Reporters do understand the limitation of production cost involved with creating a feature news story and a videographer accompanying reporters on site, but it should never compromise the quality of reporting nor its ethics. Meher, Senior Editor, cites the tagline of Gulf News: ‘Because it matters to you.’

*if it's just visual storytelling, the ethics of our journalism remain unchanged. We are just changing the platform. We are telling the story through another platform. So the ethics of our journalism stays intact. Because it matters to you, it needs to be accurate, and it needs to be reliable*

Speed and reliability go hand in hand, but how accurate can reporting be during a breaking news situation? Meher compares data points of Gulf News which reflects how 80 percent of their traffic to the website comes from users logged in via their mobile phones. Their top stories featured on the homepage of the Gulf News website does exceptionally well. A story which may not do well in the site will do well in the social media channels. It will do better on Facebook or YouTube. Although YouTube videos are regarded to be a very unpredictable platform, it will do exceptionally well or poorly, and it depends on the story. Local Stories are the most viewed. Second, is the news on celebrity which is part of their tabloid section.

‘Disaggregation’ is the result of the rise of the social media platform. To put it squarely, it is the process placing various topics such as economics, sport, politics, fashion, entertainment, arts, and even classified advertising as a niche segment rather than under a collective one.

The most remarkable thing about social media is the way Journalism has the power to unite across all platforms. Moreover, a story in the Print Editions gets a life of its own in the social media platforms. As compared to just the print editions, the effectiveness of its social media platform in doing something actionable is remarkable. Anupa shares an incident which happened two years ago:

*We had a print story, about a man losing his son near the Mushrif Park during the New York Celebration. He called a print Journalist with Gulf news who filed a story immediately the next day. The story was shared on social media as well. One of the Gulf News readers, who was taking a metro, saw a boy sitting on a bench near the metro station. He left a message on Gulf News social media pages. The commuter mentioned, he will return to tend to the boy but had to first go to his office and return after informing his supervisors. The Gulf News team asked the commuter to take a picture of the boy to ensure that the lead was authentic. The reporter then spoke to the Father and after confirmation, asked people on social media who were around the metro station to help the boy out. You would not believe the amount of many people who went out there, looked for him, actually got him food and spent time in his company so that he would wait. We managed actually to reunite him with his father. To me, that was the power of journalism.*

### **Gulf News: Monetizing the platforms**

Just like the connectivity with people, social media has also upended the way advertisers spend on print publications. Publications here in the UAE can’t ignore these trends. The market fragmentation has driven the traditional advertisers from print towards online (Blom, Morgan, Zube, & Bowe, 2014). After speaking to reporters who has worked with both Khaleej Times and Gulf News over the last decade, they confirmed that both the publication took on Digital Advertising many years ago and had been slowly harnessing its capability as today its evident how the entire action is gradually moving from print to social media in terms of its advertising revenue. The researcher enquired about monetizing strategies of videos on social media. Logan responded:

*Yes, we do, we try to monetize all content on social media except certain sensitive subjects we publish. This has been continuing for over four to five years now. As compared to Google, Facebook monetization works; differently, I would say less efficiently at the moment. However, it's been working out great for us since the time we entered this space of advertising.*

Facebook's advertising relies on building a loyal and reliable relationship with their audiences (Hazlett, 2010). As the focus remains on building brand awareness through social media platforms and built on the credibility of the news publisher while developing its customer databases. Researchers studying Facebook early days of existence (Holzner & Steven, 2009) regards Facebook's marketing system as a social graph system. It relies on Friendvertising, where the users copy the behavior of their friends in the network because they trust them. (Vander Veer, 2011) points out how news feed is the most critical feature for viral marketing. When quizzed about the monetization options available in Gulf News, Anupa explains the role of website and different formats of monetization.

