

DIGITAL-BASED NEWS PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY IN RESPONDING THE CHALLENGES OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE

Zeintika Mandasari¹

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Tebing Tinggi Deli

E-mail: mandasarizeintika@gmail.com^{1*}

Received : 01 August 2025

Published : 22 September 2025

Revised : 11 August 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijeas.v5i5.3998>

Accepted : 13 September 2025

Link Publish : <https://radjapublika.com/index.php/IJEAS>

Abstract

This study aims to analyze digital-based news production management strategies in addressing the challenges of convergence, with a focus on content planning, newsroom workflow management, digital technology utilization, and the application of journalistic ethics and professionalism. The research method employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection techniques including in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. The informants included editors-in-chief, editors, content producers, and journalists at several media outlets that have adopted a multiplatform newsroom model. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques through stages of reduction, categorization, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that digital-based news production management strategies include early multiplatform planning, newsroom integration to improve coordination, the use of content management systems (CMS) and analytics tools for production efficiency, and the implementation of strict ethical guidelines through verification and fact-checking mechanisms. The findings also revealed obstacles such as limited human resources, organizational cultural resistance, and ethical dilemmas stemming from the dominance of audience data.

Keywords: *News Production Management, Media Convergence, Multiplatform, Digital Journalism*

INTRODUCTION

Developments in communication and information technology have driven major changes in the world of mass media. News production processes, previously linear, simple, and print-based, have shifted to digital, multiplatform platforms. This change is known as media convergence, the integration of various media forms into a single news production and distribution ecosystem (Jenkins, 2006; Deuze, 2008). Convergence presents opportunities for media outlets to reach a wider audience, but it also presents significant managerial challenges. In the era of convergence, media organizations can no longer rely on a single medium as the primary channel for information dissemination. The public now consumes news through various channels, such as news portals, social media, online television, and mobile applications. This demands a production strategy that can design content to suit the characteristics of the platform while maintaining journalistic quality (Dailey et al., 2005; García-Avilés & Carvajal, 2008). Media outlets that fail to adapt risk losing relevance to an increasingly discerning digital audience.

Beyond platform changes, convergence also impacts newsroom work patterns. Journalists are required to master multiplatform skills, from writing online articles and producing short videos to managing real-time audience interactions via social media (Deuze, 2017; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021). This work process requires production management that is not only efficient but also adaptable to technological dynamics and consumer behavior. Previous studies have shown that newsrooms that successfully integrate across platforms typically employ two production management models: an integrated newsroom and a cross-media newsroom. The integrated model emphasizes centralizing the production flow within a single newsroom, while the cross-media model emphasizes looser yet more flexible collaboration between units (García-Avilés & Carvajal, 2008; Salaverría et al., 2007). The choice of model is heavily influenced by the organizational culture, technological capabilities, and business strategy of each media outlet. However, the digital transformation is not always smooth. Many newsrooms face de-convergence, a failure to integrate due to resistance from organizational culture, high workloads, and limited infrastructure (L. Diana, 2017; Fadillah, 2022). This phenomenon demonstrates that technology adoption alone is insufficient; a well-developed

production management strategy is needed for convergence to truly improve content quality and media sustainability. Another pressure arises from the fast-paced, real-time nature of digital news. The concept of ambient journalism explains how news is now constantly available through social media, messaging apps, and push notifications (Hermida, 2010; Westlund, 2013). This situation has shortened news production cycles, requiring newsrooms to adapt quickly while maintaining accuracy. Without a clear management strategy, production speed can lead to decreased quality and an increased risk of disinformation. In the Indonesian context, several studies have revealed the dynamics of media convergence implementation. Derviana's (2019) study found that *Republika* has begun implementing cross-platform integration, but it remains limited to the information gathering stage. Diana (2017) highlighted the case of de-convergence at *Tempo* due to organizational culture and product quality. Fadillah (2022) found that local media outlets like *Pikiran Rakyat* still focused on multi-platform distribution, but had not yet fully integrated editorial management. These findings confirm that production management strategy is a key factor in determining the success of convergence in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the practice of mobile journalism (MoJo) has emerged. Journalists using simple devices like smartphones are able to produce news quickly, flexibly, and cost-effectively. However, MoJo practices also pose challenges related to quality standards, ethics, and professional boundaries between journalists and content creators (Firmansyah, 2024; Srisaracam, 2019). This situation reinforces the urgency of formulating production management strategies that can accommodate new technologies while upholding the principles of professional journalism. From an ethical perspective, experts such as Kovach and Rosenstiel (2021) emphasize that the basic principles of journalism must be maintained, despite the acceleration of production in the digital era. Principles such as truth, verification, and loyalty to the public must serve as ethical safeguards in every news production decision (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021; Deuze, 2008). Therefore, digital-based production management strategies should not be solely oriented towards efficiency and speed, but must also be grounded in journalistic integrity. In practice, the challenges of media convergence require editorial management to integrate technologies such as content management systems (CMS), workflow engines, and audience analytics into the production process. These technologies can help editors understand audience behavior, manage cross-platform content distribution, and increase public engagement (Pavlik, 1999; Jenkins, 2006). Without leveraging these technologies, media outlets will struggle to compete in a measurable and data-driven digital ecosystem. Previous research also emphasizes that convergence is not simply about technological innovation but also about changing work cultures. Boczkowski (2004) points out that newsroom digitalization requires a recombination of structures and practices, not just the acquisition of new equipment. This means that production management strategies must consider organizational aspects, such as journalist training, workload distribution, and cross-departmental coordination (Boczkowski, 2004; Hermida, 2010).

