
UNIT 2 NEWSROOM SETUP AND FUNCTIONS: ELECTRONIC AND ONLINE MEDIA

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

There are four major activities of any media organization – news gathering, editorial decision making, converting selected news material into presentable formats and disseminating it to the public. You can consider newsroom as the most important part of any news organization as raw news content reaches here from various sources, editorial decisions are taken here, after gatekeeping process the raw news content is converted into presentable formats and then it is finally sent to the public.

All of these activities take place in the newsrooms of both television and online news organizations. In this unit, we will discuss the structure and functioning of television and online newsrooms.

2.2 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the structure and functioning of a television newsroom;
- explain the production process of a television news programme; and
- describe the structure and functioning of online newsroom.

2.3 NEWS PRODUCTION IN A TV NEWS CHANNEL

To understand the functioning of a newsroom, it's imperative to first take a look at the production process of news bulletins or a news programme in a news channel. Let us have a glimpse.

We have already stated that newsroom setups are not similar in all the channels, and there also differences in the nomenclature of desks and personnel. For example, in some channels, the people who are in-charge of news bulletins are called Producers, whereas in some other channels they are called Output Editors. In the same manner what is termed the Assignment Desk in some channels, in the other channels, it is known as the Input Desk.

As in any news media, there are two branches for the production of news in a channel. First is the news gathering and second is to make the raw news presentable for the viewers. Newsroom comes into the picture in the second stage. When a reporter has done his/her job of news gathering, which here means shooting of the story, the work goes forward.

First the reporter comes back to the newsroom and writes his/her script. These days it is done on computer, which is connected to all computers of the office through local area network (LANs). In fact, these days, computers are connected through wide area networks (WANs) as well, so the senior officials of the news channels also remain connected to the office systems from anywhere.

After the script is written, it goes to the script desk, where it is checked by a senior person. When the script is cleared, reporter takes it and goes for the voice over and video editing. Video editing is a technical process. In every channel now, reporters are required to edit their stories themselves. A video editor, who is a technical person, checks the edited story before it is published for telecast. As the story is published, the reporter hands it over to the production/ output desk.

Production/output desk can then include that story in a Rundown; in some channels it is also known as a Run Order. A Rundown or a Run Order is a sequence of Headlines and stories, which are to be played.

Then, the Production/output person goes to the PCR (production control room) with the Rundown. From there, the final telecast takes place which is entirely a technical process executed by engineers and other technological experts. However, a newsroom person or a journalist always remains there, because, s/he understands the News, and it is his/her responsibility to keep the bulletin or the programme in order. If there is breaking news, only a journalist can decide how to go into it,

how long to stay on that news, what is the need of the coverage, i.e., whether any live interview or graphics are needed, it is s/he who feeds the latest information regarding that news to the anchor. Actually it is the news producer / output editor, who editorially or you can say, content-wise controls the show.

Here we mentioned three main functions of the newsroom- scripting, making rundowns and executing the rundowns. But there are other functions as well which are performed by senior journalists. These are mainly related to conceptualisation, planning and execution. In any channel, the news takes shape from here. It is at this level, that the policies are formulated and the whole newsroom gets its guidance.

As we now understand the main functions of a newsroom, we are in position to know its structure, for the simple reason that the structures are made to perform the functions and achieve the targets.

Electronic media newsrooms mainly consist of three desks. These are: Assignment or Input desk, Output desk and Script desk. These desks are additional to the sitting arrangements of reporters/ bureaus, as well as other journalists/ functionaries of the channel.

2.4 ASSIGNMENT/INPUT DESKS

As the name suggests, the responsibility of this desk is to arrange and give input to the channel. In practical terms, it means feeding the channel with news items and information, which can be produced and presented to the viewers. This desk consists of many input editors, who work under the guidance of their in-charge and have many functions to perform. Let us look at the job of assignment/ input desk.

2.4.1 Overseeing Reporters

The reporters of the channel come under the assignment/ input desk. From there, they get their work assigned. They have to report to this desk. The reporters are expected to keep the assignment/input desk informed about the status of their stories. If they come to know about any new information or breaking news, they first pass it to the assignment/ input desk. It is this desk, which decides what to do about that information, how much importance it is to be given, and how it is going to be played up.

