

Quality Control In Kompas/Kompas.Id Daily News Production

Nasrullah¹, Veronika², Rossalyn Ayu Asmarantika³

Universitas Multimedia Nusantara

Email: nasrullah@lecturer.umn.ac.id, veronika.kaban@umn.ac.id,
rossalyn.asmarantika@umn.ac.id

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Abstract

In the digital era, marked by the rapid production of news, the phenomenon of misinformation has become an increasingly difficult challenge to avoid. Consequently, the gatekeeping function remains highly relevant to ensure that mass media does not fall into the trend of disseminating news that fails to meet journalistic standards due to the pressure of rapid publication. Responding to the developments of the time and changes in public consumption patterns, Harian Kompas, initially a print medium, has transformed since 2017 into the digital platform Kompas.id. This study aims to examine how gatekeeping functions within Harian Kompas/Kompas.id in the context of news production quality control (QC), using a documentation study approach. The QC function at Harian Kompas/Kompas.id is managed by the Editing and Language Harmonization Department, where the lead author has been actively involved over the past four years. This function is not only applied prior to publication but also to content that has already been published. This reflects the dynamic nature of the newsroom, extending into the public sphere, while also demonstrating an ethos to avoid errors in reporting. The QC function supports the editor-in-chief in safeguarding the realization of quality and enlightening journalism through both substantive and linguistic editing.

Keywords: *gatekeeping, news, newsroom, quality control*

INTRODUCTION

Gatekeeping is the process of selecting, writing, reviewing, positioning, scheduling, and re-editing an informational message into news (Shoemaker in Tandoc, 2014). Classical gatekeeping theory is now considered inadequate for describing the contemporary online news selection process, and recent approaches to gatekeeping remain isolated in theoretical development, lacking synthesis into a coherent gatekeeping theory (Wallace, 2018). Gatekeeping processes have taken on new patterns in the digital era, where the public and technology play increasingly significant roles in determining what becomes news and how it circulates after initial publication (Hermida, 2020).

Various studies linking gatekeeping theory have been conducted. Generally, these studies attempt to explain the phenomenon of digital journalism using gatekeeping

theory. Previous research has tried to see how public service-based media carry out the gatekeeping process that combines editorial room policies and technology platforms used, such as social media. This researcher emphasized the relationship between news media and social media platforms that is complex, dependent, and conflicting. This study looks at the gatekeeping process at the pre-production, production, and post-production stages (Røsok-Dahl & Kristine, 2024). Bro and Wallberg (2017) outline the changes in gatekeeping principles and practices alongside the spread of digital technology inside and outside newsrooms. This study focuses on news values among a new generation of gatekeepers who use social media to produce, publish, and distribute news. Social media now plays a significant role in delivering information that captures public attention. Kaban's (2017) research examines how the digital team at Kompas TV implements the gatekeeping process, particularly in event selection. Kompas TV's editorial gatekeeping is influenced by the editorial team's adherence to news values, while the digital team at Kompas TV aims to capture popular events on social media.

Pearson and Kosicki (2017) even encourage researchers to expand their focus beyond traditional gatekeeping studies. The gatekeeping model no longer provides a comprehensive view of how users consume news or how news producers create it. More broadly, Salonen et al. (2023) developed a post-publication gatekeeping framework, considering it within the context of datafication. Hermida (2020) previously introduced a framework based on the premise of the '4Ps': publics, platforms, paraphernalia, and practices. Salonen et al. (2023) later added the element of regulation—laws and self-regulation—to extend the 4P framework, recognizing that all these factors operate within a datafied news environment.

This involves understanding news circulation as a continuous and interactive process where various actors and elements collectively shape a complex information landscape. Further elaboration of gatekeeping intersects with the concept of quality control (QC). The primary challenge for gatekeeping and QC is striking a balance between speed and accuracy. While technology enables the rapid publication of news, it also increases the risk of spreading misinformation. As such, gatekeeping and QC functions become even more critical in maintaining the quality and integrity of journalism.

The speed of information makes gatekeeping have to work faster in assessing information or news. Those who become gatekeepers have sharp instincts in assessing events at least five years as journalists (Rusdi & Rusdi, 2020). The use of technological devices in carrying out this role is not new. Several media have implemented computational journalism tools (Cools et al., 2022).

