

## News Production Management of CekFakta in Dealing with Hoax Outbreak Information on the Social Media

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### Abstract

*In the digital era, the competition among mass media leads to the practice of media economy as well as creativity in presenting news content. On the other hand, the mass media are challenged to deal with hoaxes. This study aims to find out how the management of news production at Tempo through the CekFakta page. This study uses qualitative methods with content analysis, data collection techniques, and in-depth interviews. Data were collected through interviews with CekFakta journalists, article documentation, and literature studies since 2021. The results of this study reveal that three important aspects determine news products: format, quality, and content leverage. In terms of format, the news on the CekFakta page has a specific conclusion as to whether the information circulating is true or not. Three charts make up the body of fact-checking news: the introduction to the viral information; an explanation of the method of finding the truth of the information; and conclusions related to the information being studied. Consumers can understand easily the content of the information with the guide. In terms of quality, Tempo has a methodology that becomes the basic guideline for journalists to make news. The benefit aspect is accomplished by disseminating the news through social media. In practice, to achieve these three aspects, fact-checking journalists work with the help of tools obtained through collaboration with external participants. In the era of media industrialization, the news agency has become a company that aims to make a profit. News, as a product of mass media companies, must also be designed in such a way as to generate profits. Thus, the practice of journalism must also be adapted to the times. Fact-checking journalism exists not only to improve the quality of information but also to bring financial benefits to the company.*

### Introduction

There is a huge range of information provided on the internet that is massively transferred through social media. The non-stop information transferred through social

media has significantly contributed to the hoax outbreak (Lee, 2019). Sorts of hoaxes have significantly developed, from the simplest to the most complicated actions, such as photo and video editing (MASTEL, 2019). In fact, hoaxes are believed to provoke social conflicts, one of which is an intertribal conflict that happens in Yahukimo Regency, Papua. The conflict is getting heated due to a hoax saying that the death of former Regent Abock Busup in Jakarta was a murder (BBC, 2021).

As a consequence, the abundance of hoaxes found on the internet has caused public distrust of mass media. The internet has become a means of information transfer at the cheapest price. However, there are many people in a community disputing the norm of information truth, which is found to have ruined information sources for traditional news businesses that have acquired excellent credibility in the public (Lazer et al., 2018). Intensive use of the internet has changed the prospective landscape of mass media. In Indonesia, printed mass media has been transformed into an online one, as have others, such as radio and television. In other words, the internet has simply become a vital medium for mass media (Ohiagu, 2011).

The transformation is made to keep up with the existence of mass media as an information protector. One of the challenges faced in this internet era is the hoax outbreak. The role of the mass media, as the information protector, seems to be diminished along with the trends of social and new media. Further, the term 'new media' is referred to as 'social media,' which has nothing specific to do with technology but rather is a part of social media conditions that describe how massively the internet is used now (Sahar & Ui, 2014).

The circulation of information in social media has become a news topic in mass media (Sujoko & Larasati, 2018). Betancourt (cited in Kothari & Hickerson, 2016) asserts that social media can also help journalists find out information or news, monitor hot issues that exist in the communities, and process the sources of information. Besides, information shared through social media has implied the huge potential for hoax outbreaks (Lee, 2019). This condition has caused some effects, e.g., misinformation, disinformation, and new propaganda, which keeps on getting tougher day by day due to the increase in access to social media that has never happened before (Ceron, de-Lima-Santos, & Quiles, 2021). Many social conflicts have occurred due to hoaxes. To secure the people from the hoaxes, it is suggested that new mass media be able to defend themselves from such a condition. In fact, the development of technology has caused the consumers of contemporary media to have full control over products as well as media selection (Baran & Davis, 2013).

In response to the condition, one of the media companies, Tempo, attempts to develop a webpage of *CekFakta*. This page is created for the sake of social and business purposes. In fact, the mass media industry is established for two other bases as well, i.e., the economy and the public (Albarran, Chan-Olmsted, & Wirth, 2006). This condition is much more challenging than those faced by other industries. Contents have become the core of business in the media companies executed by people of redactors. Without the contents, business sources cannot 'transact' with their prospective advertisers or readers.

