

# Introduction to New Media

**COMPLEMENTARY COURSE OF BA ENGLISH**

**IV Semester – CUCBCSS 2014 Admission onwards**



**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**Calicut University P.O, Malappuram Kerala, India 673 635.**

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**STUDY MATERIAL**

**Introduction to New Media**  
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**IV Semester – CUCBCSS 2014 Admission onwards**

*Prepared by:*

*Dr. Lakshmi Pradeep*  
*Head Dept. of Mass Communicaton and Journalism*  
*Farook College, Kozhikode*

*Scrutinized by:*

*Mr. Abdul Muneer. V*  
*Head. Dept. of Journalism*  
*EMEA College of Arts and Science College, Kondotti*  
*Kumminiparamba P.O*

*Layout: Computer Section, SDE*

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## Module I

### **Internet as a medium of communication: history and evolution of internet:**

Internet has revolutionized the communication world. It has fundamentally changed the way people learn, play, create and communicate. Today it has become a part of our life. It is not just a technology, but an engine of social change, one that has modified work habits, education, social relations and maybe most important, our hopes and dreams.

The Internet scenario has undergone a transformation in the past few years. In 2015 it has reached 46.4% of the world population and 30% of Indian population. In 2010, it had penetrated 28.7 percent of the global population and only 8.5 percent of the Indian population (internetworldstats, 2016) India is one of the fastest growing Internet markets in the world growing at 14% in 2014 (internetlivestats, 2016). The increasing popularity of internet has attracted the attention of communication scholars, to fathom its promising developments, uncertainties and lurking dangers in the horizon of our cyber society.

Mass media is considered to be one of the important tools of opinion formation. Newspapers, Radio and Television are considered as major ingredients of the Fourth Estate. Very soon, Internet and Online newspapers also became popular media. Comparing to other media, the growth of online newspapers is faster. When internet became a phenomenon beyond the government and universities, electronic publishing exploded in newspapers, e-zines and current information sites.

History of internet dates back to 1960s:

The net is considered to be a product of the cold war, it was built by the USA military to protect national security in the face of nuclear attack. The Advanced Research Project Agency(ARPA) was a new Department started within the US Department of Defence and the ARPANET succeeded in creating the first effective long distance computer network.

1962: The RAND Corporation, USA, begins research into robust, distributed communication networks for military command and control.

1969: ARPANET connects first four universities in the US.

1972: The Inter Networking Working Group becomes the first of several standard-setting entities to govern the growing network.

1973: The ARPANET goes International with connections to University College in London, England, and the Royal Radar Establishment in Norway.

1974: The first commercial version of ARPANET, The Telenet opened.

1983: TC/IP becomes the Universal language of the Internet.

1984: William Gibson coins the term "Cyberspace" in his novel "Neuromancer"

1985: The World Wide Web is born.

In the United States, delivery of news and other information to people with computers in their homes dates to the late 1970s and early 1980s, when a handful of media companies went public with their experiments in something called 'videotex'. Videotex involved sending information from a central computer to an individual terminal over telephone lines, and the key advantages over print that its supporters suggested will sound familiar: speed, selectivity, the ability to personalise information and the extent of available data. Although similar systems in Europe were backed by

national governments, notably departments providing mail and telephone services, those in the United States were developed by corporations. About a dozen US newspapers also explored electronic transmission through a service called CompuServe. The available technology in the 1980s however was not quite up to the task that these pioneers envisioned. Although the Internet existed as a civilian technology, having split from its military origins in 1983, it was still a cumbersome text-based system used primarily by scientists and researchers and unknown to almost everyone else. Moreover, effective revenue models were elusive for videotext products' commercial backers, whose proprietary stand-alone networks were not connected to the fledgling Internet. By the end of the decade, many of the early services had been abandoned and others had morphed into something quite different, generally with few if any ties to existing news organizations.

There was an invention of a logical system for connecting something that existed in one place on the network to a different thing in a different place. In the late 1980s, Tim Berners Lee, working in a particle physics lab in CERN, Switzerland, developed three technical keystones for sharing information in something he dubbed the World Wide Web. There was a language for encoding documents (HTML), a system for linking one document to another (http, a protocol for exchanging data among computers) and a document-naming system (URL, or Universal Resource Locator) stemming from the World Wide Web. A few years later, a group of undergraduate programmers working in a computer lab at the University of Illinois, built Mosaic, a geographical user interface that let people simply click a mouse on a word or image to move from place to place. Mosaic was the first browser; its commercial incarnation, Netscape Navigator opened the doors of the Web wide to the world in 1994.

At the start of 1994, about twenty newspapers offered some sort of online product, mostly bulletin board services plus a handful of alliances with commercial online services such as Prodigy or America Online (AOL). By the end of that year, about a hundred online newspaper services was either operating or in development; the number climbed to about 300 by mid-1995-and kept going. Advertising quickly followed: the first banner ads appeared on hotwired.com, the site of *Wired* Magazine, in October 1994. Netscape was joined by Microsoft's Internet Explorer and then other Web Browsers, as well. The easier it became to use the Internet and the Web, the more people started getting information online; the more people went online, the greater the opportunity for media companies and marketers to reach them there.

Today, around the world, there are thousands of media outlets, countless numbers of bloggers and other Citizen Journalists. In addition to thousands of mainstream news sites, online journalism incorporates aggregator sites such as Yahoo! News; myriad sites about new media and the media in general, offering journalism; and an exploding number of "share and discussion sites" offering diverse opportunities for interpersonal connection.

In India, internet was introduced in 1991 by the department of Electronics through the Educational and Research Network (ERNET). It was funded by United Nation Development Programme. On August 15, 1995, Internet was offered to private individuals and organizations by Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited and in 1999 it was liberalized. Since then it has grown, now even villages which have telephone

accessibility are armed with internet. Until the early 1990s the internet was simply a network of computers used to transmit government data. With the advent of World Wide Web and Online Subscription Service Providers, internet traffic became an important medium of communication.

### **Characteristics of new media**

Significant attributes of the new media are interactivity, demassification and asynchronization. So it allows for more individualized communication.

‘First rule of journalism is show. Do not tell’. Online medium provides it. Faceless community all over the world consume eagerly the service of this media. New media provide multifaceted facilities, along with certain characteristics.

#### **Immediacy**

Speed and immediacy are two greatest virtues of new media. With the help of a mouse click whole world comes before the person. 3G and 4G technologies now turn the entire scenario. Information superhighway is revolutionizing the world.

The challenge facing online journalists is to balance the legitimate desires of the online audience for breaking news reports with the professional’s tradition of fairness, completeness, balance and accuracy.

#### **Interactivity**

New media is known for its ability to involve the audience. This is known as interactivity. Hence, we can say that compared to other media forms, new media has the most evolved feedback system in place.

Digital media offer us a significant increase in our opportunity to manipulate and intervene in media. These multiple opportunities are often referred to as the interactive potential of new media.

Interactivity is understood as one of the key ‘value added’ characteristics of new media as it offers opportunities for making connections between individuals, within organisations and individuals and organisations. Much of this connectivity will be of the registration interactivity mode defined above where individuals add to, change, or synthesise the texts received from others. However, when email and chat sites are considered from the point of view of human communication, ideas about the degree of reciprocity between participants in an exchange are brought into play. So, from Communication studies point of view, degrees of interactivity are further broken-down on the basis of the kinds of communication that occur within computer-mediated communication (CMC).

#### **Universality**

Web Journalism is a global media. It is not limited by time and space. New media is a platform which connects the whole world. New media provide multifaceted facilities. News about every incident happen anywhere is reachable to any other extent within a few minutes. Internet and World Wide Web point out another era of journalism. The wire services were primary link into the outside world. They provide a world view solidly within the social constructs of journalism. Online communication is an opportunity to communicate, learn, share, buy and sell. It is user controlled highly user controlled and essentially egalitarian.

#### **Hypertext**

The prefix ‘hyper’ is derived from a Greek word which has the meaning of

'Above, beyond, or outside'. Hence hypertext has come to describe a text which provides a network of links to other texts that are 'outside, above, and beyond' itself. It can be defined as a work which is made up from discrete units of material in which each one carries a number of pathways to other units.

The work is a web of connection which the user explores using the navigational aids of the interface design. Each discrete 'node' in the web has a number of entrances and exits or links.