This is the desk which is responsible for whatever news and information you watch on a channel. So, input editors keep an eye on whatever is happening in the world. They continuously keep track of the news agencies, other news channels and news web sites. They are expected to flash all the information that they think would be useful for a channel and the journalists there.

2.4.2 Arranging Visuals

TV being a visual media, visuals are of prime importance there. Every news channel wants to be the first to air the visuals. They also want to air the best visuals available. You can get an idea of this race only by being in a TV newsroom. It is the duty of the assignment/input team to fulfil this need of the channel and they keep pressurising reporters on the spot, to send the visuals as soon as possible. As the visuals are uplinked, they immediately inform the output team and as the visuals arrive they give all the related details to them.

In addition to channel's own sources, the assignment/input team have to continuously track the agencies, like APTN, REUTERS and ANI. Most of the channels subscribe

to the services of these agencies and are dependent on these agencies for the visuals of the events and the developments happening in the foreign countries.

The assignment/input desk is also expected to keep an eye on the foreign broadcasters, so that they are aware of the events taking place in the areas or countries of interest of the viewers of that particular channel. By overseeing these channels, they also get an idea of the visuals that might be available in due course to their channel.

2.4.3 Arranging Phone-in interviews

When news breaks in, generally the information first comes through phones. If the news is big, then the channels try to stay on it for many hours. It takes time to show the visuals or bytes of the eye witnesses or authorities, due to a simple reason that the reporters or the technical infrastructure can't be present everywhere. As they try to reach there as soon as possible, the channel has to give the latest information to its viewers. So, here come in phone-in interviews. These interviews are called Phonos in newsroom parlance.

The assignment/input team first lines-up all their reporters, who can give any piece or type of information or perspective regarding the development. A competent assignment/input team keeps an updated phone directory of important persons from every walk of life, so that they can be approached for information or their perspective in case that a big event or a development occurs in their field. The aim is to keep the viewers engaged, so that they don't switch over to any other channel. Continuing with the latest and new information, new elements, and new perspectives, the newsroom tries to achieve their aim. And providing all these NEW information is the duty of the assignment/input desk.

Phonos are not required only in the case of breaking news. During normal coverage also, Phonos are required to get updates or for getting reactions of the concerned parties or persons. It is the assignment/input team that arranges these.

2.4.4 Monitoring Other Channels

The assignment/input desk is required to continuously monitor the other channels, which are its competitors. After all, there is a cut-throat competition to attract more and more viewers. News channels are vying for snatching viewers of the other channels. So the most important thing is to know, which channel is showing what, and in what manner. Based on this information and its analysis, channels prepare their strategy. Generally, the assignment/input desk keeps flashing headlines of other channels every hour on an intra-mail system of the organisation. They also tell the whole team, if some other channel has any exclusive story or extra information/input regarding a running story.

2.4.5 Story Planning

Story planning is a major responsibility of the assignment/input desk. They have to assess the different angles of a story, what elements are required to present the full picture, from where these elements will come, and which reporter is best suited to do that story. After assessing all these aspects, the story is assigned to a reporter; s/he is given a detailed guideline to proceed with, and is also told the deadline. Then the assignment/input desk informs the newsroom about the Expected Time of Arrival (ETA) of the story. It is duty of the assignment/ input desk to follow and make reporters follow the timetable. Sometimes, a single story needs input from many places. For example, if a story is being done on a controversy regarding

an advertisement featuring a cricketer, it might be the case that the player at that time may be in Bangalore and the ad company officials are in Mumbai. Naturally, the bytes will have to be taken in those cities. In addition, it may be imperative to give voice of the fans of the player. These have to be brought from different places. Coordinating and collecting all these inputs and handing it over to the story packaging team are the responsibilities of the assignment/input desk.

2.4.6 Forward Planning

Forward planning implies planning for the near future. Many dates fall in the coming weeks or month, which may be important for news coverage. For example, festivals, birthdays of celebrities, elections, sports tournaments, and release of big budget/multi-starrer films. It comes under forward planning to prepare a calendar of these events and suggest how the channel should cover it. Providing background material of each and every such event is also the job of the assignment/input desk. The day, every channel will play up the event, your channel should not lack in any aspect or look dull. The assignment/input desk also has to shoulder this responsibility.

