Digital Literacy to Improve The Professionalism of Online Media Journalists in Bengkulu, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to know the competence of digital literacy Online media journalists in Bengkulu City in complying with cyber media guidelines to support professionalism ranging from verification activities to writing news or delivering coverage to editors. Also to identify efforts made by online media journalists in Bengkulu City using tools for fact checking to verify news materials. This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The data collection method uses interviews, observation and focus group discussion. This study's Informants are journalists registered as members of the Indonesian Cyber Media Network (JMSI) and the Indonesian Cyber Media Union (SMSI) in Bengkulu. The results of the study concluded that the literacy of journalists in using digital media is quite good. However, it cannot be included in the excellent category because journalists lack knowledge and skills in digital literacy competencies. Moreover, journalists knowledge and skills upgrades such as fact-checking or digital literacy training is minimal, eventhough journalists understand the challenges in publishing journalistic works today. Generally, journalists use tools for checking facts or verifying sources of information either conventionally or manually. However, the strength in publishing journalistic works is the collaboration of cyber media within press companies to produce quality work. The FGD found that only Bengkulu Eskpress conducts fact checks in its journalistic work, because its journalists have received fact-check training conducted by the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI). The study results also show that online media utilize digital-based tools because they have received fact checking training, namely Bengkulu Ekspress.

Keywords: *Digital literacy, professionalism, online media, journalists, fact checking.*

INTRODUCTION

Internet penetration has increased over time, including social media and online media. The data displayed by Abd-Elaal et al. (2020) describes in 2019, out of a population of 7.676 billion inhabitants on earth, there were 4.388 billion Internet users, 3.256 billion smartphones users, and 3.484 billion active social media users in the world. Meanwhile, data from the Indonesian Cyber Media Association in 2019 shows that the number of cyber media in Indonesia is more than 43,000, giving rise to fierce competition for readers and advertisers (Muslikhin & Mulyana, 2021). Today, hundreds of Internet users frequently use self-publishing services (Omar & Dequan, 2020). The high rate of Internet users, including social media, discovers new social problems, the dominance of fake news that has been linked to misinformation, disinformation, and other types of network manipulation, made possible by the growth of the Internet and online social media (Skarzauskiene et al., 2020). According to Sahingoz et al. (2019), many aspects of our daily lives, including social networking, electronic banking, e-commerce, etc., have moved online due to the rapid growth of global networking and communication technology. Internet users almost always use algorithms to adjust the selection and presentation of online content (Dogruel et al., 2022). Online media has also

developed, penetrated the global market, and changed long-term media consumption habits (Asker & Dinas, 2019). To combat the impact of fake news content, studies have recommended standard label designs for online media (Straub & Spradling, 2022). The increasing penetration of social media has an impact on the decline in the consumption of local newspapers. Changes in media spending and exceptionally decent advertising models in the media, are some issues that journalists need to consider (Salvo & Porlezza, 2020).

Online media journalists' competence is essential to improve according to the journalistic code of ethics. In the digital age, journalists can produce journalistic work from media content on the Internet with the help of popular YouTube media and blogs with visual content, thus allowing journalists to improve communication skills, digital information skills, and online media literacy (Garachkovska et al., 2022). An example of applied ethics is media ethics defined as "the application of ethical theory to real-world settings in which there are moral decisions, which have consequences for professionals, and which are often subjected to legal disputes" (Simaku, 2021). The widespread use of hacker sources in journalism is a professional and normative challenge for journalists, and journalism will eventually result in a negotiation process that revolves around topics such as hacking, security, journalism ethics, and the public interest (Salvo & Porlezza, 2020). Various new media platforms provide the latest information. The existence of this technology causes information to be accessed anywhere and anytime. However, various false information is also easily spread, so there is a need for the role of quality journalists in presenting quality journalism.

The journalistic ideological principle of the journalistic profession has historically been based on the development of modern Western democracies. Meanwhile, challenges in the postmodern era by a series of endogenous and exogenous changes can weaken the foundations of professional work (Casula, 2021). According to Salvo and Porlezza (2020), the competence of journalists changed in line with the development of commercial press in the last two decades of the 19th century when a distinctive way of journalistic writing emerged, the number of people who made journalism a profession increased, and a distinct sense of professional identity. The transformation process caused by technological advances and the influence of disruption significantly impact media business efforts to adapt and maintain relevance. At the same time, journalists must also adapt to significant changes.

