

Impact of Short-Form Video Platforms on News Dissemination: A Case Study of News Visibility



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Abstract

This paper analyses how the short-form video content platform has increased the popularity of news and its visibility in the digital era, especially on the Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts. These platforms have changed the face of traditional journalism because they have allowed the provision of small, graphic and extremely shareable news content. Based on the secondary information and the thematic analysis, the study shows the importance of the algorithm-based distribution that has contributed greatly to the reach and interaction with the audience, especially in younger age groups.

In addition to the visibility the research question also examines the new entrepreneurial and economic potential of short-form platforms. Such platforms are also supporting the existence of new platforms of digital journalism entrepreneurs, independent content producers, as well as new media ventures, through reduced barriers of entry and monetization via platform-related ecosystems. This trend shows the emergence of the creator economy and the platform-based business models in digital journalism. Although brief content makes the content more accessible and more engaging, it also raises certain questions about the oversimplification of content and editorial integrity. The paper concludes by finding that as much as short-form video platforms are redefining the news dissemination processes, their sustainability in the long run is pegged on striking a balance between visibility and journalistic depth and credibility.

Keywords: Digital Media Entrepreneurship, Platform Economy, Innovation Ecosystems, Creator Economy, and Sustainable Digital Journalism.

1. Introduction

The digital journalism environment is in the process of radical change, which is caused by the appearance of short-video platforms like Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts (Abi Hamzah et al., 2025). This is a transition towards the less-is-more model of information presentation that is more succinct and more visually oriented than the old-fashioned long-form reporting model. Through these platforms, news organizations are able to place breaking news, explainers and on-ground stories in bite sizes that are usually 15 to 60 seconds (Akhtar, 2025).

Within the present-day media landscape, news outlets have turned to Instagram Reels as the primary source of providing quick headlines, visual explainers, and fact-checking content, and YouTube Shorts are primarily used to deliver news highlights and brief contextual updates (Brigas et al., 2023). This development is not only a shift in form but also a reaction to the changing consumer behavior. The current trends in digital spaces demonstrate that short video content gains much more visibility and engagement than conventional news formats do due to its compact format and visual appeal (Malik et al., 2025). Moreover, the use of visuality is now a core affordance to the news production in Instagram, which influences the framing and consumption of stories (Kallio and Maenpaa, 2025).

Besides changing the news consumption pattern, the short-form video platforms are also changing the digital media entrepreneurial picture. These

platforms have reduced the barriers of entry to independent journalists, content creators, and media start-ups by offering a low-barrier content creation tool, distribution tool, and monetization tool. Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts, as the components of the larger platform economy, facilitate the development of new media businesses and business models of creators. This change demonstrates the increasing overlap of digital journalism and entrepreneurship, in which the visibility, interaction and revenue assure are all tied closely to platform-based ecosystems (Byzero Technologies, 2024).

1.2 Research Problem

Although an expanded reach has its positive aspects, the use of short video content poses a serious threat to journalistic integrity and editorial standards. This shift in the increased relevance of social media in the distribution of news has compelled newsrooms to change to adapt to the algorithm-driven distribution, whereby platform logic frequently determines the visibility of the content (Chaudhary, 2025). It has been shown that the algorithms are determinant in the acquisition of prominence to those stories, which may relegate more crucial yet difficult-to-understand news to favor high-engagement visual information (Farrau and Ezekiel, 2024).

Besides, the growing dependence on online platforms brings a dilemma between broader

coverage and editorial richness. As news organizations focus on formats that are platform friendly, critics and scholars cite the risk of content oversimplification and a perilous loss of editorial control (Kallio & Maenpaa, 2025). This leaves a research gap of how journalistic storytelling is being repackaged and whether the quest of visibility is at the expense of informational depth (Manic, 2024).

1.3 Aim of the Study

The main objective of the proposed study is to analyze how short-form video platforms influence the news visibility and dissemination considering the emergence of digital media entrepreneurship.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- To analyse how Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts contribute to increased news visibility.
- To examine the role of platform algorithms in shaping the reach of short-form news videos.
- To explore how short-form video platforms create opportunities for digital media entrepreneurship and independent news content creation.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How do Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts influence the visibility of news content?
2. What role do algorithms play in determining the reach of news videos on short-form platforms?
3. How do short-form video platforms enable new entrepreneurial opportunities for journalists and digital media creators?