In the media industry, accuracy is one of the main pillars that uphold integrity and credibility. Firmstone (2023) outlines the key indicators of quality news content: accuracy, factuality, relevance, and whether the information is produced through reporting and investigation. QC ensures that every piece of news published has undergone a rigorous verification process to avoid errors that could tarnish the media's reputation. This is particularly important in the digital era, where unverified or false news can quickly spread. QC also functions to ensure that all published content meets journalistic ethical standards, including source balance, diversity, and unbiased writing. QC is an essential element in maintaining journalistic integrity in the face of the pressure to produce news rapidly.

Harian Kompas, initially a print media outlet, launched its website version in 1995 and transitioned into the digital platform Kompas.id in 2017. Since then, it has been referred to as Harian Kompas/Kompas.id. Consequently, newsroom operations have adopted a hybrid digital model. The activities of reporters, editors, and support staff no longer solely focus on the daily print edition of Kompas but also simultaneously manage the Kompas.id platform, which publishes content in real-time. Even the print edition of Harian Kompas, formatted as an e-paper, is available on the Kompas.id platform, allowing readers to access it digitally. This integration reflects the essence of hybrid digital media, where media is no longer confined to a single format or platform but utilizes various forms of technology to reach a broader and more diverse audience. Harian Kompas/Kompas.id can be accessed by audiences through various digital devices, including mobile phones.

To meet the needs of readers with fast-paced news offerings, reporters and editors, as gatekeepers, are required to work efficiently without compromising journalistic standards. In this context, the organizational structure of Harian Kompas/Kompas.id includes a quality control unit known as the Editing and Language Harmonization Department. The lead author, having worked in this department for the past four years, shares empirical experiences from the newsroom while analyzing them through the lens of gatekeeping theory. Further discussion will confirm Shoemaker and Vos' (2009) view that despite technological changes in the media landscape, the gatekeeping process remains essential in mass communication studies.

This study builds on previous research, including works by Alfiyya Dhiya Haq and Fadilah (2018), as well as Ignatius Haryanto (2018). One of the key conclusions from Haq and Fadilah's research is that Kompas, with its journalistic quality, serves as an antithesis to false news and shallow "talking news" reports. Kompas also strives to provide interactive multimedia content presented as engagingly as possible. This poses a problem in the fast-paced digital ecosystem of today. Shin (in Firmstone, 2023), firmly states that social media algorithms (as a product of digital technology) are not designed to support quality news content.

Haryanto, on the other hand, highlights the dilemma between speed and accuracy. As journalists and editors are pressured to publish news as quickly as possible on digital platforms, they face challenges in maintaining the accuracy of news reports. This creates a risk for journalistic integrity if speed is prioritized over fact verification. Moreover, the pressures of online competition often push media outlets to prioritize sensational content to attract clicks and attention, at the expense of news quality and depth. Research by Priyonggo and Adnan (2021) shows that Kompas faces challenges in maintaining the 'ideal' type of print media, which relies on slow journalism. This approach contrasts with digital journalism, which is often seen as incomplete or focused on immediacy.

The Editing and Language Harmonization Department is responsible not only for Harian Kompas' print edition but also for Kompas.id. The QC function applies not only to unpublished content but also to content that has already been published on Kompas.id. Post-publication reviews are conducted as a precaution against possible errors stemming from the emphasis on quick publication. This department ensures that all content from Harian Kompas/Kompas.id—including text, photos, infographics, and videos—meets editorial standards, is free from linguistic errors, and is presented professionally and proportionately.

This QC role aligns with Hermida's (2020) study which posits that in a hybrid digital media ecosystem, issues and topics gain public attention after publication. Four elements—public, platforms, paraphernalia, and practices—expand upon previous work by considering the collective actions of individuals as a public; the impact of platforms as institutional spaces for news; media consumption objects and exposure; and the temporal and spatial contexts of news circulation and consumption practices.

METHODOLOGY

To explore the quality control (QC) mechanisms within Kompas, a case study approach was adopted. Case studies are particularly effective for examining contemporary phenomena within specific real-life contexts, especially when boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). This study focuses on Kompas' hybrid digital newsroom and the gatekeeping processes involved in ensuring journalistic standards. Three primary methods were utilized: participant observation, document analysis, and interviews.

A case study approach was chosen due to the study's focus on Kompas, a well-defined and bounded system within the Indonesian media landscape. By centering on a single organization, this approach allows for an in-depth investigation into the QC and gatekeeping processes at Kompas, contextualizing its operations within the

broader digital media ecosystem. The case study framework, grounded in constructivism (Stake, 1995), enables an understanding of how QC and gatekeeping practices at Kompas respond to pressures unique to digital journalism, such as speed, accuracy, and public engagement.