The development of the current media, especially online media in presenting news, must be accurate and actual. In the digital age, journalists must have digital literacy competence and use fact-checking equipment to verify news materials. The process of professionalization of journalism takes many forms and is mainly influenced by the nation-state's regulatory, normative, and cognitive cultural features (Salvo & Porlezza, 2020). In contrast, Western scholars rarely attribute religious teachings' influence on investigative journalism activities (Ismail, 2021). According to Humprecht (2020), the evolution of fact-checking and journalistic professionalism are related. The challenge of today's journalists is to train themselves to provide quality reporting to the public. It is a matter of speed and accuracy and what the public needs. The development of information and communication technology today makes everyone create articles easily and share them. For example, Paidi and Hassan (2021) conducted critical analysis on how blogs as a social media communication tool are capable and proven to be decisive in the direction of digital reporting in the case of political communication and the creation of more searchable, interactive and open public opinions.

The professionalism of journalists is related to journalistic work. In addition, journalists must have communicative competence as a criterion for professionalism. Therefore, a set of normative principles and practices that have evolved over many years is regarded as journalism professionalism (Waldenström et al., 2019). Correspondingly, journalistic professionalism is often explained as a concept that unites normative principles that define the journalistic activity and establish journalists as independent and self-regulating organizations (Waldenström et al., 2019). Unfortunately, nowadays, it is rare for the world of education to offer many journalism education programs involving an online media component to train future journalists.

In contrast, communication skills training on online social media gives its participants a positive experience and allows applying it to establish personal contacts (Falloon, 2020). In today's highly competitive journalistic environment, there are crises in the business of media organizations. This condition proves that the experience of journalists adds color to the professional and aspiring professionals about the insecurity and experience at different stages of their journalistic career (Matthews & Onyemaobi, 2020). The precarious and unstable nature of journalism as a profession and institution has complicated matters for journalism (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019).

The challenge for journalists is to train themselves to provide quality reporting the public needs. Changes in labor market regulations and the impartial proliferation of employment contracts makes it difficult for journalists to maintain job control over their professional practices, eventually forcing them to renegotiate their moral responsibilities to the public (Lima Quintanilha, 2021). As is the case in Europe, the United States, Latin America, and the Middle East, journalists are accustomed to being called by populists and their supporters, which are denoted by designations such as "fake news" and "enemies of the people" (Panievsky, 2022). Many argue that the process of disruption to the work context, workflow, and autonomy is now a common feature of contemporary journalism. This condition explains the experience of journalists obtaining institutional disruptions (Matthews & Onyemaobi, 2020). It should be a forum for the professional improvement of journalists' competence.

A large number of sources of information through social media requires journalists to be able to check facts in the process of writing news. However, the skills of journalists in fact-checking tools are still very minimal, so it impacts the quality of the news produced. Doing verification of facts for news strongly supports the professionalism of journalists in carrying out their duties contained in the journalistic code of ethics. In addition, journalists deal with rampant plagiarism by fellow journalists in a media organization. Creativity as a journalist becomes shallow in pouring facts because getting news through social media is easy, but it violates the code of professional ethics. The connectedness of journalists in media organizations can facilitate journalists to upgrade their digital literacy skills in the advanced world of journalism. However, journalistic work produced by journalists is mostly conventionally due to the lack of digital verification skills.

Therefore, it is essential to research how the competence of online media journalists in the digital era. Although the subject of this study was conducted on local journalists, information disclosure allows journalists to source news materials quickly. Examining how journalists interact with information policies can benefit how journalists utilize social media (Henrichsen, 2020). The main competency that journalists must have is the competence to access, select, understand, distribute, and analyze. It is reasonable to assume that

organizational characteristics and the information environment impact fact checkers' conduct in these studies. Due to journalistic professionalism and low levels of public trust in the news media, fact-checking processes are claimed to have been adopted early in the information environment. It is vital to have quality journalism, especially on many social media platforms. The internet and social media development has changed the media world significantly. Journalists are now forced to deliver authentic, accurate, and verified news in an environment where fake news and false information spread rapidly. However, quality journalism remains essential, especially with its emphasis on solid facts, journalistic ethics, understanding of context, and the ability to communicate with an increasingly connected society through social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Digital Literacy of Journalists

