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TELEVISION AS A “POWERFUL WEAPON”

Abstract

Television influences viewers through the coherence of its broadcasts, which, despite their genre and thematic diversity, form a certain unity. Despite the growing prominence of social media, television has not lost its relevance and still remains one of the main “weapons.” Sometimes it happens that a piece of news first aired on television later becomes part of the news agenda of various information agencies. Therefore, we can conclude that even representatives of social media closely monitor the news delivered by television newsrooms. The opposite can also occur: television representatives do not waste time verifying information disseminated by different online media before airing it.

We believe that viewers need to know who stands behind each television channel so that they can be assured of the truthfulness, impartiality, and reliability of the information presented in the news. Indeed, television can be used by individuals, organizations, businesses, or politicians for their own public relations purposes, to solve very important problems to their advantage, should they arise in the course of their activities, and thereby harm other people. Television can truly be used as a “powerful weapon” to achieve illegal goals.

Keywords: television, social media, “powerful weapon.”

In any country of the world, television, along with other media, is the main source of information for people. With the help of television, viewers gain access not only to important local news but also to global events happening around the world. This is why media is referred to as the “fourth estate.” Eldar Iberi, in his work *Radio Journalism*, points out that journalism, as a representative of the fourth estate, “actively participates in the governance of society and the state alongside the traditional three branches of power.” [1] Television can confidently be described as one of the essential components of modern life. According to our experience and observations, television can, for example, enable a particular person to win elections, among other things.

Television influences viewers through the coherence of its programming, which, despite its diversity of genres and themes, creates a certain unity. Reports, segments, and broadcasts aired on television have a real impact on viewers. From our own experience and observation, television’s influence can, for example, help a businessperson’s commercial activity to thrive, for which they, in return, spare no financial resources. However, the opposite can also happen: the same business activity can be covered in such a way, or a journalistic investigation can be conducted so thoroughly, that as a result the entire business may collapse and the businessperson’s reputation may be damaged. This is often followed by court proceedings, which will either allow the business to survive or lead to its liquidation, depending on the court’s decision. In some cases, the television channel itself may have to issue a public apology and pay a substantial fine.

We also find noteworthy the information published by the website Intermedia.ge regarding the role of internet media in public life, specifically: “With the development of digital technologies, the capabilities of mass media are growing and becoming more easily accessible.” In modern society, among these means, the internet is one of the most important. This implies all those tools of mass communication that appear

online in electronic form. In other words, it is called “internet mass media.”

Society is developing day by day, which is primarily connected to the accumulation of knowledge. Every day we try to embrace new challenges and, in doing so, save our own time. The achievements of modernity provide us with tremendous opportunities to do so. A clear example of this is internet media, where print and broadcast mass communication tools are mainly presented in the form of electronic books, newspapers, and magazines.

Through internet media, users can instantly access the latest events happening in any corner of the world and receive any media information created or written on topics of their interest. This is a highly convenient and effective method of obtaining desired information and broadening one’s horizons within a short period of time. In fact, immediacy is the main advantage of internet media, as well as the internet itself.

In the modern world, the role of internet media has become irreplaceable. This is simply because a significant portion of the population are internet users, and this group prefers to receive the information they want via the internet rather than spend time buying different newspapers or magazines or even watching television. According to global internet statistics, by 1995 the total number of internet users accounted for 0.4% of the world’s population, while by 2011 this figure had already reached 30%. Thus, in just a few years, the internet has become a universal source of access to information for millions of people—anywhere and anytime.

Given that internet media has become one of society’s key areas of interest, the amount of such content is increasing every day. Today, there are countless websites that operate according to almost the same principles as newspapers, television, and other media outlets.

Although it is clear to each of us how beneficial it is to expand our knowledge through internet media, we often still forget this truly valuable quality of the internet and use it solely for entertainment. This does not have a positive impact on a person’s health, nor do we learn anything of real value. Therefore, it is important to exercise self-control. If we approach the internet consciously in order to find the information we need, then we should refrain from switching to other topics and try to use this important feature of modern technology as productively as possible.

In public life, internet media enjoys great popularity. Even though some people still name television as their traditional source of information, the influence of modernity is evident, and accordingly, the role of internet media is growing day by day.

