

Multimedia Information Virality Versus Privacy Protection: An Ethical Study of News Visualization in Multimedia Journalism

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the dilemma between the phenomenon of information virality and the protection of individual privacy within the ethics of news visualization in multimedia journalism in the new media era. Employing a qualitative approach through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, secondary data were collected from books, scholarly journals, academic articles, and relevant journalistic ethical regulations published within the last five years. The findings reveal that the characteristics of digital media and social media platform algorithms have contributed to the increasing culture of information virality through the utilization of emotional elements (emotion) and narratives (stories) within the STEPPS framework. In practice, media orientation toward speed and engagement often leads to privacy violations, such as the publication of photographs or videos of accident victims, individuals experiencing traumatic situations, and the identities of minors without proper censorship or consent. This unethical visual exploitation has negative psychological and social impacts, including trauma, cyberbullying, stigmatization, and reputational damage caused by permanent digital footprints. Based on the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press, press freedom in fulfilling the public interest must be balanced with respect for human dignity and individual privacy rights. Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of implementing ethical measures through visual identity protection (censorship/blurring), mandatory content verification, enforcement of the Journalistic Code of Ethics, and prioritizing the protection of vulnerable groups in order to establish healthy and responsible multimedia journalism within the digital environment.

Keywords: *Multimedia Journalism, Information Virality, Individual Privacy, Journalistic Ethics, Visualization, Digital News Visualization.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly transformed the fields of communication and journalism. The emergence of social media as an integral part of multimedia journalism has enabled information to be disseminated more quickly, widely, and conveniently than ever before. News is no longer communicated solely through written text but is increasingly delivered through photographs, videos, live streaming, and other forms of digital visual content. In contemporary journalistic practice, news visualization on social media has become one of the most effective tools for capturing public attention because visual content is more capable of eliciting emotional responses from audiences. This shift reflects the evolution of social media into a new arena for modern journalism, where speed, accessibility, and information virality are highly prioritized.¹

The increasing virality of information on social media has also generated significant ethical concerns, particularly regarding the protection of individual privacy. Viral videos depicting accident victims, acts of violence, social conflicts, and the disclosure of personal information are frequently circulated without adequate consideration of the psychological consequences or the privacy rights of those involved. In many instances, digital media platforms and social media users appear to prioritize viewership, audience engagement, and rapid information dissemination over the protection of individual rights. This trend suggests that the advancement of multimedia journalism has not always been accompanied by a corresponding commitment to ethical standards in the use of digital news visualization.²

Privacy, however, is a fundamental human right that must be safeguarded, including within digital environments. It encompasses not only the protection of personal data but also the preservation of an individual's dignity, security, and well-being in society. Nevertheless, the widespread use of social media has increasingly blurred the distinction between public and private spaces. Personal information can easily be recorded, shared, and consumed by the public without the consent of the individuals concerned. Previous studies have shown that the limited public awareness of privacy protection on social media has contributed to a growing risk of data misuse and the exploitation of individuals in digital spaces.³

From the perspective of journalistic ethics, the media bear a social responsibility to provide accurate and truthful information while upholding humanitarian values. Journalistic codes of ethics emphasize the importance of respecting privacy rights, protecting victims, and avoiding the publication of visual

¹ Almira Suci Maharani, "Media Informasi Di Ranah Media Sosial: Perubahan Karakteristik Dan Peran Jurnalistik Sebagai Media Baru," *PERSPEKTIF* 11, no. 2 (2022): 710–17.

² Faridah Faridah, Muhammad Yusuf, and Nur Setiawati, "Etika Keterbukaan Dan Perlindungan Privacy Di Media Sosial," *Jurnal An-Nasyr: Jurnal Dakwah Dalam Mata Tinta* 9, no. 1 (2022): 36–47.

³ Pratama Wasisto Aji and Prahastiwi Utari, "Manajemen Privasi Generasi Z Menghadapi Komersialisasi Data Pribadi Di Media Sosial," *JURNAL IPTEKKOM (Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan & Teknologi Informasi)* 24, no. 2 (2022): 103–16.

content that exploits or harms individuals. However, the reality of digital journalism often demonstrates that news visualization is presented in a sensational manner to maximize public attention and audience engagement. Consequently, information virality creates an ethical dilemma between the public's right to access information and the individual's right to privacy.⁴ This situation highlights the need for a more comprehensive examination of the ethical boundaries governing news visualization practices in multimedia journalism within the contemporary social media landscape.