Digital literacy competence should ideally be owned by all professions, especially journalists, to counter fake information that is widely circulating on the Internet. This ability is also essential to foster public trust in journalistic work. Since the emergence of journalism in the past decades as a discipline, researchers have noted the technological, economical, and social transformations that have affected journalism's institutions and journalists' skills (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). In line with that, according to Casula (2021), changes have also occurred in journalists and workers in print, electronic and cyber media. The impact of technological innovations on the organization of technological press innovations affects the organization of work within the media system. In recent years, the changing work of journalists in producing news through mobile news has had an increasing prevalence and has been designated as a new by the modern journalism industry. Journalists carry out content distribution policies as part of their role in the newsroom (Sidiropoulos et al., 2019).

b. Digital Competence Journalist

Journalists' competence in digital literacy produces informational content in creating media products according to facts and actuals, disseminates information quickly, plans digital-based work with fellow journalists who are platformed, and provides the audience with opportunities for journalistic products or information campaigns. Modern online journalism offers specialist efficiency, mobility, and rapid adaptation to new technologies that are constantly changing and improving (Poplavska et al., 2022). Communicative competence is integral to journalists' professionalism and essential to their professional profile (Garachkovska et al., 2022). Digital literacy is closely related to new literacy, media literacy, and even multiliterate are fundamental competencies for journalists. Digital literacy is inseparable from digital technology. In addition, there are essential aspects of digital literacy, including privacy, security, and ethical use of technology and digital skills (Pangrazio et al., 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the authors used field research with qualitative research funders, and policy-makers who are increasingly aware of the effectiveness of qualitative research in illuminating issues related to experience and motivation. Due to this rising need, detailed instructions on how to carry out the various phases of qualitative analysis are in demand (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). The qualitative descriptive research is selected in this study to obtain complete information about the competence of digital iteration journalists in Bengkulu City in

supporting professionalism. Information research was selected by purposive sampling technique. Thus, the Informants of this study are journalists who are active members of Indonesian Cyber Media Network (JMSI) and the Indonesian Cyber Media Union (SMSI) in Bengkulu City, both verified media, and those who have not been in the press council. 19 journalists were selected for this study. Data collection techniques through in-depth interviews with journalists who have received journalist fact-checking training, observation, and focus group discussion (FGD) at Santika Bengkulu Hotel as well as collecting documentation. As a result, the foundation of this work is qualitative expert interviews on the topic of interest and has an instructive and explorative nature (Gossen & Heinrich, 2021). Meanwhile, the data analysis technique reduces data (data obtained from confirmed observations at the FGD), presentation of data, and drawing conclusions. Data triangulation was used in this study as a data validity technique.

RESULTS

The Informants of this research have been determined to be journalists from the JMSI and SMSI organizations. Generally, Informants have worked for more than three years in online media and journalists who have taken the Journalist Competency Exam (UKW). Journalists in Indonesia must have a press card after passing the journalist competency test by the Dewan Pers (Press Council). Media institutions must be supported by competent and professional journalists, namely those with journalistic knowledge and skills, before they are entitled to get certificates and competent cards.

Figure 1: (a) FGD Activities at Santika Hotel; (b) FGD facilitator delivers research questions; (c) Journalists respond to digital competency issues; (d) Facilitator concludes FGD results

Origin of research Informants participating in the FGD in Table 1.

Table 1: Origin of research Informants participating in the FGD

No	Name	Press Organization	Media
1	R1	JMSI	Infonegri.id
2	R2	JMSI	Telisik.co
3	R3	JMSI	Kupasbengkulu.com
4	R4	JMSI	Bengkuluinteraktif.com
5	R5	JMSI	Ewarta.com
6	R6	JMSI	Bengkuluinteraktif.com
7	R7	SMSI	Swara-Bengkulu.com
8	R8	SMSI	Bengkuluekspress.com
9	R9	SMSI	Pedomanbengkulu.com
10	R10	SMSI	Dutawarta.com
11	R11	SMSI	Satujuang.com
12	R12	SMSI	Hwnews.id
13	R13	SMSI	Mitratoday.com
14	R14	SMSI	Falmboyannews.com
15	R15	SMSI	Siberklik.com
16	R16	SMSI	Klikwarta.com
17	R17	SMSI	Katasandi.id
18	R18	SMSI	Siberindo.co
19	R19	SMSI	Wartaprima.com

Note: R (Informants)

DISCUSSION

a. Competence Access

Digitalization has changed the way Indonesian journalists work faster to disseminate information according to truth data; with this data the online mass media runs the logic of quality journalism, something that cannot be avoided. Technological innovation affects the organization of journalists' work in the media system in carrying out digital literacy (Casula, 2021).