Common, hypertext media are called *non-linear* media. Implications are that (a) one need not read documents in a prescribed order; (b) authors, styles and permissible rules of content may vary as one reads linked documents; (c) responsibility and control is diffused - as is ownership of the resulting content; (d) form and structure is easily changed, composed on demand for individuals

#### Multimedia

Online platforms have a greater advantage over other media and that is Multimedia facilities. Whenever stories are supported by cartoons, moving pictures, sound and music, it is called multimedia. The word Convergence means "come towards each other and meet at a point". So media convergence is, computer and telecommunication technologies used in the multimedia systems for the transfer and exchange of information, data, graphics and sound.

E.g. watch video and films on the computer, Read a news paper on the net

#### **New Media aesthetics**

##### Content

News in the web is displayed in a particular way. They will be short. Quality online content is timely, informative, entertaining, clear, concise, accurate, balanced and fair. Above all, online content must be conversational. The content should be simple and informative. Creating, compelling, engaging, interesting and entertaining copy is critical when writing news online. Audio, video, photos, graphics and the text itself must attract and hold readers. All of the bells and whistles of interactivity, movement sound and colour that can be found on many web sites go for naught if the copy falls flat. The intent and type of the content varies and they should be catchy.

##### Design

The design of online media became simple and interactive nowadays. The design allows connection, discussion and impact on readers. Basically it is the design of web pages through which, audience has the option; what to view, hear and read. Visual logic should be incorporated with design.

New media commonly exist in smart (computing) devices and networks. As such, these systems can be instructed to customize, individualize information for each user. The idea of *mass* media is challenged in an environment where different messages are crafted for each member of an audience.

##### Colours and Fonts

Web pages have sound movements and interactivity. Reading on a computer screen is difficult so it is necessary to make news presentation scan able, and by highlighting the key words or sentences by different colour or underline or by text font/variations. The three layers; spoken, written and image language together form single text in



online platforms. Using light colours and simple and easily readable fonts still continues as a trend.

#### Templates

This is a busy world and the facility in online platforms help to save time for the users and it is known as template. A template is a file that serves as a starting point for a new document. Templates can either come with a program or be created by the user. Most major programs support templates, so if anyone is creating similar documents over and over again, it might be a good idea to save one of them as a template. Then they won't have to format their documents each time they want to make a new one. Just open the template and start from there.

#### Navigation Bars

Navigation Bars are a set of buttons or images in a row or column that serves as a control point to link the user to sections on a Web site. The navigation bar may also be a single graphic image with multiple selections. A navigation bar (or navigation system) is a section of a graphical user interface intended to aid visitors in accessing information. Navigation bars are implemented in file browsers, web browsers and as a design element of some web sites.

#### Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks are primarily used to initiate inter activity. Links are provided in between texts in blue colour or with underline.

For example, if the text says about the people who had miraculous escape from the collapsed WTC building, there will be link to the list of escaped people. A click on it will reach the web pages listing the names. From there anyone can click to the list of Indians or Keralites. Users can find out if somebody known to them is there or not. Sometimes the link can be given to other sites as well.

#### **Books For reference**

1. Arvind Kumar, '**Digital Media & Weblog Journalism**', Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2006.
2. Cecilia Friend and Jane B. Singer, '**Online Journalism Ethics; Traditions and Transitions**', PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2004.
3. Leah A. Lievrouw and Sonia Livingstone (Editors) , '**Handbook of New Media, Social Shaping and Social Consequences of ICTs**', Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2007.
4. Sunil Saxena, '**Web Journalism 2.0**', Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi, 2012

## Module II

### Blogs: Blogosphere

A blog (short for weblog) is a personal online journal that is frequently updated and intended for general public consumption. Blogs are defined by their format: a series of entries posted to a single page in reverse-chronological order. Blogs generally represent the personality of the author or reflect the purpose of the Web site that hosts the blog. Topics sometimes include brief philosophical musings, commentary on Internet and other social issues, and links to other sites the author favours, especially those that support a point being made on a post.

Blogs represent a significant shift in information flow, where information flows from many to many seamlessly. It is a serious challenge to traditional journalism. Blogs do not have gatekeepers, so they are raw, honest, immediate passionate, opinionated and strike an emotional chord. At times they may not be credible as there are no gatekeepers. It is professional journalism versus amateur journalism. Media has realised the growing power of blogs. So news websites nowadays encourage blogging by their employees on their site. Many celebrities too have their own blogs. Blogs are on varied topics. They are easy to start but difficult to sustain.

Those who wish to start a blog will have higher cyber space without payments and start to use the space. Add text, colours, paintings, photos, audio, visual, animation, graphics and more. Publish advertisements, persuasive pieces, and campaign materials; make money by business promotion, public relation activity, reviews etc. The owner of the blog decides the content and design. Seamless freedom is the major attraction of blogs. This is a global space. Any person around the world with internet accessibility can open the page and read. Blogs offer such an international opportunity to interact with the real faceless community. Though there is an international accepted code of ethics in journalism, all laws and regulations regarding publications in one country are applicable for a blog.

The advantages of blogs are creative freedom, instantaneity, interactivity, lack of marketing constraints. The key features of a blog includes content area, archives, comments, feeds, plug ins, widgets, themes, templates, trackbacks, pingbacks.

**The blogosphere** is made up of all blogs and their interconnections. The term implies that blogs exist together as a connected community (or as a collection of connected communities) or as a social networking service in which everyday authors can publish their opinions.

Blogs can follow other blogs and repost portions of original posts or link out to original sources that prompted a post, such as news articles or product releases. Although bloggers can become influential and even profit from their posts, blogs are often maintained out of a desire to share thoughts with like-minded people rather than profit.

The blogosphere has become an invaluable source for citizen journalism – that is, real time reporting about events and conditions in local areas that large news agencies do not or cannot cover.

Blogosphere is a term some writers have used to describe the grassroots and interactive journalism made possible by participants in blogs (logs or journals

maintained on the Internet) and the symbiotic relationship between bloggers and traditional journalists.

### **Vlog**

A vlog (or video blog) is a blog that contains video content. The small, but growing, segment of the blogosphere devoted to vlogs is sometimes referred to as the vlogosphere. is a form of web television. Vlog entries often combine embedded video (or a video link) with supporting text, images, and other metadata. Entries can be recorded in one take or cut into multiple parts. The vlog category is popular on YouTube.

Some bloggers have included video content for years. However, vlogging is becoming more common as equipment becomes cheaper and supporting software and hosting and aggregation sites become more prevalent. Both Yahoo and Google feature video sections and most MP3 players, such as iPod, support video.

Anyone with access to a video-capable camera and a relatively recent computer with a high-speed connection can create a vlog and publish and distribute it online.

The vlogosphere is a very democratic arena. Unlike mainstream media, such as television or commercial Web sites, vlogs are not, for the most part, created to make money. As a result, vloggers are free to make their content about whatever they desire, no matter how controversial or esoteric the topic. Vlogging gives average citizens an audience and a chance to make their voices heard. Vlogs are often distributed through RSS feeds. Video content distributed in this way is sometimes called a vodcast or a vidcast.

### **Podcast**

A podcast is an audio file that is automatically received from the internet and then synced to an MP3 player. The files are received by subscribing to what's called a podcast feed. A podcast is a digital medium that consists of an episodic series of audio or digital radio, subscribed to and downloaded through web syndication or streamed online to a computer or mobile device. A list of all the audio or video files associated with a given series is maintained centrally on the distributor's server as a web feed, and the listener or viewer employs special client application software, known as a pod catcher, that can access this web feed, check it for updates, and download any new files in the series. This process can be automated so that new files are downloaded. Files are stored locally on the user's computer or other device ready for offline use. Podcasting contrasts with webcasting (Internet streaming), which generally isn't designed for offline listening to user-selected content.

There are now thousands of podcasts and the number is growing rapidly. Podcasters (as they are called) are not restricted by traditional broadcast formats and regulations. This allows for numerous subjects and formats.

Podcasting is an escape from the same old, corporate conglomerate, worn-out, Clear channel controlled, pre-programmed. Anyone can create a podcast. All over the world, people are creating podcasts on subjects ranging from movies, to technology, to music, to politics etc. This is new original content made by passionate people who want to share their creativity with the world. The cost to start podcasting is so low that anyone can do it. Podcasters are creating very raw and real content and listeners are responding. Some podcasts are "talk show" style. Others introduce the latest bands

and music. With podcasts one can stay current on the news, get a glimpse into someone's life, listen to movie reviews and the list goes on.