Today, it is quite relevant and frequently discussed how harmful the trend can be that internet media is replacing traditional means of mass communication. In this regard, we must remember that everything has both positive and negative sides. The most important thing is that we make the right choice ourselves and appreciate the achievements of human intellect, using them again for our own education and progress. [2]

Nevertheless, we believe that television has not lost its relevance and still remains one of the main “weapons.” Sometimes, a piece of news first aired on television later appears in the news agendas of various information agencies. This means we can conclude that even representatives of social media carefully follow the news delivered by television news services. The opposite can also happen: television representatives do not waste time verifying information spread by different internet media before broadcasting it themselves.

In our opinion, the most popular medium is still television. In Georgia, television news broadcasts remain the primary source of information for viewers. At the same time, we should not forget that bias in favor of various political parties is common, and most importantly, there is a lack of transparency regarding the ownership of television channels. Viewers may think they know who owns a given private TV company,

but often this knowledge is based only on rumor. However, it is possible for an interested person to request documents from the relevant authorities and clarify who owns a particular private television company. In our view, this should be transparent and easily accessible, though in most cases in Georgia this reality still appears somewhat obscure.

We find interesting the article published by Radio Liberty, which states:

“The owners of the national channels are registered in offshore zones. Therefore, it was impossible to determine which companies actually own these national channels,” said Tamar [3] Karosanidze, head of the organization, in an interview with Radio Liberty.

“Even the regulatory commission does not possess this information—it knows the names of the companies listed as owners, but who the shareholders of these companies are, neither the regulator nor we were able to find out, because they are registered in offshore jurisdictions.”[3]

We believe that viewers need to know who stands behind each television station so they can be confident in the truthfulness, impartiality, and credibility of the information delivered by the news. Indeed, television can be used by an individual, an organization, a business, or a politician for their own PR purposes and to solve very significant problems to their advantage, should such problems arise during their activities. In doing so, they may harm others, because television can be used as a “powerful weapon” to achieve unlawful goals.

At the same time, we also find it noteworthy that print media is becoming more active in our modern era. It might seem that television has replaced the press. However, Ambebi.ge publishes interesting information on this topic:

“In the era of digital and instant information, print media has faced real challenges. Nevertheless, it is not giving up its position and continues to return to our lives in engaging new ways. Structural changes, new strategies, and a focus on quality are helping it not only survive but also create a new media reality. Print publications can offer readers what online platforms cannot achieve. They can create unique content and pay more attention to detail and quality.”[4]

In May 2024, the Bomondi Group returned to readers with a new publication, presenting **“Tana by Bomondi.”** Why “Tana”? According to information again shared by Ambebi.ge:

“According to the Dictionary of Old Georgian Words, Tana means ‘advisor,’ and the magazine will serve as a kind of guide to fashion, culture, self-care, a healthy lifestyle, and travel.”

This 300-page publication will highlight many current topics and engage readers by raising their awareness. The edition is also notable because the cover artwork was created exclusively by the artist Salome Riggava, who works in the United States. The publication includes original articles about the world’s largest fashion houses, modern technologies in the field, iconic works by designers, and important figures working in the areas of beauty and culture. Additionally, the magazine will present travel destinations, culinary trends, and other topics. Readers will also have the opportunity to see Tbilisi from a completely new perspective through impressive photographic works. Both these and other photo essays will introduce readers to different fields from entirely unique viewpoints.

Although print media faces fierce competition from the internet, it still remains an important source of information and entertainment for millions of people around the world. Its ability to adapt to changing conditions and maintain a high standard of content quality allows it to stay relevant and attract new readers, confirming that print media will always play a significant role in the media landscape. [4] However, despite this, the role of television lies precisely in its immediacy and the ability to broadcast events live.

Therefore, in our view, television still remains the number one mass medium. Based on our television experience, we can conclude that despite the spread of social networks—and it can be said that half of Georgia’s population has become dependent on them—it is still television that makes it possible to receive

accurate, verified information. The information obtained there can then appear in various interpretations on social media, where any given story may spark hype, sharp comments, and so on.

In our opinion, compared to social media, the press seems somewhat “neglected.” Even though newspapers are available for sale at kiosks, their circulation is quite low. This may be due to the socio-economic situation of the population. There is also another possibility: it may simply have become easier to access information on the internet, and people prefer not to spend extra money on the press, since they would rather use that money for their families. Based on our experience, we can conclude that neither social media nor print media, in the current situation, enjoy as much popularity as television.

Therefore, we can say that television, as a means of mass communication, remains a powerful “weapon” in the hands of any organization, individual, or the state. The main thing is that this “weapon” is not used for personal gain or self-interest.

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