*we have been there since the inception, we have pushed for various forms of monetization, and that has worked, and we do get pretty good monetization on social media. Initially, the market was a bit confused, but now they are clear on the kind of monetization they're looking for.*

### **Gulf News: Handling unpredictable Facebook Algorithm**

News Organization has been wary of Facebook news algorithm as it would influence the way most Facebook users see the news. The publisher must grapple with the uncertainty surrounded due to non-transparency from Facebook on the algorithm it employs. However, Gulf News Social Media Team is confident about how they handled this recent transition. Also, it clarified on how stories are filed by reporters across the platforms and its print editions. Anupa explains:

*We do a Facebook live coverage of an event like the recently organized Asia Cup, which is done in tandem with the website. Some reporters are also filing video clips and photographs. Along with that, he or she is also filing for Facebook, which we then use to direct traffic back to the website. So, it's all part of a complete digital package. Thus, the feeds are sustaining pretty well and, when the algorithm shifted in Facebook we did see a dip, but now we are*

*bringing it back up because of the things that we are doing, primarily engaging the reader. If the content is engaging, you manage to go back up on the algorithm. Also, it's all organic, it's not paid for, which I think is necessary because we can only spend and boost so much. Unless it is organic, you are not going to be able to stay.*

While the demand for greater transparency over Facebook's algorithm continues, the publisher's most significant discomfort is the 'big data' manipulation that might occur (Boyd, 2015). Previous studies were limited to how they might shape social and economic life and were primarily focused on search engines. The critics called it a 'filter bubble' which contributed towards decreasing information diversity thus posing a serious threat to democracy. The focus moved toward the Facebook newsfeed as it provided little information on what they see on their timeline and why they are seeing. More than the users, it's the publishers who find itself on the warpath with Facebook on the algorithm changes (Cotter, Cho, & Rader, 2017). Facebook with the algorithm changes may want to return to just being a social network rather than be as a news publisher. Agencies worry that if Facebook offers a brand new way to communicate with people, they will soon put a premium on it (Cotter et al., 2017; Kitchin, 2017). Anupa offers datapoint on the effect of Facebook's algorithm on news publishers:

*Because of the change in algorithm, earlier if you had like more publishers would say they would get about 30-35% of their referral traffic from Facebook, now when Facebook changed their algorithm, it dropped to 18%. Because what they did was, because of the various privacy issues that came up if you don't engage with someone's content, then you get pushed down the timeline. So just because you are popping out much content, doesn't necessarily mean you're going to be seen. Which to me it doesn't reduce relevance; it just makes the game a lot sharper.*

Hopefully, this will motivate publishers to reduce their dependency on Facebook and further down the line, a shrunken role of Facebook will augur well for the publishing industry. The promises by Facebook on being a significant revenue driver with its ever-changing video strategy is seen with much pessimism today. The latest in the line of its renewed efforts is the launch of Facebook Watch. As a watch partner adds, "Facebook has made it clear that they want to reward intentional viewing and deprioritize accidental or passive viewing," (DigiDay, 2018).

## Conclusion

Convergence is a manifestation of technology, and how an organization deals with the change and canvasses its newsroom to transition is a key to its success. Experimentation is a costly affair and playing a catchup game with social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram can be quite demanding. News organizations need to tailor-make their content for multiple platforms continually, and it is evident from this study that Gulf News has reinvented its workflow continuously. Based on the interviews with editor, reporters, and video producer, it is evident that Gulf News seems to be highly effective in scrutinizing their operations, and their transition from print editions to online, including social media has been so far successful. The implementation of technological changes in the newsroom and their interface with video technology has maintained the journalist's occupation ideologies for each form of media. As the industry stares at the third round of disruption through augmented reality, virtual reality and artificial intelligence, Senior Hub Editor, Meher Murshed, is hopeful of the future *'...as it changes, we will be there, as technology changes and technology advances, we will adopt and embrace, the technology of the day...'*. Will the convergent newsroom be prompt enough to embrace 360 videos and augmented reality? It would depend on how they can offer compelling content to its followers using new technological platforms. Its success would motivate its advertisers to invest further.

News can no longer be limited to text for its online readers; it needs to offer a complete digital package on its social media platform and its website. They can feed into each other, channeling the referral traffic. The social media team will mushroom itself into an all-inclusive tech team capable of providing for a unified digital package for its readers. They need to be an astute observer of the winds of change in the social media landscape and empower the organization to expand its capabilities for the new media technologies. Increasing bandwidth in the UAE and the proliferation of mobile devices means video can be instant and affordable to the masses.

The number of videos produced by Gulf News has shot up over the years, which calls out for a more significant workforce and investment on video equipment. At the core, its visual storytelling and efficiency of the workflow. Video is immersive, and reporters and producers alike from the heydays of print journalism need to embrace the new form of storytelling. Khaleej Times is a key competitor in the region, and it would be interesting to compare how both fare in terms of technical competency and volume of



local content. Besides, they both face increasing competition from a deluge of video content produced by local digital-born news media.