In addition to the contents, the adaptation of the human resources must be adjusted, too. In fact, humans, as the most pivotal aspect of the business, are also affected by changes (Berman, Abraham, Battino, Shipnuck, & Neus, 2007). In response to it, Tempo has tried to provide the public with a *CekFakta* webpage. The webpage appears to enrich its news contents, as the media company has been well known as an investigative media all this time. *CekFakta*, in addition, tries to provide the public with content that is unique and different from the online Tempo version. The difference is the selling value of the media for other business actors to promote their products.

The research is seen as important as it attempts to explore the dynamics of mass media development in order to keep up with businesses and uphold journalism's dignity amidst the hoax outbreak due to social media's existence. Technological development, in addition, has allowed media companies to distribute their content to any platform quickly (Albarran et al., 2006). Thus, this situation becomes a good chance for Tempo to try to conquer any hoaxes that have been widespread in society. The history of technological failures in this current century has indicated that the mass media are not successful yet as they remain dependent on social formation and contexts rather than on technological capacity (Livingstone, 1999).

In this condition, the existence of *CekFakta* has been a necessity in response to the hoax outbreak. The roles of gatekeepers appear to focus on filtrating content that is allowed to be widely spread to the public (Chaffee & Metzger, 2018) and as media convergence proceeds, some have suggested that the word mass in mass communication should be replaced with the term media (see Turow, 1992). In the history of society, the complexity of communication media complexities has shifted, especially in terms of message delivery methods (Ruben & Stewart, 2014). Nicholas Negroponte has listed three shifts caused by new media in this information century.

First of all, the shift is referred to as 'a place without a space.' In this kind of shift, the geographical limitation will no longer be a barrier. Thus, information scatters will not only depend on specific times and places. Next is dissonance, which describes that the media will be asynchronous with significantly improved time management. In other words, people will be able to give responses to any messages and access any sources whenever they want to, without any worries about time. At last, an on-demand system will be applied. The presence of new media due to internet access allows some transformation to occur, from 'widely broadcasting' to 'widely collecting', or from 'receiving standardized programs for the public' to 'selecting, sorting out, and organizing on-demand programs for the public'. Therefore, on-demand information will be the universal standard in the new media era.

As a matter of fact, a new effective strategy is a necessity so that the products can be well accepted by the public. A study on selecting the strategy is closely linked with media economic studies. The studies grow along with the growth of the media industry and the world economy. In the past, many studies relied on the communication perspective in order to observe product dimensions, contents, and readers (David R. Croteau, 2018). Media economy, further, is described as a combination of two different studies involving a communication perspective and a business economic perspective. In other words, 'media economy' refers to the use of economic analysis tools in media companies (Hasan, 2006). In addition, product management must struggle to win the public's trust. It can be achieved through an exploration of the consumers' perceptions that keep on changing time by time-based on the current condition of the societies (Albarran et al., 2006).

The current phenomenon is that viral information transferred through social media is mostly categorized as hoaxes, which are finally adapted and reported as news on the *CekFakta* webpage. In fact, such a practice is the novelty of the current research. Data presented in the research consist of facts reported in the *CekFakta* channel authorized by Tempo.co and results from the interview with the redactor team, especially *CekFakta* channel administrators. In addition, the primary data will be the reference to unveil how the procedure of newsmaking based on the viral information hoax-suspected is carried out in mass media.

Referring to the background of the research, this research is aimed to observe how the production management strategy in *CekFakta* is carried out. Therefore, in the end, the research is going to demonstrate the production management strategy in *CekFakta*. The

researchers, moreover, have perceived that the production management strategy for newsmaking by the journalists in selecting facts in *CekFakta* is an interesting topic. It is due to business interest involvement that is collaborated with advanced equipment for news production. The methodological aspect of an anti-hoax newsmaking process in a media industrialization era cannot be separated from a series of practices of fact-checking. That is why such practice needs serious attention in academic studies.

## Methods

The current research used qualitative design. Theoretically, qualitative research is used to refer to a specific approach to studying social life in a natural setting. Information or data collected and analyzed are commonly unexclusive and non-quantitative. The data consist of textual sources, such as interview guidance, field notes, and documentation. In addition, there are also some other visual sources, like artifacts, photos, video recordings, and internet webpages that are used to record human experiences with other people or by himself based on social conduct and reflective situations (Saldaña, 2011).