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Concept of Media Convergence

Media convergence refers to the integration of technology, content, and organization within the modern media ecosystem. Jenkins (2006) emphasized that convergence is not simply a blending of technologies, but also involves a culture of increasingly active audience participation. Salaverría, García-Avilés, and Masip (2007) added that convergence is a multidimensional process that encompasses the realms of technology, business, and professions. Convergence can also be understood as a spectrum. Dailey, Demo, and Spillman (2005) introduced the convergence continuum model, which describes stages ranging from mere co-promotion to full integration in content production.

2. News Production Management in the Digital Age

The digital transformation has changed the way news is planned, produced, and distributed. García-Avilés and Carvajal (2008) identified two models of multimedia production: the integrated newsroom, which emphasizes centralization, and the cross-media newsroom, which allows for more flexible collaboration between platforms. These models illustrate strategic choices that must be adapted to the structure of media organizations. Furthermore, Boczkowski (2004) emphasized that newsroom digitalization is not only a technological revolution, but also a recombination of structures and work practices. Pavlik (2001) added that management strategies must utilize digital tools such as content management systems (CMS) and audience analytics to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

3. Ethics and Professionalism in Digital Journalism

The shift to digital raises serious questions about the quality and ethics of journalism. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2021) assert that core principles of journalism—such as truthfulness, verifiability, and loyalty to the public—must

be maintained despite the pressures of production speed. Deuze (2017) added that modern journalism is increasingly fluid, requiring editorial management to maintain a balance between work flexibility and professional values.

4. Media Convergence

Derviana (2019) found that Republika has adopted cross-platform integration, although it is still limited to the content collection stage. Diana (2017) highlighted de-convergence at Tempo due to resistance from organizational culture and workload. Fadillah (2022) observed that local media outlets like Pikiran Rakyat still focus on multiplatform platforms without integrated management. Meanwhile, Srisaracam's (2019) research in Thailand can serve as a regional benchmark, demonstrating organizational factors as a determinant of the success of cross-media strategies. These findings underscore the need for a more comprehensive and contextual digital-based news production management strategy in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of digital-based news production management strategies in addressing the challenges of media convergence. A qualitative approach was chosen because the phenomenon of convergence is best understood through the context, meaning, and actual practices occurring in newsrooms. As explained by Creswell (2018) and Yin (2014), qualitative research allows researchers to comprehensively explore the experiences of subjects, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding. The research locations were purposively selected, specifically media organizations that have adopted or are in the process of moving towards digital convergence. This selection was made to ensure that the data obtained is relevant to the research focus. The research subjects included editors-in-chief, digital editors, content producers, and journalists directly involved in the multiplatform news production management process. By involving these key actors, it is hoped that the strategies used by media organizations in managing digital news production can be illustrated.

Data collection was conducted using three main techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted to obtain direct information from informants regarding their strategies, policies, and the challenges they face. Second, participant observation was conducted in newsrooms to obtain a concrete picture of news planning, production, and distribution activities. Third, a documentation study was conducted by reviewing editorial guidelines, internal reports, and organizational documents relevant to the convergence policy. The combination of these three techniques was intended to ensure sufficient completeness and depth of data collection. The data obtained was analyzed using thematic analysis. The initial stage of analysis began with data reduction, which involved sorting information from interviews, observations, and documents according to the research focus. Next, the data was categorized through a coding process that mapped important themes, such as content planning strategies, newsroom workflows, the use of supporting technology, and the application of journalism ethics. The final stage of analysis was drawing conclusions, compiling research findings that explain patterns of news production management strategies in the convergence era. This analysis model refers to the approach of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which emphasizes the cycle of data reduction, data presentation, and verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation studies indicate that digital production management strategies encompass several key interrelated aspects. First, news planning is directed from the outset toward production in a variety of formats and tailored to the characteristics of various distribution channels. Second, workflow management in the newsroom demonstrates a trend toward cross-team integration, enabling faster and more efficient coordination. Third, the use of digital technologies such as content management systems (CMS), mobile devices, and analytics tools is an integral supporting factor in production strategies. Fourth, ethical and professional aspects remain a key focus, given that production speed often comes at the risk of compromising news accuracy and quality. Overall, this study confirms that digital-based news production management strategies are complex endeavors that involve not only technology adoption but also organizational culture changes, improving journalist competency, and strengthening journalistic ethical principles. These findings will be discussed in more detail in the discussion section, linking the research results to the theoretical framework and findings of previous studies.