Previous studies have generally examined social media privacy from the perspectives of data security, personal information protection, and user behavior on social media platforms. Other research has primarily focused on the legal aspects of personal data protection or on the ethical use of social media in general. However, there remains a limited body of research that specifically investigates the conflict between individual privacy protection and information virality within the context of ethical news visualization in multimedia journalism, particularly through a systematic literature review approach. Accordingly, the novelty of this study lies in its focus on analyzing how the virality of videos and digital news visuals disseminated through social media influences the protection of individual privacy, as well as how journalistic ethics should be applied to guide ethical news visualization practices in multimedia journalism. This study seeks to contribute to the existing literature by offering a comprehensive ethical perspective on balancing the public's right to information with the protection of individual privacy in today's digital media environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research approach using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The SLR method was selected because it enables researchers to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant studies concerning the ethics of digital news visualization, information virality, and the protection of individual privacy in multimedia journalism. By applying this method, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of existing scholarly developments, key research findings, and the research gaps that require further investigation.

The data used in this study consist of secondary sources obtained from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, academic publications, and previous studies relevant to the research topic. Data collection was conducted through a systematic search of scientific literature published within the last five years. The collected literature was then screened and selected based on its relevance to the objectives of the study. Data analysis was carried out by identifying, categorizing, and critically analyzing the selected literature according to the research focus on individual privacy protection and information virality in multimedia journalism. Finally, the findings were interpreted descriptively to draw conclusions regarding the

⁴ Maharani, "Media Informasi Di Ranah Media Sosial: Perubahan Karakteristik Dan Peran Jurnalistik Sebagai Media Baru."

application of ethical principles in digital news visualization practices on social media platforms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information Virality in Digital Media

The rapid development of digital media has given rise to a culture of virality as an integral part of modern communication. Information that is perceived as interesting, emotional, or sensational can spread rapidly through social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, X, and YouTube within a very short period. In the context of multimedia journalism, virality is often utilized as a strategy to attract public attention to particular events or issues. Consequently, digital news organizations compete to publish information as quickly as possible in order to maintain their visibility and attract larger audiences than competing media outlets.⁵ This increasingly competitive online media environment has shifted the focus of many media organizations beyond the quality of information toward performance indicators such as views, likes, shares, comments, and overall audience engagement. The greater the level of user interaction with a piece of content, the higher its potential to become viral on social media.

This phenomenon can be explained through Jonah Berger's Theory of Virality, particularly the STEPPS framework (Social Currency, Triggers, Emotion, Public, Practical Value, and Stories), which identifies six key elements that drive the widespread dissemination of content.⁶ Social Currency suggests that individuals are more likely to share content that enhances their social image or makes them appear knowledgeable and relevant to others. Triggers refer to the association of content with current events or widely discussed issues, making it more memorable and likely to be shared. Emotion is the most relevant element in the context of news visualization, as content that evokes strong emotional responses such as anger, sadness, surprise, or sympathy has been shown to encourage audiences to actively share information.⁷ Public explains that content that is highly visible and easily imitated by others tends to spread more rapidly, while Practical Value refers to information that people perceive as useful and therefore worth sharing. The final element, Stories, emphasizes that information presented through compelling and personal narratives such as the tragic experiences of victims has significantly greater viral potential than information presented in a purely factual manner.

Unlike traditional media, where the distribution of information is subject to editorial oversight and verification, the characteristics of social media allow virtually anyone to disseminate photographs, videos, and information to a broad audience without undergoing rigorous fact-checking or ethical review. Moreover, users often fail to consider that the Emotion and Stories elements driving audience engagement may originate from the genuine suffering of real individuals. As a result, a single event can become viral within hours because platform algorithms

⁵ Al Zuhri and Muhammad Fazil, "JURNALISTIK DIGITAL," n.d.

⁶ Jonah Berger et al., "'Contagious': Jonah Berger on Why Things Catch On," 2013, 1-6.

⁷ Berger et al.

tend to promote content that generates high levels of interaction and emotional engagement.⁸ The emphasis on virality and audience engagement has consequently encouraged both professional media organizations and social media users to produce and circulate increasingly dramatic and controversial visual content. This trend reflects the fact that the Emotion and Stories components of the STEPPS framework are more effectively conveyed through photographs and videos than through text alone. Visual content possesses a greater capacity to influence public opinion and stimulate sharing behavior because of its strong emotional and persuasive impact.