The first podcasts were downloaded into an ipod, the portable audio player of Apple company. The words ipod and broadcasting were combined to form podcasting. Podcasting does not challenge radio, but its advantages are negligible production, and hosting cost, easy to create and edit, wide reach, no licensing.

### **Search Engines**

The better way to locate specific information is to use a search engine. It is a web tool that helps to find specific sites on the internet. These are searchable indexes running on powerful computers that look up information, using key words. When enter a word or phrase to look up, the search engine locates any document containing the key words. The listed documents are called hits. The search results are generally presented in a line of results often referred to as search engine results pages (SERPs). The information may be a mix of web pages, images, and other types of files. When a user enters a query into a search engine (typically by using keywords), the engine examines its index and provides a listing of best-matching web pages according to its criteria, usually with a short summary containing the document's title and sometimes parts of the text. The index is built from the information stored with the data and the method by which the information is indexed

E.g. Google, Yahoo

### **Social Media**

Social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual and networks. Social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between businesses, organizations, communities, and individuals. These changes are the focus of the emerging field of techno self studies. Social media differ from traditional or industrial media in many ways, including quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy and permanence

Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, and wikis are among the different types of social media.

### **Prominent examples of social media:**

- **Face book** is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. According to statistics from the Nielsen Group, Internet users within the United States spend more time on Face book than any other website.
- **Twitter** is a free micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.
- **Whatsapp**, a mobile messaging App is very popular today. According to latest figures, nearly one in seven people use Whatsapp each month to stay in touch.

- **Google+** (pronounced *Google plus*) is Google's social networking project, designed to replicate the way people interact offline more closely than is the case in other social networking services. The project's slogan is "Real-life sharing rethought for the web."
- **Wikipedia** is a free, open content online encyclopaedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as Wikipedians. Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication; registration is not required to edit articles.
- **LinkedIn** is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.
- **Reddit** is a social news website and forum where stories are socially curate and promoted by site members. The site is composed of hundreds of sub-communities, known as "subreddits." Each subreddit has a specific topic such as technology, politics or music. Reddit site members, also known as, "redditors," submit content which is then voted upon by other members. The goal is to send well-regarded stories to the top of the site's main thread page.
- **Pinterest** is a social curation website for sharing and categorizing images found online. Pinterest requires brief descriptions but the main focus of the site is visual. Clicking on an image will take one to the original source, so, for example, if a registered user click on a picture of a pair of shoes, he/she might be taken to a site where he/she can purchase them. An image of blueberry pancakes might take you to the recipe; a picture of a whimsical birdhouse might take you to the instructions.

Applications that have developed within and around these platforms, websites, and tools are endless in number and functionality, but all make online sharing and searching easier in some fashion, regardless of their niche. As nearly every type of business has an association in the non-digital world, so too does the internet offer an endless number of niche social communities where members can gather around a common topic. Topics both general and specific now have living homes on the internet; anything from colon and digestive health to security and compliance can and do have active social media communities.

#### **Books For reference**

1. Arvind Kumar, ' **Digital Media & Weblog Journalism**', Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.2006.
2. Cecilia Friend and Jane B. Singer, **Online Journalism Ethics; Traditions and Transitions**, PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi,2004.
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4. Sunil Saxena, **Web Journalism 2.0**, Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi, 201

### Module III

#### **Online reporting: Language and style of Online Journalism**

Online news is a perfect medium for reporting on developing and evolving issues and events. Among the advantages that online news writing enjoys over its competing media are the ability to update and freshen copy on a more-or-less continual basis; the opportunity to include audio, video, graphics and photos; the ability to go into greater depth and provide important background information associated with issues and events; and the ability to help readers gather information on their own by providing links to other websites, documents and databases. Creating compelling, engaging, interesting and entertaining copy is critical when writing news online. Just as in the more traditional journalistic media, ownership, locale and audience characteristics play an important role in determining what style and tone the writing should take.

Online news writing should be conversational. It should read much like copy used in radio and television news. It should be similar to how people write when they're chatting with family and friends online.

Strive for a "telling story" tone. Use simple, colourful words. Use words that paint clear mental pictures for readers. Avoid the stilted, formal, convoluted style of writing that sometimes can be found in the print media and in technical manuals.

Use simple declarative sentences. The subject-verb-object format works well. Limit the use of phrases and clauses. This doesn't mean that to 'dumb down' a copy. It just means that to write clearly, directly and in a manner that is easy for readers to understand and remember the story. Readers are busy. They turn to websites for quick, easy to comprehend information. Give it to them.

Writing style can be informal and still inform. Writing can be conversational and still impress. There is no need to write in a pedantic preaching manner to appear intelligent and authoritative. The job is to communicate to people who have busy lives and a great deal on their minds. Make it easy for them to read and understand the copy. Make it easy for them to enjoy it. Make them want to revisit the website often to obtain the information they want and need.

Online news writers should use their common sense and critical-thinking abilities to evaluate the accuracy and reasonableness of source copy.

There are a number of things to remember when writing for the web.

#### **1. KNOW THE AUDIENCE**

Write and edit with online readers' needs and habits in mind. Web usability studies show that readers tend to skim over sites rather than read them intently. They also tend to be more proactive than print readers or TV viewers, hunting for information, rather than passively taking in what is presented to them.

Think about the target audience. Because the readers are getting their news online, chances are they are more interested in Internet-related stories than TV viewers or newspaper readers, so it may make sense to put greater emphasis on such stories. Also, a site potentially has a global reach, so consider whether if you want to make it understandable to local, national or international audience, and write and edit with that in mind.

## **2. THINK FIRST — AND THINK DIFFERENT**

Before you start reporting and writing a story, think about what are the best ways to tell the story, whether through audio, video, clickable graphics, text, links, etc. — or some combination. Collaborate with audio, video and interactive producers. Develop a plan and let that be a guide throughout the news gathering and production process, rather than just reporting a story and then adding various elements later as an afterthought. Also, look for stories that lend themselves to the Web — stories that can be told differently from or better than in any other medium.

## **3. TAILOR NEWS GATHERING**

Just as print and television reporters interview differently because they are looking for different things, so must online journalists tailor their interviewing and information gathering specifically to their needs.

Print reporters tend to look for information. TV reporters look for emotion on camera, sound bites and pictures to go with words. Online journalists must constantly think in terms of different elements and how they complement and supplement each other: Look for words to go with images, audio and video to go with words, data that will lend itself to interactive communication etc...

Remember that photos look better online when shot or cropped narrowly, and streaming video is easier to watch when backgrounds are plain and zooming minimal. Tape interviews whenever possible in case someone says that would make a powerful clip. Look for personalities who could be interesting chat guests. And always keep an eye out for information that can be conveyed more effectively using interactive tools.

## **4. WRITE LIVELY AND TIGHT**

Writing for the Web should be a cross between broadcast and print — tighter and punchier than print, but more literate and detailed than broadcast writing. Write actively, not passively.

Strive for lively prose, leaning on strong verbs and sharp nouns. Inject the writing with a distinctive voice to help differentiate it from the multitude of content on the Web. Use humor. Try to write in a breezy style or with an attitude. Conversational styles work particularly well on the Web. Online audiences are more accepting of unconventional writing styles.

At the same time, don't forget that the traditional rules of writing apply online. Unfortunately, writing quality is inconsistent throughout most online news sites. Stories suffer from passive verbs, run-on sentences, mixed metaphors and clichés. This is a result of fast-paced news gathering, short staffing and inexperienced journalists. This is also a big mistake. Readers notice sloppy writing and they don't forgive. They'll stop reading a story and they won't come back for more. Unlike local newspaper readers, online readers have options.

## **5. EXPLAIN**

Readers rarely notice, or care who was first. People want to know not just what happened, but why it matters. And with all the information sources out there now, in the end it will be the sites that explain the news the best that succeed. Write and edit all the stories with this in mind.

## **6. NEVER BURY THE LEAD**

When writing online, it's essential to tell the reader quickly what the story is all about and why they should keep reading — or else they won't.