From above discussion you would have understood that the assignment/input desk of the newsroom is very important. It is the provider of the information, story and perspectives. How other parts of the newsroom perform is totally dependent on the assignment/input desk. In fact, their roles begin after this desk has done its job.

2.5 OUTPUT DESK

The Assignment/input desk gives raw material and the Output cooks it up as 'digestible food' for the news hungry audience. To keep the audience engaged, the 'food' should be tasty enough. It's the duty of the Output desk to ensure that the raw information is produced in a presentable format, in the shortest possible time frame and put on air.

Output persons have many functions to perform. One should always keep it in mind that the job at the output desk is half journalistic and half technical. If you aspire to work at the output desk, then you must be conversant with modern information and telecast technologies and computer savvy. You must have the knowledge of video editing, news publishing in technological terms, making published stories ready for telecast and all technological nuances of telecast that come across when a news bulletin or a news programme is being aired. You must be aware of the vocabulary of all these processes.

Nowadays, all output persons are expected to (in fact in many channels required to) know video editing. As visuals and bytes arrive, the output team has to edit it in a way that it is available for telecast within minutes. Sometimes when reporters are not present in the office, output persons have to make the full story themselves, so that they fulfil the duty of a reporter as well. Thus the job of output person is like an all-rounder who performs different functions at different times.

Let us now have a look at the main functions of the output desk:

2.5.1 Preparing the Rundown

This may be considered as the foremost job of the output team. In some channels, a Rundown is called as a Run Order. It's the order or the sequence in which the news is planned to be aired. Before every bulletin/programme, an output editor is assigned to make the rundown. S/he prepares it as per the directions of the news editor/

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executive producer. Generally, a set pattern is followed while making rundowns but nowadays, breaking patterns are in vogue. For example, earlier, headlines had to be the first item in a news bulletin. But now, to present a surprise element to the viewers, channels sometimes begin the bulletin with impressive visuals or interesting bytes. In conventional terms, these things are called teasers, and now often, teasers are becoming the first thing in a news bulletin.

The pattern of a Rundown is given below —

- Headline
- Anchor Link giving a glimpse of what is special or interesting in his/her kitty
- News stories
- Discussion with guest or reporter (if it is planned)
- Teaser before going for a commercial break
- Commercial break
- Come back
- Headlines (optional)
- News stories
- End of the bulletin.

News bulletins or programmes may be of half an hour or an hour's duration. This pattern continues if the bulletin or the programme is of an extended duration.

2.5.2 Executing the Rundown

It is the duty of Output Editor (OE) / producer to execute the rundown and for doing this s/he has to go to the PCR (production control room). The OE/ Producer works there with a team of technical persons. The OE/Producer is expected to be present in the PCR much before the actual telecast begins. The person has to line-up the OBs and Phonos. If the anchor is doing continuous bulletins and cannot find time to go through the Rundown, s/he has to tell the anchor the whole plan of the bulletin.

While the bulletin is in the progress, the OE/Producer is the point person and is answerable for all content related matters. Thus it is a job of responsibility and a job of journalistic as well as technical competence. In case of breaking news, skills of the whole team of a news channel are tested, but it's a special test for the OE/ Producer. S/he has to take decisions then and there and has to feed the anchor with the latest information and also direct the PCR team to go where, how and to whom. S/he has to coordinate with reporters, keep a track on coming visuals and bytes and get them played according to importance and novelty.

The job of making and executing rundowns is given to capable and experienced people. On a news heavy day or during the breaking news situations, they are assisted by other people at the output desk as well.