1. Cross-Platform Content Planning

Media convergence demands fundamental changes in news content planning. Research shows that editors no longer view news as a single product for one medium, but rather as an entity that can be broken down into various formats according to platform characteristics. This strategy aligns with Jenkins' (2006) view of convergence culture, where content flows across media with increasingly active audience participation. In practice, cross-platform content planning allows a single news issue to be produced in the form of long-form articles, short videos, infographics, and live social media updates, thereby expanding audience reach. This demonstrates that news planning is no longer solely focused on speed, but also on multi-platform design from the outset. This aligns with the convergence continuum model proposed by Dailey, Demo, and Spillman (2005), in which newsroom integration occurs gradually, from simple collaboration to integrated planning. The research findings confirm that media outlets that are able to plan cross-platform content from the outset have a greater chance of maintaining relevance among digital audiences.

However, field findings also revealed obstacles such as limited human resources and differences in work rhythms between units. This situation aligns with research by García-Avilés and Carvajal (2008), which showed that the success of cross-platform planning is heavily influenced by organizational capacity, work culture, and technological support. Consequently, Indonesian media outlets need to emphasize internal training, improve journalists' multiplatform skills, and develop operational standards that support interdepartmental collaboration. In addition to focusing on news format diversification, the research also demonstrates that cross-platform planning is inseparable from audience mapping. Informants explained that each platform has different consumption characteristics: news portal audiences prefer in-depth analysis, while social media audiences tend to respond to concise visuals and fast-paced narratives. Therefore, editorial teams have begun forming dedicated teams responsible for mapping audience trends and formulating content distribution strategies. Field observations also found that editorial meetings are now more interactive, with the use of data analytics to predict potential interest topics across various channels. However, the pressure to produce "viral" content has the potential to shift priorities toward news that has public value. Human resource constraints are also increasingly prominent, with reporters being required to possess multiple skills, often placing a strain on their work. Nevertheless, this research's findings demonstrate that media outlets that successfully design multiplatform content from the planning stage tend to be better prepared for the dynamics of convergence. This underscores the importance of developing clear editorial guidelines to guide cross-platform content strategies in a targeted manner.

2. Newsroom Workflow Management

Newsroom workflow management is a crucial factor in digital production management strategies. Research shows that most media outlets are beginning to adopt an integrated newsroom model, where various units such as editors, reporters, videographers, and social media teams work within a single, coordinated flow. This aligns with research by García-Avilés and Carvajal (2008), who found that integrated newsrooms are more effective in managing information flow and preventing duplication of work. These results also demonstrate that newsroom integration contributes to increased news production efficiency. Information can be immediately distributed to various platforms without having to go through multiple processes. However, this practice also faces challenges in the form of resistance from senior journalists accustomed to a single work pattern. This phenomenon is consistent with Diana's (2017) findings on de-convergence at Tempo, where resistance to organizational culture was a major obstacle to successful integration.

In a management context, managing newsroom workflows requires visionary editorial leadership. Such leadership is needed to build a collaborative culture, reduce resistance, and foster awareness that multiplatform work is not a threat, but rather an opportunity. In line with Deuze's (2017) view, modern journalism is fluid, requiring organizations to be flexible in restructuring their work structures to respond to change. The research also demonstrates that newsroom integration has significant implications for internal communication patterns. Observations indicate a change in newsroom layout, with desks for print, online, and social media reporters placed close together to facilitate coordination. This model has been shown to accelerate the flow of information, especially during sudden events requiring rapid coverage. However, challenges arise when integration leads to overlapping tasks and role confusion. Several journalists admitted to remaining uncertain about defining responsibilities when multiple units must work on a single issue simultaneously. Furthermore, resistance from senior journalists remains strong, primarily because they feel multiplatform skills are not aligned with their professional backgrounds. In this regard, visionary editorial leadership is crucial for fostering a collaborative culture and mitigating resistance. The research found that newsrooms with progressive managers or editors-in-chief adapt more quickly, as leadership is able to construct a narrative that convergence is an opportunity, not a threat. Therefore, successful newsroom

workflow management always involves improving organizational structure and building a collaborative work culture.