Video Quality, in terms of storytelling, workflow, and video treatment, registers a big improvement. Technology plays a significant role, as the types of equipment have become smaller and easier to manage. One-man band and simplification of the workflow is the bedrock of its success. Skills behind the camera, the ability to edit video, adding a voice overfitting the story requirements is all it takes to put up a story online. Gulf News has invested in its video division, equipping standard video cameras and accessories for creating videos for the web. Although, video technology is innovating at a spiraling pace, and keeping pace with it can be a tough challenge. Since the move towards the production of the online video is pushed actively by social media platforms, news publishers such as Gulf News has adopted a far more active approach to online video. The last employee who joined the video team was a multimedia journalist, and she already came with all the skills needed for her to hit the ground running on day one. So, there as a minimum skill training, but more emphasis was on the daily operations of Gulf news and understanding its nuances. Does this mean news outlets like Gulf News should hire more video producers/editors than writers? The findings do not provide a clear understanding of that. If the leading mainstream news organizations in the UAE are building their infrastructure and workforce to deal with video storytelling, it has the potential to develop the marginal into the mainstream.

The role of reporters and how often they are featured in well-produced videos will shape the audience's understanding of the news outlet. Gulf News features reporters in its news bulletin, weather reports, and live video commentary from critical local events. These outreaches are essential for it's brand and building loyalty with its followers. A potential reader might not always seek out a written piece. However, a short video with sleek graphics summarizing headlines from the region may develop a better connection with a reporter and the publication. Nevertheless, it has been a tough transition for a print journalist. They need to talk like a person, not like a writer.

On the question of monetizing the social media platforms and advertising revenues, the news outlets actively push for digital-first and mobility-centric. They recognize the fact that disruption and innovation are the names of the game, and critical to capturing eyeballs. Dealing with Facebook and its online advertising methods has been a challenge for Gulf News. Its efficiency in targeting is overshadowed by the fact that it brings in lesser

revenues. However, fortunately, the local market has responded well to the changes Gulf News has bought into its monetizing strategies on social media platforms. It faces increasing challenges from the alternative digital-only news publishers.

The digital-only news segment in the UAE is thriving, with many publishers focuses on entertainment and soft news only. Gulf News needs to ensure are that they understand the demands of the millennials as they embrace news video, which is creating its unique narrative forms taking a break from the formats of Broadcast media. Traditional news outlets such as Gulf News and Khaleej Times need to embrace the Internet like a well-fitted suit even though they were not built for it initially. Skepticism about technology and changes it will bring needs to be kept aside, as they are inevitable, only then, they will never be relevant to their audiences. Gulf News, with its active reader base and engaging them in the storytelling process, they are assured of a commanding position as they prepare for the next wave of disruptive technologies.

## References

- Acharya, S., Smith, B. C., & Parnes, P. (1999). *Characterizing user access to videos on the world wide web*. Paper presented at the Multimedia Computing and Networking 2000.
- Allen, G., Feils, D., & Disbrow, H. (2014). The rise and fall of Netflix: what happened and where will it go from here? *Journal of the International Academy for Case Studies*, 20(1), 135.
- Blom, R., Morgan, J. S., Zube, P., & Bowe, B. J. (2014). Connecting real and virtual neighbors: The interplay between physical space, civic journalism, and online community. In *Digital Arts and Entertainment: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications* (pp. 824-838): IGI Global.
- Bock, M. A. (2011). Citizen video journalists and authority in narrative: Reviving the role of the witness. *Journalism*, 13(5), 639-653. doi:10.1177/1464884911421703
- Bock, M. A. (2012). Newspaper journalism and video: Motion, sound, and new narratives. *New media & society*, 14(4), 600-616.
- Bock, M. A. (2012). *Video journalism: Beyond the one-man band*: Peter Lang New York.

S. HAQUE

ÇAKÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi/ Journal of Institute of Social Sciences

Cilt/Volume: 11, Sayı/Number: 1, (Nisan/April 2020): 70-91 (Atf için/To cite).