2.5.3 Getting Stories on Air

As discussed above, the input desk arranges stories and raw materials and hands it over to the output desk. Now it is the duty of the output team to put it **on air**. **The edited or prepared stories could be included in the rundown at once, as they are** ready for telecast. The output team is expected to know about the full

content, the visual sequence and the bytes details etc. of the story, therefore they first have to watch it. If they feel that story is lacking somewhere they ask the input desk to get that corrected by the concerned reporters. In case the story has come from out station or the reporter is not available, this has to be done by the output team itself. Working in a television news channel is a very fast affair. The reporters are expected to write scripts and edit their stories themselves, but sometimes they have to remain in the field for long time, as they have to cover minute to minute detail of a developing story. Obviously they can't return to the office just for filing their story. In those cases, they give information regarding the story on phone and explain the visual and bytes details to the input desk. Then the input desk tries to get that story by some other reporter, but if there is a shortage of human resource at that front, then the output desk has to do that job.

2.5.4 Information on Screen

When you are watching news, you see many written information on the TV screen. In that information you will find the gist of the story, the name and the designation of the person whose bytes have been used in the story, the information about the location, which means the place where the incident has taken place or the place where the concerned person has given the bytes. In TV news parlance, this information is called a SUPER. Putting supers is also the output team's responsibility. Thus command on the language is necessary to work at the output desk. Whatever you write, it goes on air, appears at the TV screen and is seen by the viewers. So, there is no scope for any mistake and you have to be foolproof.

In western countries, the trend of the cluttered screen is decreasing, but in India it is on the rise. Here TV news channels are cluttering their screen with more and more information. It is believed that some studies have reinforced this thinking that cluttered screens are helpful in keeping viewers remain at the channel. Even though watching visuals being covered by text information can be agonising for the enlightened viewers, the channel officials think otherwise.

Anyway, supers are a very important part of a news story, and writing these has its own demand. Having command on the language is not enough; you must be innovative as well. Supers are written in a very limited number of words. There is a limit to accommodate the numbers of letters on the screen. You are asked to write 'catchy' supers, i.e., such words which will appeal to the viewers and which leave them amused. Their aim is to create curiosity; keep the viewers occupied, and tell the story in such a manner that it synchronises with the visuals and the theme of the story.

Activity

Watch a news channel of your choice. Identify some catchy supers and analyse whether they synchronise with the visuals and the theme of the story.

2.5.5 Tickers

Whenever you watch a news channel, you see that the top headline stories are running in a written text form at the bottom of the screen. These are called Tickers. Putting tickers is also a job of the output team. Generally in news channels, one person is specially assigned for this duty. His/her job is to keep information continuously updated. As we saw in the case of supers, this is also a specialised job. A person of deep news sense, having command on the language, and capable of writing correctly in hurried situations as well, is given this responsibility.

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Tickers are considered very important as many viewers go to a news channel just to scan the main news of the day or of that hour, and they get it from the tickers. As the tickers are running continuously, one does not need to follow the clock and hit the channel at the beginning of the hour. Secondly, tickers give an idea of the priorities of the selection of news in a particular channel. It attracts viewers of a particular taste, and it may distract other viewers if they find information running at the bottom of the screen intriguing. For example, if a channel runs a horoscope forecast in the ticker, then many viewers who take news seriously, may shift to some other channel. Similarly, if there is only serious news on the ticker, then the viewers of who prefer lighter news may shift to other 'location'.

Thus tickers are written according to the channel's policy. There are some simple rules for it. You have to put the information here in a very simple and communicative language. If you can create magic with the language without compromising on simplicity, then that is highly appreciated. Tickers are also used as programme promos. You must have seen that channels give information about their forthcoming programmes in tickers, with the objective to inspire people to watch those programmes at the scheduled time.

From above analysis you would have understood that working at the output desk is full of responsibilities. If you want to get a job at output desk, you must have a sound news sense, technical competence and you should be a good team person. In addition, you must know video editing, have command on the language and patience to handle the breaking news situations, because at that moment things are very fluid and decisions have to be taken quick and fast.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: 1) Use the space below for you answers.

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

1. What qualities are required for an Output person ?

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2. What is the main function of the output desk ?

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2.6 SCRIPT DESK

In television, apart from the visual element, the act of listening also plays an important role. Therefore, if camera person is an integral part of TV news presentation, so is the script writer.

Script Desk consists of senior and highly experienced persons as writing a script is a job of responsibility. Only those persons are considered for writing scripts, who have in-depth knowledge about social, political, economic, and legal issues as well as have excellent command on the language.

