

JOURNALISM AS A PROFESSION OR SOCIAL PHENOMENON

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Abstract: Journalism, as a profession and a social phenomenon, occupies an important place in the modern world. Although it exists today in many forms, the roots of journalism go back far into the past, and its formation is closely related to the development of the press and communication tools. The history of the profession of journalism begins in ancient civilizations, but the real development is recorded after the invention of Gutenberg's press in the 15th century. That invention enabled the mass printing of newspapers and books, which significantly accelerated the flow of information and enabled the development of public opinion. This paper will discuss following topics: definition of journalism, digital journalistic pyramid, traditional journalistic pyramid, ethical codes, digital era.

Keywords: journalism, history, online, codes, genres.

Introduction

The definition of journalism often depends on the context, but essentially it can be said that journalism is a profession that deals with the collection, processing and distribution of information of public importance. The text is the basis of good journalism, especially in print media. It is imperative that the newspaper text must be well written. "Writing for a newspaper is not the same as writing a literary text, because the journalistic way of writing is based on certain principles" (Vojinović, 2022, p.37). Journalistic writing must be ethical, in accordance with the journalistic code, based on accuracy, verifiability and objectivity in the work. Its basic role is to inform, educate, but also entertain the audience, while at the same time perform a control function in society. That is why it is often said that journalism is the "fourth branch of government".

"In the English parliament, the gallery where journalists sit is the fourth, and therefore journalists are called the fourth force in the country for the defense of public freedom, next to the parliament, the government and the judiciary" (Babić, 2015, p.83).

Digital journalistic pyramid

Thanks to the development of technology, the traditional journalistic practice, which was based on print media and television, has undergone significant changes. Today, online journalism is increasingly dominating, which enables faster and more interactive communication with the audience. This is precisely why a new reporting structure known as the digital journalistic pyramid has been developed, which focuses on key information and visually adapted content for social networks and portals. Digital journalistic pyramids allow the audience to get to know the accompanying content more deeply. It directs them to links, platforms and other sources that allow them to compare information and think critically about content. „Under the onslaught of electronic media, the daily press remained in a subordinate position when it comes to current affairs, but certainly in an advantage when one talks about the depth of the written content“ (Vojinović, 2022, p.37).

Traditional journalism

Regardless of the format, the essence of journalistic reporting remains the same. Traditional reporting relies on an inverted journalistic pyramid, where the most important information is placed at the beginning of the text, and the less important information is left for the end. This is especially important in cases where texts are shortened due to lack of space. The key part of any report is the lead – the first paragraph that answers the basic questions: who, what, when, where, why and how something has happened. „The role of the journalist is not only to write and distribute the news, but also to draw that news through the socio-psychological and economic context, in order to provide a complete answer“ (Vojinović et al.2022, 52).

Journalistic genres and codes

There are several journalistic genres, among which the most common ones stand out: news, report, interview, commentary and reportage. Each genre has its own structure and rules, but all rely on basic journalistic principles – accuracy, objectivity and responsibility.

Journalistic codes serve as an ethical guide in the work of journalists. They define the boundaries between freedom of expression and responsibility to the truth and the public. „New media, the emergence of the Internet, opened up a heavenly, media space, in which information moves at the speed of light and it is impossible to control, because everything happens on a global level“ (Vojinović, Davidov, 2022, p.44). In an era where anyone with a phone is a potential "source of information," professional journalism must distinguish itself by its accuracy and source verification.

Where does journalism begin?

That is why it is important to ask the question: where does journalism begin? The answer is not simple, but many agree that it begins when there is a desire to share information with the public in a responsible and professional manner. “Self-regulation in any profession or social field presupposes that norms are developed and implemented by those whose behavior is governed by those norms, in order to improve the provision of services to consumers, claimants or, as in the case of the media, to the entire society” (Vojinović et al, 2023, p.60). In the digital age, journalism is under the pressure of speed, clicks and algorithms. However, its essential function remains unchanged - to serve the public and enable the free flow of information. The challenges of modern journalism are numerous, but the basic values of this profession must remain firm, so that it can survive as a pillar of a democratic society.

Conclusion

One can say that a journalist is much more than a transmitter of information. Journalist is a researcher, an observer, an interpreter of reality and a mediator between events and the public. A journalist must possess professionalism, ethics, critical thinking and a sense of responsibility. His word has the power to change society, inform, move action and even shape public opinion. Being a journalist means serving the truth and the public interest - honestly, courageously and responsibly. Whether one looks at journalism from the point of view of a profession or a social phenomenon, one thing is certain, and that is that “the history of journalism is the history of a profession. It is the history of men and women who created a new craft, who made it become independent in relation to other professions, to grow into social complexity and power” (Gozzini, 2001, p.9).

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