

<b>BLOCK 1</b>	
<b>MOBILE TRANSITION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>BLOCK 2</b>	
<b>INTERNET OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>BLOCK 3</b>	
<b>DIGITAL INFORMATION LITERACY</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>BLOCK 4</b>	
<b>PARTICIPATION IN INTERACTIVE MEDIA</b>	<b>235</b>

## EXPERTS COMMITTEE

Prof. K.S. Arul Selvan Director, SOJNMS - Chairperson	Prof. Pradeep Nair Department of Communication, Central University of HP, Dharamshala	Prof. Bidisha Chaudhuri IIIT Bangalore
Prof. B. P. Sanjay Former Vice-Chancellor, CUTN, Thiruvaur	Prof. Vigneshwara Illavarasan IIT Delhi, New Delhi	Prof. Subodh Kesharwani Director, Center for Online Education, IGNOU
Prof. Subhash Dhulia Former Professor, SOJNMS, IGNOU, New Delhi [and Former Vice-Chancellor Uttarakhand Open University	Prof. P. V. Suresh Director, School of Computer and Information Sciences, IGNOU	Dr. Krishna Shankar Kusuma Associate Professor of Communication, JMI, New Delhi
Prof. Subodh Kesharwani Director, Center for Online Education, IGNOU	Ms. Mahalakshmi Jayaram Deputy Senior Editor, The Hindu, Chennai	Mr. Amit Gupta Senior Assistant Editor, Aaj Tak Digital, New Delhi
Mr. Alok Verma Independent Journalist, New Delhi	Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh Former Director, SOJNMS, IGNOU	Prof. O. P. Dewal Professor, SOJNMS, IGNOU
Dr. Ramesh Yadav Associate Professor, SOJNMS, IGNOU	Dr. Shikha Rai Associate Professor SOJNMS, IGNOU	Dr. Amit Kumar Assistant Professor, SOJNMS, IGNOU
Dr. Padmini Jain Assistant Professor, SOJNMS, IGNOU	Dr. Usha Chander Research Officer, SOJNMS, IGNOU	

## PROGRAMME COORDINATOR: Prof. K.S. Arul Selvan

BLOCK 1			
Unit 1	Neelima Mathur Independent Journalist and Executive Director, Formedia, New Delhi	Unit 2	Prof. K S Arul Selvan SOJNMS Garima Mishra, SOJNMS
Unit 3 & 6	Dr. Vijay Soni Deputy Editor, OPEN Magazine, New Delhi	Unit 4 & 13	Prof. K S Arul Selvan SOJNMS Aakriti Taneja, SOJNMS
Unit 5	Prof. K S Kusuma MCRC, Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi	Unit 7 & 16	Adopted from MAJMC of SOJNMS
Unit 8	Dr. Rachna Sharma Associate Professor, IIMC New Delhi	Unit 9	Adopted from EPGPathshala, MOE, Govt of India
Unit 10, 11 & 12	Dr. Manorama Tripathi, Librarian, JNU, New Delhi	Unit 14	Prof. K S Arul Selvan SOJNMS, Madhumita Das, SOJNMS
Unit 15	Dr. Sonali Srivastav Assistant Professor, NIFT, Panchkula, Haryana		

## PRODUCTION TEAM

Mr. Sanjay Agarwal  
Asst. Registrar  
MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi

July, 2024

© Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2024

ISBN:

*All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, by mimeograph or any other means, without permission in writing from the Indira Gandhi National Open University.*

*Further information on the Indira Gandhi National Open University courses may be obtained from the University's office at Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.*

Printed and published on behalf of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi by the Registrar, MPDD, IGNOU, New Delhi.

Laser Typeset by Tessa Media & Computers, C-206, A.F.E.-II, Okhla, New Delhi.

## CONTENTS

<b>BLOCK 1</b>	<b>MOBILE TRANSITION</b>	<b>7</b>
UNIT 1	Reading Media and Information Texts	11
UNIT 2	The Medium and the Message	27
UNIT 3	From Traditional Media to Digital Media	49
UNIT 4	Uses of New Media Technologies in Society	66
<b>BLOCK 2</b>	<b>INTERNET OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES</b>	<b>87</b>
UNIT 5	Uses of Interactive Multimedia Tools	91
UNIT 6	Young People in the Virtual World	106
UNIT 7	Challenges and Risks in the Virtual World	121
UNIT 8	Promotion of Alternative Media	136
<b>BLOCK 3</b>	<b>DIGITAL INFORMATION LITERACY</b>	<b>153</b>
UNIT 9	Information Literacy	157
UNIT 10	Applications of Information Literacy	183
UNIT 11	Learning Environments & Information Literacy	199
UNIT 12	Digital Information Processing	215
<b>BLOCK 3</b>	<b>PARTICIPATION IN INTERACTIVE MEDIA</b>	<b>235</b>
UNIT 13	Participation in Media Systems	239
UNIT 14	Political Participation and Digital Media	256
UNIT 15	Film Genres and Storytelling	270
UNIT 16	Advertising Literacy	283



---

## COURSE INTRODUCTION

---

MNM036 Digital Media Literacy (DML) is an extension of our earlier course, MNM35 Media and Information Literacy (MIL). In MIL, we discussed media and information systems' exploring, engaging, and empowering dimensions, which help us understand how to access media, critically analyse media contents, and responsibly participate in society-wide communication. As an extension of the MIL course, this course will examine the application side of media literacy, especially in the context of digital communication platforms. There are four Blocks and 16 Units in this course, through which you will understand the dynamic interactive platform.

**Block 1: Media Transition.** Throughout this Block, we will learn about the ever-evolving landscape of media in the digital age. In Unit 1, "Reading Media and Information Texts," we will understand the complexities of media literacy. From dissecting traditional advertising on television to navigating social media, we equip ourselves with the critical tools needed to discern truth from misinformation. Unit 2, The Medium and the Message, further explores the symbiotic relationship between media forms and their messages, focusing on news dissemination. By understanding the nuances of different media platforms, we enhance our ability to consume and analyse news content effectively, fostering news literacy. Unit 3, "From Traditional Media to Digital Media Technologies," we trace the transformative journey of media technologies, exploring their societal impacts and the emergence of digital inequalities. In Unit 4, "Uses of New Media Technologies for Society," we explore the transformative influence of digital media on society, empowering learners to critically engage with and harness the potential of new media technologies for societal empowerment and engagement.

**Block 2: Internet Opportunities and Challenges.** In this module, we embark on a journey through the dynamic landscape of digital learning, exploring its vast array of possibilities and complexities. Unit 5 delves into "Uses of Interactive Multimedia Tools," where we unravel the intricacies of interactive learning formats, from text to digital games, and their role in education. We'll dissect the significance of free and open-source software in content creation and distinguish between educational and entertainment games. Moving forward to Unit 6, "Young People in the Virtual World," we traverse the historical evolution of communication technologies and their impact on generational learning. By examining the virtual world's influence on digital natives and participatory culture, we uncover its advantages and risks. Unit 7, "The Concept of Security in Cyberspace," urges us to understand the virtual realm's complexities before delving into cyber security. We'll explore the landscape of evolving threats and the necessity for robust defences and legal frameworks. Finally, in Unit 8, "Promotion of Alternative Media through Digital Media," we shine a light on the transformative power of digital technology in media communication. By critically assessing ownership, content creation, and audience engagement, we'll gain a deeper understanding of alternative media's essence and its challenges in promoting inclusivity and participatory democracy. Join us as we navigate the opportunities and challenges of the digital age.

**Block 3: Digital Information Literacy.** This module delves into the multifaceted world of information literacy, a crucial skill set in today's digital age. Unit 9 starts our exploration by delving into the core concepts, theories, and models underpinning Information Literacy (IL). We will examine various definitions and models, including the SCONUL 7 Pillars of IL, UNESCO IL Standard, and Swiss Standards for Information Literacy. Understanding these frameworks will equip you with the foundation to navigate the information landscape confidently and critically. Moving on to Unit 10, we focus on the practical applications of information literacy. In a world inundated with information, mastering the skills to locate, evaluate, and utilise information effectively is essential. By understanding the significance of information literacy, you empower yourself to make informed choices and contribute meaningfully to discussions. Unit 11 welcomes you to the transformative realm of online learning, emphasising the crucial role of information literacy in virtual environments. As we navigate this digital landscape, we will explore self-regulated learning and the evolving role of libraries in providing access to knowledge. Finally, in Unit 12, we delve into digital information processing, unravelling its structure, processing mechanisms, and ethical considerations. By the end of this module, you will not only grasp the fundamentals of digital information but also cultivate the necessary skills to navigate the digital landscape with prudence and proficiency.

Block 4 of our course, where we explore the dynamic landscape of **Participation in Interactive Media**. In Unit 13, we will dissect the fusion of media and information systems within the modern 'Information society.' From the traditional mediums to the expansive realms of social media and the Internet, we will explore how these platforms shape our understanding of the world and facilitate the exchange of ideas. We will investigate the evolving role of audiences as active participants, transitioning from passive consumers to prosumers, and the emergence of participatory cultures. Unit 14 will take us into Political Participation and Digital Media. Here, we will understand the diverse avenues through which citizens engage in political discourse, both online and offline. By examining digital media tools, we will uncover how platforms like social media empower individuals to shape political agendas and mobilise communities. Moving forward to Unit 15, we will learn about the captivating world of cinema in Film Genres and Storytelling. We will unravel the intricacies of film production, dissect various genres and their stereotypes and understand the art of scriptwriting and storyboarding. In Unit 16, we will explore Advertising Literacy, dissecting advertising techniques, appeals, and the communication process. By integrating previous coursework insights, you will navigate the advertising landscape adeptly, fostering a deeper appreciation for its societal impact. Throughout this Block, we will emphasise critical analysis skills, ethical responsibilities, and the importance of media and information literacy in navigating the ever-evolving landscape of interactive media participation.

As digital media is being integrated into our lives extensively, we hope that this course will give us a better understanding of how to handle digital media more meaningfully.

**Block**

# **1**

## **MEDIA TRANSITION**

---

### **UNIT 1**

**Reading Media and Information Texts**

---

### **UNIT 2**

**The Medium and the Message**

---

### **UNIT 3**

**From Traditional Media to Digital Media**

---

### **UNIT 4**

**Uses of New Media Technologies in Society**

---







---

## BLOCK 1 INTRODUCTION

---

As you may be aware, all media contents are manufactured. The contents of journalism, short films, or commercial full-length movies are manufactured by media institutions. Trained media professionals are involved in it. These professionals come from our social environments, and through media content manufacturing, they reflect the existing social norms, values and beliefs. There are a lot of issues that exist in any social setting because there is an imbalance in any social setting regarding class, race, and ethnicity. The dominant groups or institutions always enjoy more power, and in turn, the same groups or institutions get a lot of benefits. This imbalance is reflected in the media content directly or indirectly.

Besides that, media institutions are mostly commercial and always aim for profit. As a result, they are always close to power centres and rely on corporate sponsors through advertisements. Closeness to power and dependence on corporations influence the media's functions heavily. Many agendas are imbibed into media content, mostly latently. As a common media user, you should be able to read between the lines to understand the varying underlying meanings and hidden agenda behind any communication. This Block particularly explains the nuances of critically understanding the media's contents.

**Unit 1: Reading Media and Information Texts.** In this Unit, we explore the significance of media literacy in today's digital era. From traditional to social media, we analyse each platform's unique characteristics and evolving trends. Topics include the impact of advertising on television, the rise of social media, and the challenges posed by fake news and paid news. We emphasise the importance of critical thinking and fact-checking skills to discern authentic content from misinformation. Through this Unit, you will develop the ability to consume and share information responsibly, contributing to a more informed and media-literate society.

**Unit 2: The Medium and the Message:** This Unit explores the dynamic relationship between media forms and the messages they convey, focusing on the news genre. Building upon our previous Unit's exploration of message encoding, we now understand the unique characteristics of different media used for news dissemination. Understanding these media's strengths and limitations is pivotal, as they shape message construction and reception. By dissecting the fundamental codes and conventions employed in print, broadcast, and online news, you'll enhance your ability to produce and analyse news content effectively. This skill is essential for fostering news literacy and critically evaluating news presentations across various platforms.

**Unit 3: From Traditional Media to Digital Media:** In this Unit, we explore the transformative journey of media technologies, from ancient cave paintings to the digital revolution. We dissect the roles of traditional media, such as the printing press, and analyse the emergence of digital platforms, including social media and mobile telephony. We examine the societal impacts of these technological shifts, from the empowerment of the middle

class to the complexities of digital inequalities. You will understand the symbiotic relationship between traditional and digital media, acknowledging their shared features and unique characteristics.

**Unit 4: Uses Of New Media Technologies For Society:** In this Unit, we explore the transformative influence of digital media on society, exploring how new media technologies have revolutionised communication dynamics. From the convergence of traditional and digital media to the emergence of participatory culture, we examine the profound shifts in media production, consumption, and societal practices. Through discussions on digital activism, e-governance, and participatory politics, we unravel the socio-cultural and democratic implications of these technological advancements. By fostering an understanding of new media literacy, this Unit empowers learners to critically engage with and navigate the complexities of the evolving media landscape, enabling them to harness the potential of new media technologies for societal empowerment and engagement.

After thoroughly reading this Block, the next time you watch primetime television news, read an editorial, or are glued to a commercial, you will definitely gain more insights while understanding its contents.



ignou  
THE PEOPLE'S  
UNIVERSITY

---

# UNIT 1 INTERPRETING MEDIA CONTENT

---

## Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Learning Outcomes
- 1.2 Comprehending the Differences of Various Media
  - 1.2.1 Traditional Media
  - 1.2.2 Print
  - 1.2.3 Radio
  - 1.2.4 Television
  - 1.2.5 Social Media
  - 1.2.6 Special Characteristics of Social Media
- 1.3 Impact of Characteristics of Different Forms of Media
  - 1.3.1 Print
  - 1.3.2 Changing Trends of Print Media
  - 1.3.3 Radio
  - 1.3.4 Changing Trends in Radio
  - 1.3.5 FM Radio
  - 1.3.6 Towards Community Radio
  - 1.3.7 Television
  - 1.3.8 Changing Trends in Television
  - 1.3.9 Impact of Advertising on Television
  - 1.3.10 Impact of Changing Trends in Traditional Media
  - 1.3.11 Uncharted Growth of Social Media
  - 1.3.12 New Challenges of Media
- 1.4 Authenticity of Media Content
  - 1.4.1 Fake News
  - 1.4.2 Paid News
  - 1.4.3 Convenient Symbolism and its Impact
  - 1.4.4 Nanoisation of Content
  - 1.4.5 Iconisation
  - 1.4.6 Stereotyping
- 1.5 Fact Checking and Self-Driven Code of Ethics
  - 1.5.1 Googling Facts
  - 1.5.2 Checking Websites
  - 1.5.3 Need for Self-Driven Skills
- 1.6 Activities with Friends and Colleagues
- 1.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.8 Further Readings
- 1.9 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

ignou  
THE PEOPLE'S  
UNIVERSITY

---

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

---

As you have joined this course on Digital Media Literacy, you may have sometimes wondered how all this will help you in your life. Simply put, how does the literacy of alphabets or numbers help us?! In today's world, media literacy has now become as important as primary literacy.

You have been exposed a lot until now, whether it is Paid News or issues of representation. In this Unit, we will look into some of the nuances of media linked to what you have understood until now. Every form of media has its characteristics that impact how it is used. Every form of media is also a part of changing times. That creates trends and changes in the characteristics. Today, changing media is a volatile scenario to which we must be very sensitive and alert. This Unit is a small step in that direction.

---

## 1.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

---

After completing this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand nuanced aspects of various forms of media;
- Develop critical thinking to discern media content; and
- Imbibe basic ability to consume and share information responsibly.

---

## 1.2 COMPREHENDING THE DIFFERENCES OF VARIOUS MEDIA

---

The big challenge today is to fully comprehend traditional media and then grasp parts of new media, known as social media. That is a prerequisite for each of us to become

- critical and sensible consumers of information
- responsible producers / 'sharers' of information
- using the appropriate platform of media for sharing information

What do we mean by these two words, traditional and social media? Well, tradition is everything that has been around for some time, and now everything that follows rapidly after that. The important point to remember is that as new forms of media develop, older social media are becoming a part of traditional media! This is a field where definitions and parameters change constantly, and we need to be constantly alert and up-to-date.

### 1.2.1 Traditional Media

Let us classify some of this to keep the lines clear. We will first look at traditional media, which includes:

- Print
- Radio
- Television

## 1.2.2 Print

Print includes newspapers, magazines, journals, tabloids and so on. Here, we get short reports, long features, editorial comments and articles with or without pictures. The biggest advantage of print media is that if we do not understand something fully or wish to re-look at a previous reference, the possibility is available. The disadvantage of print is those who are illiterate are deprived of all the information that comes out in print. However, around the world, people have built mechanisms to overcome this. For example, in rural areas, people gather around a person who reads the daily newspaper to them.

## 1.2.3 Radio

Radio is considered to have the widest reach across boundaries, including that of illiteracy. Radio signals can reach remote areas and are useful for disaster and conflict management. In comparison to print, radio can bring us the voices of people around whom a programme is made. This makes it more personal and, therefore, more appealing than print.

## 1.2.4 Television

Television has the greater possibility of bringing us images with voices. So, we get the feeling of witnessing an event. Unfortunately, in recent years, like in India, the character of television has become more studio-oriented. We see live footage only of political, sensational, criminal or major disaster occurrences, not news of human interest, innovative practices or alternative interventions that impact climate, etc.

## 1.2.5 Social Media

A little ahead, we will look at how the basic characteristics of these traditional media, along with other factors, guide and influence the content they carry. Before that, we talked of social media, which is essentially in the virtual world and linked to computers, the Internet, and mobile phones. The most familiar platforms are:

- Facebook
- X (formerly Twitter)
- Instagram
- WhatsApp
- Tumblr
- Flickr
- YouTube

## 1.2.6 Special Characteristics of Social Media

The word 'social' defines the primary characteristic of these media compared to traditional media. Traditional media is a one-way communication from the writer/speaker to an audience or masses. This is why it is often called 'mass' media. In contrast, social media is in the hands of 'society' – people like you

and me. Anyone can use a social media platform. They do not need a job with a newspaper, radio station or television channel to convey their information.