In news channels, in normal situations, reporters write their scripts themselves. After that they go to the script desk to get their scripts checked. Outstation reporters send their scripts through mail, then they inform it to the input desk, and the input

desk asks the script desk to check the script. The script editor goes through all the facts written in the scripts carefully. If s/he has doubt anywhere, s/he asks for clarification from the reporter. Only after being fully satisfied, s/he clears the script. It is also expected from the script editor that s/he will do necessary corrections in the language of the script and make it more simple and catchy.

At times, script editors have to write the full script when the story is being prepared on desk only. A news channel telecasts many special programmes of half an hour's duration and scripting of these programmes is done on the desk. The script person goes through all the visuals and bytes available, and writes the script for the planned programme.

These days, stories of short duration are in vogue and in some television channels, scripts for news stories are written in not more than 90 words which is a challenging task. Moreover, since scripts are written to the pictures; visuals get priority over the words. In fact, it is said that the words are written according to the available pictures - to explain and match the visuals. They should enhance the impact and the effectiveness of the pictures.

A script editor is required to learn these qualities to fulfil the specific demands of a news channel. They have to develop a visual sense and for the NEWS part of the story, the information is also significant which comes from reading. If you wish to work as script writer; you must develop the habit of reading a serious newspaper thoroughly on a regular basis and develop a visual sense.

2.7 HOW A TV NEWSROOM FUNCTIONS

On a normal day, when there is no breaking news or it is not a big news day like elections, newsroom functions in a set pattern. Every morning, there is phone conferencing with all the bureaus, reporters, and input desk persons. Executive Editors and other bosses or in-charges of different departments also take part in it. In this very meeting, the agenda of the day begins to take shape. Bureaus and reporters inform what they have to offer that day - if they have some special story or information, what events or developments are going to or are expected to happen in their area. Decisions are then taken which development or event or news has to be given how much importance. Accordingly, a plan of coverage is chalked out and guidelines given to the reporters.

After this meeting, the input desk follows up and implements the decisions and keeps the office informed about the progress regarding the stories. Meanwhile, whatever information is received, the input desk keeps forwarding to the output desk and the output as per its news sense, the policy of the channel and the orders from the bosses, keeps putting that information on air. This sequence breaks only when there is breaking news. During breaking news situation, a new style of working comes into operation. In a professional news channel, a special breaking news drill is organised occasionally to keep the staff prepared. In this situation, only that news and the information relating to it go on air.

2.8 ONLINE NEWSROOM: FEATURES AND CHARACTERISTICS

The structure of the online newsroom largely depends on the size of an organization and its media product. As the volume of work is more in bigger organizations, it needs more people to man the news website. Bigger organizations provide news

updates 24X7 and usually run in three shifts, each headed by a News Editor. The timings are generally from 8 am to 4 pm, 4 pm to 12 midnight and 12 midnight to 8 am. The late night shift is often called the graveyard shift because it is night in the host country to which the website caters. Its main responsibility is to scan the national and overseas news. The news updates during the graveyard shift is generally less and far in between.

It is during the graveyard shift that dailies send their newspapers to press for printing. A soft copy of the newspaper is sent to the online newsroom. The graveyard shift ensures that the latest edition of the newspaper is uploaded and made live (published) on the website. The timing of a newspaper going live varies from organization to organization, depending on their policies. Some organizations publish their latest edition much before the newspaper comes out of the printing press. They assume that print and online audience are different and have different reading habits.

An online newsroom shift is headed a News Editor, who also happens to be a Shift-In Charge. About 3-5 Sub-Editors/Content Writers, with responsibility to ensure error free and free quick updates, assist the News Editor. In case there is a major event of disaster or terror attack or a plane crash, they promptly flash the news on a ticker, even as the detailed information starts to come in.

Once the online newsroom receives some basic information about an event, it develops it into a story and waits for more inputs to filter in. Such stories are called developing stories. Fresh inputs are either updated in the earlier story itself or a new story is filed giving links to the earlier one, which serves as a backgrounder. This is called hyperlink as it enhances the comprehensibility of a news story.

