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**Which is more Reliable Print media or Online Media?**

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**Abstract**

This essay reviews the credibility of two major types of information and news resources. The question of the century has been presented! Which is more credible, print media or online media news? Credibility is defined as a sense to be trustworthy and to have a reputable reputation. With the information presented, the world and ordinary folk are battling with what to believe in.

Evidence is presented in this essay on the pros and cons of both forms of media.

Keywords: Reliability, print media, online media.

**Introduction**

Modern times are volatile and full of changes, especially for newspapers as more news sources turn into online websites. Print media is slowly becoming an instrument of dinosaurs to get their information, but are online media news articles more credible and reliable than printed media? This question has sparked a debate of the ages between the conformists and the revolutionists.

With the turn of the last decade, many reputable news sources have transitioned from printed media to online publications and subscriptions. More and more people are ditching paper and becoming glued to their screens to receive their information. Constant beeps and buzzes going off coming from their phones informing them that there has been another mass shooting in the United States, or that there has been another coronavirus outbreak in a distant land. This still begs the question, "Is online media news better than printed news?"

**Online Media**

The print vs media topic has been a debate ever since the huge expansion of the internet and advances in technology. However, there are both advantages and disadvantages to the use of

online media. Although print has been the main source of receiving information and providing entertainment for centuries, with the emergence of new technology, online media has changed this idea. The way society has received its news is always evolving throughout the decades: from the newspaper to the radio, then television, to computers/laptops, and now smart devices. However, this continues to be a topic of discussion because of people's inability to evolve with the times. The expansion of online media has changed the way people receive information forever. There is so much to be said about print vs online media, however, online media does have a lot of advantages to it. First of all, information transmission is faster than ever. We as a society can get almost all information on anything as quickly as a few seconds (Alyshia Kisor-Madlem, 2016). However, this comes with a good amount of false information. Since online media can be published quickly, some details that are published have the opportunity to be incorrect or change. Even when this happens though, the information can be deleted and edited a lot quicker than print can be. Another advantage of online media is how accessible it is to almost everyone with internet access. In most cases, newspapers are delivered on one day of the week or a person would have to go out of their way to purchase the material. While through online networks, information can be accessed in seconds on a user's devices, and the only thing required is internet access and/or signal.

There are so many different forms of online media, whether it is social media networks, news pages, or blogs. The huge blow-up of social networking sites has been a big shift in the precedence of online news sites. Nowadays, many of the younger generations only access news related information through social media websites. Although promoting news to a younger audience is always good, the quality of the news is not always reliable. Most of the pieces are highly embellished with fabricated titles which lead readers into receiving false information. The

credibility of news broadcasted through these networks is often lacking, due to network users' biases and oftentimes inaccurate understanding of the information. News sites will usually have more accurate information than social media will. However, a common problem seen with a lot of news sites is the blatant bias in the pieces. This is especially seen involving politics where certain news sites favor some candidates and ideas heavily versus others. This creates a lack of trust between the reader and the writer because news is supposed to be just the facts instead of the writer's personal views influencing the reader. This differs between another form of media called blogs. Blogs are sites where people can write about their own opinions on the news, life, or anything the writer would like. Blogs usually do not write for an audience like the other sources, they write for themselves, so the information on them tends to be the least accurate and the most biased.

### **Printed Media**

Print media has existed since the 17th century when it was the most popular form of communicating big events in countries and local cities. Its popularity has been quite steady, but the digital age is coming fast, and now consumers of large newspapers, like CNN and Wall Street Journal, have moved on to online subscriptions (Kisor-Madlem 2016). Now people can access their news faster, but there are people skeptical about whether online is a better option or not. Complaints about errors, misinformation, and bias are just some of the opinions people have about online news. These complaints, however, also generally relate to printed news as well.

Typically in news, there are two kinds of errors: spelling and misinformation. Both are and probably will always be present in news media, regardless of how much care goes into it. In 2009, The Fresno Bee printed a newspaper article about the Yosemite Chapel (Ron Orozco, 2009). It was titled "Yosemite Chapel marks 130th anniversary" and featured a disturbing

amount of spelling errors within the article. Names were misspelled, and some words were out of place within the article. The perpetrator? Bad spell checking software used to look over the article before publishing. The Fresno Bee later reprinted the article but with the proper names placed in. However, it was still quite an embarrassment for The Fresno Bee. Printed media isn't always perfect regardless of how much more time goes into it. Both print and digital media typically use the same computer software to help look over the files and the documents, so it is bound that an error can occur randomly. However, this sort of error is quite minor compared to another one that is much more harmful in the long run.

Misinformation is everywhere on the internet. Blogs, newspapers, and even social media can be flooded with information that is somehow incorrect. While newspapers are generally formed by people passionate about spreading information, it can also be a problem. This is found largely with smaller news services, due to the fact that they have to release a lot of news quickly, so their margin for errors is quite high. In a research journal titled *Editors at Small Newspaper Say Error Problems Serious*, the authors Donica Mensing and Merlyn Oliver examined small local newspapers and their sources to see the accuracy of what is being claimed. They looked at over one-thousand newspapers across the U.S. and personally contacted their sources cited to discover only about 54% of the stories were indeed accurate (Mensing and Oliver, 2005). This means that the sources were possibly cited haphazardly, not caring whether or not they were accurate to the story at hand. Considering that a lot of small-town newspapers are the main sources of information for hundreds of people, this percentage is disturbing. Considering this much misinformation is being spread in small areas is disturbing, as people might not have access to other sources for the reality of what's happening around them. Despite this misinformation,

another issue is at large when it comes to news media, which is the political views of the organization.

It's no surprise that most news stations have some sort of political bias. A lot of people have different points of view, whether it would be more conservative or liberal compared to the norm. A great example of this is Fox News, a news station known for its heavy right bias and occasional misinformation. However, these news stations can take their power over the public to the next level. In research about media bias and its effect on people, students were given article excerpts along with photos and were asked to complete a series of questionnaires. Based on the data collected, student exposure to articles "subtly influenced and distracted participants' objectivity" when it came to political views (Hoffman and Wallace, 2007). The news media you consume tends to lean you in a certain direction, regardless of if it's print or not.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, both print and online media have their pros and cons. Whether it is the speed at which it's published or the amounts of errors in it, both have areas for potential issues. In an ever-changing world, online media makes more sense for constant coverage of specific subject matter, but a lot of information can be fake or misrepresented. The print media has been a way for people to receive news for centuries now. It has uncovered some of the biggest corruption scandals and breaking stories of all time. In print media, you will read the news that happened in the past, but it will be the correct information because it had to go through many levels of clearance to even be considered for print. Online media is relatively new in the media world, but it has taken it by storm. There is one catch to the whole online publication machine, and that is that information can be taken down or revoked automatically. One of the major complaints of online publication is that it makes writers and editors more complacent because

they know that they can just take down the article if there are factual errors found. More and more credible news organizations are transforming their platforms to target online readers. It must be remembered that the only way news companies stay profitable is by having readers. It may not be in printed form, but more and more people are preferring online publications. Online and print media both have a sense of understanding that information is what people crave. People like to read flashy headlines, and juicy columns on the latest gossip, but there must be a consensus that the truth is always the best in both print and online media.



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