## **7. DON'T PILE ON**

A common problem with online writing occurs in breaking news stories. In an effort to seem as current as possible, sites will often put the latest development in a story at the top — no matter how incremental the development. Then, they'll pile the next development on the top, and the next — creating an ugly mish-mash of a story that makes sense only to someone who has been following the story closely all day. Unfortunately, the only people who are usually doing so are the journalists. Few readers visit a site more than once a day. Remember this when updating stories, and always keep the most important news in the lead.

## **8. SHORT BUT SWEET**

Most stories online are too long for a Web audience, and I imagine few readers finish them. But let that be a guideline, not a rule. Readers will stick with longer stories online if there is a compelling reason for a story to be that long — and if it continues to captivate their attention.

Making readers scroll to get to the rest of a story is generally preferable to making them click. Online news users do scroll. But of late online papers want to give a large number of stories, so they just give headlines on the home page and the stories are just a click away. If someone has clicked to get to a page, it's generally because they want to read the story, and thus chances are high that they will.

## **9. BREAK IT UP**

Larger blocks of text make reading on screens difficult, and there is a chance to lose readers. Using more subheads and bullets to separate text and ideas helps. Writing should be snappy and fast to read. Keep paragraphs and sentences short. It also helps to extract information into charts, tables, Pie charts, bulleted lists and interactive graphics. Even a simple box with a definition or summary can help break up text and convey information in an easy-to-read format.

## **10. DO NOT FEAR THE LINK**

Don't be afraid to link. Many sites have a paranoid fear that if they include links to other sites, readers will surf away and never return. It's not true! People prefer to go to sites that do a good job of compiling click-worthy links, there is an example of Yahoo!'s success. If people know they can trust a site, they will come back for more.

At the same time, journalists have a responsibility to apply news judgment and editorial standards to the links they choose. Avoid linking to sites with blatantly false information or offensive content. Select links that enhance the value of the story by helping readers get additional information from the people behind the news.

Link to related stories on the site, past and present. This is one of the advantages of the Web. By linking to other stories to provide context and background, writers have more freedom to focus on the news of the day without bogging stories down with old information.

### **Tools for Newsgathering**

It seems bizarre that journalists wouldn't use many of the tools and media channels that are available. They could apply their traditional journalism skills and add social



media and other media channels, such as blogs, to their reporting arsenal. Online newsgathering is not a different one from traditional news gathering by reporters or wire services. The difference is that it needs quick news gathering and fastest posting than traditional media. Online media platforms utilize the services of reporters, news agencies etc.

While other sources too can be effectively utilized:

1. The personalized news wire
2. The Google advanced search
3. Google reader
4. RSS Feed
5. Periodicals / Newspapers
6. Blogs/Sites
7. Social Media like Facebook, Twitter etc.

### **News determinants in Cyber space**

Cyberspace is the notional environment in which communication over computer networks occur. The word became popular in the 1990s when the uses of the internet, networking, and digital communication were all growing dramatically and the term "cyberspace" was able to represent the many new ideas and phenomena that were emerging.

**Determinants** are the yardstick or the criteria by which an editor determines what portion of the day's news he/she will use. Online media news determinants have significance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The higher the rating, the more likely it is to be used. Ratings will be determined by these questions:

1. Is it timely? -- implies immediacy or nearness to the present.
  - o If it is not timely, it is history or just a prediction.
  - o Event has just happened or will be held in the near future.
  - o In agriculture, a seasonal basis may be considered.
  - o Announced today -- may make timely discoveries or projects in the past.
2. Is it Global/Local? -- nearness to the audience -- point of posting the content
3. Is it important? -- Magnitude and significance of the idea, event or situation.
  - o Large numbers of people or large areas
  - o Prominence or person (s) involved or supporting the idea (spokesperson)
  - o Who and how many will be affected -- consequence -- will things change because of it?

There are several other news values too such as oddity, novelty, change, cause, target audience etc.

### **Do's and do not's of online reporting**

#### **Dos**

1. Write the content in simple language; avoid jargons
2. The content should be as short as possible
3. Create more white space
4. Provide hyperlinks
5. Make it readable by providing photos
6. Provide an eye-catching headline
7. Use colours to attract the readers

8. The language should be direct and in present tense
9. Should contain relevant 5 Ws and 1H in the first paragraph
10. Give sub headings

**Don'ts**

1. Don't make the content too lengthy
2. The lead should not contain any jargons
3. Shouldn't contain flowery language
4. Don't use too small or too large fonts

**5. Don't publicize other people's stories:-**

Telling both sides of the story holds a lot more value than a mere copy and paste of someone else's work. It is possible to "repurpose" existing content . Repurposing is instead of posting out an article, rewrite the article taking a stance "for or against" the main point. The primary goal is to keep the clients and prospects on the website and videos versus someone else's.

**6.Avoid Plagiarism:-**

Don't ever try to copy and paste an entire article from one website over to yours. It is stealing someone else's content, and if it is without permission, it's called plagiarism. Many people and big companies have "Google Alerts" set up that monitor their content and brand, so if anything is used on the Internet without their consent they are notified right away. In many instances, clients can see through that, and it will dilute the website's value. Lastly, it is not a very professional thing to do.

Take the time and incorporate original content or repurpose existing content to add value, and keep the clients and prospects close to the site.

**Today the legal right to privacy encompasses four areas:**

- Intrusion or the unwarranted violation of a person's physical solitude. For instance, a journalist's use of a telephoto lens to capture the private moments of an unsuspecting subject can constitute intrusion
- Publicity of embarrassing private facts. Public complaints about privacy invasion typically involve a perception that journalists use their freedom to rummage, often irresponsibly and unnecessarily, through the private lives of others.
- Placement of a person in a false light, which involves publishing distortions that leave an erroneous impression.
- Appropriation or use of a person's name, picture, or likeness without permission, usually for commercial gain.

Although the same laws apply online as offline, the Internet and other digital technologies can make privacy concerns especially acute. The legal right to publish is important for journalists. But the ethical need for privacy is at just as crucial.

The online legal issues facing journalists are complex, and copyright is just one example, one, where the national law is clear and laws among nations are relatively consistent, at that.

Some of the ethical issues facing online journalists also have legal implications. Although, in general, the same laws apply online as offline, the application of those laws can be tricky. Moreover technology generally changes much faster than the law. The constantly evolving, open networked, global nature of the internet creates new

permutations of old issues. For reporters, online privacy issues revolve largely around the question of where to draw the line between a private conversation and public arena-raising concerns about deception, other ethical issues with legal ramifications. It is a lot more helpful to create original content rather than “repurposing” existing content to increase your value proposition going forward.

**Books For reference**

1. Arvind Kumar, ‘ **Digital Media & Weblog Journalism**’, Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.2006.
2. Cecilia Friend and Jane B. Singer, **Online Journalism Ethics; Traditions and Transitions**, PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi,2004.
3. Leah A. Lievrouw and Sonia Livingstone (Editors) , **Handbook of New Media, Social Shaping and Social Consequences of ICTs**, Sage Publications, New Delhi,2007.
4. Sunil Saxena, **Web Journalism 2.0**, Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi, 2012

## **Module 4**

### **ONLINE EDITING**

Editing is the process of selecting and preparing media used to convey information. The editing process can involve correction, condensation, organization, and many other modifications performed with an intention of producing a correct, consistent, accurate and complete work

Editing is more than just rereading copy to fix the technical errors. That is the first step, because good editing goes far beyond that. The goal of editing is to make the copy better at several different levels. That's why the process of editing is the same as the process of writing. An editor must solve a complex, intricate problem that happens to be with words instead of numbers.

#### **EDITING REQUIREMENTS**

Editors ensure the written quality of online publications. Their duties might include reading materials, making sure that a writer's formatting fits in-house style guidelines, correcting grammatical or factual errors and making suggestions for improvement. They may also be responsible for selecting articles or materials for publication, assisting with design, layout and overseeing other aspects of publication.

Editors typically work closely with authors throughout the editing and publishing process. Although editors' work can be very rewarding, with seeing their work come to final publication, there are many stress factors involved too. Hours can be very long, including nights and weekends, especially when a deadline hovers.