The research aims to investigate how production management was in the newsmaking carried out by Tempo through its *CekFakta* webpage. In nature, the goals of qualitative research vary. It depends on the expected goals that have been planned. The most-found results comprise important representatives of the synthesis from analytical data, which can be in the forms of documentation of cultural observation, new knowledge and understanding about individual and social complexities, evaluation of program and policy effectiveness, artistic interpretation of the essence of humanity, criticism on social orders that exist, and initiatives of social justice (Saldaña, 2011).

Research of news production management in Tempo through the *CekFakta* webpage used an interpretative paradigm. The paradigm was considered ideal since the newsmaking in *CekFakta* appeared to be a holistic social reality. Within it, there was also a connection of interactive symptoms, especially between the societies and the topic under discussion. In general, an interpretative paradigm constitutes a social system that perceives conducts in detail through observation (Neuman, 2014). Furthermore, the interpretative paradigm sees facts as a unique aspect with special contexts and meanings that represent the cores of social reality.

The research, furthermore, applied a case study method. In essence, the case study is one of the methods used for research in social sciences (Yin, 2014). In addition, the method constitutes a strategy whose main problems are started with 'how' and 'why'. Those two will lead to a series of contemporary events in which the researchers only have very small access to controlling the events. In the research, data were collected through interviews, document analysis, and observation of news reported on the *CekFakta* channel. Moreover, the documents were analyzed starting from 2021 to 2022. The source person of the research was the Coordinator of *CekFakta*, Angelina Safitri, and the journalist of *CekFakta*, Ika Ningtyas. The former was in charge of selecting the news themes, while the latter was responsible for making the news.

Further, the qualitative research analysis method was used in the research, which was divided into three main stages, i.e., data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). In fact, qualitative research is supported by valid and authentic data, which becomes the requirement of research validity. Thus, data collected from the research are supposed to have authentic criteria based on the quality of the research process (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Futing Liao, 2012).

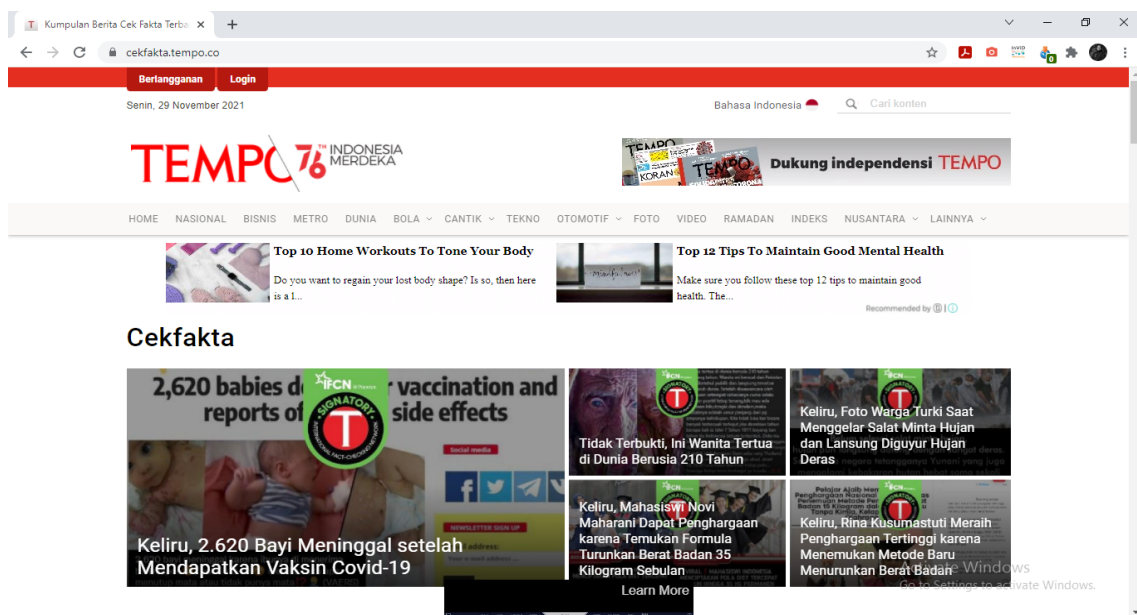


The current research applied document analysis and interview results as the sources of data. The researchers, in addition, used constructivism and interpretative paradigms as the approach, with the basic theory of media and economic management. With the use of qualitative-descriptive analysis, it was expected that the empirical illustration provided could depict reality. The focus of the research was the management strategy of newsmaking in the *CekFakta* channel. In reality, the researchers observed the management strategy applied in the *CekFakta* channel by directly confirming with the source person and journalist.

