**Digital media and society**

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The theory of Mass Society and Mass Communication have both been in play since the origin of media. During this long and continued battle for control over information, the effects of content on the masses has not been talked about. There is a strong salience between media agenda and public agenda and after the advent of social media, the correlation between what digital media says and how the public thinks is stronger.

Today’s world is corporate and everything is measured in pennies. Every commercial unit aims to increase revenue through sales. All the focus is placed on persuading the masses and in the process, the adverse effects of the media content on society is neglected entirely. Words have overt and covert meanings, depending on the context in which they are used and also with reference to the context in which they are read.

In the age of the internet, every walking person is a media house. They can record anything and broadcast it immediately or write anything and put it on the air. The broadcaster of video, picture or text may have his own context but viewer and reader will give it their own meaning. This is what is happening. Everything is being recorded and, at some stage, is being broadcasted as well. Creators of mobile applications have converted this into an industry by giving incentives to the content creators and endorsing only nominal restrictions. Content creators include professionals, semi-professionals, amateur, subject specialist, academia personnel and intellectuals. They create content according to their assessment of the viewer’s demand. Thousands of scandals, cybercrimes, theft, murders, fake news are after effects of the digital world.

[Intizar murder case: ATC gives death sentence to 2 cops for planned killing](https://nation.com.pk/25-Oct-2021/intizar-murder-case-atc-gives-death-sentence-to-2-cops-for-planned-killing)

Mainstream media has a gatekeeping mechanism. They have editorial control and a team of professionals to manage and vet content before it airs. Moreover, it is a million-dollar industry which operates according to set rules and regulations. On the other hand, the digital world is a blessing for researchers, economists, banking, multi-nationals, the media industry, aviation, defence and many more affiliated units. It has not only brought ease in gathering information but provided relief in manufacturing and operating products.

Servers are packed with big data. This big data contains a wealth of information which discloses human habits, their priorities, shortfalls, strength, social preferences and religious leanings. In short, humans are totally exposed.

In the process, the corporate world and big data companies create content which fulfills their set of objectives that help them earn money. They simply create an artificial world for users. This artificial content further provokes humans for a reaction which further creates artificial content and so on. This whole chain reaction is a jigsaw puzzle which has negative effects on users. However, it is benefitting the corporate world or those engaged in propaganda for chaos.

[Govt will fulfil commitments made with TLP: Sheikh Rasheed](https://nation.com.pk/25-Oct-2021/govt-will-fulfil-commitments-made-with-tlp-sheikh-rasheed)

A brand is the new currency in the digital world. Branded media houses, companies, writers, blogs and vlogs, schools and universities can create ripple effects for the society. The persuasive effect of a brand message is far larger than an unbranded message. Viewers and listeners take content very seriously when it comes from a branded source. We are now living in a digital world but also a branded world. In simple terms, the content or product needs branding to successfully persuade customers and translate into sales. The branded age has its own limitations and advantages. Branding is a mechanical process with little technique and understanding of analytics.

The TV and computer are two different things. A TV has value edited content mostly for information and entertainment. Even advertisement is editorially controlled. However, cellphones and computers are independent entities without restrictions. States and non-state actors are equally as active as the masses in using social media. The US Presidential Elections of 2016, Indian Chronicles of 2020, Wikileaks, Pandora Leaks of 2021, militant media and the pandemic are few examples of social media use by state and non-state actors.

[T20 World Cup: Afghanistan defeats Scotland by 130 runs](https://nation.com.pk/25-Oct-2021/t20-world-cup-afghanistan-defeats-scotland-by-130-runs)

The most devastating effect of the digital world is the spread of fake news. The use of unsubstantiated news is extremely harmful for humanity. We live in a post-truth era, an era in which audiences tend to believe information that appeals to their emotions and their personal beliefs as opposed to seeking and accepting information that is regarded as factual and objective. People’s information consumption is being increasingly guided by the affective or emotional dimension of their psyche as opposed to the cognitive dimension. This post-truth reality is one of the reasons why fake news has become so inescapable, and consequently, why it’s so hard to combat and interrupt the production and dissemination of deliberately false news.

Digital media users need an identity to safeguard against the proliferation of fake news. It is however, difficult to run away from the digital world but a few checks and balances can enhance the viability of technology instead of its negative effects.