In multimedia journalism, however, these principles of virality are frequently applied without sufficient consideration of their ethical implications for the individuals depicted in news coverage. Examples include the publication of uncensored images of accident victims, survivors of violence, or individuals involved in social conflicts solely to strengthen the Emotion and Stories elements and increase the likelihood that the content will be widely shared. The ability of digital media to disseminate visual information rapidly and on a massive scale further amplifies the risks of privacy violations, misinformation, and the exploitation of victims for the sake of media popularity. Therefore, the ethical application of news visualization is essential to ensure that, regardless of the powerful dissemination mechanisms described by the STEPPS framework, the pursuit of virality remains constrained by humanitarian values and the protection of individual privacy rights throughout the process of information dissemination in the digital environment.

Forms of Privacy Violations in News Visualization

The rapid development of multimedia journalism in the digital era has made news visualization increasingly dominant in the dissemination of information to the public. Photographs and videos are considered more effective than text in capturing audience attention, leading both news organizations and social media users to rely heavily on visual content to increase the virality of information.⁹ However, the use of news visuals without adequate ethical consideration frequently results in violations of individual privacy. One of the most common forms of privacy infringement is the dissemination of videos depicting accident victims, acts of violence, or social conflicts without taking into account the psychological well-being of the victims and their families. In many cases, such videos are widely circulated across social media platforms to attract public attention and generate higher audience engagement, often without the consent of the individuals involved. This practice demonstrates that digital media environments frequently prioritize information virality over humanitarian values and respect for individual privacy rights.

Another common form of privacy violation is the publication of identifiable images of individuals without their consent, particularly those involving victims of crime, minors, and people experiencing traumatic events. Such practices frequently

⁸ Berger et al.

⁹ Zuhri and Fazil, "JURNALISTIK DIGITAL."

expose individuals to public scrutiny at a time when they are most vulnerable, potentially causing long-term psychological distress, social stigma, and reputational harm. In the digital environment, where visual content can be rapidly shared and permanently archived, the consequences of unauthorized exposure become even more significant.

With regard to child protection, the publication of children's identities in mass media requires special ethical consideration because children are particularly vulnerable to the harmful effects of digital information dissemination. Under ****Law No. 35 of 2014 on Child Protection**** in Indonesia, every child has the right to the protection of their identity and private life from any form of publication that may adversely affect their physical, mental, or social development.¹⁰ Accordingly, mass media are prohibited from disclosing the identities of children who are victims or perpetrators of criminal offenses. This prohibition extends to the publication of photographs, videos, full names, residential addresses, school information, or any other details that could reveal a child's identity to the public. Adherence to these legal and ethical standards is essential to safeguarding children's rights and ensuring that journalistic practices prioritize their best interests over the pursuit of audience engagement or information virality.

News visualization that openly reveals the identities of victims has the potential to cause psychological trauma, cyberbullying, and damage to the social reputation of the individuals concerned.¹¹ Furthermore, the exploitation of tragic events through the use of sensational images or videos represents another form of ethical violation in digital news visualization. Media organizations often present graphic or emotionally charged scenes excessively to attract audience attention without adequately considering the moral and social consequences for victims, their families, or society as a whole. Therefore, adherence to journalistic codes of ethics is essential to limiting visual exploitation and safeguarding individuals' privacy rights in the practice of multimedia journalism.

Several cases on social media illustrate the growing concern over privacy violations in the digital era. One of the most notable examples was the viral TikTok livestream conducted by healthcare workers during a cesarean section procedure in 2025.¹² The livestream sparked widespread public criticism because it exposed a medical procedure that should have remained private and confidential. As a consequence of the incident, the healthcare professionals involved were subjected to disciplinary sanctions for violating professional ethics and the patient's right to privacy.

Another example illustrating privacy violations in news visualization can be found in the media coverage of the assault case involving Mario Dandy Satrio in 2023. In this case, several online news outlets published photographs, personal

¹⁰ Salwa Ramadhani, "Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Hak Privasi Anak Yang Dipublikasikan Di Media Massa (Kajian Berdasarkan Undang-Undang Nomor 35 Tahun 2014 Tentang Perlindungan Anak)" (Universitas Malikussaleh, 2025).

¹¹ Ramadhani.