## Results and Discussion

Info Media Digital (IMD) LLC as the holding company of Tempo.co had been developing the *CekFakta* webpage since 2018. In daily practice, this webpage is managed by the journalists who are also in charge of being the fact-checkers. Some of them, in addition, had joined verification method training and fact-checking held by Google News Initiative in collaboration with the Alliance of Independent Journalists of Indonesia (AJI).

In general, there are three to four news headlines per day that are broadcasted on the webpage. The number is, indeed, relatively smaller than those of news on political, educational, and economic issues. Even so, the news quality in the *CekFakta* channel is seen as much more accurate since a special methodology is applied in its making.



**Figure 1.** Display of CekFakta channel accessed using a laptop (source: cekfakta.tempo.co)

The use of the special method to determine the information validity has made the channel always broadcast highly-credible news products. The signatory fact-checker logo on the webpage can also impact the trustworthiness of the webpage. The logo was not made without purpose. In fact, the logo was acquired after Tempo.co successfully joined an international community called the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN). Out of the 49 certified institutions in the international network for fact-checking IFCN, five of which are the Indonesian mass media that are registered in it since 2018, including Kompas.com, Tirto.id, Liputan6.com, Tempo.co, and Mafindo (turnbackhoax.id).

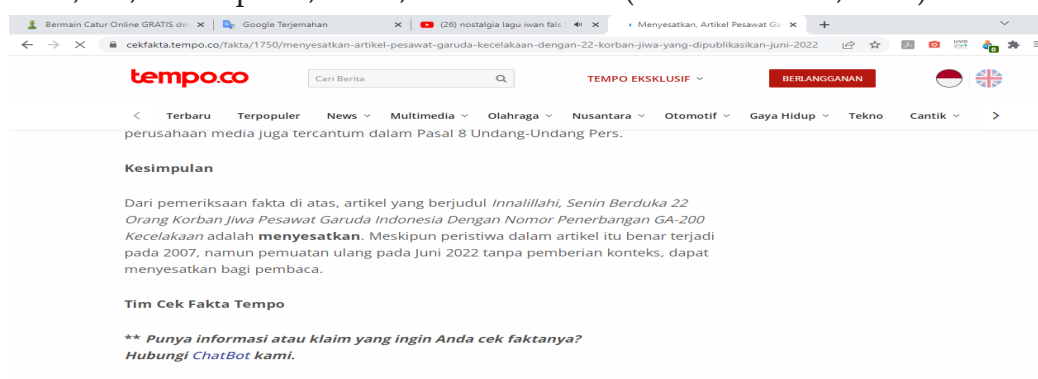
Further, the criteria for the mass media products are not significantly different from

those of the other products. The products are made for several purposes, especially to meet market and consumer demands. In fact, the key to its continuity is news production management. Production management is being run based on crucial decisions over some aspects, such as news reporting format, news quality processing standard, issues of utility, and interconnectedness between products and prices (Albarran et al., 2006). Further, the last aspect mentioned was not going to be exposed in the research since, according to the research, *CekFakta* can be accessed for free by the readers through the internet. Besides, three important points make the news a good product, including the format, quality, and utility.

## Conclusion Format in the News

One of the research findings in this current research was the news format displayed on the *CekFakta* webpage, which was found different from the common ones. There were three main compositions needed in order to construct the news, namely introduction, explanation, and conclusion. In fact, the news format of the *CekFakta* webpage was unique. It had a conclusion to state if the information widely spread in society was true or not. Therefore, it became a remarkable offer for the readers since none of the mass media these days made such a news format.