This primary characteristic gives every individual 'power' like we never had before. This is also why it is critical to use these platforms responsibly. It used to be said that something published in a newspaper or broadcast on radio/television is like a Bible truth. Increasingly, the information passed around on social media is being viewed similarly. Unfortunately, that is a dangerous trend because not all information producers and sharers are careful of their content's veracity.

**Check Your Progress: 1**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. In about 100 words, define what you understand as Traditional Media and Social Media, highlighting one major difference.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. Name a few Traditional and Social Media forms and mention which you use daily.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

---

**1.3 IMPACT OF CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF MEDIA**

---

Now, we look at how the basic characteristics of different forms of media can guide content. We also examine the motivated/commercial/corporate factors that interfere with media content.

**1.3.1 Print**

A newspaper, magazine, tabloid, etc., has several pages over which content is presented with text and pictures. Additionally, print media can highlight/draw attention to various stories differently. It can be the front page/lead story, editorial/comment page, or specific theme page (world/business/arts/sports, etc.). As a result, print -

- can provide us with a wide variety of content, out of which we can choose to read what interests us
- it can give us combinations of short and long reports on various aspects of a story, with bulleted snippets of information in boxes, pictures that partly visually depict the story
- it gives us the possibility to glance through and focus on or jump to the section that interests us

### 1.3.2 Changing Trends of Print Media

In the context of the above points, Print Media maintained high professionalism before television, and now social media has become the frontline media platform. Subsequently, competition with other media cornered print media into choices that would help to hold up its readership. Some of those factors that changed the character of print media are

- declining readership meant turning to sensationalism to attract the reader
- needing a higher quantum of advertising to sustain themselves
- Both these factors resulted in a scenario where
- the slant of a story could be 'twisted' to grab the reader's eye, particularly in a headline
- this often results in misconceptions even if the full story subsequently provides the 'truth.'
- behind-the-scenes 'relationships' between the editorial and advertising departments with advertisers give pulls and pushes that affect the representation of a story
- these can even be unconsciously reflected in a story due to undefined peer influence on thoughts that occur in informal associations

Recently, the worldwide phenomenon in media is the deep association of media owners with politicians and industrialists. This has affected print media as much as television. Though print media journalists still carry a lot of credibility, many continue to struggle against lobbies and do their work ethically despite pressures.

### 1.3.3 Radio

Radio can provide as much diversity as print if running a full-time service. Other factors pre-determine the content of radio.

Stories need to be of two kinds:

- relevant to the immediate environment of the listener because it is usually heard in the personal confines of the home
- informative about the world, particularly for those who do not have access to news due to geographical constraints

For effective radio programming, the presenters and those who are included in interviews/discussions/expert views / etc., need to be people with

- good voices and diction
- clarity of thought to speak 'volumes' in crisp sentences and short expositions/answers
- pleasant to establish a warm relationship through sound waves

### **1.3.4 Changing Trends in Radio**

Unlike print and television, the commercial / advertising sector's impact on radio was, by and large, different. Unless supported by the state or some strong institution, radio stations as we knew them faded out. Those radio stations had well-researched, keenly thought-out, listener-interest-oriented diverse programmes that would inform/educate, entertain, and give continuous descriptive, on-the-spot sports commentaries. The cricket and Republic Day commentaries were perfect examples of crossing borders until television took over.

Even so, the power of radio did not die out. It metamorphosed into a more popular form that became a part of people's daily lives, such as FM Radio. With FM, the 'diversity' of radio is split into sub-sectors. This means we have FM stations for every kind of 'need'. It could be music, sports, cinema, food, a particular location (town/city), elderly, youth, etc. The diversity of FM stations worldwide is immense, and many have been running successfully until now.

### **1.3.5 FM Radio**

Depending on the specific circumstances, FM Radio, even if governed by commercial pressures, is less susceptible to being influenced by lobbies than print and radio. This is usually because FM stations almost invariably have the possibility of phone-ins, and the public can interject and 'expose' facts, which may or may not be acceptable to the ownership. This powerful aspect of radio cannot be undermined because it gives radio a greater democratic character than print and television, with an added dimension of energetic, immediate communication between those who disseminate and those who consume information.

### **1.3.6 Towards Community Radio**

It was natural that some serious social issues would be neglected in such a situation because it had less chance of grabbing a popular listener base. In its organic way, radio developed the concept of community radio, which has become a strong component of radio as we know it today. Governments and the public (community) are struggling with the laws that can give community radio a comprehensive form. When it does, it still has the potential to give more depth and voice to society's concerns than print and television. This is particularly so in climate change, disaster management, grassroots developmental issues and issues linked to vulnerable / marginalised groups/ communities, particularly women.



### 1.3.7 Television

Due to its popularity essentially based on the power and attraction of moving images, television became the 'first' face of media over print and radio. Its potential to bring the world to our drawing room created an underlying change in people's consciousness. We developed a sense of being global citizens and imbibed diversity due to the various nations and cultures we began seeing on television. This has been the biggest contribution of television.

### 1.3.8 Changing Trends in Television

Compared to a long history of sustained dependability and appeal of information of print and radio, television lost its credibility in a shorter span of time. In its initial phases, public service was the guiding motto of television. In later years, it was a struggle for states to maintain their public service nature. The competition of private satellite channels quickly changed the character of television worldwide.

### 1.3.9 Impact of Advertising on Television

Advertising made the greatest impact as it gravitated away from print and radio and toward television. This soon made television more of a business venture than a source of credible information and public service.

As this business component grew rapidly and exponentially, industrialists saw television as a good business proposition. This development led to another quiet, somewhat unhealthy change that insidiously sunk into the television system. The use of television channels for political agendas is now more a norm than an exception.

This impacted print because media moguls also wished to control newspapers. The era when newspaper editors had their journalistic freedom has increasingly become a precious and often rare phenomenon.

### 1.3.10 Impact of Changing Trends in Traditional Media

The overall impact of the various factors mentioned above is deep and critical. The power of business and media has overpowered the world of public media content. Society

- no longer knows what to believe and what not to believe
- is often deprived of the kind of content they wish to have
- are almost bullied into becoming habitual consumers of skewed or slanted content that is imposed upon them
- have nearly no say in how these circumstances can be changed because they have no powers

This was bound to create turmoil, and society would respond. Technology helped that happen. Social media has become the great media leveller of this century. Media can no longer be defined as content from one source sent to many. It is a two-way communication of content, which can multiply with

shares, forwards, and algorithms. With time, social media has also triggered headline stories in traditional media.

### 1.3.11 Uncharted Growth of Social Media

At first, this seems to be the perfect solution. After all, what could be better than ourselves being in charge of what we want to read, see and communicate? The catch is right here. At an individual level, almost none of us is equipped to

- research our facts
- write with clarity
- Take pictures/videos that follow the rules for framing, lighting, etc.
- be responsible enough not to share content that can cause any form of unease or disturbance to individuals/groups/communities/society at large
- utilise the correct medium to convey our content

This is the reason why there is a lot of turmoil associated with the use of social media.

### 1.3.12 New Challenges of Media

The biggest plus point of social media, particularly YouTube and shared videos, is sharing content previously limited to a few people. Today, we learn much more about health, lifestyle, diet, and spiritual matters than in recent years. This enables society to make choices that they may not have been able to without such immense online content.

On the negative side, like traditional media, social media also has ownership, which is almost monopolistic. So, we and all our content on social media are in the hands and power of powerful people whose platforms rule the world. These platforms are heavily driven by advertising, which has its pitfalls. This can prove quite dangerous in a way, as we have seen in the case of the Facebook data breach.

In short, the challenge for traditional media has become credibility, and the challenge for social media is facts and privacy. Societies and governments worldwide need to address both these issues.

#### Check Your Progress: 2

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. In 100 words, EACH defines what you understand as print, radio, and television characteristics.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Mention one plus and one minus point for Print, Radio, and Television and their reasons.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Write a short essay of 250 words on why you think Social Media has become popular.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

---

## 1.4 AUTHENTICITY OF MEDIA CONTENT

---

Due to a combination of all the facts mentioned above, the authenticity of media content is our biggest challenge. How do we know that the content we read, hear, and see is true? How do we know that we are not victims of subconscious messaging? How do we know that we perceive content in a particular way because it has been presented in a specific way?

While several points related to this can fill a whole essay or book, we will look at a few that are critical for us to understand as information consumers.

Fake News, Paid News, Iconisation and Stereotyping are some of them.

### 1.4.1 Fake News

Those who work in or with the media belong to the same society as us and have the same strengths and weaknesses. Fake News is usually a tool used by vested interests (who may or may not have direct links with the media) and consistently wish to harm/demolish/destroy/eliminate an individual/institution. They will use any means to achieve this end, including sting operations that excite us like an investigative, spy-like thriller. Fake News has become a popular element in politics and runs across traditional and social media. It can be a motivating story in a newspaper or on television or content that goes viral on Facebook or WhatsApp.

### 1.4.2 Paid News

Paid News has a similar 'bad' aura but is often used in more complicated situations. It could influence the government to adopt a particular policy or product. Or it could be used to ensure certain people are placed in the right top positions in major ministries, institutions, and organisations. Paid news can be used by corporations, multinational companies, and politicians to

achieve whatever they wish.

### **1.4.3 Convenient Symbolism and its Impact**

In the media context, nanoisation, Iconisation and Stereotyping are symptoms of today's times.

Increasingly, those working for traditional media face the pressures of

- time
- breaking a story first
- conveying the 'slant' of a story in the quickest way

And those who use social media like to use

- short forms of words and bad spellings are becoming a norm
- smileys of all kinds to convey words

Nanoisation, Iconisation and Stereotyping help for all of these.

### **1.4.4 Nanoisation of Content**

What is Nanoisation? Nano is very small. So, while we easily share very long messages others send on WhatsApp, it is not the same when we write original content ourselves. There is a rush to convey information quickly in the shortest time. It suits everybody because attention spans have greatly reduced, and people want to 'get the message' quickly.

### **1.4.5 Iconisation**

What do we mean by Iconisation? Iconisation is the use of a symbol to convey a complete meaning. A cake is an icon for a birthday, or the Eiffel Tower is an icon for Paris / France. This is a technique that was originally adopted by the advertising world. It has now spread to all kinds of content across all media. The result is essentially

- a rapidly decreasing diversity in images that convey specific concepts
- inappropriateness with the real lives of people in many parts of the world

For example, an ad for a shampoo will invariably have a fair woman with long, glossy hair. So, the image of beauty in our mind is perpetually linked to a fair face. An ad for a spice or cooking oil often has a family around a table with eight to ten steaming dishes. So, again, the image of a healthy life is embedded with so many dishes on the dining table. Neither of these applies to the lives of many darker-skinned or poor people in the world.

### **1.4.6 Stereotyping**

Stereotyping carries similar aspects and largely affects how we view women, communities, races, and nations. Projecting images with guns and certain kinds of flags stamps an image of a particular type of people belonging to a particular religion. Depicting women in certain ways creates an image of women as a sexual object. Emphasising a particular colour gives an image a

context of a particular political party or country.

As we can see, it is a real challenge to grasp the authenticity of the content beyond the canonisation, iconisation and stereotyping we receive across various forms of media. The more we learn to research and analyse the content, the better informed we can be. That is a demand of present and future times.

### Check Your Progress: 3

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the challenges related to the authenticity of media content? Write in bullet points.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. State one of your examples of each of the following:

- Fake News
- Paid News
- Navigation
- Iconisation
- Stereotyping

---

## 1.5 FACT CHECKING AND SELF-DRIVEN CODE OF ETHICS

---

It is not easy to authenticate media content. After all, in our busy lives with hectic schedules, it is easy to say: Where do I have the time to research and find the truth? That is true. So, we must learn to restrain ourselves unless we are fully equipped to utilise and share content or create new content.

### 1.5.1 Googling Facts

There are a few possibilities, and Google is the best way to check facts. It often helps to find the truth quickly. Write relevant words, then a +, and then 'true or false'. This can lead you to hundreds of leads, and your critical thinking will help you find the correct answer.

For example, you come across a story that seems big and involves big names. It is a letter on an organisation's letterhead with address, names, telephone numbers and signatures. It looks authentic, but no news about this has ever come out in the public domain. You can type the name of the organisation + one of the names mentioned + whom it is addressed to + fake news or true.

### 1.5.2 Checking Websites

Apart from this, what goes viral on Facebook or WhatsApp is often an old story or from a doubtful source. In the case of a doubtful source, it can have impressive initial words, like BBC or TimesNow. Then, there will be some additional words/alphabet, meaning it is a dubious site. Click on the link and look into the 'About' section; the background will be clear. There will always be a lot of difference in the quality and content of a real BBC site and a fake one.

Wikipedia has a list of fake websites:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_fake\\_news\\_websites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fake_news_websites)

### 1.5.3 Need for Self-Driven Skills

As we become burdened with constant media content, we must develop habits, skills, and competencies that make us responsible consumers, sharers, and content creators. We must remember that the content remains in the virtual world and is the legacy we will be leaving behind for our children and grandchildren. That is a big responsibility, and we must understand it as such.

#### Check Your Progress: 4

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. How would you check the authenticity of a message about a health tip you receive on WhatsApp?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. What would you do before you share a Facebook post about a particular community / religious group?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. What are the three things you would do before posting your own 'story' or 'comment' on a developing riot situation?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

---

## 1.6 ACTIVITIES WITH FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES:

---

1. Close your eyes and think of a day without access to media. Discuss and make notes.
2. Buy two daily newspapers in English and two languages for each group member. Identify news and ads that have used Iconisation and Stereotyping to convey a story.
3. Create a four-sentence message for WhatsApp and write it in full form using nanoisation. Discuss the two versions.
4. Each person views one English and one language television channel in the evening at prime time. The next day, discuss your views on fake and paid news aspects.
5. Pick a religious issue and discuss how you would NOT present it on Social Media and three reasons for not doing so.
6. Pick one issue and discuss how and why it would be presented differently in Print, Radio and Television.

---

## 1.7 LET US SUM UP

---

We have looked at the characteristics, changing trends and their impact on various forms of media. All these are important components of how you and I perceive media content. Undoubtedly, our own beliefs and life experiences play a role in how we perceive that content. We hope this Unit becomes a part of your life experience as you become critical users, sharers, and creators of appropriate content.

---

## 1.8 FURTHER READINGS

---

1. Bordoloi, A., & Srimathi, S. P. (2021). The Condensing and Misogynistic Portrayal of Women in Media. *KnowEx Social Sciences*, 1(02), 1-10. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=193005d2f634c435863ff707bf660047f980ed58>
2. Brooks, D. E., & Hébert, L. P. (2006). Gender, race, and media representation. *Handbook of gender and communication*, 16, 297-317. <https://focusintl.com/GD142-%20Gender,%20Race%20and%20Media%20Representation.pdf>
3. Castañeda, M. (2018). The power of (mis) representation: Why racial and ethnic stereotypes in the media matter. *Challenging inequalities: Readings in race, ethnicity, and immigration*. [https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1059&context=communication\\_faculty\\_pubs](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1059&context=communication_faculty_pubs)
4. Dame Adjin-Tettey, T. (2022). Combating fake news, disinformation, and misinformation: Experimental evidence for media literacy education. *Cogent arts & humanities*, 9(1), 2037229. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/23311983.2022.2037229>

5. Hobbs, R. (2021). *Media literacy in action: Questioning the media*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
6. Hoewe, J., & Ewoldsen, D. R. (2024). The Media Use Model: A metatheoretical framework for media processes and effects. *Human Communication Research*, 50(2), 254-263.
7. Jansson, A., & Lindell, J. (2018). Media studies for a mediatized world: Rethinking media and social space. *Media and communication*, 6(2), 1-4. [https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/57810/ssoar-mediacomm-2018-2-jansson\\_et\\_al-Media\\_studies\\_for\\_a\\_mediatized.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-mediacomm-2018-2-jansson\\_et\\_al-Media\\_studies\\_for\\_a\\_mediatized.pdf](https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/57810/ssoar-mediacomm-2018-2-jansson_et_al-Media_studies_for_a_mediatized.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-mediacomm-2018-2-jansson_et_al-Media_studies_for_a_mediatized.pdf)
8. Kargın, T., & Demir, R. (2023). Empowering Children's Media Literacy in the YouTube Era: Insights into Critical Awareness. *International Journal of Research in Teacher Education (IJRTE)*, 14(3). [https://ijrte.inased.org/files/5/manuscript/manuscript\\_4038/ijrte-4038-manuscript-001552.pdf](https://ijrte.inased.org/files/5/manuscript/manuscript_4038/ijrte-4038-manuscript-001552.pdf)
9. Rizvi, Y., & Kuznetsova, E. (2023). The Politics of Representation: Examining Media Portrayals in Social Science Literature. *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies*, 1(02), 122-132. <https://thecrssl.com/index.php/Journal/article/download/12/12>
10. Silverblatt, A., Miller, D. C., Smith, J., & Brown, N. (2014). *Media literacy: Keys to interpreting media messages*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.

---

## 1.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

---

### Check Your Progress 1:

1. Traditional media refers to established forms of mass communication, such as newspapers, television, radio, and magazines. These platforms typically involve one-way communication from the sender (the media organization) to the receiver (the audience). In contrast, social media encompasses online platforms and applications that facilitate interactive and user-generated content, allowing individuals to create, share, and engage with content in a bidirectional manner. One major difference between the two is the level of interactivity and user participation inherent in social media, which is often absent in traditional media.
2. Examples of traditional media include newspapers like *The New York Times*, television networks such as CNN, radio stations like BBC Radio, and magazines like *National Geographic*. On the other hand, social media platforms encompass Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. A daily user engage with social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, while also consuming traditional media through online news portals.