Based on the results of discussions with online media journalist who are members of the online media association in Bengkulu city, shows knowledge about digital literacy. Informant R15 said they can utilize information sourced from various media, be it social media or mass media by using the accounts they have. The information they are looking for varies. For example, information related to political, economic, socio-cultural, and crime. However, the tendency of the information relates to local nature, such as crime and related to the dynamics of development carried out by city and provincial governments. According to the criteria of this study, professional journalists prioritize media accuracy, independence, and literacy when conveying reliable information. In addition, they should help the public understand the complexity of news in a world full of fast information, including fake news. Journalism is vital in providing quality information and supporting democracy by maintaining these standards.

b. Competence in Selecting

Competence in selecting and sorting out various information sources that are accessed and considered useful for digital media users. Individuals are expected to be able to carry out activities to select and sort information according to their needs from new media. For

example, starting from knowing what types of information are appropriate and credible to get information, knowing the management of devices to sort information, and knowing how to ignore, delete and block unnecessary information.

According to Informant R16, information that is not suitable for publication is used as reading material only. This is done because it can increase knowledge about information that is unknown. Journalists open their horizons with all the information so they do not lag behind. The present condition is also possible for us to receive information without being sought or needed.

Information sources that journalists use are more about trusting colleagues who disseminate information. Not only mass media as news sources but also social media, especially about local information, which is easy for journalists to verify with information sources. So, the source of information according to journalists, will be easy to verify if you are familiar with the resources you have, you can immediately go to the location or call a number that is easy to track. Ideally, a media company would be responsible for the content journalists publish (Fincham, 2021).

Informants R2 and R18 stated that they do not use special search engines but often use Google if they want to find or search for the information. If information is posted on social media, journalists browse their account history by looking at previous posts, whether there is consistency with the information that exists. In addition, the journalist see the same friends connected to Informant R18 so that the journalist can ascertain who owns the account and truth of the information.

c. *Understanding Competencies*

Individuals can understand the content of new media textually. Starting from understanding programming languages for practical use of new media, understanding ideas conveyed by message producers, understanding the grammar and use of punctuation, understanding the meaning and context of the use of symbols (emoticons), and understand the meaning of images and videos textually and contextually.

The information sourced and sought must be well understood by journalists. Understanding is fundamental considering the ease with which information is obtained and disseminated. Informant R8 from bengkuluekspress.com, argued that he often did fact checking first and when he got the news source. Informant R8's principle is that journalists should always do fact checks because not all information available in photos, videos, or text is correct. Therefore, fact checks are part of understanding information. Informat R8 is the only journalist who has received fact-checking training organized by Google News Initiative in collaboration with Independent Journalist Association (AJI) in 2018. Informant R8 said it was very useful to attend the training to support his activities as a journalist. Symbols in social media are increasingly diverse, but for journalists, the understanding of these symbols does not need to be understood in depth because the expression of symbols reads quickly in stickers or emoticons. Messages that use stickers or emoticons effectively represent the sender's expression of the message. In addition to entertaining, it is also updated with new shapes and types. Law Number 14 of 1999 concerning the Press expressly regulates the rights and obligations of press companies in Indonesia to manage online news portals. It does not distinguish it from other types of media. However, the law does not explicitly mention "online media" or similar terms.

Messages received from people known to journalists are very influential especially online news published by fellow journalists. The issue of information that is used as news in online media will be considered and reviewed again by other journalists. Normally, a news story appears in other online media with the same content. Thus, according to Informant R19, it can be concluded that trust in news that other journalists have posted can be a factor in the non-credibility of journalistic products because journalists only copy and paste news from other journalists. Journalists can actually use this condition to do fact-checking again instead of directly publishing the same thing. Research shows that although most journalists do not know about digital literacy, they realize how necessary this knowledge is because digital culture makes mass media competitors continue innovating content and technology to welcome and compete with other internet-based companies. Journalism has faced challenges but is also an opportunity to change in the digital age. With the development of information and communication technologies, such as the Internet, which allowed the instant dissemination of information, the concept of journalism also began to change. This is the most recent development in media journalism. With new technologies that greatly help the press, journalism as a servant is increasingly complex and evolving.

d. Distributing Competence

Competence in sharing information by considering who will access the information. Individuals can disseminate messages in new media, including sharing responses to media content. Sharing messages also has a competency criteria where individuals can adapt content to the recipient of the message, including language, and which platform is more appropriate to convey it.