In general, prior to the current era, the news format only told the readers about specific events without sending the readers to arrive at a specific conclusion. In fact, the conclusion is supposed to be acquired through methodological steps. Besides, the format concept can also be used for product competition analysis based on themes amidst some media for the special news, i.e., in the press, radio, and television (Albarran et al., 2006).



**Figure 2.** An example of a conclusion on the *CekFakta* webpage concluding that viral information concerning the Garuda GA-200 plane crash accident that had caused victims is a hoax (source: cekfata.tempo.co)

It is evident that the fact-checking news format is different from the beginning. The news in *CekFakta* is not only telling the readers about the '5W+1H' aspects but also elaborates on how the journalists could arrive at the truth of the information they acquired. The coordinator, Angelina Sawitri, the source of the research, asserted that, in general, the journalists collected some posts from social media that were suspected to have hoax potential and to have gone viral in the societies, which was also possible to be the cause of a heated response from the netizens. The posts, additionally, might consist of fact-like claims. In fact, the reality remained unknown. After knowing the category of information, Angelina proposed some raw materials in the daily meeting of redactors held every morning. When getting approved, the materials would be distributed to each of the journalists in charge of fact-checking. In other words, they were fully responsible for any posts in need of checking.

In the news introduction stage, the journalists of *CekFakta* explained any viral information that was going to be reported. There was also a description of the composition of the information. For instance, if there was a figure, the figure was going to be the main object of the description. In addition, the informants, locations, and time when it happened were also mentioned. If the figure was considered eligible to be published, it would be published. In some cases, non-eligible figures were unpublished, and they were changed by caricatures.

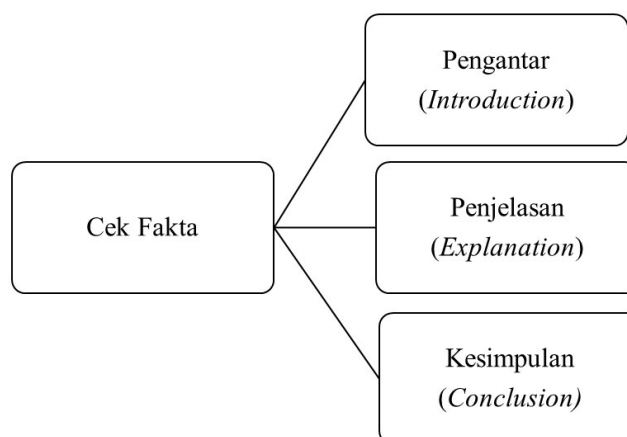
The readers were given a clear description so that they could know from the start what information contexts would be reported. The description was important to avoid the reader's misunderstanding of the information. After that, the journalists tried to explain how they worked on finding the truth of the information, which constituted the explanation phase.

The journalists of *CekFakta* have also been floored by their findings. They explained in detail the essence of the information under analysis. In such a process, the journalists were required to be careful and capable of clarifying the information from credible sources. Besides, the acquisition of technological tools became crucial in finding the truth of the collected data, such as in the forms of video, photos, texts, and voices.

*"Each of the checkers examines, depending on the claims and posts. If it's only a text, they only check for the news and Google document browsing, or if needed, we directly call upon the experts. If it's a photo, then we just need to refer the photo to image tool. While if it's a video, we can capture it, then refer it to image (or using InVID). InVID is an application to fragment a video into several images."* (Angelina)

The next structure is the conclusion. In this part, the readers were given information about whether the shared information was fully true, partly true, not proven yet, fake, or full of fallacies. Those five categories indicated a conclusion that is easily understandable for the readers. On its official webpage, Tempo clarified that, for the category of 'true,' all the information shared extensively based on the existing sources was accurate. In the category of 'partly true,' all the information from any sources to which the public had access was not all true; only some of it was true.

In the category of 'not proved yet,' though all of the information obtained was based on existing proofs, the status of the information remained blurred. For the fake information, it indicated that even though all of the information was based on existing proofs and all of the statements used factual and correct data, if the delivery methods for the conclusion were false, misunderstandings would happen. At last, the category 'full of fallacies' indicated that all of the existing proofs were inaccurate.