**Check Your Progress 2:**

1. Characteristics of Print, Radio, and Television
  - a. **Print:** Print media refers to materials that are physically printed and distributed, such as newspapers, magazines, and books. Its characteristics include static content, longevity, and tangibility. Print allows for in-depth analysis, archival value, and a sense of credibility due to its traditional nature.
  - b. **Radio:** Radio is an auditory medium that broadcasts audio content over the airwaves. Its characteristics include immediacy, intimacy, and accessibility. Radio provides real-time updates, fosters a personal connection with listeners through voice, and is accessible to audiences even in remote areas.
  - c. **Television:** Television is a visual and auditory medium that broadcasts moving images and sound. Its characteristics include visual impact, immediacy, and widespread reach. Television engages audiences through dynamic visuals, delivers news and entertainment in real-time, and reaches a broad demographic.
2. Strengths and Weaknesses of Print, Radio, and Television
  - a. **Print:** Plus point: Print offers in-depth analysis and credibility. Minus point: Its distribution can be limited, and it lacks immediacy compared to other mediums.
  - b. **Radio:** Plus point: Radio provides real-time updates and is accessible. Minus point: It lacks visual content and can be affected by signal issues.
  - c. **Television:** Plus point: Television engages audiences with dynamic visuals and widespread reach. Minus point: It can be expensive to produce and relies heavily on advertising revenue.
3. **The Popularity of Social Media:** Social media has become popular due to its ability to connect people globally, facilitate instant communication, and offer a platform for self-expression. With social media, individuals can share their thoughts, experiences, and content in various formats such as text, images, and videos. Its interactive nature encourages engagement, fostering communities and relationships beyond geographical boundaries. Moreover, social media platforms offer personalized content tailored to users' interests, enhancing user experience and retention. Additionally, the accessibility of social media through smartphones and other devices has contributed to its widespread adoption. However, concerns about privacy, misinformation, and digital addiction highlight the need for responsible usage and regulation of social media platforms.

**Check Your Progress 3:**

1. Challenges related to the authenticity of media content:
  - a. **Misinformation:** Deliberate spread of false information to deceive audiences.
  - b. **Disinformation:** False information spread with the intent to

## Mobile Transition

manipulate public opinion or cause harm.

- c. **Manipulated Content:** Images, videos, or audio altered to misrepresent reality.
  - d. **Echo Chambers:** Social media algorithms reinforcing existing beliefs by filtering content.
  - e. **Confirmation Bias:** Individuals seeking out information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs.
  - f. **Lack of Verification:** Failure to verify sources or fact-check information before publication.
  - g. **Deep Fakes:** AI-generated content that convincingly mimics real people, used for deceptive purposes.
2. **Examples:**
- a. **Fake News:** A fabricated story claiming a celebrity's death.
  - b. **Paid News:** A news article promoting a particular political candidate paid for by their campaign.
  - c. **Navigation:** Biased framing of a news story to influence public opinion on a contentious issue.
  - d. **Iconization:** Exaggerated portrayal of a public figure as a hero without acknowledging their flaws.
  - e. **Stereotyping:** Depiction of a certain ethnic group in a film as criminals, perpetuating harmful stereotypes.

---

## UNIT 2 THE MEDIUM AND THE MESSAGE

---

### Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Learning Outcomes
- 2.2 Media Codes and Conventions: Concept and Definition
  - 2.2.1 Defining and Identifying Media Codes
  - 2.2.2 Defining Media Conventions
  - 2.2.3 Relevance of Media Codes and Conventions
- 2.3 Relevance of Codes and Conventions in the News Genre
- 2.4 Codes and Conventions for Print News/ Newspapers
  - 2.4.1 Writing Style
  - 2.4.2 Page Layout
- 2.5 Codes and Conventions for Radio News
  - 2.5.1 Radio News Formats
  - 2.5.2 Codes for Radio News
  - 2.5.3 Conventions in Radio News
- 2.6 Codes and Conventions for Television News
  - 2.6.1 Visual Codes in Television News
  - 2.6.2 Audio Codes in Television News
  - 2.6.3 Conventions in Television News
- 2.7 Codes and Conventions of News Websites
  - 2.7.1. Codes Used in a News Website
  - 2.7.2. Conventions of a News Website
- 2.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.9 Further Readings
- 2.10 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

---

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

---

In the previous Unit, you learnt how messages are coded in media and information texts. The messages in media texts can have obvious and, at times, connotations. In this Unit, we will focus on the medium and the messages it carries, specifically for the news genre. Here, we will start with the characteristics of the different media forms used to disseminate news. This is very basic yet important in understanding media messages.

The characteristics of the medium influence the message it carries. A medium's strengths and limitations can potentially dictate the framework in which the message is developed. So, every medium has specific ways of developing and codifying a message for easier understanding on the receiver's end.

Hence, this Unit introduces the basic codes and standard conventions used by the print, broadcast, and online media to deliver news effectively to their audiences. We treat news here as a communication of information. A basic understanding of these codes and conventions for preparing and delivering news will help you better create and analyse news stories, which is imperative for news literacy.

---

## 2.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

---

After completing this Unit, you should be able to:

- Define media codes and conventions
- Identify the codes and conventions of news used in
  - Newspapers
  - Radio
  - Television
  - Websites
- Appreciate the relevance of the codes and conventions of the news genre
- Critically analyse the news presentation in print/TV/Radio/Websites

---

## 2.2 MEDIA CODES AND CONVENTIONS: CONCEPT AND DEFINITION

---

Look around you; don't you find yourself surrounded by media texts? We are soaking in information actively and, yes ... also passively. The photographs in the magazine, the illustrations in the hoardings, the news story in the newspaper, the colours used on a website, the camera angle and frames in a video, the audio in the music, etc., all make you feel or act in a certain way.

A media text is developed using language specific to the medium. This language comprises the codes, conventions, formats, symbols, and narrative structure suitable for the medium. Hence, the associated meanings can sometimes be obvious or not so obvious. Codes and conventions are like the building blocks of the media messages that we receive. An understanding of them helps us code the messages and decode them well.

### 2.2.1 Defining and Identifying Media Codes

Let's start with an example. You are in a restaurant and need to use the restroom. How do you find out where it is? When you find it, how do you recognise which restroom to use? Look for some indications like the one below.



*Image Source: Pixabay.com*

No matter where you go, a sign like this signifies the restroom.

Codes are a system of signs which, when put together, create some meaning. A code should have the following attributes to ensure its comprehension. They are:

- Using signs that are easily recognisable at the receiver's end is important.
- It should also have a context. Meaning is derived from a sign when some context is provided to it. For example, a cross can signify Christianity, the medical profession, or addiction. The context in which it is placed imparts meaning to it.

Media codes fall into the following three categories:

- a) **Technical codes:** Techniques used in the creation of the media text.
- b) **Written codes:** Everything that is spoken and written.
- c) **Symbolic codes:** The connotations of the technical and written codes.

### **2.2.2 Defining Media Conventions**

Media conventions are a standard way to use the media codes in the text. This can act as a governing behaviour for media production in the industry. Media conventions followed in developing media text can be as follows:

- a) Form conventions guide the arrangement of codes in media text. This structuring can be achieved through elements of a page layout in print media, sequencing of shots in a movie, etc.
- b) Story conventions: These are narrative structures used when telling a story. It can be built around cause and effect, a point of view, etc.
- c) Genre conventions: These are the repetitive elements, like character, story arcs, etc., that make a work peculiar to a specific genre. For example, sci-fi is a genre that will have characters like scientists.

Codes and conventions are fashioned together in media texts to sell an idea or present something in a desired light to make you feel in a particular way.

### **2.2.3 Relevance of Media Codes and Conventions**

When Marshall McLuhan said, 'The Medium is the message, ' he tried to emphasise the symbiotic relationship between the message and its embedded medium. This relationship has a practical and functional aspect.

- a) It is practical because a medium's attributes set the boundaries for creating a message. For example, a newspaper cannot carry audio-video content.
- b) The message is about what is being said and how it is said. How it is said affects how the message is perceived.

A set of codes and conventions works behind it to design messages to communicate the intended meaning.

---

## 2.3 RELEVANCE OF CODES AND CONVENTIONS IN THE NEWS GENRE

---

Codes and conventions offer a pattern and hints to grasp the meaning of the text. The codes and conventions used while designing a message for news media can construct reality, identity, ideology, consciousness, stereotypes, misrepresentation, underrepresentation, etc. An extensive familiarity with these patterns results in a more intricate thought process and interpretations.

1. It can help a journalist to create balanced and fair news reports.
2. It can help the audience critically analyse a news story. Consequently, it is valuable to identify and tackle misinformation, propaganda, stereotypes, etc.

Thus, knowing the codes and conventions used in the news media is imperative to follow the news better, talk about it and write it better. This news literacy will help me understand the news discourse critically.

Before we move ahead to explore the codes and conventions used in print and broadcast news, it is important to keep in mind that the codes and conventions used in a media accordingly adapt to the :

- purpose of communication,
- type of effect that is desired,
- audiences,
- contexts and
- the kind of media used.

For the news genre, the general purpose of news is to inform the audiences objectively. The context is provided in the details of the news. The 'written code' deals with the language style dictated by the journalistic norms for providing objective and unbiased information. These journalistic styles:

- It helps to structure a news story according to the news value.
- It ties in with the existing editing practices in the news industry, considering the news consumption patterns and habits of the readers/audiences.

The attributes of the news media affect the delivery of the news item and the kind of codes used.

With this understanding, we will now learn the conventions of preparing and delivering a news item using the most suitable media codes according to the attributes of the news media.

---

## 2.4 CODES AND CONVENTIONS FOR PRINT NEWS/ NEWSPAPERS

---

Newspapers have been the most popular and credible source of information in print media. The news items can be categorised into the following

journalistic categories:

- a) **News Stories:** Short and concise facts about a recent event with a news value. It is written in an inverted pyramid style.
- b) **Features:** Provide an in-depth analysis or significance of a news/ human angle story. They are written in a linear or nonlinear standard outline format, usually with a conclusion.
- c) **Editorials:** Fact-based opinions from in-house editors. It objectively explains an issue to oppose or refute it.
- d) **Reviews:** Subjective, honest critique based on opinion. Usually, it has a recommendation for readers.

All of these follow a specific news writing format that follows journalistic guidelines.

Now that you can identify the types of news items in a newspaper, we will explore the basic elements of a news story and how they are structured.

**Activity 1:** Pick up a daily newspaper and try to identify

News stories

Features

Editorials

Reviews

### 2.4.1 Writing Style

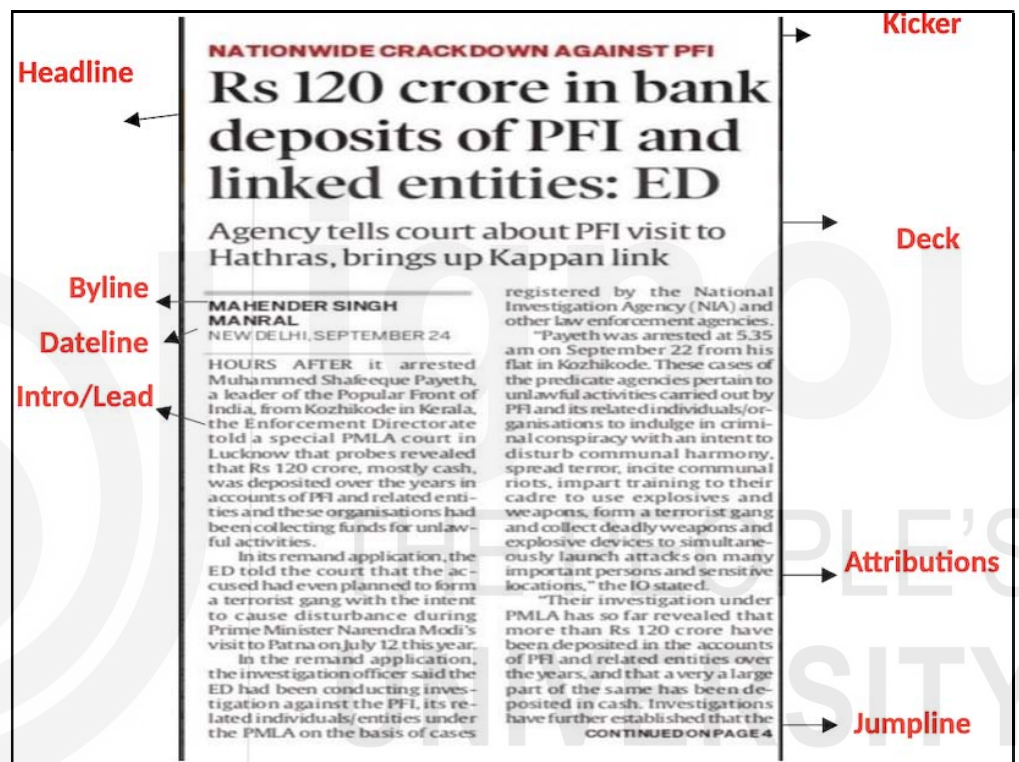
The written code comprises writing style and textual layout.

The Indian newspapers follow the basic news writing conventions of the Press Council of India. The news stories are written to inform about a newsworthy event. It is done in the most concise and informative possible way. To do this, there are certain structural elements of a news story.

- a) **Headline:** A headline is a crisp and concise news story summary. It draws the reader's attention to the story and helps him decide whether to read further details. Headlines can be supplemented with subheads.
- b) **Intro:** The first sentence of the news story summarises the news story. Of the 5W and 1H, you can find at least 3 of them here. The intro is useful because even if the reader leaves the story at this point, he will still have some information about it.
- c) **Body:** The story's further details are written in an inverted pyramid style, with the most important information first and the lesser important details following. This format facilitates easy editing for editors in a space crunch. The readers find the information in a hierarchy of importance.
- d) **Quotations/Attributions:** Sometimes, the news story mentions what was said about the event by a key person related to it. These are

mentioned in quotes. A quotation from a reliable source or an eyewitness increases the credibility of the news story.

These comprise a news story and are placed according to importance. The most important and newsworthy information is provided below the headline as the lead. This is followed by the body, which provides additional relevant details. The story might end with background info or a conclusion; this is the tail. This convention for the written codes followed in news writing is called the inverted pyramid style. It structures the news story based on the newsworthiness of the associated details. It has been developed and is still used because it guides the reader through the details for a better understanding. However, if the reader does not read the story and leaves mid-way, he still will have the most important information.



Structure elements of a news story written in an inverted pyramid style. (Source: The Indian Express)

A news story always carries the source of the news below the headline. It can be as a news agency's byline ( name of the correspondent) name. Following it is the dateline, which mentions the place and date of writing. It is always advisable to look for the news source for its credibility.

**Activity - 2**

Pick up a newspaper and analyse the topmost story to see how it is written. How is it structured?

Can you identify the elements like headline, intro, dateline, and byline?

Does the story have attributions? In which part of the story is it located?



## 2.4.2 Page Layout

We need to see how these stories are placed in a newspaper. A newspaper's layout uses technical codes and considers the audience's expectations on the page. Knowing its conventions will allow you to interpret it and ensure that the message is decoded as it should be.

### Page Layout Considerations

- **Space:** After the ads are placed on a page, the space left is called the *news hole*. This is where the news stories are placed. The news stories are placed in stacks of text called *columns*. The uppermost part is occupied by a *masthead* where you find the newspaper's title. It is the biggest attention seeker on the front page.

Rest space is utilised for news stories according to their value.

Besides this, you can also find blank white spaces between texts, text columns, and other elements used in a news story. This is *white space*. It provides breathing spaces, avoids clutter, and improves readability and comprehension.

*A jump line* is a short phrase appearing at the end of a column. It indicates that the story will continue on a subsequent page. It is used to manage space when a news story does not fit in the space allocated on the front page. It helps to make space for other news stories. Interested readers can navigate to the story for more information.

- **Hierarchy:** The most important stories are placed *above the fold*, while an *anchor story* is at the base to keep the readers on the page for a while. The news stories are placed according to their newsworthiness, even above the fold.

The lead story, *Splash*, stands out as the most prominent story on the front page. It can be identified by the amount of space it occupies and the font type used. It symbolises the importance of the story.

The second most important story is called the *off lead*, which could be found parallel to the splash but could be identified by the lesser space and font relative to the lead.

*Headlines* indicate the importance of a story by working with font attributes like size, type, colour, etc. The way a headline is laid also has a purpose, like banner headlines, crossline headlines, flush left headlines, kickers, hammers, etc. Hence, headlines not only introduce the news story but also cues towards the importance of the story.

- **Images & Size:** Images can also be part of the news story. They act as proof of what has happened and supplement what is written. They also break the monotony of the text and make the page attractive and more appealing to the readers. A good picture would be relevant to the context and meaningful.

Apart from images, infographics or other illustrations are also used depending on the story's needs.

Captions are used to describe the images/illustrations used.

The use of images/illustrations with suitable captions helps present the story better, attempts to take the readers to the event scene, and helps them understand it better<sup>3</sup>.

- **Colour:** The conventional way is dark text on a light background, like black on white. Some newspapers can use colours to enhance their aesthetics and make them more appealing. Coloured headlines can also make a specific story stand out from the rest.

However, the news media is divided on the use of colours in newspapers. You can find newspapers that use colours to aid readership but also mind that it is not getting flashy (losing their serious tone). How a newspaper is perceived depends greatly on the layout and the colours used. It sets a tone for what they stand for. It can be clearly understood from a quote by an editor from The Times:



Page layout elements of the front page of a newspaper (Source: The New Indian Express)

“This is a paper to be read . . . not (just) looked at,”

The layout convention followed by a newspaper is called the *house style*. It represents the identity and sets the tone of the newspaper.

### Activity - 3

Take a daily newspaper and analyse the layout of its front page

What elements can you identify on the front page?

Does this layout resemble how the inner pages are laid?

Can you make some inferences about the brand identity and tone of the newspaper?

## 2.5 CODES AND CONVENTION FOR RADIO NEWS

Radio, unlike print and television, relies only on sound. No visual cues can enhance the understanding of the audio message. The content on the radio consists of spoken words, music, and sound effects. Spoken words are central to radio content, and how they are spoken can add a layer of meaning.

Sound is central to all the codes and conventions used to generate radio content. The kind of sound, its combinations, modulation, and even its absence are used to create meaning on the radio and in newscasts.

Before you move to the codes and conventions of radio news, it will be helpful to know that only All India Radio (AIR) has the right to broadcast news in India.

### 2.5.1 Radio News Formats

The news on the radio is presented in three formats.

- a) **News bulletins:** These are 5—to 10-minute broadcasts with headlines and signature archival music. They are lively, crisp, and concise. An example is the 6 a.m. bulletin on AIR.
- b) **New magazine:** These are the longer newscasts, usually around 30 minutes. They begin with a bulletin and discuss it in detail. They might include talks, interviews, discussions, features, reviews, expert comments, etc. The afternoon news on AIR is an example of a news magazine.
- c) **Newsreel:** These are recorded supplements to the news bulletin. They can be voice dispatches from the correspondent, actuality, comments from key people in the news, analysis, etc. They can be found embedded in news magazines. The News and Radio Newsreel By BBC was a 15-minute newsreel broadcast four times daily.