Data Collection

The data collection process involved a combination of participant observation, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews. These methods were selected to provide comprehensive insights into Kompas' QC processes, combining direct engagement with qualitative evidence.

1. Participant Observation

The lead author's position within Kompas' Editing and Language Harmonization Department provided the unique opportunity to conduct participant observation as a primary data collection method. Participant observation is a qualitative method where the researcher actively engages in the environment they are studying, allowing them to observe and record behavior, practices, and decision-making processes firsthand (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the lead author assumed the role of "participant as observer," meaning they participated in routine editorial processes while simultaneously observing the QC mechanisms in practice.

Observations focused on various aspects of the QC workflow, including editing protocols, the application of journalistic standards, and the interactions between different departments involved in content production. Data were collected over a period of six months, during which the lead author noted daily routines, challenges, and adjustments made to uphold journalistic quality within a fast-paced digital newsroom. Observational notes included reflections on meetings, real-time decisions regarding content revisions, and the QC roles assigned during each editorial shift. Additionally, informal insights into the department's adaptation to digital demands were noted, providing a contextual background for analyzing the QC processes at Kompas.

2. Document Analysis

Document analysis, a systematic method for evaluating existing documents, was employed to gain historical and procedural insights into Kompas' QC practices (Bowen, 2009). Documents analyzed included internal editorial guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), minutes from weekly "Wednesday Meetings," and reports detailing Kompas' editorial policies, especially in response to the digital transformation. Document analysis enables researchers to track changes and developments within an organization over time, allowing a longitudinal view of evolving QC standards at Kompas.

Each document was evaluated to identify core themes relevant to quality control, including accuracy, ethical standards, and editorial procedures. For example, the SOP of the Editing and Language Harmonization Department, revised in April 2024, detailed the department's specific responsibilities and procedures, providing critical insights into the QC functions and the criteria used to assess content quality. Furthermore, the minutes from the "Wednesday Meetings" between 2023 and 2024 provided ongoing editorial guidelines, which outlined key decision-making criteria and content priorities, particularly during politically sensitive periods. These records were instrumental in understanding the editorial structure and expectations for QC, including policies for handling breaking news, maintaining source diversity, and monitoring news coverage related to ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup (SARA) issues.

3. Interviews

To supplement observational and document-based data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key individuals within Kompas' editorial and QC departments. Interviews allow researchers to explore participants' perspectives, experiences, and insights in depth, contributing a personal dimension to organizational practices (Kvale, 2007). A total of five interviews were conducted, each lasting approximately 45–60 minutes. The interviewees included senior editors, the QC department manager, and key personnel from the Editing and Language Harmonization Department.

The interviews were structured around key topics: the role of QC in Kompas, challenges posed by the rapid pace of digital journalism, and the department's efforts to balance speed and accuracy. An interview with the manager of the QC department, for instance, provided critical insights into the operational structure, the challenges encountered, and the specific strategies employed to uphold journalistic standards in a digital-first environment. Additionally, a conversation with the lead editor revealed how QC policies are enforced at different editorial stages, illustrating the collaborative nature of gatekeeping at Kompas. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically, with themes aligned to concepts of accuracy, editorial standards, and ethical considerations within QC.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach was used to analyze the data gathered from observations, documents, and interviews. Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data, which allows for an in-depth understanding of key issues (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic coding was performed manually, with initial codes developed from field notes, document excerpts, and interview transcripts. Key themes included "accuracy and verification," "editorial standards," "adaptation to digital media," and "ethical

challenges in QC.” These themes were further categorized under the broader concepts of gatekeeping and QC in digital journalism.

For instance, themes derived from observational data often highlighted practical challenges faced by the QC team in a high-speed news environment, such as handling last-minute revisions and addressing errors in published content. Document analysis corroborated these findings by identifying organizational procedures designed to streamline QC while maintaining quality standards. Interview data provided a more personal perspective, highlighting the values and motivations of QC personnel in their gatekeeping roles.