#### **Content**

- A story must be reported in as few words as possible. The sentences should be short and easy to read and understand. The paragraphs too must be short. The attention span of readers is short.
- Avoid modifiers.
- Substitute wordy phrases with short words.
- Remove relative clauses.
- Avoid starting a sentence with a subsidiary clause.
- Use "one sentence, one idea" format.
- Use active voice.
- Delete clichés.
- Put names and designations in right order.
- The words should be simple, short and familiar.
- Avoid abstract nouns.
- Delete and correct factual errors.
- Accuracy alone is not enough; objectivity too is important.
- Avoid defamatory statements.
- Give source of a story.
- Be careful with numbers and figures.

#### **Conciseness**

- Create strong verbs.
- Use verbs instead of nouns.
- Use active voice frequently.

- Avoid sentences beginning with *It* and *There*.
- Delete redundant and needless phrases.

### **Clarity**

- "**Keep It Short and Simple**".
- Ensure subject and verb agreement.
- Ensure that pronoun references are clear in meaning.
- Create sentences parallel in structure and meaning.
- Eliminate modifier problems.
- Double check for faulty comparisons and omissions.
- Avoid unnecessary shifts in a sentence.

### **Layout**

- Designing the format of publications.
- Manipulate design properties, such as type size, font style, spacing, column width and placement, using software.
- Transferring material to the Internet using Web publishing software.
- Arrange information such as text, graphics, videos and photographs.
- Editing photos and creating graphic elements such as charts or maps.

### **Style**

- Follow style book.
- Use of capital letters.
- Use of abbreviations.
- Use of titles and references.
- Use of numerals
- Spelling
- Italics

## **ONLINE HEADLINES**

### **Characteristics**

- Virtual gateway: Having arrived on the homepage, headlines are usually the starting point. We can move forward only when we click the headline.
- Concise and informative
- Capture the mood of the story
- Context as key words: The headline must grab the attention of search engines if it is to attract the new users.
- Contrast and visual appeal
- Point size: Write headlines in a point size that is appropriate to the screen size. The type size cannot be as big as in printed newspapers as computer screens are smaller.

### **How to write headline**

- Locate the news point
- Identify key words
- Write the first headline
- Polish the headline

### **Do's and don'ts of news headline**

- Use simple and specific words
- Use active verbs
- Drop the use of auxiliary verbs and their past tense
- Use articles
- Abbreviations must be used sparingly in online headlines
- Attribution should be given
- Online headlines must be written in present tense
- Punctuation marks is an avoidable ornamentation depending on the nature of headline
- Numerals should be numerals as far as possible
- Avoid factual errors
- There is nothing wrong in posing a question in a headline

### **WEBSITE DESIGN**

Web design encompasses many different skills and disciplines in the production and maintenance of websites. The different areas of web design include web graphic design; interface design; authoring, including standardised code and proprietary software; user experience design; and search engine optimization. Often many individuals will work in teams covering different aspects of the design process, although some designers will cover them all. The term web design is normally used to describe the design process relating to the front-end (client side) design of a website including writing mark up. Web design partially overlaps web engineering in the broader scope of web development. Web designers are expected to have an awareness of usability and if their role involves creating mark-up then they are also expected to be up to date with web accessibility guidelines.

Effective web design is judged by the users of the website. There are many factors that affect the usability of a website, and it is not just about form (how good it looks), but also function (how easy is it to use). Websites that are not well designed tend to perform poorly and have sub-optimal Google Analytics metrics (e.g. high bounce rates, low time on site, low pages per visit and low conversions). The ten web design principles that will make the website aesthetically pleasing, easy to use, engaging, and effective are given below.

#### **1. Purpose**

Good web design always caters to the needs of the user. Are the web visitors looking for information, entertainment, some type of interaction, or to transact with the business? Each page of the website needs to have a clear purpose, and to fulfil a specific need for the website users in the most effective way possible.

#### **2. Communication**

People on the web tend to want information quickly, so it is important to communicate clearly, and make the information easy to read and digest. Some effective tactics to include in web design include: organising information using headlines and sub headlines, using bullet points instead of long winding sentences, and cutting the waffle.

### **3. Typefaces**

In general, Sans Serif fonts such as Arial, Calibri and Verdana are easier to read online (Sans Serif fonts are contemporary looking fonts without decorative finishes). The ideal font size for reading easily online is around 14 to 16 points and stick to a maximum of 3 typefaces in a maximum of 3 point sizes to keep your design streamlined.

### **4. Colours**

A well thought out colour palette can go a long way to enhance the user experience. Complementary colours create balance and harmony. Using contrasting colours for the text and background will make reading easier on the eye. Vibrant colours create emotion and should be used sparingly (e.g. for buttons and call to actions). Last but not least, white space is very effective at giving the website a modern and uncluttered look.

### **5. Images**

A picture can speak a thousand words, and choosing the right images for the website can help with brand positioning and connecting with the target audience. Also consider using infographics, videos and graphics as these can be much more effective at communicating than even the most well written piece of text.

### **6. Navigation**

Navigation is about how easy it is for people to take action and move around the website. Some tactics for effective navigation include a logical page hierarchy, using bread crumbs, designing clickable buttons, and following the ‘three click rule’ which means users will be able to find the information they are looking for, within three clicks. These steps can help to achieve good navigation- visualising the site, reviewing the user interests by studying the site logs, vertical and horizontal navigation bars, Site Map, Time stamps etc.

### **7. Grid based layouts**

Placing content randomly on the web page can end up with a haphazard appearance that is messy. Grid based layouts arrange content into sections, columns and boxes that line up and feel balanced, which leads to a better looking website design.

### **8. “F” Pattern design**

Eye tracking studies have identified that people scan computer screens in an “F” pattern. Most of what people see is in the top and left of the screen and the right side of the screen are rarely seen. Rather than trying to force the viewer’s visual flow, effectively designed websites will work with a reader’s natural behaviour and display information in order of importance (left to right, and top to bottom).

### **9. Load time**

Everybody hates a website that takes ages to load. Tips to make page load times more effective include optimising image sizes (size and scale), combining code into a central CSS or JavaScript file (this reduces HTTP requests) and minify HTML, CSS, JavaScript (compressed to speed up their load time).

### **10: Mobile friendly**

It is now commonplace to access websites from multiple devices with multiple screen sizes, so it is important to consider if the website is mobile friendly. If the website is

not mobile friendly, either rebuild it in a responsive layout (this means your website will adjust to different screen widths) or build a dedicated mobile site (a separate website optimised specifically for mobile users).

Simplicity, weight, compatibility and consistency are all necessary in design. Readability, packaging and story length are relevant factors to facilitate communication by design. Website mechanics involves three different professionals- web editor, web designer who looks into the: look and feel, navigation, readability, and visual appeal of the website, and web programmers

**Book for Reference**

1. Sunil Saxena, *Web Journalism 2.0*, Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi, 2012



## Module V

### Ethics in New Media

A media revolution is transforming the nature of journalism and its ethics. The means to publish is now in the hands of citizens, while the internet encourages new forms of journalism that are interactive and immediate. Theorists often define ethics in terms of a set of principles of *right* or *moral* conduct. Digital technologies raise a host of thorny and troubling ethical challenges for journalists and media practitioners, whether professional or citizen journalists. Following is a sampling of some of the issues digital technologies raise for students, scholars and practitioners of media. *Plagiarism* has become an often-accepted practice and international cultural norm due at least in part to the ease and temptation of copying online sources. Digitally *altering images* or video is common in advertising and sometimes in news. Using *anonymous sources* is frequently an accepted practice in online journalism. *Omni directional imaging* is more than science fiction. Ethics in new media concern various issues such as portrayal of violence, pornography, cyber crime, addiction, copyright, digital divide and so on.

#### OBSCENITY

Obscenity has been defined by the Supreme Court as ‘the quality of being obscene which means offensive to modesty or decency; lewd, filthy and repulsive. Section 294 of the Indian Penal Code lays down the punishment for obscene acts or words in public. The other sections of Indian Penal code which deal with obscenity are 292 and 293. The law does not clearly define what would constitute an obscene act, but it would enter the domain of the state only when it takes place in a public place to the annoyance of others. Temple art etc is traditionally outside the purview of this section. Section 292 in The Indian Penal Code says that, for the purposes of sub-section (2), a book, pamphlet, paper, writing, drawing, painting, representation, figure or any other object, shall be deemed to be obscene if it is lascivious or appeals to the prurient interest or if its effect, or (where it comprises two or more distinct items) the effect of any one of its items, is, if taken as a whole, tends to deprave and corrupt the person, who is likely, having regard to all relevant circumstances, to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it.]