### 2.5.2 Codes for Radio News

**Written codes:** The news script for radio follows the news writing guidelines prescribed by the Press Council of India to uphold journalistic norms. But considering that radio exits in time. A reader cannot go back, nor are there any visual cues to assist comprehension; it is advised to :

- i. Use short and simple sentences.

- ii. Use active voice to describe what the subject is doing/has done.
- iii. Do not use the relative clauses as they can break the flow of the sentence. Consider the following line from a radio news story.

*'A group of Students who are from Central Hindu School won the International Math Olympiad.'*

Statements like this should be rewritten by removing the relative clause "who".

**Technical codes:** These are the technical processes involved in creating content for radio news, like recording, editing, and mixing. The way (news genre convention) these sounds are recorded, mixed, and structured in a newscast creates symbolic codes for the listeners.

**Symbolic codes:** *Pitch* patterns help listeners identify the beginning and end of the story. They can also inform about the story's length, seriousness, and even credibility. Generally, the newsreader begins a statement on a high pitch and ends on a lower pitch. An exception is an interrogative statement, where the pitch rises at the end of the statement.

*Presence, co-presence or absence* of sounds are also cues for the listener. For example, a signature tune is played in the background with the headlines but not when the news is read in detail. This background tune instantly reminds us that we are in the headlines without being told.

Music, sound effects, and recorded or live audio clips are also used to provide cues for better understanding.

**Check Your Progress: 1**

- Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answer.  
2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

- 1. What are the various radio news formats?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 2. Why is it not advisable to use clauses in radio news?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

### 2.5.3 Conventions in Radio News

You will now see how a radio newscast is structured and delivered using these written, technical and symbolic codes. The basic convention for professional and credible news delivery is to be formal, serious and informative. A radio newscast can have the following elements:

- **Intro:** When a news reader introduces himself, time and the network.
- **Stinger:** It is a short music played at the beginning or end of a report. This can also be used in the headlines segment.
- **SFX:** The music is fading away.
- **Cue:** When the news presenter introduces a report from a correspondent or a sound byte.
- **Actuality:** These are the recordings from the field/interview/speeches. The shorter segments, when picked from it, are called grabs.
- **Atmos:** Ambient sounds from the location where the correspondent is reporting. For example, the sound of people shouting slogans in the background when the reporter is covering a protest.
- **Audio clips:** Pre-recorded interviews, etc., are used in the newscast.
- **Outro:** When the newsreader ends the news broadcast.

Using caps in news scripts is a conventional way of providing cues to the newsreader, and it should not be read. However, it has a purpose, such as segment identification for the newsreader and maintaining pace.

#### TEMPLATE RADIO NEWS PACKAGE

#### CONVENTIONS AND ITS RELEVANCE

<p>AIR MORNING NEWS NATIONAL CONFERENCE/UKRAINE/JAPAN/RBI/DELHIRAINS/PM SPEECHES/CRICKET <b>NAME OF THE NEWSREADER</b> <b>DATE</b> [RUNS: 29:54]</p>	<p><i>Slug Line:</i></p>
<p>NEWSREADER: ALL INDIA RADIO PRESENTS MORNING NEWS [0.02] SOUNDER [0.09]</p>	<p><i>Intro</i></p> <p><i>A recorded tune used to introduce segments of the broadcast. Here the AIR tune.</i></p>
<p>HEADLINES[.20]</p>	<p><i>Introduced in the beginning to get the listener's interest.</i></p>
<p>STING</p>	<p><i>The music inserts play in background when headlines are being read.</i></p>

	<p><i>The tune distinguish the headlines segments from the rest of the segments.</i></p>
<p>NEWSREADER: <b>PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI INAUGRATES THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTERS AT EKTA NAGAR IN GUJRAT</b></p>	
<p>INDIA CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE CEASATION OF HOSTILITY IN UKARINE</p>	
<p>.</p>	
<p>2<sup>ND</sup> T20 INTERNATIONAL BETWEEN INDIA AND AUSTRALIA WILL BE PLAYED IN NAGPUR</p>	
<p>STRINGER FADES</p>	<p><i>Fading signifies end headlines and beginning of the stories in detail.</i></p>
<p>CONFERENCE[.59]</p>	<p><i>[ ] signifies the run time of the story/segment. Here .59 is the time required to read it which is 59 seconds. Helps timing the bulletin and maintaining pace</i></p>
<p>UKRAINE[1:06] NEWSREADER:..... JAISHANKAR .....RUNS:[18] OUTCUE: “.....OF FOOD GRAINS FERTILIZERS AND FUEL.” NEWSREADER:.....</p>	<p><i>Actuality: Record sound from a speech interview. Provides variety to the pace in long news story.</i> <i>Outcue: Provides a cue to the news reader as to where will the sound end.</i></p>
<p>JAPAN [1.29] NEWSREADER:.....</p>	
<p>MORNING MATTERS[5.38]</p>	<p><i>A news reel record with an expert</i></p>
<p>HEADLINES AND TRAILS[0:24]</p>	

NEWSREADER:.....	
SPOT	<i>Break or the spot reserved for Public Service Advertisements</i>
SFX	<i>Ease of life in India Sound effect</i>
NEWSREADER: YOU ARE LISTENING TO MORNING NEWS ON A-I-R	<i>Reminder cue : For time and station</i>
JAPAN[] NEWSREADER:.....	
RBI[] NEWSREADER:.....	
DELHI RAINS[] NEWSREADER:.....	
PM'S SPEECH [] NEWSREADER:.....	
CRICKET[] NEWSREADER:.....	
NEWSPAPER OVERVIEW[] NEWSREADER:.....	
CLOSING HEADLINES[] NEWSREADER: AND WITH THAT WE END THE MORNING NEWS. HAVE A GREAT DAY.	<i>Outro: the last line said by the news reader Signifies the end of the news bulletin</i>

Sounders, actuality, and stingers help the listener identify the segment. The runtime for each segment is recorded and mentioned, helping the newsreader pace the newscast.

Consider the following example to understand how sound clips(music, SFX, actuality) can be placed symbolically in news stories and how they improve listening comprehension and experience. We are using a template script/package of the 'Morning News' presented on AIR.

A basic understanding of these radio news codes and conventions will help you to use them intelligently when creating or analysing radio news.

#### Activity - 4

Listen to the All India Radio newscast.

Can you identify the radio news format?

What kind of sounds can you identify during the newscast?

What was the outro used by the newsreader?

## 2.6 CODES AND CONVENTIONS FOR TELEVISION NEWS

Understanding television as a medium will help one grasp the codes and conventions of television news. Television is an audio-visual medium, so using the various technical, written and symbolic codes is easier. These codes provide audio or visual cues or even both. Thus, making the information more presentable makes it easy to understand.

Rather than directly defining the codes and the conventions, here we take the other way around. Let us try to look for the audio and visual cues in television news and their relevance that aim to make comprehension better for the audiences.

### 2.6.1 Visual Codes in Television News

What do you first observe when viewing a television news report? Visuals...right? This is where a lot of symbolic codes are embedded. What is it that you see on your screen?

- The news presenter presents the news in a specific mode of address,
- The set,
- The animate/animate text on the screen.

Have a close look at the following screenshots from News at Ten on DD News. The opening frame shows the segment's name with the DD news logo and *news scroller* at the bottom, helping to identify the news programme. Coupled with the *sounder*<sup>5</sup> in the background typography, the red colour establishes its brand identity.

A sequential analysis of the graphics, colour, and images, along with the music, pace, opening camera shot, studio setup, mise-en-scene, and mode of address, helps uncover the symbolically coded brand identity and the expectations created by the news telecast.



The opening frame of the News is at ten on DD news. (Source: DD News)

The next frame has the news presenter who introduces the news stories. The news stories are sequenced in the order of their newsworthiness. Analysing the television news telecast can help you understand the visual and verbal news codes.



1. The number of elements in the frame and their placement comprise the visual codes of composition. For example, the presenter is mostly in the centre of the frame, dressed formally and addressing the camera directly. This connotes authority and seriousness from the source. You can also spot a strapline at the bottom of the screen where you can see the news headlines trails.
2. The movement of the camera and the subject is also part of the visual code. The basic convention is to use an establishing shot, long shot, mid shot, and closeup. The pan movements also incorporate greater details from the event spot.
3. The sequence in which the visual content is structured also adds meaning to what is being said. Here, sequencing deals with editing the visual content to change shots, juxtapose images, and organise them according to what is being said by the news reader or the reporter. A news report can have interviews, vox pop, actual footage from the spot, images, sound clips, animated graphics, etc. A well-judged sequencing of these elements can break monotony and facilitate comprehension for the audience.



*Opening frame of The news at 10( Source: DD News)*

## 2.6.2 Audio Codes in Television News

Remember, television is an audio-visual medium. The visuals can be empowering, but when used wisely, the verbal cues can reinforce, undercut, or modify the visual elements. The verbal cues in the news follow the conventional narrative and journalistic norms of news report writing, which the presenter reads.

- The use of voice-over is a prominent verbal cue used in television news. This is an off-commentary by a reporter that accompanies a sequence of video clips.
- The standard out cue is another verbal cue that suggests that the reporter is signing off when they end the story. For example, ".....Tom Bateman, BBC News Jerusalem".

### 2.6.3 Conventions in Television News

Convention, as already explained, is the standard way to do something. Here, we discuss how television news, consisting of its visual and audio elements, is structured.

Writing a news package is a convention for television news<sup>6</sup>. It lays down how a news story would be told on television. It is similar to a narrative storytelling of what has happened with an intro, details, and an end. It has all the elements like images (moving and still), *bytes*, *VO*, *NATSO*, etc.

The package generally begins with an intro from the in-studio anchor. This is followed by the package lead, who has a narrative and visual lead.

Like print news, it has a middle with details and an end with a final narrative and visuals. *From the Piece to the camera, actual footage* can connect the audience to the story by providing visuals directly from the field. Sometimes, *infographics* make the information more comprehensive for the audience.

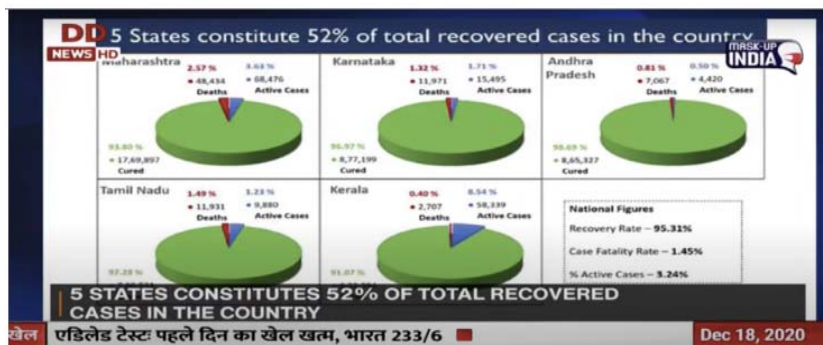
An *anchor tag* concludes the story and provides any other related info that was not in the package.



An example of Actuality footage (Source: DD News)



An example of Piece to camera (Source: BBC)



An example of Infographic s used in a newscast (Source: DD News)

### Activity - 5

Watch a television news broadcast and record

- The duration
- The segments
- The audio cues used
- The video cues used

---

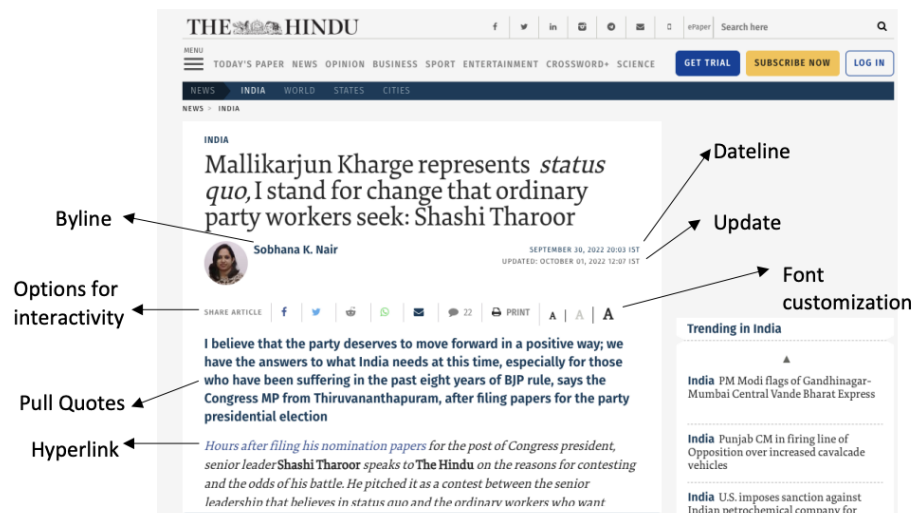
## 2.7 CODES AND CONVENTIONS OF NEWS WEBSITES

---

With the change in technology, news moved from print and radio to television and is now available online through our phones and computers. Newspapers have their online editions on their websites. Similarly, radio and television news broadcasters have websites and social media handles.

To understand this convergence of news on the internet, it is important to explore the characteristics of the medium and how it is useful for the audiences and the broadcaster. The internet is:

1. **Hypertextual:** This internet feature helps to interconnect texts through internal and external hyperlinks. This can help the news provider to embed relevant information and background related to the story through hyperlinks.
2. **Multimedia platform:** This can help integrate audio, video, text, images, etc., facilitating innovative ways of storytelling.
3. **Interactive:** The internet is interactive, unlike traditional media. In news genre <sup>8</sup>, websites can have navigational, functional, and adaptive interactivity. The more interactive the website is, the easier it is for the visitor to get involved with the content.
4. **Immediate:** On the internet, there is no lag between the relay of the information and its reception. Considering the timeliness of news, the internet provides a massive advantage in breaking news and updates for a story. The audience need not wait for the news telecast to break a news story or limit themselves to the strapline update of it. It is readily available on the phone app or website. The follow-up is also constantly updated.



Now that we know the characteristics of the internet, it is easier to appreciate how it cuts through the limitations of traditional news media. This helps journalists achieve much more through their websites than through conventional media. For example;

- Radio news is devoid of visuals and is aired on a schedule. It needs to catch up in interactivity as well.
- The front page of a newspaper has a space limitation, which affects the number of stories and their length. However, the newspaper's online homepage will have no similar restrictions. Thus, we find more headlines on the webpage than on the front page of the same newspaper. The breaking news section on the webpage cannot be found in its print version. The online version of a newspaper will have interactive elements embedded in the story, which is a limitation of its print version.
- While television news channels have multimedia elements and immediacy, the hypertextuality (for references and additional info) and interactivity that the internet provides through polls and user-generated content such as comments, connections, and sharing through social networks are missing in television newscasts.
- Another attribute is that the stories published on the online version remain, so we can read or even revisit them at our convenience. It's easy to return, which is impossible in broadcast news media.

## 2.7.1 Codes Used in a News Website

The written code, again, is guided by journalistic guidelines.

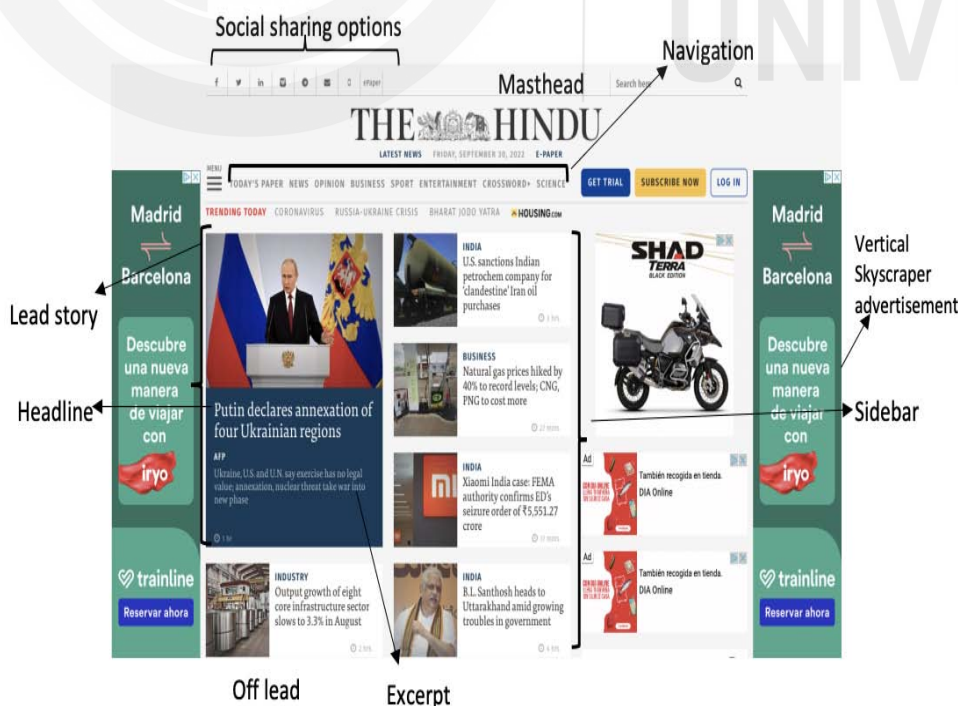
The technical code can be spotted in how a website's news is created and laid out. Similar technical codes might be found in print and television.

Videos and social media handles relevant to the story are commonly found. Other multimedia tools, including timelines, maps, slideshows, word clouds, etc. (BBC, Journalism CCEA), can also supplement the stories.

## 2.7.2 Conventions of a News Website

Take a good look at the screenshot from a news website below. What do you find?

- The layout of a newspaper website differs prominently from its print version.
- The elements like byline, lead story, headline, images, caption, pull quotes, attributions, etc., are found in the newspaper's online version, similar to its print version.
- The convention differs in the way the news stories are placed.
- The layout is either a grid or a multi-column system<sup>9</sup>. This provides better legibility and a visual cue for seriousness.
- Like the print version, the online versions use black fonts on a white background. Colours can be used in headlines, section names<sup>10</sup>, action buttons, or areas that need immediate attention.
- Vertical skyscraper ads are another convention as they stay in sight for longer when scrolling down the page.



**Activity - 6**

Analyse a news website and answer the following:

What is hypertextuality used for in a news story?

What multimedia tools can you find embedded in a news story?

What are the options available to facilitate interactivity?

How is the layout of the website different from its print version?