- Boczkowski, P. J. (2002). The development and use of online newspapers: What research tells us and what we might want to know. *The handbook of new media pp*, 270-286
- Boczkowski, P. J. (2004). The processes of adopting multimedia and interactivity in three online newsrooms. *Journal of Communication*, 54(2), 197-213.
- Boyd, D. (2015). Untangling research and practice: What Facebook's "emotional contagion" study teaches us. *Research Ethics*, 12(1), 4-13. doi:10.1177/1747016115583379
- Cisco. (2017). *Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update, 2016–2021 White Paper*. Retrieved from <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/visual-networking-index-vni/mobile-white-paper-c11-520862.html>
- Cotter, K., Cho, J., & Rader, E. (2017). *Explaining the News Feed Algorithm: An Analysis of the "News Feed FYI" Blog*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems, Denver, Colorado, USA.
- Deuze, M. (2004). What is multimedia journalism? *Journalism Studies*, 5(2), 139-152.
- Deuze, M., & Bardoel, J. (2001). Network journalism: converging competences of media professionals and professionalism.
- Deuze, M., Bruns, A., & Neuberger, C. (2007). Preparing for an age of participatory news. *Journalism practice*, 1(3), 322-338.
- DeVito, M. A. (2017). From editors to algorithms: A values-based approach to understanding story selection in the Facebook news feed. *Digital Journalism*, 5(6), 753-773.
- DigiDay. (2018). The publisher's survival guide to the post-Facebook era. 19. <https://digiday.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Publishers-survival-guide-new-1.pdf>
- Domingo, D. (2008). Interactivity in the daily routines of online newsrooms: Dealing with an uncomfortable myth. *Journal of ComputerMediated Communication*, 13(3 SRC - GoogleScholar), 680-704.
- Domingo, D., Quandt, T., Heinonnen, A., Singer, S., & Vujnovic, M. (2008). Participatory journalism practices in the media and beyond: An international comparative study of initiatives in online journalism. *Journalism practice*, 2(3 SRC - GoogleScholar), 326-342.

S. HAQUE

ÇAKÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi/ Journal of Institute of Social Sciences

Cilt/Volume: 11, Sayı/Number: 1, (Nisan/April 2020): 70-91 (Atf için/To cite).

- Doyle, G. (2002). *Media ownership: The economics and politics of convergence and concentration in the UK and European media*: Sage.
- Doyle, G. (2015). Multi-platform media: How newspapers are adapting to the digital era. In *The Routledge Companion to the Cultural Industries* (pp. 125-135): Routledge.
- Friedberg, A. L. (2002). South-west Asia after the Taliban. *Survival*, 44(1), 51-68. doi:10.1080/00396330212331343232
- Girod, B., Ericsson, S., Resnik, Y. A., & Färber, N. (2002). Method and apparatus for providing scalable pre-compressed digital video with reduced quantization based artifacts. In: Google Patents.
- Hallin, D. C., & Gitlin, T. (1994). The Gulf War as popular culture and television drama. *Taken by storm: The media, public opinion, and US foreign policy in the Gulf War*, 149-163.
- Harcup, T., & O'neill, D. (2016). What is news? *Journalism Studies*.
- Hazlett, K. (2010). *Marketing to the Social Web: How Digital Customer Communities Build Your Business (2nd ed.)* 20102 Larry Weber. *Marketing to the Social Web: How Digital Customer Communities Build Your Business (2nd ed.)*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2009. 230 pp. \$24.95 (hardback) [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com) (Vol. 27).
- Hoffman, S. (2013). *Updating the Journalist'S Toolbox: an Analysis of the Multimedia Skills That Journalism Graduates Need and Employers Want in Today'S Converged Newsroom*. Oklahoma State University,
- Holzner, & Steven. (2009). *Facebook marketing : leverage social media to grow your business*.
- Hunter-Hart, M. (2017, 26 July 2017). Mark Zuckerberg Reveals How Facebook Will Change in the Next 2 Years: Its all about Video. *Innovation*. Retrieved from <https://www.inverse.com/article/34729-facebook-future-mark-zuckerberg-video-earnings-call>
- Jeske, D., Briggs, P., & Coventry, L. (2016). Exploring the relationship between impulsivity and decision-making on mobile devices. *Personal Ubiquitous Comput.*, 20(4), 545-557. doi:10.1007/s00779-016-0938-4
- Kalogeropoulos, A., Cherubini, F., & Newman, N. (2016). The future of online news video.

S. HAQUE

ÇAKÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi/ Journal of Institute of Social Sciences

Cilt/Volume: 11, Sayı/Number: 1, (Nisan/April 2020): 70-91 (Atf için/To cite).