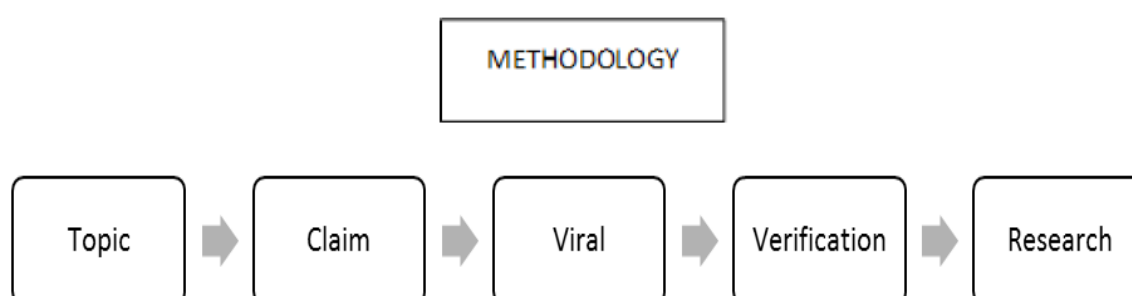
**Figure 3.** Diagram of CekFakta news in Tempo.co (source: processed data, 2022).

Based on the abovementioned explanation, the diagram for *CekFakta* news appeared to show off a different construction. The format can be found in all of the news reported on the *CekFakta* webpage.

### Standard Management of News Quality

The quality of the news on the *CekFakta* webpage was based on the information's truth-seeking methodology. In fact, fact-checking journalists had a guide to analyzing information in their methodology. The information search methodology could be directly accessed on the *CekFakta* webpage. This transparency showed that the process of newsmaking could not be separated from scientific studies so as to make it possible to account for it. The methodology described the steps that fact-checking journalists took when searching for information for newsmaking. The first step was to find a popular topic and get the public's attention. Then, the topic was claimed as a fact by a group of people or by a person.

The next consideration was that the topic became a subject of discussion or public discussion. Tempo referred to this as 'viral' information. If those three components had been completed, the next step was to confirm whether or not the report sources had already been verified. The next step taken by fact-checking journalists was conducting research in order to track all of the public sources in relation to the claims or statements made. The whole range of available sources would be explored and, if necessary, included in the article so that the readers could immediately check their validity. On its official website, Tempo stated its confidence in believing that methodological and source transparency were the keys to the credibility of the fact-checking process. Transparency and truth, in addition, could help people attain better and more complete information to navigate from unsafe misinformation ("International Fact-Checking Network Empowering Fact-Checkers Worldwide," 2021).



**Figure 4.** Diagram of newsmaking methodology on the CekFakta webpage (source: processed data, 2022).

The methodology was also supported by the good qualifications of the journalists. The journalists, who belonged to the Board of Editors at *CekFakta*, had received education or training on verifying hoax information. In fact, the education and training programs were conducted by companies and professional organizations to build more productive and satisfying work performance (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2012). The capacity of the journalists who were trained was indicated by the explanation given by a fact-checking journalist, Ika Ningtyas, who also became a source person in the research. She, furthermore, explained some basic principles of newsmaking. In her opinion, the basis of *CekFakta*'s journalism was derived from conventional or traditional journalism. One of the most fossilized traditional principles was verification.

*"After the fact-checking training, I was required to focus on developing facts. Eventually, I became a journalist in 2018. The methods used are really varied, depending on the contents we would like to explore. For instance, in relation to photos, we had to decide if the photos*



*were proper or not. Next is about videos. We had to check in advance whether the videos had been edited or not, or maybe there were mistaken notes. It means that when we received the information, we needed to define in advance what to contest and verify” (Ika Ningtyas).*

Practically, fact-checking is not a new issue in the development of journalism. In every journalism process, fact-checking is needed since the most basic principles of journalism are factualization and verification (Nurlatifah & Irwansyah, 2019). Moreover, related to traditional practices, verification is actually not only carried out by the reporters, but also the chief editor. The verification level, in fact, is very strict in news agencies.