Read a news story on a news website and try to rewrite it for

1. Newspaper
2. Radio

**Check Your Progress: 1**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answer.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. Describe the codes and conventions of print media?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. What are the unique features of a news website?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

---

**2.8 LET US SUM UP**

---

The communication process uses agreed codes and conventions, which also apply to news genres. These codes and conventions of the news genre are affected by the medium in which they are placed. So, an understanding of the medium helps you create news stories that are easy to understand without compromising professional guidelines. Knowledge of medium-specific codes and conventions helps you find meaning in and through the media texts. Knowing how a message is constructed and presented in the news genre can assist in analysing news and information well.

Technical and written codes vary according to the medium and are connoted as symbolic. For traditional news media, the codes were either audio or visual and structured according to the convention to facilitate better presentation and comprehension of information.

Online news websites use multimedia tools to combine all the existing news codes and conventions with interactivity and hypertextuality to present and deliver news more immediately and effectively.

We hope this discussion will enable you to explore various news media platforms and analyse how messages are constructed and presented. Eventually, it will enable you to interpret explicit and implicit narratives.

---

## **2.9 FURTHER READINGS**

---

1. Andersen, N. (2016). Curriculum Contexts. How Might Context Influence or Inflect Media Literacy Education?. *The Journal of Media Literacy*, 63(1-2), 60-69.
2. Bruhn, J., & Schirrmacher, B. (2022). *Intermedial studies: An introduction to meaning across media* (p. 354). Taylor & Francis.
3. Curtin, P. A. (1995). *Textual Analysis in Mass Communication Studies: Theory and Methodology*.
4. Frau-Meigs, D. (2019). A curriculum for MIL teaching and learning. *Understanding Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in the Digital Age: A Question of Democracy*. Edited by Ulla Carlsson. UNESCO.
5. Fedorov, A. (2015). Hermeneutic Analysis of the Cultural Context of the Functioning of Media in Society and Media Texts on Media Literacy Education Classes. *Journal of International Network Center for Fundamental and Applied Research*, (4), 214-225.
6. Hartley, J. (2013). *Understanding news*. Routledge.
7. Homer, E., & Scarratt, E. (2012). Media Studies GCSE (1): possibilities and practice: Elaine Homer and Elaine Scarratt. In *The Media Teacher's Handbook*. Routledge.
8. Lacey, N. (2018). *Image and representation: Key concepts in media studies*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

### **Useful Links**

<http://culturca.narod.ru/radio.htm>

[https://www.thenewsmanual.net/Manuals%20Volume%202/volume2\\_49.htm](https://www.thenewsmanual.net/Manuals%20Volume%202/volume2_49.htm)

[https://www.siue.edu/MASSCOMM/PDFs/radio\\_news\\_script.pdf](https://www.siue.edu/MASSCOMM/PDFs/radio_news_script.pdf)

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/audio\\_video/programmes/radio\\_newsroom/transcripts/18\\_00hrs.stm#1](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/audio_video/programmes/radio_newsroom/transcripts/18_00hrs.stm#1)

<https://medium.com/the-book-mechanic/news-articles-vs-feature-articles-why-you-need-to-know-the-difference-dd758fdcc6be>

---

## **2.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS**

---

### **Check Your Progress: 1**

1. Radio news formats encompass a spectrum of styles tailored to diverse audience preferences. Straight newscasts adhere to a conventional

structure, delivering factual updates efficiently. Feature stories provide in-depth analysis through interviews and investigative reporting. News magazines blend news, features, and commentary, offering a comprehensive overview. Talk shows foster audience engagement, enabling interactive discussions on current events. Each format serves distinct purposes, catering to the dynamic needs of listeners.

2. In radio news, the avoidance of clauses is prudent due to the medium's auditory nature. Clauses can hinder comprehension, leading to confusion or missed information for listeners. By utilising concise, straightforward sentences, clarity is heightened, facilitating better understanding among the audience. Additionally, such a style maintains engagement, as it ensures information is conveyed swiftly and effectively, enhancing the overall listening experience.

**Check Your Progress: 2**

1. The codes and conventions of print media encompass various elements such as layout, typography, headlines, and visuals. Layouts typically follow a grid system for organisation, while typography is chosen for readability and visual appeal. Headlines are often concise and attention-grabbing, guiding readers to key stories. Visuals, including photographs and illustrations, complement written content to enhance understanding and engagement.
2. News websites offer unique features compared to traditional print media. They provide real-time updates, multimedia content like videos and interactive graphics, and hyperlinks for further exploration. Additionally, news websites often allow user engagement through comments sections and social media sharing, fostering a sense of community and interactivity among readers. These platforms prioritise immediacy and accessibility, catering to the fast-paced nature of digital information consumption.



---

## UNIT 3 FROM TRADITIONAL MEDIA TO DIGITAL MEDIA

---

### Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Learning Outcomes
- 3.2 Traditional Media Technologies
  - 3.2.1 Transmission of News, Information and Knowledge
  - 3.2.2 The Movable Printing Press
  - 3.2.3 The Emergence of the Press
  - 3.2.4 New-Printing Technology
- 3.3 The Role of Literacy
- 3.4 The Emergence of Technological Elite
- 3.5 The Emergence of the Middle Class
- 3.6 The Emergence of Telegraph, Radio and Television
- 3.7 The Emergence of Digital Media
  - 3.7.1 The Impact of Digital Media
  - 3.7.2 Convergence in Digital Media: Multimedia
  - 3.7.3 Content Management System (CMS)
  - 3.7.4 Search Engine Optimisations (SEO)
  - 3.7.5 Users as Creator
  - 3.7.6 News Gathering in Digital Space
  - 3.7.7 Use of Social Media
  - 3.7.8 Gate-Keeping in the Digital Space
  - 3.7.9 Analytical Profiling of Users
  - 3.7.10 Mobile Telephony
- 3.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.9 Keywords
- 3.10 Further Readings
- 3.11 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

---

### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

---

Technologies have played an incremental role in perpetuating and sustaining civilisations and societies. Their roles have been so defining that the technologies they used or the type of technologies prevalent in those societies became their defining features. You must have heard about the industrial society that formed during the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. It was followed by knowledge and digital societies in which network computers, the Internet, the World Wide Web, and mobile telephony assumed greater dominance. When we define human evolution as historical and prehistoric, the demarcation is notably based on the ability,

skill, and technologies of writing and historical record keeping. In communication and mass media, technologies have played equally defining roles. In every era, it adopted the prevalent technologies to reach mass audiences. The earliest cave paintings at Sulawesi in Indonesia, Spain and France are the earliest examples of human desire to reach out to fellow beings and communicate their ideas and perceptions through pictorial depictions.

However, the growth and development of media technologies have never been a linear and monolithic progression. There were many twists and turns regarding who owned the technology, how they used it, and who their earlier adopters were. With it also came the hierarchical and patriarchal society in which new technologies were invariably owned by the elites who could profit from them. At times, technologies were also used to exploit the marginalised people. Media technologies soon became an instrument of authoritarianism to control and shape the ideologies of the masses. These are some of the critical thoughts that you as a learner need to keep in mind while transitioning from one media technology to another, and you should look for other factors similar to the process.

The two media spaces—traditional and new media—are not mutually exclusive. They do not have separate ecosystems. They share many commonalities and overlap their features. While competing with each other, the two media spaces also complement each other. During the initial stages of development, they lived in a symbiotic relationship, helping each other grow and prosper.

While new technology always takes away a part of the business of the earlier technologies, it also creates its own space and captive audience. For example, when TV came, it was thought to wipe out the print media. But as history shows, it didn't happen as feared. A similar doomsday prediction was propagated with the onslaught of digital media against the print. As we know, print media continues despite 20 years of continuous onslaught from the digital space. That's not to say that print media has not been affected. The new media has minimised the profitability of print and has also challenged its dominance in the advertising space.

---

### **3.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

---

After completing this Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the development of media spaces and issues associated with it;
- Describe the differences between traditional and new media;
- The main features of the two media spaces; and
- The convergence of print and digital media and its impact.

---

### **3.2 TRADITIONAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES**

---

Technologies have existed for millennia, and it isn't easy to differentiate the onset and cut-off dates of various technologies that have impacted human

civilisation. But broadly speaking, they are divided based on analogue and digital differentiation. In this sense, newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV were initially analogue mediums powered by mechanical and electrical production. The onset of digital technologies based on binary code came quite late and was responsible for transforming the analogue medium.

In ancient times, papyrus was a popular medium of writing in the Nile region of Egypt as early as 3000 BCE, and it continued until the late 12th century CE. It was a reed plant, which provided a smooth and durable material for writing. The word paper is derived from papyrus. The earliest form of book, Codex, was hand-written on papyrus or parchment and fastened together for future use. In India, *Betula utilis* (Himalayan Birch), popularly called birch bark, was a popular writing material, and the earliest Buddhist and Sanskrit religious texts were written on it. It continues to be used in some parts of India and Nepal to write sacred religious texts among the orthodox sects. These writings were meant to transmit knowledge from one generation to another. But it was confined to a limited group of people who could read and write, especially the priestly and the ruling class.

While much is known about the writing material in the ancient period, there is not much historical and archaeological evidence to suggest the transmission of information from one part of the country to another. The Greeks and the Romans used public places and squares to announce the events and ceremonies. Likewise, during the Mauryan period, Ashoka's edicts were popular means of addressing and communicating with the masses. This was probably the earliest means of mass media in India. In addition to this, the Mauryans also made use of the pigeon postal system as a means of connection with far-flung provinces. During the Mughal period, the *Waqia-Navis* worked as intelligence news gatherers. Mir Bakhshi presented the information received from them to the Emperor. There was yet another group of verbal news-gathering, which *Harkarah* did.

### 3.2.1 Transmission of News and Information and Knowledge

Mass media content has three ingredients: news, information, and knowledge. Interestingly, people were more desirous of knowledge than news and information in ancient times. It led to the compilation of sacred and secular books, whether it was on papyrus or birch barks. However, only some people could read and had access to these books and manuscripts. In modern times, news and information have assumed centrality in people's lives largely because of the globalisation of business and finances, which are directly linked to people's livelihoods. As literacy spread, more books were written and sold across the countries. These books were written manually by scribes and kept in safe custody. Knowledge production and transmission were limited and confined mainly to aristocratic and religious elite groups.

News was also transmitted through messengers who could travel long distances quickly. Some ancient and mediaeval empires had built a strong network of news carriers who could relay information from one part of the country to another. By this time, the paper was already in use as writing material. Some business communities, like Armenians, had built a robust and

reliable network of news transmission, which they used in their trans-oceanic trade, especially in the Indian subcontinent. When the Portuguese and the British came to India, they had to get help from Armenian traders to make inroads into the hinterland.

### **3.2.2 The Movable Printing Press**

The papermaking technology was known to China in ancient times. Archaeological evidence of the earliest extant paper dates back to the 1st and 2nd BCE. Gradually, papermaking technology travelled to the Arab world during the 8th century and to Europe in the 11th century. Before the advent of paper in Europe, wooden logs and animal skin parchment were used for writing. The writing was done mainly by hand, and it took months to finish one book. The advent of movable printing presses invented by Johannes Gutenberg in Germany in the 15th century revolutionised printing technology, whereby large numbers of books were produced quickly. The first book to be printed was the Bible. As new technology most often faced hostility from the conservative forces, the early printers were quite apprehensive of its acceptance, especially when the letter was printed in black, associated with evil forces during the mediaeval period. To overcome these superstitious beliefs, the printers found an ingenious way in the Bible, which was welcomed and accepted by the masses and the Church.

The new printing technology played an important role in the European Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation, making books easily available to the masses. It also helped to emerge a literate middle class, which would play a significant role in the future. The printing technology was further improved and accelerated by another German printer, Friedrich Koenig, in 1810 when he used a steam engine to speed up the mass production of books. It was the beginning of the industrialisation of printing technology. Earlier, it took one hour to produce 480 pages, which was doubled with a steam engine. The printing process was further improved, with 3,000 pages per hour by the 1830s. By then, the Industrial Revolution had already begun in England, France and other parts of Europe, with people having disposable income.

### **3.2.3 The Emergence of the Press**

The mass production of books and other reading material slowly transformed society with new ideas, values and human business activities. Soon, the sacred and secular knowledge was within everyone's reach. The printing press was a new symbol of the Renaissance, and it mushroomed in every lane and street of the major cities of Europe. It could be compared with the STD booths of the 1990s, cyber cafes and mobile shops of the 21st century, which became a new symbol of connectivity and transmission of information.

Newspapers, often called broadsheets, were slowly emerging from various parts of Europe. They were 29.5 by 23.5 inches in contrast to the tabloid, 17 by 11 inches. They were printed, dated and came out in regular intervals and were either daily or weekly, depending on their periodicity. Before printing came into vogue, hand-written newspapers were circulated in Venice around the 1560s. They mainly covered stories related to politics and wars in Europe

and elsewhere. Popularly called *Avvisi* or Gazettes, they were weekly newspapers.

The first mass media in the form of printed newspapers came up only in the early 17th century. Printed by a German named Johann Carolus in Strasbourg, the weekly was called *Relation aller Fürnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien*. The first English-language newspaper came out in 1620. It was published in Italy and Germany and was called *Corrant*. Most early newspapers were censored and allowed to carry only foreign news lest they threaten local administration and Imperial authority. In 1695, the British government relaxed the censorship, and as a result, several newspapers flourished in London, Boston and Philadelphia. Unlike today's anti-plagiarism rules, there was close coordination between newspapers, often reprinting articles freely.

In the meantime, transferring print technology from the developed economy to the underdeveloped economy took time and effort. However, the time gap in technology transfer decreased as we moved from the earlier centuries to the present century. The modern newspaper took almost 200 years to reach India after it was first published in Europe. However, the transfer of technology related to radio and TV to India was quick and prompt. In digital media, technology transfer is much quicker. It resulted from globalisation and the interlinking of finances and interdependence between the countries in the late 20th and early parts of the 21st centuries.

In India, the plan to launch an English newspaper was afoot as early as 1766 by William Bolts, a Dutch adventurer. But East India Company soon deported him because of his hostilities against the British officials. Later, in January 1780, James Augustus Hicky published the first English newspaper, *The Bengal Gazette*, from Calcutta. The newspaper was critical of the British administration and accused them and the then Governor General Warren Hastings of corruption and malpractices. The Governor General, in retaliation, prohibited the circulation of the newspaper through the postal system, thus forcing Hickey to come to a compromise. He soon became a supporter of the East India Company government. The 19th century saw the emergence of various regional and English-language newspapers, including *The Statesman*, *The Times of India*, the *Hindu*, and *The Tribune* from various parts of the country.

### 3.2.4 New-Printing Technologies

As mentioned earlier, German printer Friedrich Koenig used a steam engine to speed up the mass production of printed material. With it began the process of industrialisation of printing technology. In the 20th century, the inventions of typesetting machines and new rotary presses further accelerated the process of mass production by 1912, when there were some 4000 newspapers in Britain alone. The electrically powered printing machine and the introduction of digital technology in typesetting and printing made it possible for thousands of copies to be published in an hour. This considerably reduced the cost of the newspapers, which helped it further increase its circulation. These early newspapers carried only local news. The national

media in various countries were yet to emerge. The development of railways and other means of transport helped the circulation and emergence of national media.

In the meantime, Britain witnessed the emergence of new journalism during the 1890s, which steered away from elitist features and catered to the masses. William Thomas *Stead* took cudgels against the prevailing norms and began investigative journalism to probe child welfare and reformation activities. Establishing 'government by journalism' and influencing public opinion and government policies was important.

In the meantime, the newspaper industry began introducing new elements in its production process, such as illustrations and pictures. It created visual appeal and attracted new readership to its fold. The technology to incorporate photographs in the print began in the late 19th century, transforming the visual appeal of newspapers. It was Matthew Brady who, in 1862, exhibited the photographs of the Battle of Antietam during the US Civil War. It portrayed the dead and wounded soldiers of the war. It shocked the Americans to see the stark reality. Brady brought "home to us the terrible reality of war," noted the *New York Times*.

As newspapers assumed the role of mass media with greater reach and increasing readership, advertising soon became an integral feature and backbone of revenue. Political parties, too, began lobbying with newspapers for support and reaching out to voters in their respective constituent assemblies. Their hobnobbing with newspapers was responsible for division on an ideological basis and played a deciding role in the emergence of mass media. Also, according to media theorist Benedict Anderson, newspapers were the main instruments in spreading nationalism and forging national identity among people of diverse ethnic groups inhabiting a common geographical area. In India, the newspaper was responsible for bringing freedom fighters from various parts of the country together and fighting for a common cause.

As these newspapers expanded their reach and operations and assumed a central role in national politics, they set up networks of bureaus across the country to collect news and generate content for their newspapers. However, as smaller newspapers could not afford the cost of employing a large staff, they mainly relied on news agencies for news. News agencies are mostly privately owned commercial enterprises that provide news on a subscription basis. The newspapers have to pay a monthly/annual fee for the services. Some news agencies formed during the period included Havas in 1859 in France (now called Agence France-Presse. AFP), the Associated Press in the US and Reuters in the UK. These agencies had transnational presence and operations.

The Press, however, was not without its challenges. The emergence of penny papers in the 1830s in the US posed serious threats to daily newspapers, as they were one-sixth of the daily price. While the cost was one factor, it appealed to a larger audience because of its popular and sensational news. In some countries, political changes had a detrimental effect on the growth of

the press as it curtailed freedom of expression. In Nazi Germany, some 1000 newspapers were shut down between 1933-1945. Joseph Goebbels, who was in control of the Press, maintained a strict vigil on the Press and issued directives for its operation, which directly infringed on their freedom.

---

### **3.3 THE ROLE OF LITERACY**

---

As discussed, one of the impediments to the growth of early print media was the low literacy rate. However, with a subsequent increase in literacy, the print media began proliferating from the beginning of the 19th century. In England, the concept of Sunday schools run by churches and voluntary and private schools played an important role. According to one estimate, 40 per cent of males and 60 per cent of females were illiterate in 1800. Illiteracy decreased to 33 per cent of males and 50 per cent of females by 1840; by 1870, it dropped to 20 per cent of men and 25 per cent of women. In India, a British colony then, the literacy rate was as low as 3.2 per cent in 1872, which rose to 16 per cent in 1941.

However, the dependency on literacy for media consumption has declined in recent years with the emergence of television, radio and the Internet, which do not need literacy. The audio and video elements have made disseminating news and information easily understandable, even without the ability to read and write. A steady rise in the circulation of newspapers and magazines before the coming of the Internet was a testimony to increasing global literacy.