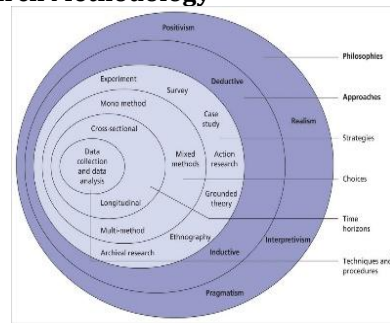
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The following table outlines the criteria used to select sources for this research (Newman & Gough, 2020):

Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Timeframe	Published between 2020 and 2025.	Published prior to 2020.
Platform Focus	Specifically Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts.	General social media or traditional TV news.
Data Source	Peer-reviewed journals and industry reports from PubMed & Google Scholar.	Unverified blogs or personal opinions.
Topic	News visibility and journalistic storytelling.	General entertainment or influencer marketing.

Furthermore, the chosen literature was critically reviewed in order to determine what contribution it makes towards the understanding of digital media innovation and entrepreneurial dynamics in the short-form video ecosystem. Special focus was on those works, which discuss platform-based business

2. Research Methodology



2.1 Research Philosophy and Approach

The research follows a positivist research philosophy, as its main focus is put on the objective study of the observable trends in the distribution of digital news. In order to present a strict structural scheme, the research employs the model of Research Onion (Melnikovas, 2018), which helps in moving philosophical assumptions to the methods of data collection (Mardiana, 2020). The research method is a deductive one, as the given theories are analyzed in terms of the existing theories regarding digital media and audience engagement (Pandey and Pandey, 2021).

2.2 Data Analysis and Collection

It is a secondary data collection study relying on the synthesis of academic journal information, reports of the industry, and trustworthy online sources (Mishra and Alok, 2022). A systematic and clear selection of literature has been implemented with the use of PRISMA Model (Preferred Reporting Items to Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) (Newman and Gough, 2020) (Appendix). A thematic analysis process will be applied in the analysis of data. This entails the recognition and decoding of the repeated themes including the effects of an algorithm, adapting the content, and metrics of engagement (Pandey & Pandey, 2021).

model, creator-driven content production, and new digital media businesses. In such way this method will guarantee that the trends in the news dissemination will be not only reflected in the analysis but also placed in the context of the platform economy and digital entrepreneurship.