To ensure validity and reliability, a triangulation strategy was employed, integrating findings from observations, documents, and interviews. Triangulation enhances the credibility of case study research by cross-verifying data from multiple sources (Yin, 2018). Member checks were also conducted, where interview transcripts and summaries of observational data were shared with participants to confirm the accuracy of the information. Additionally, documents obtained from internal archives were corroborated with data from participant observations to validate the consistency of QC practices at Kompas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The lead author began engaging in the quality control (QC) function in 2020, approximately three years after Kompas transformed into a hybrid digital media outlet. Prior to this, the lead author served as an editor for the Regional Desk, Metropolitan Desk, and Humanities Desk. The role of editor followed a 10-year tenure as a reporter covering various topics. It can be said that gatekeeping functions have been exercised since the lead author began working at the media outlet in 1995. Essentially, the gatekeeping process has been in place since reporters began filtering and selecting topics or issues to cover as news, in accordance with journalistic standards and the values upheld internally by Kompas.

The QC function has officially been institutionalized as part of the Editing Department, which consists of five personnel qualified as senior journalists who have previously served on at least two different desks as editors or desk heads. The five personnel include Subur Tjahjono (manager), Nasru Alam Aziz (assistant manager), Johan Waskita Utama (assistant manager), Syhnan Rangkuti (assistant manager), and the lead author, Nasrullah (assistant manager).

The purpose of this work unit is to assist the editor-in-chief in ensuring the realization of high-quality and enlightening journalism at Harian Kompas and Kompas.id through substantive and linguistic editing. The quality standards refer to the Indonesian Journalists' Code of Ethics, published by the Press Council, and the

Kompas Journalists' Code of Ethics. The activities and standards are detailed in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of the Editing and Language Harmonization Department, revised in April 2024.

To facilitate smooth operations, the editing team is supported by the language harmonization team. Therefore, the formal name of the unit is the Editing and Language Harmonization Department (PB), although in practice, the editing team bears the responsibility of acting as the final gatekeeper. The PB team primarily provides linguistic technical support. In terms of substance, the editing team holds the authority to make revisions, withhold publication, or even remove content deemed inappropriate or unfit for Kompas.

The revision mechanism is carried out by first coordinating with the desk editor who published the content. However, in emergency situations where the desk editor is slow to respond, the editing team generally makes the necessary corrections themselves in order to prevent negative reactions from readers and the general public. Corrections can be divided into two categories: substantive and technical. **Substantive corrections** include aspects such as the completeness of the news, the balance of sources, accuracy of framing and context, as well as appropriateness according to journalistic ethical standards and the values upheld by Kompas. **Technical corrections** include linguistic elements (word choice/phrasing, sentence structure, punctuation, etc.), the alignment of images/photos with the content, and the compatibility of the content with various devices, following the media's transition from print to digital.

On a daily basis, there are three to four personnel assigned to regular shifts. The first shift works from 06:00 to 15:00, the second shift from 07:30 to 16:30, and the third shift from 15:00 to 24:00. All personnel are required to work from the office (Palmerah, Jakarta) except for Syahnan, who, due to health reasons, is allowed to work remotely from Pekanbaru (Riau). Specifically for the third shift (15:00 to 24:00), which works from late afternoon until midnight, two personnel are always on duty: one focusing on Kompas.id and the other on the print edition of Kompas.

Main Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the editing team include: (1) Quality Control (QC) of the content published by Harian Kompas and Kompas.id. (2) Selecting and uploading the main news articles on Kompas.id, with the primary consideration being journalistic excellence (measured by readability through the Chartbeat application). (3) Uploading publisher-curated news to Google News Showcase. (4) Attending editorial meetings and providing feedback on the results of the editing process, and (5) Curating news to be submitted for national and international journalism awards.

Daily Responsibilities

Daily responsibilities consist of editing for Harian Kompas (print edition) and Kompas.id. Editing for Harian Kompas (print edition) comprises of (1) Ensuring all content in Harian Kompas adheres to Kompas' standards and does not contain elements related to ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup (SARA) issues, nor does it result in misperceptions or misconceptions. The content includes articles, photos, and infographics, (2) Ensuring there is no duplicate content, (3) Ensuring there is no repetitive content, either in rubrics or in substance, (4) Monitoring advertisements to ensure they do not contain SARA elements, do not result in misperceptions or misconceptions, and do not conflict with Kompas' values, (5) Ensuring pages are sent to the printing press within the deadline, (6) Editors on night duty are responsible for editing additional e-paper content before it is uploaded to epaper.kompas.id.