---

### **3.4 THE EMERGENCE OF TECHNOLOGICAL ELITES**

---

New technologies create economic opportunities for entrepreneurs and the early adopters. The same was true with print technology, which benefitted many people. They gradually accumulated wealth, which was disposable for further investment in technological improvement. The media owners soon became part of a larger capitalist group and worked with them to safeguard their interests. They were part of a select group of media barons who continued to dominate the media space for almost two centuries before the coming of the Internet. They also worked in close coordination with political elites and played a vital role in deciding the political destinies of the countries.

Interestingly, the trajectory of media evolution and technology in the 21st century has followed a similar path with the emergence of digital media, especially social media, which is concentrated in the hands of a few powerful elites. Only a handful of corporations control the larger media space, whether it is Facebook, YouTube, Twitter or Instagram. This was quite unlike the traditional print media, known for providing local news and catering to geographically bounded audiences. There was diversified ownership of small and medium newspapers, which have now lost their presence in the largely globalised media space, thus leading to monopolistic practices. It is said that the new class of technological elites, with deep pockets have cannibalised the

smaller and medium media products that formed the backbone of traditional media.

### 3.5 THE EMERGENCE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

One of the reasons for the popularity of print media in Europe and elsewhere was the emergence of the middle class in the 18th and 19th centuries. They were a group of people with disposable income and were part of the new workforce of the industrialised economies. They invested in educating their children in private schools and were acutely aware of the change in politics and society. They aped the mannerisms of the elites and were socially upward mobile. Many were traders, merchants, and professionals working in the metropolitan areas. Their appetite for news, information and gossip was vigorous, and they consumed media content voraciously.

Higher literacy at the beginning of the 19th century also played an important role in the dissemination of technological know-how related to new means of media production. Technological innovations travelled seamlessly from one part of Europe to another, with the middle class being its early adopters and carriers. It gave birth to a new class of printer professionals, which included linotype operators and compositors. William Bullock further improved the rotary printing press, which was invented by Richard March Hoe in 1843. Today, the offset printing press uses a lithographic process based on the separation of oil and water, and it uses three cylinders: plate, blanket, and impression.

#### Check Your Progress: 1

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answer.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

#### Choose the correct answers.

1. Which media technology is called digital technology?
  - A. Newspapers
  - B. Radio
  - C. Television
  - D. Websites
2. Betula utilis (Himalayan Birch), popularly called birch bark, is
  - A. A kind of food
  - B. A writing material
  - C. A decorative material
  - D. A medicine
3. Who were Waqia-Navis during the Mughal period?
  - A. Revenue officials
  - B. Police constables
  - C. News reporters



- D. Announcers
4. Papermaking was first invented in which country.
- A. India
  - B. Egypt
  - C. China
  - D. Argentina
5. Name the printer who improved upon the first printing press
- A. Friedrich Koenig
  - B. Johannes Gutenberg
  - C. Thomas Bensley
  - D. Richard March Hoe

---

### **3.6 THE EMERGENCE OF TELEGRAPH, RADIO AND TELEVISION**

---

While printing through offset presses continued apace, other technological innovations had far-reaching consequences on media production. The invention of pulp papermaking in the 1840s considerably reduced the cost of newsprint. While the cost of print production was reduced, the speed with which news travelled was still slow and dependent on railways, which could travel 55 km/hour during the early period.

The invention of the telegraph by Samuel Morse with codes of dots and dashes in 1835 accelerated the news gathering and dissemination process. The news can be transmitted instantaneously over long distances through wired telegraphs. By the 1840s, all major cities were interconnected through a network of telegraph wires, which made the transmission of news easy and instant. The geographical distances lost meaning as news from 50 km to 5000 km could travel simultaneously. There were wired networks which could transmit the information. The telegraph was a precursor to what would follow in the coming centuries. It has continued to be used for a long time, and the last telegraphic message was sent to India in 2013.

Wired communication in the 20th century was soon followed by wireless communication, which provided technological support for developing radio, television and broadcast media. It was Guglielmo Marconi who developed the first wireless radio system in 1895. It didn't require much physical apparatus for transmission and was widely used by seamen and defence forces during times of crisis. Radio soon became a popular mass media and was considered more efficient than the telephone in reaching larger audiences. It was also less expensive and was easily accessible. Now, an unlimited number of people can listen to radio programmes while sitting in various geographical locations.

In addition to providing news and information, radio soon became a favourite medium for advertisers during the 1920s and in subsequent decades. Advertisers could now reach many captive audiences without the need for

physical transportation and circulation of advertising materials. Political leaders in the US, like Calvin Coolidge, used it to reach out to mass voters during his pre-election radio speech in 1924. Some 20 million people listened to it. It dramatically impacted listeners as modulation in voice, change in tone, and addition of jingles added pleasing elements to advertising. The visual medium of TV soon followed it in the coming decades. It is popularly believed that the popularity of product advertising led to a spur in mass consumerism that was in no way responsible for triggering the Great Depression of the 1920s.

By the 1940s, radio had complete dominance in the media space. However, after World War II, it was soon overtaken by a new technology, television, which added motion pictures and visual elements to its broadcast. In addition to audio news reading, viewers can see real pictures in real time on live TV broadcasts. There was a television boom in the US and other parts of the world, leading to its massive expansion and news-gathering growth.

As mentioned earlier, it was controlled by only a handful of media barons who guarded their interests vigilantly. The homogenisation and monopolistic practices of broadcast media were widely criticised as they deprived traditional media owners of investing in profitable media ventures. The deregulation of television in the 1980s and 1990s opened doors for other investors, thus adding more channels to the media space. The spread of cable television made it more accessible and geographically diverse regarding reach and impact. The invention of satellite television and Direct to Home (DTH) telecast, based on digitisation of the medium, further improved the speed and quality of the transmission.

As the new mass media technology gained ground, media theorists realised that different mediums were shaping their content uniquely, leveraging the medium's strength and downplaying its weaknesses. This led Marshall McLuhan in 1964 to pronounce the famous line "the medium is the message". The dissemination of news and information was the function of the medium which delivered it. It also shaped the quality of content delivery. From the time of the first printing press to the modern-day World Wide Web, the content of the medium has been transformed in unimaginable ways. Each medium has amplified its unique qualities (USP) in enhancing content delivery, sometimes at the cost of comprehensive and detailed information. For example, TV news coverage is more concerned with Breaking News and flashing sensational crime stories for greater Television Rating Points (TRPs) than covering the news in detail. The emergence of digital media during the last decade of the 20th century and the early 21st century has further reshaped the delivery of media content in its unique fashion.

---

### **3.7 THE EMERGENCE OF DIGITAL MEDIA**

---

Technological innovations in media mirror other innovations in various fields. In a way, the media quickly adopted these innovations to suit its purpose. As we discussed, the innovations of telegraph, radio, and television were not initiated by the media itself but by other agencies and individuals to develop faster means of communication, especially for defence and science.

The scientific communities relentlessly attempted to enhance the power of computation and communication networks.

The first such attempt was the invention of the digital programmable 'Difference Engine' and 'Analytical Engine' by Charles Babbage in 1820. It later became known as the computer, which used discrete digits instead of binary digits (bits), as used today. This is why Charles Babbage has been called the father of computers. Ada Lovelace, daughter of English poet Lord Byron, who created the programme for Babbage's prototype computer, is the first computer programmer in the history of computers.

In the meantime, advanced computers came into existence that could do complex calculations and work. However, there was no network through which individual computers could be connected to communicate. The scientists of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology developed a programme for computers to communicate with each other. The new technology enabled a message to be broken down into small packages at the source before being reassembled at the receiving end.

The communication network between individual computers was enhanced to include multiple computers. The Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) in the US further refined the process and made the new technology available to the US military in 1969. They were able to develop multiple communication pathways and ensure that if one route failed to work, the other network (route) could be activated to compensate for the route loss and enable easy information transfer.

The ARPANET made the new communication system available for commercial use in 1976. Queen Elizabeth II sent the first email from one computer to another in 1976 by clicking the send button. A tangible and real progress, however, began in 1989 with the invention of the HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) by Tim Berners-Lee, which made it possible for users to browse the Internet. A year after the popularity of HTTP, the World Wide Web came into existence and connected the world of computers through optic fibres and telecommunication networks.

The Computer-mediated communication system influenced media communication as it demolished the geographical boundaries and physical distribution of newspapers and media products. Now, people in any part of the world can access news and information at the click of a button. It also accelerated the news gathering and dissemination process with less time devoted to the production process. It didn't require a newsprint, printing machine, or staff dedicated to production and circulation, thus reducing the cost of media production considerably. In addition to being an affordable medium, it opened doors for media owners and readers to access and launch new media products, catering to diverse groups.

### **3.7.1 The Impact of Digital Media**

The impact of digital media has been profound and sweeping, affecting all aspects of life, including education, healthcare, banking, commerce and governance. It had a very harmful effect on traditional media as many began

closing their shop because of high production costs. According to a survey, almost two newspapers are shutting down weekly in the US. One of the reasons has been the loss of advertising revenue, which has now shifted to digital media. Now, advertisers focus more on target advertising for higher returns, which is easily traceable on the digital platform. According to one estimate, the digital advertising market in the US in 2021 was US\$155.3 billion and is increasing at a considerable pace. In India, Rs 246 billion was generated from online advertising in 2021.

In addition, there has been a shift in the pattern of advertising platforms with the coming of digital media. However, this does not mean that traditional media are not generating advertising revenue; instead, the growth in the segment either stagnates or does not grow on the expected line. Moreover, traditional media's huge operational and production costs have made it unviable, thus reducing the profit margin. On the other hand, the operation cost of digital media is minimal. However, the cost of news-gathering remains the same for both the media.

### **3.7.2 Convergence of Digital Media: Multimedia**

There are obvious benefits of digital media vis-à-vis traditional media that have made the former popular among the trans-generational audience. In addition to being affordable and accessible from anywhere, it does away with the need to carry the media product physically. The user can save the content on his/her laptop, computer or mobile and access it later at their convenience. Unlike traditional media, which is based on a one-way flow of information from source to end-user, digital media provides instant interactivity between the two. The most significant advantage of digital media is its feature of convergence of various technologies, including print, radio and television, all rolled into one. It can carry pictures, infographics, animations, and interactive features. The convergence of these mediums has often been called 3Cs, meaning Communication, Computing and Content. The scope of convergence has been further expanded to include technological, economic and cultural convergence because of the popularity and reach of the medium.

The platform providing the converged content of various mediums is called multimedia because of its technological prowess. It may include segregated features like online interactive, podcasts, news feeds, blogging and mob file applications. The diversity of the technology and content is part of the inclusive media experience. While the universalisation of technology and content is a given advantage, the medium has also been accused of robbing the individuality of the various mediums. It has painted the diverse medium in one colour, a mosaic, but taking away the beauty of each.

### **3.7.3 Content Management System (CMS)**

The Content Management System of an online news operation is the backend and the backbone of the digital operation. It works like a central nervous system of the human body, which transmits and processes the messages received from various sense organs. It is a central depository where all the information is received, keyed in, and published before it is visible on the

website and accessed by various media. It is the depository and processing centre for receiving news, pictures, audio, and video files edited before publication and broadcast. There is a wide range of format choices available for uploading this content. For example, pictures and images are uploaded in jpg, jpeg, and png formats, audio files in MP3, and videos in MP4 format. The latter provides lots of flexibility for coding. One advantage of digital media is that the content, once published, can be re-edited, and new inputs can be added without disturbing its publishing status. This is quite unlike traditional media, where news cannot be edited once published and broadcast.

### **3.7.4 Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)**

Much like the listenership of radio and TRP of TV news channels, there is still competition among digital content providers to get the eyeballs from the readers. Many news content is accessed through search engines, and there is always a race among digital content providers to appear on the search engines. The ability of news or content to appear on search engines depends on various factors. Among them are the relevance and topicality of the content, its uniqueness, the ranking of the news provider and the way it has been programmed to appear in the search engine. While uploading a story, an online editor has to provide searchable keywords, mega tags and descriptive details of the content.

### **3.7.5 Users as Creators**

One of the benefits of digital media is its importance to users in the larger scheme of technological innovation. Unlike traditional media, users can now play a more active role in the form of the creator of news content, posting comments, sharing it and voicing his/her opinions on various issues. The concept of Citizen Reporter has added a new dimension to news-gathering, as it is not possible for reporters to be at all the places. This has also led to the process of democratisation in the news-gathering process. Most citizen reporters work voluntarily, but media organisations also appoint some. However, the authenticity of such news reporting is always questionable, as citizen reporters are not trained professionals. Nonetheless, they sometimes inform the media of a particular event or corruption, to which professional reporters carry a follow-up.

### **3.7.6 News Gathering in Digital Space**

As a result of the proliferation of media space and types of content created by diverse mediums, the role of news reporters has diversified. A news reporter works on different media platforms at the same time by creating visuals (photographs), podcasts, videos and social media content. Most media organisations have a robust online presence, so their content is used in news multimedia production. The social media presence of reporters often adds credibility to media organisations as they provide ground report feeds in social media. Some enterprising reporters have assumed the role of independent media production of their popularity. Equipped with a camera, digital mike and a laptop, they provide on-site reporting of the events.

### **3.7.7 Use of Social Media**

Recently, social media has assumed greater importance because of its reach and popularity among the masses. As a result, no media house can afford to miss the bandwagon, and they maintain an across-media presence in social networking sites, bookmarking, social news, media sharing, microblogging, and online forum sites. Some social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have huge followings, making them ideal platforms for news dissemination.

These digital platforms are also popular among political leaders, sportspersons, celebrities, and business barons, who often voice their opinions. These social networking sites are also where politicians and leaders announce their plans and policies and interact with the masses for feedback. Incidentally, these sites have become the source of news and information for journalists and media organisations.

### **3.7.8 Gate-Keeping in the Digital Space**

Credibility is one of the important factors that make or mars the reputation of a media product. To ensure that news is reliable and authentic, it goes through various levels of check, counter-check and re-check before it is published or broadcast. A well-defined mechanism exists for trained editorial professionals to discard false, unauthenticated, and propaganda news items. The reputation of a media organisation largely depends on the strength of its gatekeeping. However, in the digital age, the process of gatekeeping has been liquidated because of the maddening rush to be the first to give breaking news. Also, it puts an additional cost on media organisations to have several fact-checkers during 24/7 operations. There needs to be more trained human resources to do the job. However, some traditional media organisations have retained their vigour in fact-checking and have been vigilant enough to maintain editorial sanctity.

### **3.7.9 Analytical Profiling of Users**

The digital media, based on computational analytics, provides rare insight into the profile of its readers on a real-time basis. This is quite different from the traditional media, which focuses on the circulation of newspapers and magazines. Apart from circulation figures, little information is available on the age, gender, and social profile of the people reading the newspaper. Other mediums like radio and television measure their popularity based on the number of listeners and TRP. Digital media, on the other hand, provides a detailed account of the number of people reading the news, their age group, gender, geographical location, and the time spent on a particular site. It provides a deeper insight into the kind of content liked and read by the users and their content choices. These data are quite useful for the news providers in reshaping the content provided to the readers.

### **3.7.10 Mobile Telephony**

Mobile telephony provides one of the best examples of technological convergence among all technologies. It is not simply a device but a

combination of devices like a telephone, a typewriter, a camera, a calculator, a computer, a clock, a torch, a mirror, gaming, a navigational guide and many more, all combined in one. It is a complete world for news-gathering and dissemination and communication devices. Mobile telephony has brought a sea change to the way information is shared and consumed. It provides instant connectivity with any part of the world, thus shrinking the world into a global village.

In 2021, over 15 million mobile devices were worldwide, providing easy access to news and information. It has opened a new vista of news consumption, cutting across class, caste, gender and social division, thus empowering the weak and marginalised equally. The pace of growth in media technology has been so fast that it has become almost impossible to predict the future. It has made the access and reach of news, information and knowledge unimaginably easy from the days of traditional media, and its growth is expected to accelerate in times to come.

### Check Your Progress: 2

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answer.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

#### Choose the correct answers.

1. Corrant was a popular
  - A. Newspaper
  - B. A radio programme
  - C. Communication device
  - D. Newspaper
2. Guglielmo Marconi is the inventor of
  - A. Wireless radio
  - B. Television
  - C. Printing machine
  - D. Communication programme
3. Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP), invented by Tim Berners-Lee, is used in which of the following mediums
  - A. Newspapers
  - B. Radio
  - C. Television
  - D. Internet
4. Which format is used for uploading videos on a news website?
  - A. MP4 format
  - B. MP3 format
  - C. JPG
  - D. JPEG

5. What mass media was used by Ashoka, the Mauryan king, to communicate with people?
  - A. Public announcement
  - B. Folk songs
  - C. Rock edicts
  - D. Pamphlets

---

### 3.8 LET US SUM UP

---

We learnt that every technology has its use in its own time and space. Some of the technologies have had a transforming impact on human civilisation. It played a critical role in disseminating news, information and knowledge - the bedrock of human progress. As media is one of the constituents of learning, education, and governance, the associated technologies helped it progress. From the age of traditional media to the new digital age, it has strived to compete with allied fields in providing fast, efficient and authentic news. The various technologies also shaped the content provided to users uniquely. The digital age has broadened the canvass of information, making it easily available to the masses. It's no wonder that the age we are living in has been a knowledge society as it forms the basis of existence.

---

### 3.9 KEYWORDS

---

**Papyrus:** Derived from plant barks, it was a popular writing medium in the Nile region of Egypt in ancient times (as early as 3000 BCE).

**Waqia-Navis:** They were professional news reporters during the Mughal period and provided intelligence reports to the emperor through Mir Bakhshi.

**News agencies** are mostly privately owned commercial enterprises that provide news on a subscription basis. Newspapers pay a monthly/annual fee for the services.

**ARPANET:** The Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) is a US-based agency that developed networks for computers to communicate with each other.

**HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP):** Developed by Tim Berners-Lee, HTTP is a communication protocol that connects web servers and allows users to browse the Internet.