¹² Ramadhani.

profiles, and information about the suspect's girlfriend, who was only 15 years old and legally classified as a child in conflict with the law. Some media organizations even disclosed the name of her school and details about her family background, while her photographs were widely circulated across various social media platforms. These practices were criticized by the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) Indonesia, which argued that such reporting violated Article 5 of the Indonesian Journalistic Code of Ethics, which prohibits journalists from revealing the identities of children involved in legal proceedings. AJI also emphasized that mass media organizations have a legal and ethical obligation to comply with both the Journalistic Code of Ethics and Law No. 40 of 1999 on the Press as part of their responsibility to protect the rights and welfare of children.

This case demonstrates that the high level of public interest surrounding a particular event often encourages media organizations to prioritize the rapid dissemination of information without adequately considering the ethical consequences of revealing a child's identity. However, children involved in legal proceedings retain the right to privacy and identity protection as guaranteed under applicable laws and regulations. The public disclosure of a child's identity may result in social stigma, psychological distress, and long-term social harm that can adversely affect the child's future development and well-being. Therefore, this case serves as a clear example of how news visualization practices driven by information virality can undermine the principle of privacy protection. It also underscores the need for media organizations to place the best interests of the child at the forefront of every stage of the news reporting process.

Ethical Perspectives on Information Virality

Information virality is essentially a neutral phenomenon, as it merely describes the speed and extent to which content spreads within the digital environment.¹³ However, when virality becomes the primary orientation in multimedia journalism practices, the ethical dimensions involved become a significant issue that requires further examination. Ethical studies on virality seek to address a fundamental question: can the spreadability of content be used as a measure of successful news reporting, or should such success remain subject to the moral boundaries established within journalistic codes of ethics? As explained through the STEPPS framework, the elements of emotion and stories naturally encourage visual content to be shared more quickly and widely.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the same psychological forces that make a video or photograph go viral may also become a form of exploitation when the content originates from an individual's real suffering without considering their privacy rights and dignity.

The ethical issues surrounding viralization have become increasingly relevant given the current characteristics of electronic and digital journalism, which are required to compete in the rapid dissemination of information amid the intense flow

¹³ Herman Purba and Edo Rinaldo, "Reality and Virality : Dynamics and Issues in The New Media Era in Indonesia Realitas Dan Viralitas : Dinamika Dan Isu Dalam Era Media Baru Di Indonesia" 11, no. February (2024): 283–99.

¹⁴ Berger et al., "' Contagious ' : Jonah Berger on Why Things Catch On."

of social media content.¹⁵ This challenge has encouraged some journalists and social media content managers to neglect verification processes and ethical considerations in pursuit of virality, causing journalistic codes of ethic which should function as moral guidelines to be frequently overlooked.¹⁶ Therefore, ethical studies of virality do not aim to reject virality itself but rather to establish ethical boundaries that ensure virality does not become a means of exploiting individuals.

Based on the analysis of previously discussed cases, such as the TikTok livestream during a cesarean section procedure (Rachmawati, 2025) and the publication of a child's identity in the Mario Dandy case (S. Maharani, 2023), several ethical principles can be formulated to assess the appropriateness of viral content within multimedia journalism. First, the principle of public information relevance, which evaluates the extent to which content genuinely serves the public interest rather than merely satisfying public curiosity or emotional attraction. Second, the principle of exposure proportionality, which requires media organizations to present visual materials only to the extent necessary without exploiting sensitive details that are irrelevant to the substance of an event. Third, the principle of consent, which emphasizes the necessity of obtaining permission from individuals involved before distributing private or traumatic content. Fourth, the principle of respect for human dignity, which highlights that individuals featured in news coverage should not be reduced merely to objects of public consumption for the purpose of increasing engagement.

These four principles demonstrate that virality and journalistic ethics can coexist, provided that media organizations and social media users are willing to place moral considerations above algorithmic pressures to continuously produce emotionally appealing content. In other words, ethical virality is a form of information dissemination that remains subject to journalistic codes of ethics rather than sacrificing privacy rights merely for greater reach and interaction. This condition ultimately creates a further dilemma between the public's interest in obtaining information and individuals' rights to privacy protection, which will be discussed in the following section.

The Dilemma Between the Public Interest and the Right to Privacy

One of the major challenges in multimedia journalism is the dilemma between the public's right to access information and the individual's right to privacy. In digital media practice, information is often considered highly newsworthy if it attracts widespread public attention, particularly when it concerns criminal cases, accidents, natural disasters, or social conflicts. However, efforts to satisfy the public's demand for information are frequently accompanied by the excessive publication of photographs, videos, or personal identities, thereby increasing the

¹⁵ S Saifal and M Sos, *Jurnalisme Media Elektronik Dan Tantangan Di Era Viralisasi Media Sosial* (Detak Pustaka, 2026).