Editing for Kompas.id comprises of (1) Ensuring all content on Kompas.id adheres to Kompas' standards and does not contain SARA elements, nor does it result in misperceptions or misconceptions. The content includes articles, photos, infographics, and videos, (2) Uploading the latest news that meets Kompas' journalistic quality standards as the main news to increase its readability.

As part of gatekeeping routines, attending daily meetings consists of (1) The morning editorial meeting held from 07:30 to 08:00 to discuss coverage planning for Kompas.id, (2) The evening editorial meeting held from 17:00 to 17:30 to discuss content planning for Harian Kompas, (3) A weekly meeting held every Wednesday at either 15:00 or 16:00 to discuss editorial policies, and (4) Routine meetings held by the Editing and Language Harmonization Department.

Quality Control and Gatekeeping Stages

The QC function described above is inherently inseparable from the gatekeeping process, which is implemented in layers within the newsroom. Broadly speaking, the gatekeeping process at Harian Kompas/Kompas.id can be divided into two stages: Stage 1 and Stage 2.

- **Stage 1 of gatekeeping** occurs when the news/content is "input." In this stage, reporters submit their articles to desk editors. Kompas has a total of nine desks, with around 200 reporters in total. In this phase, desk editors play the main role, filtering and checking the accuracy and completeness of the news, enriching the content, providing context, adding photos/infographics/videos, and sending the content to PB before it is published in print or on Kompas.id. Generally, the editing team's work is lighter if the content is produced by reporters who are meticulous, ethical,

and adhere to journalistic standards throughout the process of gathering, processing, and writing news.

- **Stage 2 of gatekeeping** occurs when the news/content is about to be or has already been "output." Once desk editors have approved the content, the PB team reviews it. At this stage, the editing team acts as the "final gatekeeper." They thoroughly check all articles reviewed by the PB team. For the print edition of Harian Kompas, the night shift editors are also responsible for sending the pages to the printing press. The print edition currently consists of 16 pages.

The morning, afternoon, and evening shift editors review the text, photos, infographics, and videos after the PB team has approved them. Ideally, the content on Kompas.id is reviewed before it is published, but in most cases, the content is reviewed after it is published. This occurs because desk editors are also subject to the pressure of rapid publication and have the authority to publish directly, particularly when the content involves current events or issues of immediate public interest.

In the context of Kompas and Kompas.id, we observe an integration between traditional print media and digital platforms, enabling online content access, user interaction, and the dissemination of information through various digital channels. This combination reflects the essence of hybrid digital media, where media is no longer limited to one format or platform but leverages multiple technologies to reach a broader and more diverse audience.

The description of the newsroom workflow is still being "constructed," particularly to illustrate how the gatekeeping process operates, from the reporter and editor at each desk to the Editing and Language Harmonization Department.

The data collection process was carried out by being directly involved in the newsroom and observing the editorial policies stated in the minutes of the Wednesday Meeting. "Wednesday Meeting" is the terminology used by the Kompas/Kompasi.id editorial team for weekly routine meetings. The Wednesday meeting is the highest forum for editorial policies which are then outlined in the daily news pattern for print format and real time in digital format (Kompas.id). The Wednesday meeting is always led by the Editor-in-Chief/Deputy Editor-in-Chief, attended by the Managing Editor/Deputy Managing Editor, representatives of editors from each desk, representatives of departments, and representatives from supporting units such as Research and Development, Visual Design, and Social Media.

The author examined the minutes of the Wednesday meeting throughout 2023 - mid-2024. For the Kompas/Kompas.id daily, 2023-2024, coinciding with the political year (2024 Presidential Election and 2024 simultaneous regional elections), is a momentum for accelerating digital transformation to continue to uphold the quality and ethical journalism. The results of the Wednesday meeting on April 26, 2023 explicitly stated: "Political years are used as momentum to show the strength of Kompas/Kompas.id."

At the Wednesday meeting on May 24, 2023, it was reminded of the importance of being more careful in political years with the sentence: "News errors are minimized. Kompas journalism still prioritizes facts. Verification is still carried out on statements from sources, not just quoting statements." The Wednesday meeting emphasized several important points to maintain the quality of news production, including from the perspective of journalism ethics. This momentum is considered strategic because the public's interest in reading mass media generally increases along with the need for information as a reference for determining political preferences.

The Wednesday meeting on January 25, 2023 accommodated input from the Editing Department: Editors must ensure that there is no identical news on one page or on different pages. This input is based on findings of duplicate news, both in format and different. Make it a habit to examine (the entire) page when editing. Desks are also reminded to arrange and ensure not to use the same observer or expert sources for several different news items on the same day.