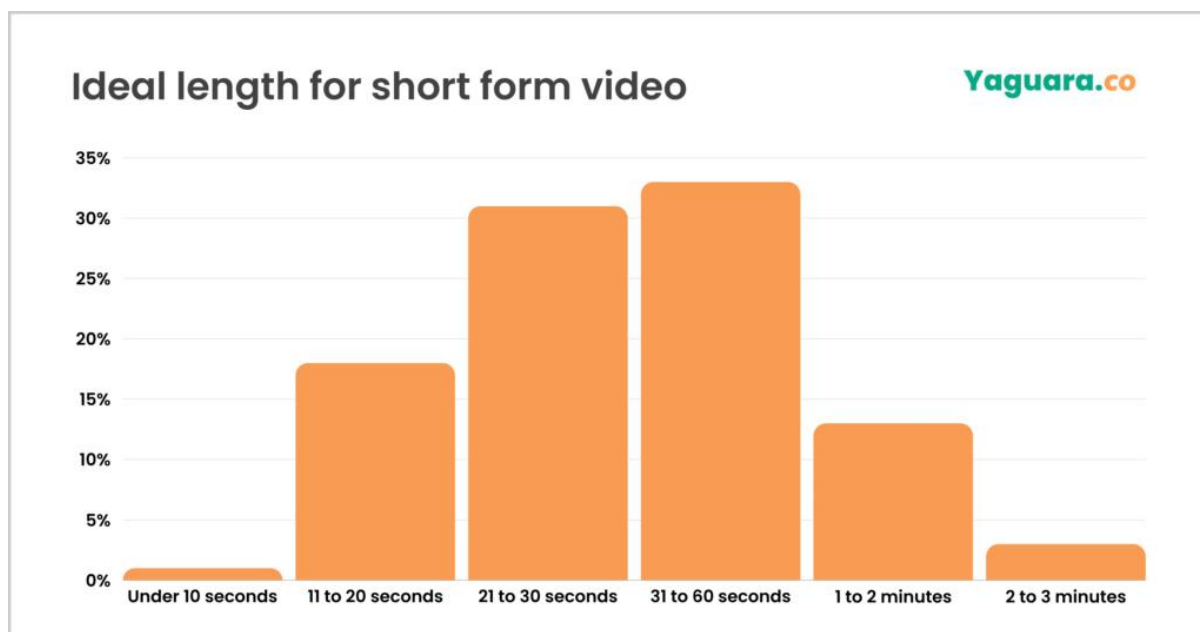
3. Literature Review

3.1 Digital Media Entrepreneurship and Platform Economy

The recent research has focused on highlighting the increasing nature of digital entrepreneurship in the changing media ecosystem. The emergence of short-form video platforms has led to the creation of the creator economy, where people and small-scale media businesses are independent content producers and distributors. They also operate as a sub-component of a more extensive platform economy, which allows the creation of revenue through advertising, brand relationship and revenue models based on audiences. Research indicates that this type of environment leads to innovation in the fields of media through experimentation of content formats, audience engagement tactics and scalable digital business models. This has changed the traditional architecture of the newsrooms and

enabled startups and independent journalists to compete in a decentralized and algorithmic media industry.

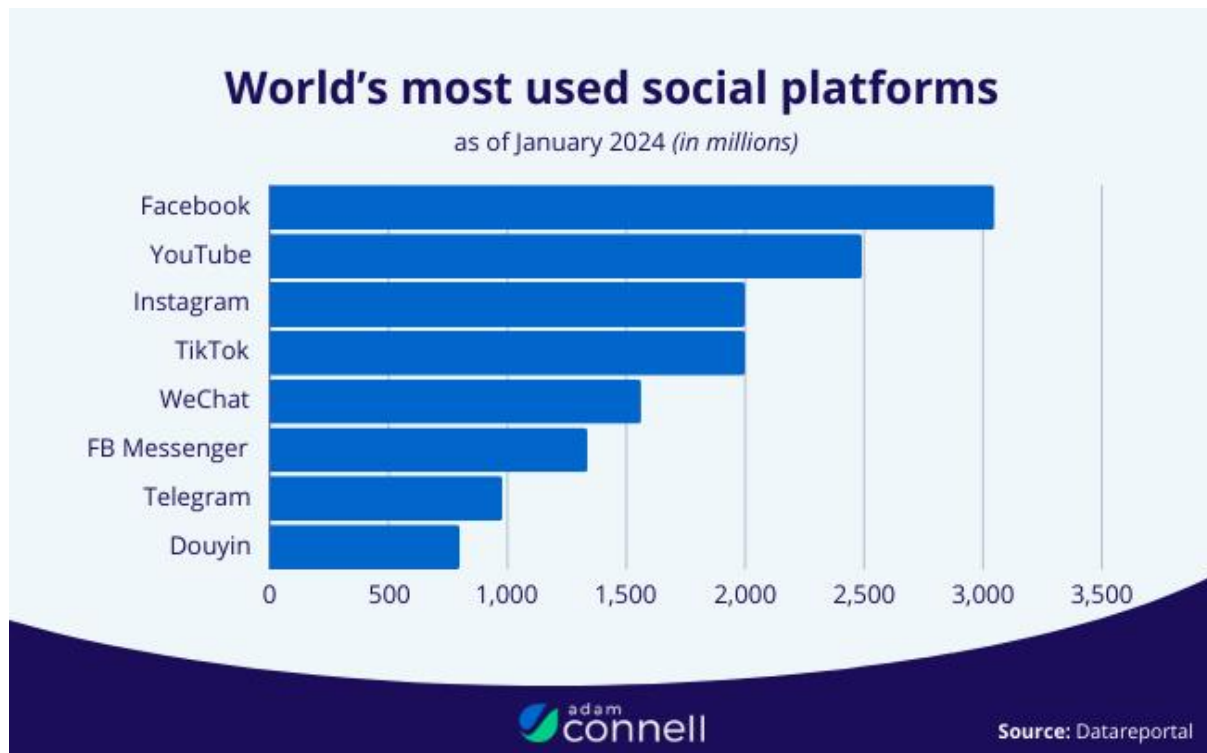
The digital journalism shift into the snackable content era is a critical moment in the way the masses perceive information. The existing research on digital journalism emphasizes the increasing role of social media networks in the distribution of news and the interaction with the audience, as the long-form reporting faces the competition of high-speed and visualized formats more and more. This shift is being emphasized by the fact that the video content is projected to take up 82 percent of the total internet traffic of the world by 2025 with short-form taking the lead. The paper is a literature review on the dynamics of short-form video platforms namely Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts based on three main themes consistent with the research objectives.