Whoever—

- (a) sells, lets to hire, distributes, publicly exhibits or in any manner puts into circulation, or for purposes of sale, hire, distribution, public exhibition or circulation, makes, produces or has in his possession any obscene book, pamphlet, paper, drawing, painting, representation or figure or any other obscene object whatsoever, or
- (b) imports, exports or conveys any obscene object for any of the purposes aforesaid, or knowing or having reason to believe that such object will be sold, let to hire, distributed or publicly exhibited or in any manner put into circulation, or
- (c) takes part in or receives profits from any business in the course of which he knows or has reason to believe that any such obscene objects are for any of the purposes aforesaid, made, produced, purchased, kept, imported, exported, conveyed, publicly exhibited or in any manner put into circulation, or

(d) advertises or makes known by any means whatsoever that any person is engaged or is ready to engage in any act which is an offence under this section, or that any such obscene object can be procured from or through any person, or

(e) offers or attempts to do any act which is an offence under this section, shall be punished [on first conviction with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, and with fine which may extend to two thousand rupees, and, in the event of a second or subsequent conviction, with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, and also with fine which may extend to five thousand rupees].

This section does not extend to—

(a) any book, pamphlet, paper, writing, drawing, painting, representation or figure—

(i) the publication of which is proved to be justified as being for the public good on the ground that such book, pamphlet, paper, writing, drawing, painting, representation or figure is in the interest of science, literature, art or learning or other objects of general concern, or (ii) which is kept or used bona fide for religious purposes;

(b) any representation sculptured, engraved, painted or otherwise represented on or in— (i) any ancient monument within the meaning of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (24 of 1958), or (ii) any temple, or on any car used for the conveyance of idols, or kept or used for any religious purpose.]

Anything that is obscene must necessarily be indecent. Obscenity refers to that which has a prurient or lascivious appeal. A vulgar writing is not necessarily obscene. Obscenity has a tendency to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences. There is also a distinction between mere references to sex or sexual explicitness from obscenity. In *Ranjith D Udeshi V State of Maharashtra* the Supreme Court remarked “Sex and nudity in art and literature cannot be regarded as evidence of obscenity without something more.” In the same case the Supreme Court drew the difference between obscenity and pornography. It was held that while pornography denotes writings pictures etc. intended to arouse sexual desire, obscenity may include publications not intended to do so but which have that tendency. While both offend against public decency and morals pornography is obscenity in a more aggravated form.

### **PRIVACY**

The term privacy has been described as the rightful claim of the individual to determine the extent to which he or she wishes to share himself or herself with others and his or her control over the time, place and circumstances to communicate with others. It is the ability of an individual or group to seclude themselves, or information about themselves, and thereby express themselves selectively. The boundaries and content of what is considered private differ among cultures and individuals, but share common themes. When something is private to a person, it usually means that something is inherently special or sensitive to them. The domain of privacy partially overlaps security, which can include the concepts of appropriate use, as well as protection of information. Privacy may also take the form of bodily integrity.

The right not to be subjected to unsanctioned invasion of privacy by the government, corporations or individuals is part of many countries' privacy laws, and in some cases, constitutions. Almost all countries have laws which in some way limit privacy. An

example of this would be law concerning taxation, which normally requires the sharing of information about personal income or earnings. In some countries individual privacy may conflict with freedom of speech laws and some laws may require public disclosure of information which would be considered private in other countries and cultures.

Privacy may be voluntarily sacrificed, normally in exchange for perceived benefits and very often with specific dangers and losses, although this is a very strategic view of human relationships. In the business world, a person may volunteer personal details (often for advertising purposes) in order to gamble on winning a prize. Personal information which is voluntarily shared but subsequently stolen or misused can lead to identity theft.

### **COPYRIGHT**

Copyright is the exclusive and assignable legal right, given to the originator for a fixed number of years, to print, publish, perform, film, or record literary, artistic, or musical material. The rights provided under Copyright law include the rights of reproduction of the work, communication of the work to the public, adaptation of the work and translation of the work. The scope and duration of protection provided under copyright law varies with the nature of the protected work.

The Copyright Act, 1957 governs the subject of copyright law in India. The Copyright Act 1957 was the first post-independence copyright legislation in India and the law has been amended six times since 1957. The most recent amendment was in the year 2012, through the Copyright (Amendment) Act 2012.

The author of a work is generally considered as the first owner of the copyright under the Copyright Act 1957. However, for works made in the course of an author's employment under a "contract of service" or apprenticeship, the employer is considered as the first owner of copyright, in the absence of any agreement to the contrary.

Section 19 of the Copyright Act 1957 lays down the modes of assignment of copyright in India. Assignment can only be in writing and must specify the work, the period of assignment and the territory for which assignment is made. If the period of assignment is not specified in the agreement, it shall be deemed to be 5 years and if the territorial extent of assignment is not specified, it shall be presumed to be limited to the territories of India.

The Copyright Act 1957 exempts certain acts from the ambit of copyright infringement. They are fair dealing with any copyrighted work for certain specifically mentioned purposes and specific activities enumerated in the statute.

The fair dealing approach followed in India is clearly limited towards the purposes of private or personal use, including research, criticism or review and reporting of current events and current affairs, including the reporting of a lecture delivered in public.

While the term fair dealing has not been defined anywhere in the Copyright Act 1957, the concept of 'fair dealing' has been discussed in different judgments, including the decision of the Supreme Court of India in *Academy of General Education V. B. Malini Mallya* (2009) and the decision of the High Court of Kerala in *Civic Chandran v. Ammini Amma*.

The Copyright Act 1957 provides three kinds of remedies - administrative remedies, civil remedies and criminal remedies. The administrative remedies provided under the statute include detention of the infringing goods by the customs authorities. The civil remedies are provided under Chapter XII of the Copyright Act 1957 and the remedies provided include injunctions, damages and account of profits. The criminal remedies are provided under Chapter XIII of the statute and the remedies provided against copyright infringement include imprisonment up to 3 years along with a fine up to 200,000 Rupees.

### **LIBEL**

Libel consists in the publication of a defamatory statement expressed in some permanent form, for instance by writing, printing, pictures, statue, wax work, effigy etc. In the case of films, the visual aspect being permanent in nature would constitute libel. The audio portion would also qualify as libel because it is the part of the film.

In the context of the internet, publication occurs when the contents of the publication are seen by the reader. An electronic publication could take place through the email, online bulletin boards, chat room messages, digital photographs and so on.

At common law libel is both a criminal offence as well as a civil wrong. Under India Law, libel constitutes criminal offences under Section 499 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860. Whoever defames another shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

The truth of defamatory statement is a complete defense to civil action for libel. The defense of fair comment on a matter of public interest is like justification, a complete defense to an action of libel.

The law of libel recognizes certain situations where public interest demands that a person should be protected from liability for a defamatory statement, even though the words cannot be proved to be true or defended as fair comment. In such cases, the laws concern for free discourse outweighs the need to protect personal reputations. There are two type of privileges-absolute and qualified. An absolute privilege is effective no matter what the defendant's motivation. The defense of absolute privilege applies to Parliamentary, Judicial proceedings, Military and navel proceedings and state proceedings. On the other hand, the exercise of qualified privilege is conditional upon its bona fide exercise.

It is a defense to an action of libel the plaintiff had expressly or impliedly consented to the publication complained of. Where the defendant offers an apology and the apology is accepted by the plaintiff, it would absolve the defendant in an action of libel.

### **CYBER LAWS**

Cyber Crime is not defined in Information Technology Act 2000 or in the I.T. Amendment Act 2008 or in any other legislation in India. Offence or crime has been dealt with elaborately listing various acts and the punishments for each, under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and quite a few other legislations too. Hence, to define cybercrime, we can say, it is just a combination of crime and computer.

Cyber crimes can involve criminal activities that are traditional in nature, such as theft, fraud, forgery, defamation and mischief, all of which are subject to the Indian Penal Code. The abuse of computers has also given birth to a gamut of new age crimes that are addressed by the Information Technology Act, 2000. We can

categorize Cyber crimes in two ways.