---

### 3.10 FURTHER READINGS

---

1. Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso
2. Bradshaw, Paul. 2017. *The Online Journalism Handbook: Skills to Survive and Thrive in the Digital Age*. London: Routledge
3. Briggs, Asa and Peter Burke. 2005. *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet*. Malden, MA: Polity Press



4. Croteau and Hoynes. 2003. Media Society: Industries, Images and Audiences (third edition). Pine Forge Press: Thousand Oakes
5. Flew and Humphreys. 2005. "Games: Technology, Industry, Culture" in Terry Flew, New Media: an Introduction (second edition). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press
6. Holmes. 2005. "Telecommunity" in Communication Theory: Media, Technology and Society. Cambridge: Polity
7. John. Herbert. 1999. Journalism in the Digital Age: Theory and practise for broadcast, print and online media. MA: Focal Press
8. Lev, Manovich. 2001. The Language of New Media. Cambridge, USA: MIT Press
9. McLuhan, Marshall. 1964. Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man. New York: McGraw-Hill
10. Mintz, Steven "The Jazz Age: The American 1920s: The Formation of Modern American Mass Culture," Digital History, 2007, [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article\\_display.cfm?hhid=454](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?hhid=454).
11. Newman, W. Russell. 2010. Media, Technology and Society: Theories of Media Evolution. Michigan, US: The University of Michigan Press
12. Noll, Michael A. 2007. The Evolution of Media. Maryland, USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers

---

## 3.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

---

### Check Your Progress: 1

1. D
2. B
3. C
4. C
5. A

### Check Your Progress: 2

1. A
2. A
3. D
4. A
5. C

---

## UNIT 4 USES OF NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES IN SOCIETY

---

### Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Learning Outcomes
- 4.2 Understanding New Media and Media Convergence
  - 4.2.1 Characteristics of New Media Technologies
  - 4.2.2 Change in Media Infrastructural Dynamics
- 4.3 Transitioning Society with New Media
  - 4.3.1 Shift in Social and Cultural Practices
  - 4.3.2 Digital Democratic Processes: ICTs, e-Governance, and New Concepts
- 4.4 Dimensions of New Media Literacy
  - 4.4.1 Digital Devices, Access, and Empowerment
  - 4.4.2 Understanding the Potential of New Media Technologies
  - 4.4.3 Developing New Media Skills and Competencies
- 4.5 User-Centric Participation via New Media Technologies
  - 4.5.1 Participatory Culture and New Media Literacy Framework
  - 4.5.2 Active Audience Approach and User-Generated Content
  - 4.5.3 Civic Engagement and Participatory Politics
  - 4.5.4 Digital Activism and New Media for Social Action
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Further Readings
- 4.8 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers

---

### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

---

The materialisation of digital media has created a dual identity of media logic, prior to which media generally consisted of print and the audio-visual medium. The legacy of media as a singular entity has disintegrated and re-integrated through cultural, economic and political processes to pave the way for digital media. Therefore, the fulcrum of traditional and new media is loosely edged on production, consumption and outlet patterns.

Media as an institution has become a space of converging and diverging spaces with overlapping characteristics of traditional media and new media due to the collapse of space and time and a mode of production. In the news arena, newspapers and magazines, television news channels, and online news platforms have enriched news debates and consumption patterns, evident across all stances of life and society. This media convergence has transformed the infrastructure and content produced in the present compared to before Web 2.0 technologies.

These new media technologies have brought about societal changes at the social, cultural, political, and economic levels. Most importantly, the

audiences have also changed considerably, from users to producers and from consumers to prosumers, thereby blurring the lines between producers and users. This unit attempts to focus on how these new media technologies have transformed and influenced the social, cultural and democratic practices of the new media audiences.

---

## 4.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

---

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the concept of new media and media convergence;
- Grasp the characteristics of new media technologies and how it has transformed the media infrastructure;
- Analyse the shift in cultural, social and political practices due to new media;
- Evaluate the three pillars of new media literacy and its efficacy in society; and
- Assess the opportunities for participation due to new media technologies at the sociological and political levels.

---

## 4.2 UNDERSTANDING NEW MEDIA AND MEDIA CONVERGENCE

---

The concept of digital media arises from the characteristic that all information or data in these media is encoded in numbers, the most common being that of binary code of 0 and 1. Thus, technology is the defining dimension of the media, which observes the shift of storing information digitally on a physical object, such as a USB flash drive, digital images, MP3, etc.

The ambiguous nature of new media as a term, which primarily leans on subjectivity, and the restricted perception of online media, which focuses on internet-based media only, leads us to focus on digital media for this unit in convergence with the facet of online media since the Internet has enhanced the digital sphere. Media convergence deals with the interconnectedness of communication technologies, computer networks and media content. Therefore, it brings the "three C's" together: computing, communication and content. The notion of new media convergence can be better reflected from three dimensions, all of which have influenced the social, cultural, economic and political spheres of life while changing the democratic processes.

The first form of convergence to consider is technological convergence. Technological convergence is the movement of almost all media and information to digital electronic formats, storage, and transfer of the digitisation of all media, communications, texts, sound, images, and even currency into a common digital format or language. This process has involved a switch from analogue media to digital forms.

Due to technological convergence, governments and policymakers have initiated the need to change legislation to govern this new form of industry.

This led to a second kind of convergence, called regulatory convergence, a deregulatory strategy in the media and telecommunication industries adopted by the governments of many industrial economies since the mid-1990s. This set of regulatory changes has profoundly affected the structure of the media, telecom and computing industries and significantly impacted our current media culture.

After the transformation of the regulatory framework, mergers and acquisitions across the media industry were witnessed at a large scale, driven by the combination of technological developments and the overall climate of neo-liberal deregulation and globalisation. Dominance of media conglomerates with expansive scale of mergers and acquisitions paved the way for large-scale cross-industry expansion or horizontal integration, in which a firm in one industry (for instance, telecommunications) expanded across to another industry (such as television broadcasting) and vertical integration, in which a firm that is concentrated on one point in the production chain of a sector (for instance, film production) expands into another part of the production chain in the same industry, such as film distribution. These types of expansion drove a general strategy of industrial convergence within the media and telecom sector, the third kind of convergence that occurred and changed the media landscape.

#### **4.2.1 Characteristics of New Media Technologies**

Due to the advent of new media technologies and convergent media, the novelty can be experienced in the form of:

1. New textual experiences (new kinds of genres and textual forms, entertainment and pleasure and patterns of media consumption; computer games, simulations, special effects cinema)
2. New ways of representing the world (new representational possibilities and experiences, immersive virtual environments, screen-based multimedia)
3. New relationship between subjects (users and consumers) and media technologies (use and reception of image and communication media in everyday life and meanings invested in media technologies)
4. New experiences of the relationship between embodiment, identity and community (shift in personal and social experience of time, space and pace)
5. New conceptions of the biological body's relationship to technological media (challenges to the received distinction between the human and the artificial, nature and technology, body and media as technological prostheses, the real and virtual)
6. New patterns of organisation and production (realignments and integrations in media culture, industry, economy, access, ownership, control and regulation)

## 4.2.2 Change in Media Infrastructural Dynamics

Multiple media can be understood as using different tools such as television, tape recorder, video, overhead projectors, slide projectors, etc. Multimedia is denoted as a short form for multiple media.

Enhanced levels of interactivity are made possible by combining multiple forms of media content. Online multimedia is increasingly becoming object-oriented and data-driven, enabling applications with collaborative end-user innovation and personalisation on multiple forms of content over time. Examples of these range from multiple forms of content on Websites like photo galleries with both images (pictures) and title (text) user-updated to simulations whose coefficients, events, illustrations, animations or videos are modifiable, allowing the multimedia "experience" to be altered without reprogramming. In addition to seeing and hearing, haptic technology enables virtual objects to be felt. Emerging technology involving illusions of taste and smell may also enhance the multimedia experience.

The tangent of multiple media can be witnessed from two major strands: multiplicity of devices and media platforms.

From the device's perspective, the multiplicity factor can be witnessed through the overlapping features of a Bluetooth music player and an Amazon Echo. However, they also have distinctive features which neither of them can cover. Digital media has enabled an individual to possess multiple devices, such as laptops, mobile phones, tablets, streaming devices, music players, etc., that pertain to various facets of life. Moreover, seamless connectivity has also been made possible due to the Internet and the Internet of Things (IoT). Augmented Reality headsets can be combined with that of gaming, giving rise to virtual gaming. Therefore, emancipatory mechanisms are available in the context of devices.

Similarly, online media has made multiple media platforms accessible to every individual based on user selectivity and narrowcasting possible for all needs: communicative, educative, commercial and entertainment.

### Check Your Progress: 1

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. What is media convergence?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. What are the three dimensions of media convergence?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. What are the characteristics of new media technologies?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

---

### 4.3 TRANSITIONING SOCIETY WITH NEW MEDIA

---

New media technologies have influenced the social and cultural practices and the democratic and economic processes of society. In this unit section, we will learn about the shift in practices across different aspects of society.

#### 4.3.1 Shift in Social and Cultural Practices

Individuals now use new media technologies such as smartphones to stay connected with their families and friends via various modes of communication. Additionally, users' everyday lives have transformed considerably with newer forms of gaining education, working and maintaining relationships apart from online shopping and managing finances.

##### 1. *New Ways of Living*

The speed, convenience, and versatility of social messaging have led to its integration within the entire customer journey, and it is even greater than traditional methods like emails, phone calls, or live chats.

WhatsApp and other similar social messaging apps have allowed people to share texts, videos, photos, and other content. Even though these apps are called IP messaging apps, these have primarily become 'Social Networks'. The forerunners in the arena of IP messaging are WhatsApp, Viber, Google Duo, Hike, Skype, Facebook Messenger, VChat, Instagram Messenger, Snapchat, Telegram, etc., wherein WhatsApp takes the lead across the country. In addition, these IP messaging platforms allow users to place a video or voice call (also known as VOIP), thereby changing the dynamics of the telecom sector in India and across the globe. Emojis, GIFs, emojis, and stickers have become quite prevalent, especially amongst the younger audience. In contrast, sharing images, videos, documents, and locations has garnered worldwide attention as well. Furthermore, social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, etc., have grown multifold, initiating new ways of staying connected with friends and family.

Moreover, with the emergence of social networking sites, matrimonial sites, dating sites, edTech, etc., a new world of online relationships, internet dating, online education, and online work modes has also emerged, shaping our current cultural and social practices.

Online shopping has also been enabled due to the emergence of e-commerce websites and digital finance practices, thereby transforming

the everyday lives of society, including consumers and producers. Furthermore, every aspect of our lives can be found online, which provides an alternative to the physical world in all walks of life.

## 2. *Mobile Revolution*

Mobile media in the contemporary world is firmly embedded in our lives. Mobile phones have offered us the unique possibility of transcending the confines of space and located-ness, allowing us to communicate with others regardless of where we are. In doing so, they transformed how we understand space and disrupted the boundaries we had placed between private and public space and between working life and social-private life. With the infusion of mobiles, the emerging highly mobile, personalised, atomised, hybrid work-social life has completely changed the dynamics of our way of life socially, culturally, and politically.

In the political spectrum, horizontal social networks have developed extensively; however, the scope of democratising political mediation and the pressure of mobile media commercialisation and control are still contested. While in the sociocultural outcomes of the mobile revolution, individual autonomy has enhanced considerably with a renewed sense of creativity and use of imagination due to the influx of several messaging and calling digital platforms, however, the dominance of consumer culture has taken over face-to-face communication.

## 3. *Finance Technology and New Economic Practices*

The digital economy intersects with postmodern cultural economies (the media, the university, and the arts) and the information industry (the information and communication complex).

The digital economy is recognised as a specific mechanism of internal capture of larger social and cultural knowledge pools. Specific forms of production (Web design, multimedia production, digital service), along with forms of labour we wait to recognise as such (chat, mailing lists, amateur newsletters, and maybe free labour, too), construct the idea of digital labour.

The notion of a digital economy has revolutionised the dynamics of the economy and economic practices as well. With the emergence of cyberspace, credit and debit cards have become a norm apart from online transactions, thereby blurring and transcending geographical boundaries and language barriers. The advent of online transactions, wallet apps, UPI, PayPal, etc., has also transformed economic practices in India.

In addition, the Digital India programme has further enhanced the scope of India's digital economy. Announcements on Fibre to the Home (FTH) and 5G will only hasten the development of reliable, high-speed telecom infrastructure, the backbone of every digital economy.

Apart from the variation in the dynamics of the economy, cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin have materialised. It is a decentralised digital currency without a central bank or single administrator.

### 4.3.2 Digital Democratic Processes: ICTs, e-Governance and New Concepts

The evolution of digital media is a fascinating backdrop for examining political institutions. New media technologies have become tools for moulding societal structures, evidently shaping interactions between individuals and governments. Research on digital media's impact on democratic systems continues to grow through the metric of press freedom and expression. On the contrary, comparative studies on its effects within authoritarian governments have lagged.

#### 1. *e-Governance*

e-Governance in India has transformed to promote inclusive growth that covers electronic services, products, devices and job opportunities. An initiative driving this growth is Digital India. The Digital India programme is the government's flagship programme with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. The aim of this initiative is maximum governance and minimum government.

E-Governance emphasises shifting governance and policymaking to the digital platform and using digital tools to bring about change and transformation in the political and democratic processes.

#### 2. *Cyber Laws*

With the arrival of digital media, policymakers worldwide developed cyber laws for their respective countries, which governed communication technology, particularly cyberspace or the Internet.

Cyber laws apply to all users of this space as they have worldwide jurisdiction. Cyber law can also be described as the branch of law that deals with legal issues related to using inter-networked information technology.

In most developed countries, cyber laws have been developed stringently to adhere to the norms of privacy and security of its citizens, especially in Western countries. However, in most developing countries, cyber laws are not as well defined and are in the best interests of all stakeholders involved.

In India, cyber laws are contained in the Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act), which came into force on October 17, 2000. The Act's main purpose is to provide legal recognition to electronic commerce and facilitate filing electronic records with the Government. A recent amendment of the Act in 2021, which specifically deals with laws about OTT platforms and social media, has been brought under the purview of the existing IT Act in India.

#### 3. *Net Neutrality*

The concept of net neutrality focuses on the aspect that all data on the Internet should be treated equally by corporations, such as Internet service providers and governments, regardless of content, user, platform,



application or device. Network neutrality requires all Internet service providers (ISPs) to provide the same level of data access and speed to all traffic and that traffic to one service or website cannot be blocked or degraded. ISPs are also not to create special arrangements with services or websites in which companies provide them with improved network access or speed.

The term "network neutrality" was introduced in 2002. The concept was floated in response to efforts by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), a United States regulator body, to require broadband providers to share their infrastructure with competing firms. Internationally, countries like the USA, Japan, Brazil, Chile, Norway, etc., have some form of law, order or regulatory framework that affects net neutrality.

In the Indian context, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) adopted net neutrality regulations in July 2018. The regulations highlight that internet access services should be governed by a principle that restricts any form of discrimination or interference in the treatment of content, including practices like blocking, degrading, slowing down, or granting preferential speeds or treatment to any content.

#### 4. *Digital Literacy Initiatives*

As technology transforms what and how we read and consume information, the notion of digital literacy becomes crucial.

The American Library Association (ALA) defines digital literacy as “the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.”

In this context, digital literacy encompasses more than education because the Internet has become a key source of information. It is imperative to be digitally literate to comprehend what is authentic and reliable information while consuming it. Individuals aware of digital literacy understand the basics of Internet safety, such as creating strong passwords, understanding and using privacy settings, and knowing what or what not to share on social media.

While digital literacy has gained prominence globally at an institutional level, India has embraced the National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) Programme, not just for students but for all strata of society.

The National Digital Literacy Mission Programme is a dynamic and integrated digital literacy awareness, education, and capacity programme platform. It will help rural communities take the lead in the global digital economy, help them maintain competitiveness, and shape a technologically empowered society. The vision of the Digital Literacy Mission (DLM) is to create a multi-stakeholder consortium and work with the government and their various schemes and agendas to showcase in some of those panchayat constituencies how making them digitally literate can change the scenario of governance, empowerment, social inclusion, educational approach and employment.

---

## 4.4 DIMENSIONS OF NEW MEDIA LITERACY

---

On the one hand, new media technologies have completely transformed the minute ways in which we live our lives; on the other hand, they have also brought about changes at the macro level, from economy to politics. However, despite the transition of all paradigms of society, it is imperative to understand the critical perspective of digital media to be fully equipped with how digital media can empower individuals and society at large.

### 4.4.1 Digital Devices, Access and Empowerment

When discussing access to digital devices and new media technologies, we often take a privileged stance and consider it a no-brainer to own devices such as laptops, smartphones, the Internet, etc. However, the concept of access does not limit itself to the upper middle class and high class of society; it also leans towards the economically weaker sections of society along with the marginalised sections. Furthermore, apart from ownership of said devices, the usage and ability to use them also highlight the aspect of access. The primary question that arises when it comes to empowerment via new media technologies in society is if marginalised communities such as persons with disabilities (PWDs), people from remote communities, people belonging to lower socio-economic strata, LGBTQIA communities, etc., have equal opportunities to access ICTs. If not, then the need to find a way to bridge this gap is of utmost relevance, essentially to make society equitable at the basic level of access.

### 4.4.2 Understanding the Potential of New Media Technologies

The second dimension of new media literacy is the opportunity to understand and fully grasp the impact and reach of these new media technologies in society. This parameter deals with the scope of influence that new media technologies might have on our social, cultural, political and economic lives. This dimension has already been discussed in great detail in the previous sections of this unit. However, a critical analysis of the same is explicitly needed to accept and adapt, first and foremost, to the fact that new media technologies have a major role in society.

### 4.4.3 Developing New Media Skills and Competencies

Lastly, the third dimension of new media literacy is the participatory function of users in new media technologies to be fully empowered. However, one must have the necessary skill set and competencies.

Jenkins et al. (2009) have identified 11 new media literacies comprehensively covering social skills and cultural competencies amongst young people to participate in online media spaces fully. The new media literacies' framework is based on traditional literacy, research, technical, and critical analysis skills taught in the classroom and developed through collaborations and networking. The core media literacy skills are as follows:

1. *Play: the capacity to experiment with one's surroundings as a form of problem-solving*

Through play, children and young people try on roles, experiment with culturally central processes, manipulate core resources, and explore their immediate environments. Children can play games and shift their emphasis from fun to engagement and learning, which is also deeply motivating. Educators can tap into play as a skill when they encourage free-form experimentation and open-ended speculation.

**2. *Simulation: the ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-world processes***

New media provides powerful new ways of representing and manipulating information. New forms of simulation expand our cognitive capacity, allowing us to deal with larger bodies of information, experiment with more complex configurations of data, form hypotheses quickly and test them against different variables in real time. Contemporary video games allow youth to play with sophisticated simulations and, in the process, to develop an intuitive understanding of how we might use simulations to test our assumptions about the way the world works.