3.2 Enhancing News Visibility through Short-Form Platforms

The visibility and engagement of short-form video contents are much greater than the traditional news format because of its concise format and visual characteristics. The Rise of Reels indicates that the communicative capacity of such websites is in that they can attract attention in the initial few seconds which is a crucial requirement since 71 percent of viewers determine if they will watch more or not during the first few frames. According to Byzero Technologies (2024), the short-form format is no longer a privilege of entertainment content, but a discovery tool because 73% of consumers want to watch a short video to discover information about a topic or service.

Studies have shown that these platforms are visibility engines in which the succinctness of the content is the norm (usually 15 to 60 seconds) which can be quickly shared. Indeed, users are more likely to post short-form video than any other type of content two times. It is mostly noticeable in the emerging markets such as India, which is projected that by 2025, short-form video viewers will be 650 million with more than 60 per cent of users aged below 30 years using social media as their main source of news. However, in comparison to a static post that is mostly distributed among existing followers, Reel has an average reach rate of 30.81 that is more than two times the reach of a static image or carousel.



3.3 Algorithmic Influence and Content Prioritization

Platform algorithm is an essential aspect in the contemporary coverage of news. Academics have discussed the role that platform-based approaches like Instagram and YouTube play in guiding the content reach and news prioritization, which in many cases transfer the role of the gatekeeper, previously held by the editors, to platform logic. These algorithms are mainly concerned with Content Velocity the speed of interaction during the first hour that is, the news needs to be instantly captivating to become popular. Lopezosa et al. (2020) discovered that certain optimization techniques are employed by "cybermedia" in YouTube in order to become as visible as possible, revealing that such metrics as watch time and engagement rate are the determiners of whether a news clip can become viral.

This dependency on the platform logic introduces a platform reset in journalism, where newsroom is forced to make changes to the judgment of the newsroom to meet the technical demands. According to YouTube Shorts, most recently, a record engagement rate of 5.91 was registered, the highest of the short formats, versus Instagram reels at 1.23, which is much higher than the average engagement with regular photos at 0.70. This prioritization through algorithm has resulted in a situation in which 55 percent of TikTok users and 41 percent of YouTube and Instagram consumers now use these algorithmic feeds to consume news on a regular basis.

3.4 Journalistic Adaptation and Visually-Driven Storytelling

The change in the direction of the short form news has brought about a complete adjustment of the ways of journalism. Instagram Reels are becoming more popular as an option among news outlets in order to offer quick headlines, visual explainers, whereas YouTube Shorts to share highlights and quick contextual updates. The defining characteristic of this evolution is the so-called *visuality* as the central affordance of the text, in which the image or video clip frequently becomes dominant in relation to the text. It is a reaction to a colossal change of habits: in all markets of the world, the level of social video news consumption has increased by 52 percent in 2020 to 65 percent in 2025.

Nonetheless, this change presents some threats in terms of depth and credibility. Although short-form videos less than 90 seconds are effective to maintain 50% of the viewer, the necessity to be snackable leads to the simplification of the content and loss of editorial control. Moreover, 44 percent of age 18-to-24-years use these platforms as their primary news source, although trust remains an issue; the worry of the differentiation between what is real and what is fake news on the internet is 58 percent of the world population. Modern news makers face the challenge of finding the right balance between the necessity to rock the social media video content (Argila, 2017) and the journalistic responsibility of offering the truth in a format where 90% of consumers currently have the video content on their mobile phones on a daily basis.