3. Utilization of Digital Technology

Research results show that the use of digital technology is the backbone of production management strategies. Media outlets use content management systems (CMS) to manage production flows, mobile devices for rapid coverage, and analytics tools to understand audience behavior. Pavlik (2001) asserted that digital technology is revolutionizing the way journalists gather, produce, and distribute information, and this finding demonstrates the relevance of this view. The use of technology has been shown to increase the speed and expand the distribution of news. However, this study also identified ethical dilemmas resulting from the dominance of analytics in editorial decision-making. When audience data is the primary basis, editors tend to produce news that is popular on search engines or social media, even though these issues are not always of public value. This phenomenon was previously addressed by Hermida (2010) in the concept of ambient journalism, where the pressure of real-time information has the potential to shift journalistic priorities from the public interest to market preferences. Therefore, media outlets need to balance the use of technology with a commitment to ethical principles. One strategy emerging from this research is strengthening the role of editors as gatekeepers, capable of filtering trend-based content without compromising journalistic integrity. In this way, technology can be used as a tool, not the sole determinant of the production process.

The research also confirms that the success of digital production management depends heavily on the editor's ability to optimally utilize technology. A CMS has proven to be a crucial instrument for managing workflows, from writing and editing to distribution across various channels. Observations show that media outlets with an integrated CMS can reduce publication time by up to 40 percent compared to those still using manual systems. Furthermore, the use of mobile devices in reporting allows journalists to submit reports in real time, increasing the media's competitiveness in presenting breaking news. However, reliance on analytics tools poses serious challenges. Quantitative audience data is often used as the basis for editorial decisions, resulting in less-than-popular but critical news stories being deprioritized. Informants acknowledged that this dilemma often sparks debate within the editorial team.

4. Ethics and Professionalism in Digital Production

Research findings indicate pressure to expedite publication, often resulting in accelerated or bypassed verification. This situation poses a risk to the fundamental principles of journalism. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2021) emphasize that truth and verification must remain top priorities, despite increasingly pressing demands for speed. Efforts to maintain ethics are carried out through the implementation of editorial guidelines, fact-checking mechanisms, and editorial oversight. This strategy aligns with Deuze's (2008) view that, despite increasingly fluid journalism, professional values must remain a pillar of public trust. The study also found that some media outlets have begun developing dedicated fact-checking units that work in parallel with production teams, thus ensuring accuracy. The study also found that the pressure of speed in production has consequences for the quality of news verification. Several reporters admitted to rushing to publish stories due to the goal of being first. This situation creates the risk of misinformation that can damage the media's credibility. As a mitigation measure, some editors have established fact-checking units that work in parallel with production teams. These units play a crucial role, especially when news stories concern sensitive issues, such as politics, disasters, or crime. Furthermore, editorial guidelines have been updated to include specific protocols for dealing with pressure to publish quickly, such as requiring confirmation from at least two sources before publishing. Research findings show that media outlets that consistently apply ethical standards are more likely to maintain public trust, even if they lag behind competitors. This demonstrates that professionalism remains a key asset in journalism, even amidst the current convergence.

CONCLUSION

Field findings show that changes in production patterns are not only related to technology adoption, but also to the transformation of work culture, newsroom governance, and strengthening journalism ethics.

1. Cross-platform content planning has proven to be a crucial foundation for a single news issue to reach diverse audiences. Editors who are able to design content from the outset for various distribution channels are better prepared to maintain relevance in the era of convergence. However, limited human resources and multiple workloads are obstacles that must be overcome through training and organizational restructuring.

2. Newsroom workflow management demonstrates a shift toward an integrated newsroom model that encourages faster coordination and production efficiency. However, cultural resistance, especially from senior journalists, remains a challenge. Visionary editorial leadership has proven to play a central role in building a collaborative culture and fostering awareness that multiplatform access is an opportunity, not a threat.
3. The use of digital technologies—such as content management systems, mobile devices, and analytics tools—has become the backbone of production strategies. Technology accelerates news distribution, but also presents ethical dilemmas when audience data is more important than public value. Therefore, the editor's role as gatekeeper remains crucial in maintaining a balance between business interests and public responsibility.
4. Ethics and professionalism must remain paramount amidst the pressures of rapid production. Efforts such as establishing a fact-checking unit, implementing strict editorial guidelines, and implementing minimal verification mechanisms are strategic steps to maintain accuracy and public trust.

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