The Computer as a Target:-using a computer to attack other computers. E.g. Hacking, Virus/Worm attacks, DOS attack etc. The computer as a weapon:-using a computer to commit real world crimes. E.g. Cyber Terrorism, IPR violations, Credit card frauds, EFT frauds, Pornography etc. Cyber Crime regulated by Cyber Laws or Internet Laws.

Technological advancements have created new possibilities for criminal activity, in particular the criminal misuse of information technologies such as Unauthorized access & Hacking, Trojan Attack, Virus and Worm attack, Email spoofing, Email Spamming, Sending malicious codes through email, Email bombing, Sending threatening emails, Defamatory emails, Email frauds, IRC related issues, Consumption of scarce, limited, or non-renewable resources like NW bandwidth, RAM, CPU time, Alteration of Configuration Information Physical Destruction or Alteration of Network Components, Pornography, Forgery, IPR Violations, Cyber Terrorism, Banking/Credit card Related crimes, E-commerce/ Investment Frauds, Sale of illegal articles, Online gambling Defamation, Cyber Stalking, Identity Theft, Data diddling, Theft of Internet Hours, Theft of computer system (Hardware), Physically damaging a computer system and Breach of Privacy and Confidentiality

The Government of India enacted its Information Technology Act 2000 with the objectives as to provide legal recognition for transactions carried out by means of electronic data interchange and other means of electronic communication, commonly referred to as "electronic commerce", which involve the use of alternatives to paper-based methods of communication and storage of information, to facilitate electronic filing of documents with the Government agencies and further to amend the Indian Penal Code, the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 1891 and the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto." The Information Technology Act, 2000, was thus passed as the Act No.21 of 2000, got President Assent on 9 June and was made effective from 17 October 2000. The Act essentially deals with the following issues: Legal Recognition of Electronic Documents, Legal Recognition of Digital Signatures, Offenses and Contraventions, Justice and Dispensation Systems for cyber crimes.

Amendment Act 2008, being the first legislation in the nation on technology, computers and e-commerce and e-communication, the Act was the subject of extensive debates, elaborate reviews and detailed criticisms, with one arm of the industry criticizing some sections of the Act to be draconian and other stating it is too diluted and lenient. There were some conspicuous omissions too resulting in the investigators relying more and more on the time-tested Indian Penal Code even in technology based cases with the I.T. Act also being referred in the process and the reliance more on IPC rather on the ITA. Thus the need for an amendment – a detailed one – was felt for the I.T. Act almost from the year 2003-04 itself. Major industry bodies were consulted and advisory groups were formed to go into the perceived lacunae in the I.T. Act and comparing it with similar legislations in other nations and to suggest recommendations. Such recommendations were analyzed and subsequently taken up as a comprehensive Amendment Act and after considerable administrative procedures, the consolidated amendment called the Information Technology

Amendment Act 2008 was placed in the Parliament and passed without much debate, towards the end of 2008 (by which time the Mumbai terrorist attack of 26 November 2008 had taken place). This Amendment Act got the President assent on 5 Feb 2009 and was made effective from 27 October 2009.

Some of the notable features of the ITAA are as follows:

Focusing on data privacy

Focusing on Information Security

Defining cyber café

Making digital signature technology neutral

Defining reasonable security practices to be followed by corporates

Redefining the role of intermediaries

Recognising the role of Indian Computer Emergency Response Team

Inclusion of some additional cyber crimes like child pornography and cyber terrorism

Authorizing an Inspector to investigate cyber offences (as against the DSP earlier)

Section 43 deals with penalties and compensation for damage to computer, computer system etc. This Section addresses the civil offence of theft of data. If any person without permission of the owner or any other person who is in charge of a computer, accesses or downloads, copies or extracts any data or introduces any computer contaminant like virus or damages or disrupts any computer or denies access to a computer to an authorized user or tampers with it etc, he shall be liable to pay damages to the person so affected. The essence of this Section is civil liability. Criminality in the offence of data theft is being separately dealt with later under Sections 65 and 66.

Writing a virus program or spreading a virus mail, a bot, a Trojan or any other malware in a computer network or causing a Denial of Service Attack in a server will all come under this Section and attract civil liability by way of compensation. Under this Section, words like Computer Virus, Computer Contaminant, Computer database and Source Code are all described and defined. Questions like the employees' liability in an organization which is sued against for data theft or such offences and the amount of responsibility of the employer or the owner and the concept of due diligence were all debated in the first few years of ITA -2000 in court litigations like the baze.com case and other cases.

The corporate responsibility for data protection is greatly emphasized by inserting Section 43A whereby corporate are under an obligation to ensure adoption of reasonable security practices. Further what is sensitive personal data has since been clarified by the central government vide its Notification dated 11 April 2011 giving the list of all such data which includes password, details of bank accounts or card details, medical records etc.

Section 66B: Dishonestly receiving stolen computer resource or communication device is punishable with punishment up to three years or one lakh rupees as fine or both.

Section 66C: Electronic signature or other identity theft like using others' password or electronic signature etc. Punishment is three years imprisonment or fine of one lakh rupees or both.

Section 66D: Cheating by personation using computer resource or a communication device shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which can extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to one lakh rupees.

Section 66E: Privacy violation – Publishing or transmitting private area of any person without his or her consent etc. Punishment is three years imprisonment or two lakh rupees fine or both. Section 66F: Cyber terrorism – Intent to threaten the unity, integrity, security or sovereignty of the nation and denying access to any person authorized to access the computer resource or attempting to penetrate or access a computer resource without authorization. Acts of causing a computer contaminant (like virus or Trojan Horse or other spyware or malware) likely to cause death or injuries to persons or damage to or destruction of property etc. come under this Section. Punishment is life imprisonment.

Section 67 deals with publishing or transmitting obscene material in electronic form. Whoever publishes or transmits any material which is lascivious or appeals to the prurient interest or if its effect is such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely to read the matter contained in it, shall be punished with first conviction for a term up to three years and fine of five lakh rupees and in second conviction for a term of five years and fine of ten lakh rupees or both.

Child Pornography has been exclusively dealt with under Section 67B. Punishment for the first conviction is imprisonment for a maximum of five years and fine of ten lakh rupees and in the event of subsequent conviction with imprisonment of seven years and fine of ten lakh rupees.

Section 69 empowers the Government or agencies as stipulated in the Section, to intercept, monitor or decrypt any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer resource, subject to compliance of procedure as laid down

The Indian Penal Code, 1860, normally referred to as the IPC is a very powerful legislation and probably the most widely used in criminal jurisprudence, serving as the main criminal code of India. In practice, however, the investigating agencies file the cases quoting the relevant sections from IPC in addition to those corresponding in ITA like offences under IPC 463, 464, 468 and 469 read with the ITA/ITAA Sections 43 and 66, to ensure the evidence or punishment stated at least in either of the legislations can be brought about easily.

Ethics is a very important aspect of new media, as the internet is increasingly becoming an important part of our daily life. There is a pressing need to protect children, adolescents and other vulnerable sections from the dangers of the net.

### **Books for Reference**

1. Madhavi Goradia Divan: *Facets of Media Law*, Eastern Book Company
2. M. Neelamalar: *Media Law and Ethics*, PHI Learning Pvt. Ltd.
3. *Press, Media & Telecommunication Laws*, Universal Law Publishing Co.

## Module VI

### Introduction to Technical Writing

Technical writing is a type of writing where the author is writing about a particular subject that requires direction, instruction, or explanation. This style of writing has a very different purpose and different characteristics than other writing styles such as creative writing, academic writing or business writing.

Technical writing is sometimes defined as simplifying the complex. Inherent in such a concise and deceptively simple definition is a whole range of skills and characteristics that address nearly every field of human endeavour at some level. A significant subset of the broader field of technical communication, technical writing involves communicating complex information to those who need it to accomplish some task or goal.