The condition had become a representative depiction of how the *CekFakta* webpage maintained the quality of its products. The above-mentioned principles are in line with the theory of media production management. In detail, the theory explains that in the quality management of media products, journalists must consider some elements to work in harmony. The elements consist of objectivity to the features of the news’ object and efforts to meet the readers’ needs, in addition to the social quality interpreted as the media product potential in the fulfillment of cultural, political, and social goals in a democratic society (Albarran et al., 2006).

### **Circulating Content Leverage**

Media products produced had to be distributed to the public. It was very important to find a medium that could distribute the display of the *CekFakta* contents. The two source persons admitted that they used social media to distribute the *CekFakta* products. In fact, social media are quite effective for sharing products—not only because they are cheap but also because they are widely spread. *CekFakta* also has social media accounts on Instagram (tempo.cekfact), Facebook (Tempo CekFakta), and Twitter (@Tempo.co account), which is also used as the account name on the YouTube platform. One of the main features that typify product management in multimedia companies is the ability to exploit formats and ideas in such a way that they are allowed to carry out information that overlaps the media and technology boundaries (Albarran et al., 2006).

Based on the interview result with the Coordinator Angelina Safitri, also set as the respondent, the fame of Tempo helped the *CekFakta* products to be easy to get accepted in the societies. Information circulation in social media also uplifted the brand name of the media. In other words, the presence of *CekFakta* has helped Tempo gain the trust of the public. Angelina asserted that with increasing public trust, the number of online readers also elevated. She confessed that there had been more than 800 thousand readers page-viewing Tempo.co per day. Not only that, the number kept on increasing day by day.

*“This branding issue is much more profitable than traffic because when people know that Tempo has established a fact-checking channel, they will definitely see it and say: ‘Wow, that’s great’.” -Angelina.*

In a world of multiformat offerings, content leverage is the brand lever. Building a strong brand is increasingly important in the midst of a large variety of content offerings. At the same time, identity consistency in the market is also important to keep up with the large supplies and fluctuating demands (Albarran et al., 2006). Angelina claimed that the *CekFakta* products were what the public needed at that time. Even so, the high number of visitors to the *CekFakta* webpage cannot necessarily be an indicator of the high media literacy level of Indonesian people. To her, at the very least, the *CekFakta* webpage has made a crucial effort to improve people’s information literacy.

Although hoax information is so dangerous for the public, the company instead remains oriented towards its business advantage. Ika Ningtyas, the source person in

the research, said that Tempo had been in the collaboration with Facebook since 2019. This collaboration allows fact-checking journalists to easily track any viral information. Facebook provides a special page or 'dashboard' to channel viral information every day. This particular page can only be accessed by partner networks, such as Facebook and Tempo. In fact, the collaboration with Facebook has made it possible to disburse funds to Tempo's editors. However, Ika did not even say in detail how much money Facebook had disbursed to Tempo.

## **Conclusion**

Tempo is adapting to technological development, which directly affects its characteristics in reporting the news to the public. The adaptation is marked by the creation of a *CekFakta* webpage. In addition, the webpage is specially intended to report the truth about viral information on social media. Furthermore, in the production management process, the board of editors has played an important role, especially in the shape of the product and its circulation.

In fact, the results indicated the embodiment of a concept of media production management that consisted of the format, quality, and utility of the news. The news reported on the *CekFakta* webpage was unique since all of it demonstrated conclusions regarding the truth about the information widely circulated in cyberspace. In fact, the format was the new offer given by the media to the readers.

Regarding the quality of the news, there was a specific methodology for the newsmaking guide that could be applied by fact-checking journalists. Besides, the *CekFakta* journalists were also trained so that they were equipped with the capacity and ability to search for necessary information. This was parallel with the products they generated. In fact, keeping up with the quality of a product was of great importance so that consumers would continue to put their trust in the media.

Furthermore, the news editors attempted to pronounce the news' utility by widely spreading the products to the public. In this internet era, *CekFakta* has created some social media accounts: Instagram (tempo CekFakta), Facebook (Tempo CekFakta), and Twitter (@tempo.co). The current research was focused on media management; the research limited its discussion only to the management of news production. Thus, it is fully suggested that prospective research be able to more deeply examine business aspects of non-profit anti-mainstream media, like Mafindo. Recently, with the rapid development of technology, the practices of new media have obviously been enriched with many scientific perspectives that are surely useful for academics or practitioners.

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