These days, most websites, make use of timeline for quick understanding of the facts and figures. It includes detail of the story as it happened and the time of its occurrence. Sometimes, to give it a visual appeal, it also includes infographics and pictures of the event in the story.

Apart from the editorial team, which includes a news editor and sub-editors, a technical person also assists the online newsroom operation in rectifying technical error that might creep in during the operation. Although most websites are self-sustaining and such technical eventualities are rare yet; it is always safe to have a technical person on a standby. As the workflow is greater in big organizations and the editorial team has less time to focus on visuals, a designer is often assigned to help the editorial team with photographs, graphics, and animation depending on the need of the hour.

2.9 ONLINE NEWSROOM: TEAM WORK

The manpower strength required for a newsroom is decided keeping in mind the scale of its functions. Of this, 80 per cent are generally the editorial staff. The editorial team works in three shifts to provide the latest news on a 24X7 basis. And often during the outbreak of a major incident, more people are pooled in to meet the contingency of increased news updates. The working of an online newsroom is a collective team effort as it involves reporting, editing and publishing hundreds of stories every day. Besides, there is also a need for visuals in the form of photographs, videos, infographics and multimedia etc to make the story attractive and eyeball grabbing.

Once a story goes 'live' on a website, it becomes necessary that it reaches a wider group of readers and appears on search engines where people search for the latest

updates. It is here that the role of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Social Media Optimisation (SMO) comes in to play an important role. They ensure that the news stories are searchable and visible on search engines.

These days, a large number of people are connected with media organizations via social media for the latest news updates and news analysis. The role of social media team is to make its stories available on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Reddit, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Baidu, WhatsApp, WordPress, StumbleUpon, etc. Often, readers subscribe to newsletters of various websites, which are sent directly to the subscriber's email. There are also options of customized newsletters, whereby a reader can opt for his/her areas of interest to receive newsletters related to it.

Let us now see how each of the online newsroom teams work to make the newsroom a smooth running operation.

2.9.1 Editorial Team/Content Writers

An important role of an online editorial team is to ensure quick and fast news update as it is all about speed, accuracy and credibility of the news that matters to be placed on the online platform. This is because the news gets flashed immediately and reaches readers in real time. This inherent capability of the online medium gives it a rare advantage. Before news gets splashed on the television or in a daily newspaper, it has already reached millions of people through the internet.

Operating in shifts, the editorial team, however, have their eyes glued to the TV, news agencies and other websites to know what is happening everywhere. The news scanning process continues along with news updates, writing and publishing stories online. If any member of an editorial team notices some important news, he/she immediately alerts the news editor, who depending on the merit of the story, decides its placement on the website.

An online editorial meeting chaired by the editor is a routine exercise to discuss important news development of the day. The edit meet also plans and discusses news events that need to be covered in the coming days. The edit team remains in constant touch with the technology team, design team and photo team for its day-to-day requirements.

2.9.2 Technology Team

The technology team is also an integral part of the newsroom as it facilitates the process of carrying the news to the worldwide audience. The strength of the technology team depends on the magnitude of operation and varies between 4-5 staff headed by a Chief Technological Officer (CTO).

A major responsibility of the technology team is to look after the Content Management System (CMS) via which news stories, photographs, video and other multimedia content are uploaded on the web servers before reaching the audience. Web servers are collection of network computers, which make the web pages available to multiple users across the globe. The role of technology team is highly skilled and falls under the Information Technology Unit of the organization.

The technology team has also to ensure that the download time of the website is fast, so that there is no delay in news reaching the users. A common technical error on the website is HTTP 404 Not Found Error. It means that the users are not able to access a web page, which they are looking for. This happens generally when a

page is removed from the website or is moved from its particular location. At the user end, the error occurs when a user types a wrong Uniform Resource Locator (URL) on the web browser. The technology team tries to minimise such errors as it affects the credibility of the website. The 'tech' team, as it is generally referred to in newsroom, also helps the editorial team in developing special packages for news coverage during important events like polling, election results, accidents, terror attacks and so on. The 'tech' team tries to improve the interactivity between the users and the newsroom by developing special interactive interfaces. Comments, feedback and poll questions are some examples of the interactive features of a news website.