Still in the same meeting forum, input from the Editing Department was followed by an affirmation: Political issues and recession are the news magnets that are the focus throughout 2023. All resources are expected to refer to these two issues proportionally and optimally. Almost a month later, in the Wednesday meeting, February 22, 2023, Editor-in-Chief Sutta Dharmasaputra expressed appreciation from various parties, including shareholders for Kompas/Kompas.id's coverage that became public discussion and revealed phenomena. This appreciation was followed by the determination of the use of the slogan for the 6th anniversary of Kompas.id (March 8, 2023) with the hashtag: #JurnalismeMecerahkan. At that time it was revealed that the total Kompas audience reached 6,000,000 subscribers from various platforms. In the Wednesday meeting, March 29, 2023, it was revealed that the total Kompas audience had increased, reaching 6,628,814, including print, digital, social media, and relations audiences.

The importance of the slogan "Enlightening Journalism" was reminded again at the Wednesday meeting, July 12, 2023 with the sentence: "This must be a reference for anyone and any division every time they create content or collaborate amidst the

diversity of complex information from various platforms." In the same meeting, the need for guidelines on title length, number of tags, or special powerful tags was emphasized. Following up on this, the Editing Department immediately coordinated with the editors to formulate a guide to "Kompas.id News Checklist Before Publication". This formulation can be accessed via https://kgnewsroom.com/kompas_editorial_policy/detail. A link attached to the content management system (CMS) to make it easier for the editorial staff to access when writing and editing news.

To guide editorial decision-making, including how the Editing Department decides which news is worthy of being published on the web homepage as the main news, all editors, journalists, and related elements in the newsroom are required to monitor Chartbeat. Chartbeat is a web-based application designed to help editors and editorial teams monitor content performance in real-time. Chartbeat provides analytical data that allows editorial staff to understand how their content is consumed by readers, both directly on the website and across various other distribution platforms. News that is classified as having a high Charbeat score will be endorsed to the homepage as the main content, so that it appears on the device screen with a prominent display.

Based on monitoring on Chartbeat, the editing team and editors communicate to immediately identify emerging trends and adjust coverage or editorial strategies to respond to audience interests. This allows the editorial staff to be more responsive to reader needs and direct content strategically. During an interview in early July 2024, Regional Desk Editor Rini Kustiasih stated that communication between desk editors and the editorial team aims to ensure the effectiveness of gatekeeping and quality control in news. Furthermore, intensified communication seeks to enhance readability by placing featured stories on the homepage.

Political and Legal Desk Editor Anita Yossihara, in an interview in mid-July 2024, explained that for rapidly evolving news, especially political issues related to the presidential election, editors may publish articles immediately after receiving drafts from reporters without waiting for the editorial and language alignment teams to review them first. The rationale is that if the news is delayed due to awaiting review by these teams, there is a risk of Kompas appearing "caught off guard" and being outpaced by other media. Therefore, it is essential to "expedite" publication.

Subsequently, there must be immediate communication between the editor and the editorial team to intensify the post-publication review of the published content.

“Anita emphasized that the digital era demands a fast-paced editorial workflow, but we do not want to sacrifice accuracy for speed. In the rush, there may be typographical errors in source names, reporter misinterpretations, data inaccuracies, and other relevant issues. Therefore, a post-publication review is necessary.”

In relation to digital transformation, the Wednesday meeting, January 3, 2024, emphasized that the news flow on Kompas.id (and also Harian Kompas) must not only be accurate, but also fast. Relevant to this, the Editing Department Manager, Subur Tjahjono, emphasized in an interview with the author in mid-August 2024 that the intended speed does not come at the expense of journalistic quality. Therefore, the quality control (QC) function must continue to be optimized, parallel to the gatekeeping function. Although it is believed that every news has gone through strict checks at the editor level before publication, there must still be an effort to "comb" back the news that has been published on Kompas.id in real time. This QC mechanism is stated in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) document of the Language Editing and Coordination Department dated April 4, 2024, in which the author contributed to providing the formulation.