- Technical writing explains how to use technology
- It is audience specific
- It is the process of shaping information
- It deals with theories, systems, designs and methods

#### Definition

“Technical writing conveys specific information about a technical subject to a specific audience for a specific purpose...The words and graphics of technical writing are meant to be practical: that is, to communicate a body of factual information that will help an audience to understand a subject or carry out a task.”-**Michael H. Markel**

“Technical communication is a process of gathering information from experts and presenting it to an audience in a clear and easily understandable form.”- **The Society of Technical Communication**

#### Types

Technical writing covers many genres and writing styles depending on the information and audience. Technical documents are not solely produced by technical writers. Almost anyone who works in a professional setting produces technical documents of some variety. Some examples of technical writing include:

1. **Instructions and procedures** are documents that help either developers or end users operate or configure a device or program. Examples of instructional documents include user manuals and troubleshooting guides for computer programs, household products, medical equipment, and automobiles.
2. **Proposals.** Most projects begin with a proposal—a document that describes the purpose of a project, the tasks that will be performed in the project, the methods used to complete the project, and finally the cost of the project. Proposals cover a wide range of subjects. For example, a technical writer may author a proposal that outlines how much it will cost to install a new computer system, and a teacher may write a proposal that outlines how a new biology class will be structured.
3. **Emails, letters, and memoranda** are some of the most frequently written documents in a business. Letters and emails can be constructed with a variety of goals—some are aimed at simply communicating information while others are designed to persuade the recipient to accomplish a certain task. While



letters are usually written to people outside of a company, memoranda (memos) are documents written to other employees within the business.

4. Press releases: When a company wants to publicly reveal a new product or service, they will have a technical writer author a press release, a document that describes the product's functions and value to the public.
5. Specifications are design outlines that describe the structure, parts, packaging, and delivery of an object or process in enough detail that another party can reconstruct it. For example, a technical writer might diagram and write the specifications for a smartphone or bicycle so that a manufacturer can produce the object.
6. Descriptions are shorter explanations of procedures and processes that help readers understand how something works. For example, a technical writer might author a document that shows the effects of greenhouse gases or demonstrate how the braking system on a bike functions.
7. **Resumes and job applications** are another example of technical documents. They are documents that are used in a professional setting to inform readers of the author's credentials.
8. Technical reports are written to provide readers with information, instructions, and analysis on tasks. Reports come in many forms. For example, a technical writer might evaluate a building that is for sale and produce a trip report that highlights his or her findings and whether or not he or she believes the building should be purchased. Another writer who works for a non-profit company may publish an evaluation report that shows the findings of the company's research into air pollution.
9. White papers are documents that are written for experts in a field and typically describe a solution to a technological or business challenge or problem. Examples of white papers include a piece that details how to make a business stand out in the market or a piece explaining how to prevent cyber-attacks on businesses.
10. **Websites**: The advent of hypertext has changed the way documents are read, organized, and accessed. Technical writers of today are often responsible for authoring pages on websites like "About Us" pages or product pages and are expected to be proficient in web development tools.
11. **Standard operating policies and procedures**: These are the operating documents for organizations; they contain rules and regulations on how the organization and its members are expected to perform. Policies and procedures are like instructions, but they go much further. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) are more for procedures in which a process is performed—for example, taking a dental impression.
12. **Recommendation, feasibility, evaluation reports**: This group of similar reports does things like compare several options against a set of requirements and recommend one; considers an idea (plan, project) in terms of its "feasibility," for example, some combination of its technical, economic, social practicality or possibility; passes judgement on the worth or value of a thing by comparing it to a set of requirements, or criteria.

13. **Technical background reports:** This type is the hardest one to define but the one that most people write. It focuses on a technical topic, provides background on that topic for a specific set of readers who have specific needs for it. This report does not supply instructions, nor does it supply recommendations in any systematic way, nor does it report new and original data.
14. **Technical guides and handbooks:** Closely related to technical report but differing somewhat in purpose and audience are technical guides and handbooks.
15. **Primary research reports:** This type presents findings and interpretation from laboratory or field research. The content, organization, and format guidelines for the primary research report are important.
16. **Business plans:** This type is a proposal to start a new business. See content, organization, and format guidelines in the chapter on business plan.
17. **Technical specifications:** This type presents descriptive and operational details on a new or updated product.

### **OBJECTIVES IN TECHNICAL WRITING**

1. Act ethically in their role in the communication situation.
2. Act critically as they apply principles taught in the course to communication situations.
3. Evaluate the rhetorical context of a given writing situation and write accordingly. Included in this evaluation are adapting to the communication situation by analysing the audience, the writer's role, and the appropriate ethical dimensions.
4. Apply concepts of information design. These concepts include effective ways to design documents for print, web, and other electronic means of communication in order to construct documents meaningful to the audience.
5. Effectively create standard formats used to construct meaningful documents. These formats include genres such as various kinds of reports, sets of instructions, letters and memos, and various electronic genres.
6. Use visual items in effectively constructing meaning in communication situations. These items include, but are not limited to, tables and graphs, photographs, drawings and schematics, and various electronic creations such as screen captures.
7. Effectively negotiate the process of completing technical documents. These processes include planning, drafting, editing and revising to quality standards, and, where appropriate, usability testing, research methods and appropriate citation of sources.
8. Recognize and accommodate global concepts. These concepts include localization, translation, and globalization.
9. Create clear, concise technical documents that effectively use style and grammar and information structure in ways that create meaning with the reader.
10. Collaborate effectively in various writing situations, including planning, creating, managing, evaluating, editing and revising document production

## **GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL WRITING**

- Know your audience. An expert in the field will understand certain abbreviations, acronyms, and lingo that directly apply to such a field. The novice will not understand in the same manner and, therefore, every detail must be explained and spelled out for them.
- Use an impersonal style. Write from a third person perspective, like a teacher instructing a student. Any opinions should be omitted.
- The writing should be straightforward, to the point, and as simple as possible to make sure the reader understands the process or instruction. This at times may appear as simply a list of steps to take to achieve the desired goal or may be a short or lengthy explanation of a concept or abstract idea.
- Know how to research. Gather information from a number of sources, understand the information gathered so that it can be analysed thoroughly, and then put the information into an easy to understand format to instruct those who read it. The more inexperienced the audience, the more information has to be gathered and explained.
- Be thorough in description and provide enough detail to make your points; but, also consider the need to use an economy of words and not bore the reader with unnecessary details.

### **Process of technical writing**

Technical writing process has three steps: Pre Writing or Planning, Writing and Re-Writing. The planning and writing steps can overlap, but generally, they are performed in this order. The following is a breakdown of the technical writing process.

#### **Pre Writing**

The Technical Writer gathers all information relevant to the project, including subject matter, document specifications, and audience analysis. The Technical Writer reviews existing corporate materials and may look at the competition's offerings. The Assignment Editor or Project Manager gives the writer clear expectations, a budget and deadlines. The Writer must know how the final product should differ from what is already available. The Writer prepares an outline of the project, usually as a table of contents (TOC), and estimates a period for delivery. If the corporation does not have a Production Department, then the Project Manager arranges a contract with an external printer, broadcaster, or CD press. The Circulation Manager and Webmaster determine when and how the finished document will be distributed. The Writer may consult the Quality Assurance Manager about reviewing the document's success and making any necessary version changes.

#### **Writing**

The writing phase includes research, interviews, site visits, creating graphics, preparing a glossary of technical terms, writing the content, indexing, listing references, obtaining permissions and registering copyright. The Writer checks with the Project Manager at regular intervals to confirm the document is on schedule and within budget. The SME (Subject Matter Expert) validates the technical information, or the document goes through another form of peer review. The Attorney and Risk Manager approve the content and add a legal disclaimer, if necessary. The Editor and

Proofreader ensure the document has correct grammar, spelling, formatting, and follows the appropriate style guide. The Graphic Artist ensures the illustrations are suitable for the chosen media (e.g by digitizing hard copy, designing a CD cover, etc.).

Keep in mind: The audience of technical document

The goal of writing

The purpose of writing

### **Re-Writing**

After the process of writing the technical document will go through the process of editing. The editor will check the document to remove factual errors. He will double check the spellings, grammar, style, flow of information etc. according to the style guide. He will recommend rewriting the document if there are errors. The editor or SMEs may recommend re-writing if the document is not fulfilling the objectives and purpose of the document. Sometimes additional information will be added while re-writing the document.

### **Book for Reference**

5. SajithaJayaprakash, *Technical Writing*, Himalaya Publishing House Pvt.Ltd, Mumbai, 2008
6. Gerson, *Technical Writing: Process And Product*, Pearson Education India, New Delhi, 2007
7. Herman M. Weisman, *Basic Technical Writing*, Merrill, California, 1992
8. Darlene Smith-Worthington, Sue Jefferson, *Technical Writing for Success*, Cengage Learning, USA, 2010..