Kalogeropoulos, A., & Nielsen, R. K. (2018). Investing in Online Video News. *Journalism Studies*, 19(15), 2207-2224. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2017.1331709

Kant, V., & Xu, J. (2016). News Feed FYI: Taking into Account Live Video When Ranking Feed. *Facebook Newsroom*, 12.

Kitchin, R. (2017). Thinking critically about and researching algorithms. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20(1), 14-29. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2016.1154087

Kleis Nielsen, R., & Ganter, S. A. (2018). Dealing with digital intermediaries: A case study of the relations between publishers and platforms. *New Media & Society*, 20(4), 1600-1617.

Klinenberg, E. (2005). Convergence: News production in a digital age. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 597(1), 48-64.

Lasorsa, D. L., Lewis, S. C., & Holton, A. E. (2012). Normalizing Twitter: Journalism practice in an emerging communication space. *Journalism Studies*, 13(1), 19-36.

Lindlof, T., & Taylor, B. (2002). Asking, listening, and telling. *Qualitative communication research methods*, 170-208.

Maxwell, R., & Miller, T. (2011). OLD, NEW AND MIDDLE-AGED MEDIA CONVERGENCE. *Cultural Studies*, 25(4-5), 585-603. doi:10.1080/09502386.2011.600550

McManus, J. H. (1994). *Market-driven journalism: Let the citizen beware?* : Sage Publications.

Meeker, M., & Wu, L. (2017). *Internet trends 2017*. Paper presented at the Code Conference, Preso da: <http://www.kpcb.com/internet-trends>.

Nguyen, A. (2008). FACING "THE FABULOUS MONSTER". *Journalism Studies*, 9(1), 91-104. doi:10.1080/14616700701768147

Pincus, H., Wojcieszak, M., & Boomgarden, H. (2017). Do multimedia matter? Cognitive and affective effects of embedded multimedia journalism. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 94(3), 747-771.

Plantin, J.-C., Lagoze, C., Edwards, P. N., & Sandvig, C. (2018). Infrastructure studies meet platform studies in the age of Google and Facebook. *New media & society*, 20(1), 293-310.

S. HAQUE

ÇAKÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi/ Journal of Institute of Social Sciences

Cilt/Volume: 11, Sayı/Number: 1, (Nisan/April 2020): 70-91 (Atf için/To cite).

- Potter, D., Matsa, K.-E., & Mitchell, A. (2013). Local TV: Audience declines as revenue bounces back. *The State of the News Media, 2013*.
- Purcell, K. (2010). *The state of online video: Pew Internet & American Life Project* Washington, DC.
- Raman, A., Tyson, G., & Sastry, N. (2018). Facebook (A)Live? Are live social broadcasts really broadcasts? *eprint arXiv:1803.02791*, arXiv:1803.02791.
- Schifferes, S., Newman, N., Thurman, N., Corney, D., Göker, A., & Martin, C. (2014). Identifying and Verifying News through Social Media. *Digital Journalism*, 2(3), 406-418. doi:10.1080/21670811.2014.892747
- Singer, J. B. (2004). Strange Bedfellows? The Diffusion of Convergence in Four News. *Journalism Studies pp*, 5(1 SRC - GoogleScholar), 3-18.
- Tang, J. C., Venolia, G., & Inkpen, K. M. (2016). *Meerkat and Periscope: I Stream, You Stream, Apps Stream for Live Streams*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, San Jose, California, USA.
- Tanner, A., Forde, K. R., Besley, J. C., & Weir, T. (2012). Broadcast Journalism Education and the Capstone Experience. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 67(3), 219-233. doi:10.1177/1077695812444097
- Thornton, L.-J., & Keith, S. M. (2009). From Convergence to Webvergence: Tracking the Evolution of Broadcast-Print Partnerships through the Lens of Change Theory. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 86(2), 257-276. doi:10.1177/107769900908600201
- Vander Veer, E. A. (2011). *Facebook: the missing manual: " O'Reilly Media, Inc."*.
- Wise, K., Bolls, P. D., & Schaefer, S. R. (2008). Choosing and reading online news: How available choice affects cognitive processing. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 52(1), 69-85.
- Zelizer, B. (2007). On "Having Been There": "Eyewitnessing" as a Journalistic Key Word. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 24(5), 408-428. doi:10.1080/07393180701694614