The Editing Department carries out the QC function with the aim of ensuring that every news product is in accordance with general journalistic principles and internal values adopted by Kompas. General journalistic principles refer to The Elements of Journalism (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001) and the Journalistic Code of Ethics of the Press Council. Meanwhile, the internal values referred to are stated in the vision and mission of the Kompas daily as the author heard directly from the founder of the Kompas Daily, Jakob Oetama (1931-2020), on various occasions, especially in every celebration of this media's anniversary.

The vision and mission of Kompas were formulated by St. Sularto (2015), as follows:

- Kompas Vision: To become an agent of change in building a more harmonious, tolerant, safe, and prosperous Indonesian community.
- Kompas Mission: To develop Kompas as a leading news brand through resource optimization and synergy with strategic partners.

In a more thorough language, the leadership of Kompas/Kompas.id is formulated as follows: To become a mass media with integrity, independence, and trusted by the public in voicing the truth and building the nation through humanistic, responsible, and balanced journalism.

The general gatekeeping function is parallel to the quality control task carried out by the Editing Department and the Kompas editorial staff, collectively and continuously. It is also in line with the view of Tandoc (2018), who said, "In the digital age, journalists are not the only gatekeepers anymore. However, their ability to verify information remains essential for maintaining their role as trusted sources of news."

This can be interpreted that even though many other parties also disseminate information, journalists or editorial staff in the newsroom still play an important role in maintaining the credibility of information through a strict verification process. The following is a more detailed analysis of the role of gatekeeping and the importance of quality control in digital journalism:

1. Digital Technology and Gatekeeping: Digital technology is changing the landscape of journalism, especially in terms of information distribution. Although technology allows for faster and wider access and dissemination of news, journalists still have a role as gatekeepers who determine what is or is not suitable for publication, especially in the context of large volumes of information. This means that the task of verification and accuracy cannot be ignored, even though the pressure to publish news quickly is increasing.

2. Verification and Accuracy as Gatekeeper Responsibilities: In the digital era, where misinformation and disinformation can easily spread, journalists must maintain high standards of verification. Information verification is a key element that distinguishes professional journalists from non-journalist actors who also disseminate information through digital platforms.

3. Challenges and Adaptations of Gatekeeping in the Digital Era: Tandoc also emphasized that gatekeeping is no longer just about choosing what news to publish but also about maintaining the quality of that news through quality control (QC). Journalists and media organizations must adapt their gatekeeping processes to meet the new challenges of the digital era, including speeding up verification without sacrificing accuracy. This process is the essence of QC in modern news production.

4. The Importance of Trust and Credibility: Without rigorous QC, the media can maintain public trust. Therefore, even though the challenges are greater in the digital era, maintaining quality and accuracy is the foundation of public trust in the media.

CONCLUSION

The quality control (QC) process in the Kompas/Kompas.id newsroom illustrates how the gatekeeping mechanism is applied in a layered manner to ensure high journalistic standards, in alignment with the values upheld by Kompas. The Editing and Language Harmonization Department functions as the final gatekeeper, responsible for reviewing and revising content before publication.

Through the QC mechanisms implemented at Kompas/Kompas.id, it is evident that the gatekeeping and editing processes carried out by the editing team are not only based on internal standards but also adhere to broader journalistic codes of ethics. The procedures in place allow for continuous evaluation of content, taking into account the changes within the hybrid digital media landscape. Thus, this study demonstrates that document analysis serves as a crucial tool in maintaining the quality and integrity of journalism amidst the dynamic evolution of the media.

The QC process at Kompas/Kompas.id is not only relevant in the operational context of the media organization itself but also makes a significant contribution to the broader study of gatekeeping practices and quality management in the media industry. Kompas/Kompas.id media team continues to operate efficiently with an effective organizational structure and rigorous processes, also meeting the demands of the digital era without compromising journalistic standards.

The various dynamics and distinctive characteristics of quality control (QC) in news production at Kompas/Kompas.id confirm experts' views that in the digital era, gatekeeping is not confined to the newsroom before publication but extends into the post-publication phase. The editorial and language alignment teams' efforts to recheck already published articles have become an integral part of the QC mechanism. The gatekeeping function, which intersects with QC, is increasingly important and relevant to maintaining the quality and integrity of journalism.

One unique aspect of gatekeeping at Kompas/Kompas.id is the emphasis on the QC function within the editorial and language alignment teams, leading to this team being recognized as the "final gatekeeper" both within and beyond the newsroom. QC responsibilities are not assigned to editors at the desk level; however, they are required to communicate promptly with the editorial and language alignment teams if a particular news piece has been published due to immediacy demands.

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