¹⁶ Lailatul Maflucha et al., "Etika Jurnalistik Dalam Era Digital: Menghadapi Tantangan Dengan Kode Etik Pers," *Jurnal Media Akademik (JMA)* 2, no. 1 (2024).

risk of violating individual privacy rights.¹⁷ This situation demonstrates that the freedom to obtain and disseminate information must be balanced with respect for individual rights in the digital environment. Privacy itself is recognized as a fundamental human right that is legally protected and constitutes an essential aspect of modern society.

This dilemma can be explained through the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press, which emphasizes that the media's role extends beyond merely informing the public. The media also bear a moral responsibility to minimize the potential harm caused by news reporting. From this perspective, journalists must distinguish between information that genuinely serves the public interest and information that merely satisfies the public's curiosity. For example, reporting on the causes of a traffic accident may serve the public interest because it provides educational and preventive value. In contrast, publishing detailed images of victims or distributing graphic videos depicting their injuries does not necessarily provide information that is relevant or beneficial to society.¹⁸ Consequently, media organizations are expected to conduct careful ethical assessments before publishing visual content that may harm individuals.

In the practice of multimedia journalism, the public interest is often invoked as the primary justification for disseminating information through digital media. Society undoubtedly has the right to receive information regarding social, political, criminal, and humanitarian events occurring within the community. The emergence of digital media and social networking platforms has accelerated the dissemination of information, enabling the public to access news in real time without geographical limitations. In this context, the media function as institutions responsible for fulfilling the public's informational needs.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the public's right to information should not be interpreted as an unlimited right to access every aspect of an individual's private life simply because that person is involved in a newsworthy event.

The problem arises when the concept of public interest is used to justify the excessive dissemination of photographs, videos, or personal identities. In many cases, media organizations and social media users not only report information relevant to an event but also expose victims' private circumstances that hold little or no meaningful informational value for the public. From the perspective of the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press, such practices represent a deviation from the media's social function because editorial priorities shift toward generating attention and maximizing virality rather than fulfilling the public's legitimate informational needs. In other words, not every piece of information that attracts

¹⁷ Elfian Fauzy and Nabila Alif Radika Shandy, "Hak Atas Privasi Dan Politik Hukum Undang-Undang Nomor 27 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pelindungan Data Pribadi, *Lex Renaissance*, Vol 7 No 3, Hal 445-461," 2023.

¹⁸ Sakhidad Mahdiyar and Göktürk Yıldız, "Mapping Social Responsibility Theory in Media and Journalism: A Bibliometric Analysis (2001–2025)," *Indonesian Social Science Review* 4, no. 1 (2026): 113–26.

¹⁹ Ardian Eka Prasetya et al., *Penyiaran Publik Di Era Digital: Etika, Praktik, Dan Profesionalisme* (Penerbit Lutfi Gilang, 2025).

public attention can be regarded as information that genuinely serves the public interest.

On the other hand, the right to privacy is a fundamental right inherent to every individual and should continue to be respected even when that individual is involved in a newsworthy event. According to the Right to Privacy Theory, every person has the right to control information concerning themselves, including their identity, physical condition, and personal experiences that are not relevant to public disclosure. Consequently, the dissemination of uncensored videos depicting accident victims, survivors of violence, or individuals involved in social conflicts may constitute a violation of privacy rights, even when such dissemination is carried out under the justification of informing the public. This problem is further intensified by the characteristics of digital media, where content can spread rapidly, remain permanently accessible, and become extremely difficult to control once it has gone viral.²⁰

Based on these considerations, this study argues that the public interest and the right to privacy should not be viewed as mutually exclusive principles. The media can continue to fulfill their informative function without sacrificing the dignity and rights of the individuals featured in news coverage. Therefore, strict adherence to the Journalistic Code of Ethics and the principles of the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press is essential in establishing ethical boundaries for digital news visualization. Information presented to the public should focus on the substantive aspects of events that genuinely serve the public interest, while personal identities and private information that are irrelevant to public understanding should remain protected. Accordingly, the success of multimedia journalism should be measured not only by the extent to which information becomes viral but also by its ability to maintain an appropriate balance between the public's right to know and the individual's right to privacy.