4. Theoretical Framework

To analyze the impact of short-form video on news dissemination, this study employs two primary theoretical lenses:

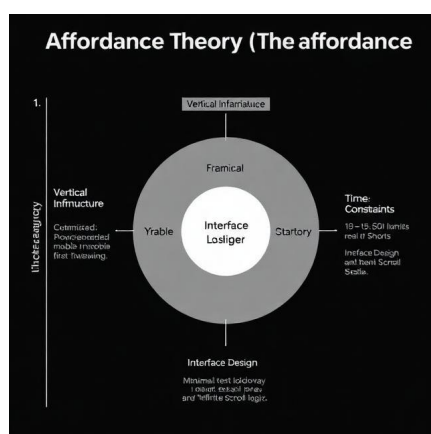
4.1 The Circular Model of SOME



Proposed by Shareef et al. and adapted by Abi Hamzah et al. (2025), the Circular Model of SOME (Social, Optimization, Message, Evaluation) provides a management framework for digital content.

- **Social:** Focuses on the interactive nature of the platform.
- **Optimization:** Addresses the technical strategies (SEO and hashtags) used to ensure visibility.
- **Message:** Concerns the content itself its clarity, brevity, and visual appeal.
- **Evaluation:** Involves analyzing engagement metrics to refine future news delivery. This theory helps explain how news organizations manage their Instagram and YouTube presence to maintain a continuous cycle of engagement.

4.2 Affordance Theory (Visuality as an Affordance)



Rooted in environmental psychology and adapted for digital media by Kallio & Mäenpää (2025), Affordance Theory suggests that the "properties" of a platform invite specific actions. On Instagram, "visuality" is the primary affordance; the platform's interface encourages news producers to prioritize high-impact visuals over deep textual analysis. This theory is crucial for understanding why news

content is reshaped into "bite-sized" pieces it is a direct response to the visual-first architecture of the platform.

5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the technical features of short-form platforms and the resulting journalistic outcomes.

- **Independent Variables:** Platform Features (Vertical format, 60s limit), Algorithmic Logic (Engagement-based distribution), and Creator Strategies (Optimization).
- **Moderating Variables:** Audience Demographics (Gen Z/Millennials) and Shrinking Attention Spans.
- **Dependent Variables:** News Visibility (Reach/Impressions), Audience Engagement (Shares/Comments), and Editorial Integrity (Complexity vs. Oversimplification).

Research Findings and Critical Analysis

As the results of this study are organized in terms of the goals of the study, the main difference in the dynamics of news presence and reading is evident. Through the application of critical insights into these themes, the research paper emphasizes the way the technical affordances of the Instagram reel and the YouTube short are transforming the world of journalism.

5.1 Theme 1: Better Visibility and Democratization of Discovery

The study establishes that news visibility is greatly boosted by short-form video sites especially among the younger age groups who are becoming progressively news-resistant to conventional news delivery methods. Statistics show that the average reach of Instagram Reels is 30.81 that is at least two times higher than the reach of the static image or carousels. This is because these platforms are largely of the discovery-first format; unlike normal social feeds, which feature content of accounts followed, Reels and Shorts are pushed to non-followers in an aggressive manner, depending on interest profiles. As much as this democratization of discovery is resulting in the grassroots journalists and regional news organizations reaching unprecedented audiences without a huge following, it is also diminishing the status of the editorial power. The results indicate that virality frequently beats veracity on such platforms. The change towards content that is shareable and concise (15-60 seconds) implies that regularly, visibility is given to content that is visually striking and not necessarily editorially valuable.

5.2 Theme 2: Algorithmic Logic: The New Gatekeeper

One of the main conclusions of the research is that the human editors are mostly substituted by the

algorithm used on the platform as the news visibility guardian. These algorithms are driven by their engagement velocity and rank the content that will garner quick likes, shares, and watch time. An example is YouTube Shorts which are rewarded based on high completion rates and this has created a landscape where news has to hook a viewer within the first three seconds or be algorithmically obscured. This algorithm-driven ranking brings in a systemic bias in the favor of emotive and sensationalist content. In the quest to appease the unseen designers of the digital world, news outlets are sometimes compelled to use the tricks of clickbait or rapid-paced news presentation that may bend the seriousness of serious journalism. It has been argued in the research that abrupt changes in the algorithms may have a dire effect on the circumstances, within which news is generated, and a form of visibility uncertainty arises, which complicates long-term planning in journalism.