**3. *Performance: the ability to adopt alternative identities for improvisation and discovery***

Gameplay is also one of a range of contemporary forms of youth popular culture that encourages young people to assume fictive identities and, through this process, develop a richer understanding of themselves and their social roles. Educators have used dramatisations to teach children to reflect more deeply on their experiences of stories. One of the most prominent examples is Model United Nations (MUN), which helps young people develop new knowledge and strategies by enabling them to develop alternative identities.

**4. *Appropriation: the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content***

Appropriation is understood as a process by which students learn by taking culture apart and putting it back together. It may involve both analysis and commentary. Sampling intelligently from the existing cultural reservoir requires a close analysis of this material's existing structures and uses; remixing requires an appreciation of emerging structures and underlying potential meanings. Such appropriation is visible in drama, theatrics, art, and music and can also be acknowledged in gaining insight into educational materials.

**5. *Multi-tasking: the ability to scan one's environment and shift focus onto salient details on an ad hoc basis***

Attention, in order to learn cohesively, is important but difficult for learners nowadays, especially due to the emergence of digital media; however, instead of focusing on narrowing attention, young people often respond to a rich media environment by multi-tasking. Multi-tasking involves monitoring and responding to the sea of information around us. Students need help distinguishing between being off task and handling multiple tasks simultaneously. Currently, young people are playing with

these skills as they engage in games or social activities that reward the ability to maintain a mental picture of complex sets of relationships and to adjust quickly to shifts in perceptual cues.

**6. *Distributed Cognition: the ability to interact meaningfully with tools that expand our mental capacities.***

Applications of the distributed cognition perspective to education suggest that students must learn the affordances of different tools and information technologies and know which functions tools and technologies excel at and in what contexts they can be trusted. Students need to acquire patterns of thought that regularly cycle through available sources of information as they make sense of developments in the world around them. One of the recent examples is augmented reality (AR), a potential tool for distributed intelligence to be applied in the learning process.

**7. *Collective Intelligence: the ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others towards a common goal***

Children and adults are acquiring the skills to operate within knowledge communities by interacting with popular culture. We often learn through play that we later apply to more serious tasks. For example, young Pokémon fans, who each know crucial details about the various species, constitute a collective intelligence whose knowledge is extended each time two youths on the playground share something about the franchise. Educators can deploy aspects of collective intelligence when students pool observations and work through interpretations with others studying the same problems at scattered locations. Such knowledge communities can confront problems of greater scale and complexity than any student can handle.

**8. *Judgement: the ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources***

The new mediated landscape of mainstream news sources, collaborative blog projects, unsourced news sites, and increasingly sophisticated marketing techniques aimed at ever-younger consumers demand that students distinguish fact from fiction, argument from documentation, real from fake, and marketing from enlightenment. Even when media content has been determined credible, it is vital for students also to identify and analyse the producer's perspective: who is presenting what to whom and why. Media literacy education, therefore, heavily relies on the concept of Judgment to distinguish information from misinformation and disinformation.

**9. *Transmedia Navigation: the ability to deal with the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities***

At the most basic level, transmedia stories are stories told across multiple media. Modern literacy requires the ability to express ideas across various systems of representation and signification, including words (spoken or written), images (still or moving), music, 3D models, etc. Students must learn to sort through various modes of expression,

determine which is most effective in reaching their audience and communicating their message, and grasp which techniques best convey information through this channel.

**10. *Networking: the ability to search for, synthesise, and disseminate information***

In a world in which knowledge production is collective and communication occurs across various media, the capacity to network emerges as a core social skill and cultural competency. Students today tap into popular search systems such as Google.com, Amazon, etc., readily available on Web 2.0, to collect and annotate data for themselves and other users. Therefore, Networking is only partially about identifying potential resources; it also involves a process of synthesis, during which multiple resources are combined to produce new knowledge. Educators use social networking to link learners with others who might share their interests or encourage students to publish works produced for the larger public.

**11. *Negotiation: the ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative sets of norms***

The fluid communication within the new media environment brings together groups who otherwise might have lived segregated lives. Culture flows easily from one community to another. People online encounter conflicting values and assumptions and come to grips with competing claims about the meanings of shared artefacts and experiences. Therefore, it becomes increasingly critical to help students acquire skills in understanding multiple perspectives, respecting and even embracing diversity of views, understanding a variety of social norms, and negotiating between conflicting opinions. Educators can foster negotiation skills when they bring together groups from diverse backgrounds and provide resources and processes that ensure careful listening and deeper communication.

Therefore, as highlighted by Jenkins et al. (2009), core media literacy skills combine social skills and cultural competencies in and out of school so that young people can adapt and learn effectively about the dynamic environment through the available tools. Apart from school, parents become another agency that can help shape young people's relationships with online tools for enhancing their mental capacities to be media and information-literate, from communication to effective participation in online media spaces.

**Check Your Progress: 2**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the new social and cultural practices adopted by individuals with the help of new media technologies?

.....

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
2. How have the democratic processes evolved with new media technologies?

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
3. What are the social skills and cultural competencies Jenkins et al. (2009) discussed for empowering themselves?

---

## 4.5 USER-CENTRIC PARTICIPATION VIA NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

---

### 4.5.1 Participatory Culture and New Media Literacy Framework

From a media literacy perspective, Jenkins et al. (2009) initiated the idea of participatory culture among young people in online media. As per Jenkins et al. (2009), young people are consumers and producers in online media spaces. Ito et al. (2009) illustrate that youth participate in online media spaces for two main purposes- friendship-driven and interest-driven. In this context, Ito et al. (2009) identify three sub-genres of participation: hanging out (friendship-driven participation), messing around (acquiring a new skill online) and geeking out (intensive and focused participation after acquiring the skill online; hence, learning).

The notion of participatory culture, as per Jenkins et al. (2009), stems from three core gaps:

1. **Participation Gap** (unequal access to opportunities, experiences, skills and knowledge)
2. **Transparency Problem** (difficulty to recognise how media shapes their perception)
3. **Ethics Challenge** (ethics to communicate and responsibly participate in online media spaces)

Therefore, media education and literacy have become imperative to making online media a dynamic environment that can be engaged to its full potential. Moreover, participatory culture shifts the focus on literacy from individual expression to community involvement, especially among young people.

Borrowing the idea of “Affinity Spaces” (Gee, 2004), Jenkins et al. (2009) state that affinity spaces have become the basis of participatory culture among young people, offering them opportunities to learn and also bridging differences of age, class, gender, race, and educational level. Furthermore, participatory culture includes both popular culture and informal learning for efficient participation in online media spaces.

There are four forms of participatory culture:

1. **Affiliations** (forming formal and informal memberships in online communities centred around various forms of online media such as Friendster, Facebook, message boards, metagaming, game clans, etc.)
2. **Expressions** (producing new forms such as digital sampling, skinning and modding, fan video making, fan fiction writing, zines, mash-ups, etc.)
3. **Collaborative Problem-Solving** (working together in formal and informal teams to complete tasks and develop new knowledge through Wikipedia, alternative reality gaming, spoiling, etc.)
4. **Circulations** (shaping the flow of media through podcasting and blogging)

Therefore, participatory culture combines traditional literacy skills (how to search for information, evaluate the credibility of information, synthesise and make sense of information, and make a decision and action) and new media literacy (social skills or methods of interaction with larger communities).

#### 4.5.2 Active Audience Approach and User-Generated Content

With Web 2.0, the shift from users to producers and consumers to prosumers has become apparent. Before the Internet, communication was followed with a top-down approach, making it passive and mostly one-way. However, audiences can participate in media production and interact with media content online. Moreover, new media platforms have enabled the common public to access, interact with and participate in the media organisation, leading to an active audience approach. An active audience approach has also initiated well-informed participation in society. The framework of the Internet also allows instantaneous reach, which further motivates individuals to shift from passive participation to active participation in the media production process. One of the key examples of this transformation is citizen journalism. Citizen journalism, as a concept, has allowed citizens to report on local issues and bring forth stories worth telling to the world.

An increased availability of technologies supports the increased diversity of participatory practices. Due to the Internet's modality, there is an intensification and massification of already existing participatory practices, which gives rise to more user-generated content. Therefore, user-generated

content emphasises the participation of digital media users in content production. Some examples of user-generated content are blogs, vlogs, podcasts, webzines, digital storytelling, wikiing, etc.

Despite the possibility of engaging with new media technologies in the best way possible, digital participation varies on how individuals use the said technologies, wherein the distinction ranges from consumption to production (Beemt, 2010):

1. **Traditionalists:** Such individuals only use the Internet for browsing. Therefore, it remains a one-way communication and is inclined towards a passive audience approach.
2. **Gamers:** Gamers engage with new media technologies for gaming and similar purposes, wherein they adapt and perform alternative identities. Due to this, they partially lean towards active engagement with the Internet.
3. **Networkers:** Networkers, on the other hand, prefer to maintain networks and interchange information with other networkers. They maintain blogs and vlogs and indulge in activities stimulating active audiences across the Internet.
4. **Producers:** Producers are the ultimate active audiences who participate in producing user-generated content. Using various techniques and concepts, producers engage with new media technologies for writing, uploading photos and videos, graphic design, and drawing. They may also participate in civic or political engagement apart from social activities.

#### 4.5.3 Civic Engagement and Participatory Politics

With the rising importance of new media technologies as well as their reach, large proportions of people across racial and ethnic groups have access to the Internet and use online social media regularly to stay connected with their family and friends while pursuing their interests and hobbies. Therefore, with the possibility of engaging with and participating in online media, the public can:

- a) Link quickly, aggregate and share information from a vast number of sources;
- b) Derive meaning from this jumble of information through commentary;
- c) Spontaneously generate online discussion communities around any given piece of information; and
- d) Enable discussion communities concerned with a particular issue to multiply and mutate rapidly, self-replicating viral across the Internet.

Due to the public engagement with new media, a direct relationship has also been drawn between an individual's personality and their engagement with public affairs, including the political process, social movements and academic activities. Moreover, social ties can be developed with other



interested people who influence their engagement over the digital platform. Thus, online social media networks facilitate better participation in civic affairs by associating with creating with multimedia content, transmedia navigation, and various other UGC formats.

Similarly, participatory politics has gained traction due to new media technologies enabling horizontal and non-hierarchical communication, especially for marginalised communities. Participatory politics is a significant dimension of the political life of young people, giving them greater control, voice, and potential influence over the issues that matter most in their lives. However, participatory politics can be considered an addition to an individual's engagement rather than an alternative to other political activities. Learning how to judge the credibility of what people find online has also enabled youth to get news through participatory channels.

#### 4.5.4 Digital Activism and New Media for Social Action

Individuals and their organisations use the Internet to organise themselves and mobilise the public by producing radio shows, newsletters, newspapers and magazines, wikis, spoof websites and sites that expose misinformation. There are predominantly four areas through which citizens can engage with new media for social action:

1. Freedom of expression through citizen journalism: User-generated content (UGC) is increasingly used and published by mainstream media organisations. Individual citizens are researching, preparing and publishing reports for a mass audience. More capable citizens are using new media technologies, leading to better quantity and quality of UGC. Therefore, citizen journalists contribute to:
  - a) news content;
  - b) sharing opinions and first-hand experiences;
  - c) collaborative content (digital storytelling, community workshops, etc.), and
  - d) interactive journalism (collective experience).
2. Digital storytelling in identity development: Digital storytelling explores the identity that individuals and organisations have developed in the public and not-for-profit sections. It acts as a vehicle for the voices of under-represented or marginalised groups of adults, especially women. A digital story is a personal narrative with digital technologies for public consumption online. Therefore, digital stories:
  - a) Encourage people to conduct research;
  - b) Foster critical thinking skills;
  - c) Assist people to communicate effectively;
  - d) Give people a voice;
  - e) Encourage people to develop a community; and
  - f) Promote creativity, digital and information literacy.

3. Intercultural skills and social action: Intercultural skills help to bridge differences, defuse conflict and set a foundation for peaceful coexistence. The basis for intercultural competence lies in the following skills:
  - a) Self-awareness and self-respect (by examining the lens through which you view the world)
  - b) Cultural humility and empathy (through accepting how others see the world)
  - c) Engaged listening (in order to participate in authentic intercultural dialogue)
  - d) Flexibility (through adapting to temporary shifts in perspective)
  - e) Relationship building (by forging lasting cross-cultural personal bonds).

4. Freeing the mind to use new technologies for social action: New media technologies associated with the Internet have created the most liberating intellectual and social spaces in the history of humanity. People who want to communicate with one another have found ways around government restrictions. This has resulted in more transparency and openness in the government. It has benefited marginalised and oppressed people since freedom of speech and action is now available to millions worldwide.

Furthermore, social media applications, including social networking sites, blogs, podcasts, and content shares, have been used by several institutions to facilitate a participatory cultural experience. Examples of the role of social media in pushing social action are:

- Collaborative editing of an article on Wikipedia
- Uploading of images on Facebook
- Uploading of videos on YouTube
- Creation of short-term messages on Twitter

Such activities enable more and more people to become media producers, distributors, and consumers. In such ways, social networks also challenge one of the former hegemonies of traditional media institutions. Therefore, online media can allow users to create and participate in online spaces for various causes, especially through user-generated content. Although there are varied forms of participation, young people actively engage with their newfound agency to participate in civic and political arenas.

**Check Your Progress: 3**

**Note:** 1) Use the space below for your answers.

2) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the four forms of participatory culture?

.....  
.....

2. Discuss the role of user-generated content in the active audience approach.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. How can an individual participate in the democratic processes with the help of new media technologies?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

---

## 4.6 LET US SUM UP

---

In this unit, we have discussed the notion of media convergence, which stems from three forms of convergence: technological, regulatory and industrial. The dimensions of media convergence also stimulate the novelty of new media technologies towards newer experiences, other ways of representation, refined relationships between subjects and the technology, evolved concepts of identity and community and different ways of organisation and production. Additionally, the aspects of multiple media and how they contribute to the transition from old to new media have been discussed in detail.

Regarding the transcendence of society due to Web 2.0 technologies, the shift in cultural and social practices has been reflected instead of a change in lifestyle, communication, mobile technologies, and new economic practices at the micro level. At the macro level, new media technologies have influenced democratic processes by introducing concepts such as e-governance, cyber laws, net neutrality, and digital literacy initiatives. However, despite the knowledge of such concepts, the dimensions of new media literacy are imperative to understand, essentially to critically assess the uses of new media technologies for and in society. Accessibility to ICTs, understanding their potential and the need for social skills and cultural competencies to ascertain the same have also been discussed.

Lastly, the participatory function of new media technologies in society has been assessed in great detail. The Participatory Culture and New Media Literacy framework by Jenkins et al. (2009) has been observed to be critical for this unit section. The active audience approach and essence of user-generated content, which becomes the crux of the participatory function, delve deeper into new media participation's sociological and political approach. Finally, the possibility of civic engagement, participatory politics and digital activism, which has been made possible due to new media

technologies, has been assessed from the empowerment vantage point.

---

## 4.7 FURTHER READINGS

---

1. Couldry, N. (2013). *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*. Germany: Polity Press.
2. Lindgren, S. (2021). *Digital Media and Society*. United Kingdom: SAGE Publications.
3. Lister, M., Dovey, J., Giddings, S., Kelly, K., & Grant, I. (2009). *New Media: A Critical Introduction*. Oxfordshire, England: Taylor & Francis.
4. Miller, V. (2011). *Understanding Digital Culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
5. Siapera, E. (2017). *Understanding New Media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
6. White, A. (2014). *Digital Media and Society: Transforming Economics, Politics and Social Practices*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

---

## 4.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

---

### Check Your Progress: 1

1. The phenomenon of media convergence deals with the interconnectedness of communication technologies, computer networks, and media content. Therefore, it brings the "three C's" together: computing, communication, and content.
2. Three dimensions of media convergence:
  1. Technological convergence
  2. Regulatory convergence
  3. Industrial convergence
3. Characteristics of new media technologies:
  1. New textual experiences
  2. New ways of representing the world
  3. New relationship between subjects (users and consumers) and media technologies
4. New experiences of the relationship between embodiment, identity and community
5. New conceptions of the biological body's relationship to technological media
6. New patterns of organisation and production

## Check Your Progress: 2

1. New forms of social and cultural practices adapted by individuals due to new media technologies:
  - New ways of living
  - New ways of communication
  - Mobile revolution
  - New economic practices
2. Influence of new media technologies on the democratic processes:
  - e-Governance
  - Cyber laws
  - Net neutrality
  - Digital literacy initiatives
3. Social skills and cultural competencies introduced by Jenkins et al. (2009):
  1. Play: the capacity to experiment with one's surroundings as a form of problem-solving
  2. Simulation: the ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-world processes
  3. Performance: the ability to adopt alternative identities for improvisation and discovery
4. Appropriation: the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content
5. Multi-tasking: the ability to scan one's environment and shift focus onto salient details on an ad hoc basis
6. Distributed Cognition: the ability to interact meaningfully with tools that expand our mental capacities.
7. Collective Intelligence: the ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others towards a common goal
8. Judgement: the ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources
9. Transmedia Navigation: the ability to deal with the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities
10. Networking: the ability to search for, synthesise, and disseminate information
11. Negotiation: the ability to travel across diverse communities, discerning and respecting multiple perspectives, and grasping and following alternative sets of norms

## Check Your Progress: 3

1. Four forms of participatory culture (Jenkins et al., 2009):

## Mobile Transition

- Affiliations (forming formal and informal memberships in online communities centred around various forms of online media such as Friendster, Facebook, message boards, metagaming, game clans, etc.)
  - Expressions (producing new forms such as digital sampling, skinning and modding, fan video making, fan fiction writing, zines, mash-ups, etc.)
  - Collaborative Problem-Solving (working together in formal and informal teams to complete tasks and develop new knowledge through Wikipedia, alternative reality gaming, spoiling, etc.)
  - Circulations (shaping the flow of media through podcasting and blogging)
2. Before the Internet, communication was followed with a top-down approach, making it passive and mostly one-way. However, audiences can participate in media production and interact with media content online. The Internet's framework also allows instantaneous reach, further motivating individuals to shift from passive to active participation in media production. Due to the Internet's modality, there is an intensification and massification of already existing participatory practices, which gives rise to more user-generated content.
3. Possibilities of individuals to participate in democratic processes with new media technologies:
- Media production and user-generated content
  - Civic engagement
  - Participatory politics
  - Digital activism (Freedom of expression, citizen journalism, digital storytelling, identity development, adoption of intercultural skills, social action)