Ethical Efforts in Digital News Visualization

Ethical efforts in digital news visualization are important for reducing privacy violations that often occur in multimedia journalism and social media practices. One measure that can be taken is the use of face blurring or identity masking in photos and videos showing accident victims, victims of violence, minors, or individuals in traumatic conditions. Identity masking aims to protect privacy and prevent the psychological and social impacts that may be experienced by the individuals being reported on. In the context of journalistic ethics, the media are not only responsible for conveying information to the public but also for safeguarding human dignity and rights so that individuals do not become objects of visual exploitation in digital spaces.²¹ Therefore, the use of visual censorship is a form of applying humanitarian principles and the social responsibility of the press in digital media.

²⁰ Kadek Ayu Widya Arisanthi, "Hak Atas Privasi Dalam Pengelolaan Digital Legacy Pascakematian Sebagai Wujud Perlindungan Hak Asasi," *Politika Progresif: Jurnal Hukum, Politik Dan Humaniora* 2, no. 2 (2025): 104-13.

²¹ Hera Alvina et al., "The State of Digital Freedom in Indonesia an Assessment of Online Censorship, Privacy, and Free Expression," *Journal of Digital Law and Policy* 1, no. 3 (2022): 141-52.

In addition to identity masking, publication consent is also an important part of the ethics of digital news visualization. Media organizations and social media users should consider the individual's consent before disseminating sensitive photos or videos. In practice, many viral contents are spread without the consent of the parties involved, thereby potentially violating privacy rights and causing social trauma.²²

Therefore, content verification is also necessary to ensure that the visual information being disseminated has clear news value, is not manipulated, and does not mislead the public. Verification is important because digital media allows information to spread very quickly without a strict filtering process.

In addition, the protection of victims and children must be a top priority in news visualization because these groups are vulnerable to media exploitation. The media need to avoid openly disseminating the identities of victims and children in order to protect their safety, comfort, and future in digital spaces. Thus, the implementation of ethical news visualization is not only the responsibility of the media but also of all social media users so that the dissemination of information continues to respect humanitarian values and individual privacy rights.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion presented, it can be concluded that the development of multimedia journalism in the new media era has significantly transformed the landscape of communication and news distribution. The characteristics of digital media, which prioritize speed and are driven by social media platform algorithms, have contributed to the emergence of an information virality culture. Within the STEPPS framework, the utilization of the elements of emotion and stories (tragic or dramatic narratives) has become a primary strategy employed by digital media to attract public attention, increase engagement, and maintain commercial sustainability. However, excessive orientation toward view counts and continuous content circulation has resulted in the neglect of verification processes and ethical considerations in the use of digital news visualization.

This phenomenon has generated serious conflicts in the form of various violations of individual privacy rights within digital spaces. Current news visualization practices still frequently reveal the identities, faces, and personal data of accident victims, victims of violence, individuals involved in social conflicts, and minors without adequate censorship or consent from the parties concerned. Real cases, such as the exploitation of private medical procedures through livestreaming and the disclosure of the identities of children involved in legal cases, demonstrate a lack of ethical awareness that may lead to severe psychological trauma, cyberbullying, social stigmatization, and permanent reputational damage due to irreversible digital footprints.

These conditions create a profound ethical dilemma between fulfilling the public's need for information and protecting individuals' fundamental right to

²² S Ag Mukhlizar and M Ikom, "ETIKA MASYARAKAT DIGITAL," *Etika Masyarakat Digital* 30 (2025).

privacy. Based on the Social Responsibility Theory of the Press, press freedom and the public's right to know are not unlimited rights. Media organizations must be able to distinguish between information that genuinely serves the public interest for educational purposes and sensitive information that merely satisfies public curiosity or is simply interesting to the public. Therefore, strengthening ethical practices in digital news visualization has become a crucial agenda for maintaining healthy multimedia journalism.

The implementation of ethical principles including information relevance, proportionality of exposure, the obligation to obtain publication consent, and respect for human dignity must be prioritized above the algorithmic interests of digital platforms. Concrete measures, such as applying visual censorship or blurring faces and identities, strengthening content verification processes, and demonstrating full commitment to protecting vulnerable groups such as children and trauma victims, must be carried out in accordance with the Journalistic Code of Ethics and applicable laws.

Through these commitments, a responsible balance between the public's right to access information and the protection of citizens' privacy rights can be achieved within the digital environment.

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