5.3 Theme 3: Journalistic Adaptation Adaptation to Crisis of Complexity

The analysis concludes that news companies are quickly changing their narratives to accommodate the visibility affording short form services. It has contributed to the emergence of so-called micro-explainers and visual headlines that appeal to an average attention span around the world that has actually been reported to have reduced to only 8 seconds. It has been estimated that in 2025, short-form video is going to have constituted 90% of the internet traffic, which further justifies this need to adapt. Although this adaptation is effective when it comes to engaging, it leads to a kind of crisis of complexity. According to the evidence, the motivation of brevity tends to simplify difficult socio-political challenges. By depriving the context of a news story to fit within a 60-second time frame, news content will be at risk of being used as a misinformation platformizer where failure to provide strong fact-checking infrastructure on short-form platforms will allow fake stories to be shared in the name of responsible reporting.

It is also found that short-form video sites are not merely remaking the news visibility but also are establishing new lines of entrepreneurship in digital journalism. These services allow independent journalists, content creators and small media startups to become independent news producers by using the reach of algorithms, audience building and monetization opportunities. This transition is especially conducive to the emergence of creator-driven journalism and decentralized media enterprises in particular, the emerging digital economies, e.g., in India. Consequently, this is slowly overtaken by platform-native news ventures, which are less reliant on the conventional newsroom model because they focus on speediness, novelty, and audience-driven storytelling.

Summary

The shift to short-form video is a winning shift on the part of the news industry to make itself relevant in a mobile-native, snack-friendly media landscape. Nonetheless, this paper finds critically that this relevance is at a high price on any editorial depth. Although Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts fill the gap addressed to younger demographics, they also tie the access of the population to information to commercial algorithms that are more focused on engagement than the interest of the people. The results indicate that to prosper without compromising its integrity, newsrooms should come up with the strategies, which will capitalize on the popularity of the short-form form of journalism besides taking all possible measures to resist the urge to simplify the truth to the point where the newsroom may be tempted to go with the scroll.

6. Conclusion

In summary, the emergence of short-form video platforms like Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts has changed the digital news environment critically by greatly boosting the visibility and reach of the news. As this study emphasizes, the trend toward brief, visual storytelling is a necessary change that news companies making the shift to appeal to younger audiences and still be present in an algorithm-driven environment must implement. On the one hand, these platforms represent an unprecedented opportunity to reach a large number of people and guarantee a high level of engagement, on the other hand, they create the necessity to balance the desire to be fast and accessible with the requirements of the journalistic profession to be able to gain an editorial depth and control. In the end, the introduction of short-form video into newsrooms is an irreversible change in the world of media journalism, and the competition with success depends on the skills of mastering the specifics of platforms and preserving the essence of the news message. Moreover, the paper has also given the point that short-form video platforms are not just a source of news distribution, but also a driver of entrepreneurial innovation in the media sector. These platforms are a fresh frontier of sustainable digital journalism, especially in the fast-changing digital economies, by allowing low-cost entry, reach, and creator-driven models of businesses.

7. Recommendations

- **Prioritize Visual-First Storytelling:** News organizations should invest in specialized video teams to create high-quality, concise content (15–60 seconds) that leverages the "visuality" affordance of platforms like Instagram to capture shrinking audience attention spans.
- **Optimize for Algorithmic Reach:** Editorial teams must develop a technical understanding of platform-specific algorithms, focusing on

"engagement velocity" and metadata optimization to ensure critical news stories gain prominence in automated feeds.

- **Implement "Micro-Explainer" Formats:** To combat the risk of content oversimplification, outlets should use short-form videos as "gateways" that provide immediate value while directing interested viewers to long-form, in-depth coverage for greater context.
- **Maintain Editorial Control in Adaptation:** While adapting to platform logic, journalists must ensure that the pressure for virality does not compromise factual accuracy or result in the loss of editorial oversight.
- **Leverage Cross-Platform Strategies:** Outlets should utilize Instagram Reels for quick, interactive headlines and YouTube Shorts for sharing news highlights and contextual updates to maximize visibility across different user demographics.
- **Continuous Evaluation and Data Analysis:** Based on the Circular Model of SOME (Social, Optimization, Message, Evaluation), newsrooms should continuously evaluate engagement metrics to refine their content management strategies and improve the effectiveness of their news delivery.
- **Enhance the Digital Media Sustainability:** To develop sustainable digital media businesses in the creator economy, media companies and individual creators should consider hybrid revenue models and platform monetization, brand partnerships, and audience-funded journalism.

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Appendix