The study results found that cyber media journalists in Bengkulu are members of several press organizations. The media used in organizational solidarity is very diverse, but the WhatsApp group is the most frequently used by Informant R9. The dissemination of information in the WhatsApp group is a routine activity of journalists or a forum for obtaining information. The dissemination of information that is carried out will received a response from other members. This means that homogeneity in the profession makes it very easy for journalists to provide information and vice versa to receive information from other journalists.

Informant R13 has also had bad experiences in disseminating information through their social media because they think the source is a known person, a friend also shared from other people's posts. The information passed on from that experience provides a meaningful lesson that accessing information not just a quick read but must be thorough and understand its content. Even so, in general, Informant R2 has competence in assessing good information, one of which looks at the source, reads the title and text thoroughly, and information that has the characteristics of 5W1H.

According to Informant R16, the most crucial element in journalistic work is meeting 5W1H - what, who, where, when, why, and how. By understanding the structure of the news text, viewing examples of short news texts, and studying the elements of the news text, journalists can better understand the news or information they read and minimize the spread of misinformation or hoaxes. Journalists and the media are two entities that influence, shape and drive public opinion because of their nature, so it can be used as the right tool in informing the community about problems that occur. The media is an antidote to hoaxes that are widely spread through social media to inform and educate the public (Cakranegara et al., 2023).

Experience in using news materials from other journalists is a problem. The dilemma of giving a reprimand to fellow journalists is a very guarded thing considering that harmony is also a mandate in this group. Informant R8 revealed that in their experience, plagiarism in journalistic work is something that could damage journalists' ethics. Plagiarism can occur in the title or the body of the news. They only changed the name of the journalist. Informants R3 and R6 said that there has never been a firm solution to the violation of plagiarism of journalistic work by the press organization tasked with it. So, according to Informant R6, it becomes a weakness of control in the media. The occurrence of plagiarism of journalistic works is because online and digital systems makes easy access to information. However, media that have not been verified by the *Dewan Pers* easily take news from other media as their own.

e.   Competence to Analyze

Individuals are expected to be able to dissect the content of new media and to read it more comprehensively from many angles. Starting from the form and packaging of information, the source of information, the purpose of the information maker, the language used in the media representation. It is a semiotic way of thinking that there is a media ideology that is carried out.

The active participation of journalists is essential in conveying information to educate the public. It has even helped explain and protect the public from infodemics or hoaxes. Skills in identifying hoaxes are mandatory because they must be preceded by solid knowledge about the characteristics of the hoax. Informant R16 argued that hoaxes have become a threat and a challenge in the press as it is massive and fast, especially with the development of technology. There are applications that are easy to use to create misinformation and disinformation. The characteristics of hoaxes that are best known to journalists are obscure sources, provocative titles, and oddities in the sentences used. False information needs to be known by the public to fight the spread of fake news so that it can survive in an era of untruth and disinformation (De Paor & Heravi, 2020). Disinformation is defined as 'false, unclear, or misleading information that is forwarded, provided, or confirmed to the individual, group, or country being targeted' (Iosifidis & Nicoli, 2020).

Informant R6 revealed that knowledge of misinformation and disinformation is not very clear. However, they say it is just a term because generally, it is called a hoax. Journalists also gain new knowledge about these issues that have been explained by facilitators. The essence of journalism is the discipline of verification. With fact-checking initiatives, journalists are again carrying out their primary function in serving the public interest, namely providing factual, credible, and accurate information. This is especially important in the age of social media when hoaxes, and disinformation circulate everywhere especially in an election when the public desperately need a reliable reference. Therefore, this fact-checking initiative is one of the significant efforts done by Informant R10 to fight the disinformation that is widely circulated in cyberspace. Using online sources of information documented by journalists as sources processed in fact checks is a new and valuable journalistic tool. According to Surdu et al. (2021), the way to avoid false information is to have critical thinking skills, strategies that are applied when dealing with disinformation, fake news, or misinformation.