2.9.3 Design Team

The design team is responsible for the look and feel of the website and plays an important role in making it visually attractive. It decides the placement of the headline, introduction, body text (the main story) and the pictures on a web page. The design team also decides on the sizes of the photographs, which appear along with the story at various places on the website. The Homepage (it is like the front page of a newspaper) of the website, the section pages like India, World, Politics, Business, Sports, Photo Gallery and Blogs, etc., are all designed by the designing team to categorise news stories into various sections. This is however, a one-time affair and does not change very frequently. On a day-to-day basis, however, the design team assists the newsroom in developing special features, infographics and the picture presentations for the website.

2.9.4 Photo and Video Team

In a majority of the online newsrooms, the photo and video teams are clubbed together. However, in the TV news channels where the flow of videos tends to be greater, a separate video team often looks after the video uploads for its online operations. As the videos are heavy files and take more time to download, they are processed in MP4, 3GP or VLC format for quick streaming on desktops and mobile devices. The agencies, which supply videos to various organizations, send it in a customised format compatible with the requirement of the organization. The photo team, on the other hand, selects the relevant pictures for news stories, crops it depending on the required size of the story and sends it to editorial team for enhancing the visual appeal of the story.

The photo teams usually work on Photoshop software and try to optimise the pictures for websites and other devices, depending on its format. They make the file size much smaller by reducing its weight and thus ensuring a quick download. Some of the websites have now started using larger pictures for greater visual appeal. Photographs are generally sourced from news agencies, which provide round-the-clock news pictures. Sometimes, when there are no real visuals for a story, a representative image is used to break the textual monotony of the web page.

2.9.5 SEO and SMO Team

The roles of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Social Media Optimization (SMO) teams are to ensure that the stories filed by the editorial team appear on the search engine. A large number of people go to the search engine to find the latest

update on a story. To maximize easy visibility of a story on search engine, important key words are included in the headline, which are in turn picked up by the search engines. While filing a story in CMS, the editorial team also puts in important key words, meta tags and a short description of the story. It helps the search engine in locating a particular story, meta tags, on the other hand, define the content of a web page. An important role of the SEO and SMO teams is to post stories on social networking sites and directories.

2.9.6 Social Media Team

The role and growth of social media in news dissemination has been phenomenal in recent times. In fact, a sizeable chunk of readership to various news websites comes from social media, especially Twitter, Facebook and many more. As a result, big online media organizations have established a separate division, which looks after the social media operations. The moment a story goes ‘live’ on the website, it is immediately put on the social media.

These days, social media networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Reditt, WhatsApp, LinkedIn have become popular places for breaking news and for political, business and sports personalities to declare their opinion on a particular issue.

Sometimes, the opinion of these leaders itself becomes a news and is carried by newspapers and websites as a news story. Also popular media organizations tend to have huge number of followers of their social media pages. They in turn, share and re-tweet news stories, which further reaches more and more people like a chain reaction. These days no big media or business organization can do without a strong presence in the social media where big data has come to play a major role.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: 1) Use the space below for you answers.

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

Fill in the blanks:

1. A common technical error, which a tech team come across is error.
2. Videos arefiles and take more time in streaming.
3. A large number of people go to to find the latest update on a story.
4.are the two most popular social media sites.

2.10 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we tried to discuss the structure and functioning of newsrooms of television and online news organisations. It is important to understand the role of different components and workflow. We talked about the various important departments of a television newsroom and discussed how a television newsroom works. Apart from TV newsrooms, we discussed in detail the structure and functioning of the newsroom of online news platforms.

2.11 FURTHER READINGS

- Boyd, A., Stewart, P., & Alexander, R. (2008), *Broadcast Journalism*, Amsterdam: Elsevier/Focal.
- Yorke, I., & Alexander, R. (2017), *Television News*, Abingdon, U.K.: Routledge.
- Cohen, J., & Kenny, T. (2016). *Producing new and digital media*. Burlington, MA: Focal Press.

2.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

1. Refer to section 2.5
2. Refer to section 2.5

Check Your Progress 2

1. HTTP 404 Not Found Error
2. Heavy
3. Search engines
4. Facebook, Twitter

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