The news goes through a selection stage that is not too strict, information that is considered not a need for digital media users, some of the discussion participants will save the onformation as archive, and inappropriate information just thrown away. There are also

those who ignore the information because it is considered a waste of time. These conditions can be understood as - online media does not know the space and time of reporting, they can at anytime and anywhere make news without editing or cross checking on information sources. Nevertheless, they still pay attention to ethics in journalism. Therefore, as an online journalist, knowledge, and skills are required to load news that is fast, careful, and smart so that it can access various other information that may be more important and used as a news story. Therefore, the news sources they access are not limited to social media but all media sources by browsing social media accounts that are also news sources. However, for the accuracy of the information obtained, they trust accredited mass media and news sources from trusted colleagues.

In the process of packaging the news, no one has revealed about bad experiences; this is due to conveying information based on previously validated information through news sources. Even if they are already selective in reporting, for example, doing a double check about the quality of the news, especially about photos, videos, and sources of information obtained is good practice. However, according to Informant R6 and R15, there are still reports that sometimes do not match the information received such as in cases of criminal acts committed by children or reporting acts of violence committed by adults and the transparency about the name, and the physique of the perpetrator and the victim. This shows that online media pay little attention to regulations related to reporting. However, they realized that they need to pay more attention to the impact caused by the news.

The ability of digital journalists in Bengkulu city to respond to hoax-themed reports in online media is quite varied, some look at it and subsequently not spread it. Hoax information is known only to journalists. In addition, some of them search for news sources, whether the source is credible, verified, or by a particular institution. However, overall Informant R1 is quite skeptical when responding to hoax information. This was shown by caution in receiving information that has the nuances of hoaxes.

Online media journalist in Bengkulu in this study, revealed that knowledge about fact checks has not become a necessity if the news is published in the local media because journalists can directly verify the facts about the scene. It is different from events outside Bengkulu that require effort but often uses the network of fellow journalists to find facts. This means that journalists do very little fact checks through available tools. At the same time, the role of innovative journalists needs to be designed to be proficient in multiplatforms and mobile today (García-Orosa et al., 2020).

Informants R2, R14 and R17 think that knowledge of dis-mis-information will be more suitable to socialize with the public, not journalists. But journalists also understand the demands and challenges of dealing with technological disruptions. Journalists should ideally commit to always be updated in digital literacy and tools for fact-checking. In extracting information, of all the FGD participants, only one online media has attended fact-checking training, namely Informant R8 from bengkuluekspress.com. So the FGD took place with participants who had never attended the fact-checking training organized by Google-Aliansi Independent Journalists.

Online media, as part of social media provides information to the audience about exciting events to read, and discuss. Many people need polite, smooth speech and try to avoid partiality to certain parties. Therefore, before delivering the news, there needs to be a filter before sharing so it can produce quality information that is important and needed by the community. The results of the discussion showed that Informant R10 who is a member of the SMSI association considers that screening before reporting is unnecessary because it is

considered part of journalists' guidelines. Ideally, these findings matches the transformation of journalism that is easy to get from negatively charged content so that media companies are distracted, and the solution is an important collaboration between media institutions and *Dewan Pers* (Nurlatifah & Mutmainnah, 2021).

The media is very careful in writing news that is sensitive and contains readers' emotions, especially those related to sexsual and criminal cases. To get quality news according to the facts on the ground, the information is filtered before sharing. This is done by phone or direct visits to the field but minimal use of Google or other fact-checking tools.

CONCLUSION

This data correlates with the rapid flow of information dissemination supported by the help of the Internet, which makes it easier for users to access information anywhere, anytime. The ease of accessing digital information concerns the public, along with the rampant circulation of misinformation and disinformation on social media. The role of the media through professional journalists is vital in providing credible information to the public, especially online media journalists or cyber media in Bengkulu City. In other words, journalists can act as a counter to false information circulating in digital media. Professionalism, according to journalists, ideally also align with the welfare of journalists. Therefore, journalists should develop skills through digital literacy in today's digital era. There are three essential things that journalists must have, namely, knowledge/insight, skills/expertise, and ethics/attitudes.

The journalist literacy in using digital media to find sources of information, is good enough. The results of the discussion concludes that there is still a lack of tools used by journalists in conducting fact checks or verifying sources of information. Generally, journalists verify conventionally or manually even though there are online media that utilize digital-based tools and have received fact checking training. Based on the results of this research, it is hoped that journalists will get support for increasing digital literacy competencies to improve professionalism.

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