

## **Sixth lesson: Electronic press in Algeria**

The forefront of media innovation is being driven by the digitally-savvy younger generation, heralding a new era for electronic journalism in New Algeria

### **Digital Natives Revolutionizing Media: The New Age of Electronic Journalism in Contemporary Algeria**

During the Arab Summit in Algeria on November 1, 2022, both Arab and foreign media experts witnessed a significant milestone that underscores Algeria's remarkable progress in digital transformation and the adoption of cutting-edge media and communication technologies. This progress allowed the 2022 Algeria Summit to claim the title of "The first Arab summit without paper," a feat that was lauded by media delegations for its impeccable organization and the ample resources provided to facilitate their work.

This achievement hardly came as a surprise to many representatives from Arab and foreign media outlets who witnessed firsthand the impressive capabilities of young Algerian journalists, most of whom are actively engaged in electronic news platforms. These journalists adeptly navigated high-tech computers, intricate software, and large screens to present their content. The Algerian government went the extra mile by equipping participating delegations and media professionals with digital tools instead of traditional paper documents, symbolizing the dawn of a new media era that Algeria is embarking upon."

### **The Challenging Journey of Electronic Journalism in a Pre-Modern Setting**

In the past, electronic journalism faced significant challenges at a time when social media was exploding, and the digital revolution was transforming the landscape of audiovisual media. This transformation saw smartphones replace television screens and traditional print journalism becoming outdated for information dissemination. Despite these changes, the Algerian government refused to recognize digital media, which led to a lack of discussions about its future and the benefits it could offer.

During this period, the existing system procrastinated in establishing a legal framework to create a conducive media environment. It actively hindered the efforts of relevant public authorities and the print media community, discouraging progress and delaying the establishment of regulatory bodies for electronic media. At times, the government viewed electronic media with suspicion, considering it a threat that challenged the national media and the entire nation of Algeria.

According to Dr. Mohamed Tayeb, a lecturer at the University of Algiers' Faculty of Media and Communication Sciences, electronic journalism emerged as an extension of traditional print journalism, driven by rapid digital transformations worldwide. Algeria was not immune to these changes and the challenges they presented. Consequently, the Algerian state embraced the birth and growth of digital journalism as a significant gain for both Algeria and the media sector, recognizing its sensitivity.

Since taking office, the President has developed a comprehensive plan that places digital journalism at the forefront of media sector reforms. This plan encompasses vital elements, including the revision of the legal framework to modernize and rejuvenate it, thereby distancing it from past practices. This effort resulted in the creation of an organic media law, a crucial addition to the National Communication policy. Its primary aim is to bolster the rights of media professionals and pave new avenues for journalism in the digital age. These reforms are particularly critical in the face of external campaigns targeting Algeria, to which the electronic press youth have responded with determination.

### **Revolutionizing Algerian Media: The Impact of Electronic Journalism on Youth Engagement and Legal Reforms**

In January 2018, a study titled “Young people’s engagement with Algerian electronic media and their interaction with its content” was conducted among 50 students from the Department of Media and Communication Sciences at the University of Mohamed Khider (Biskra). The research unveiled a significant surge in interaction with Algerian electronic media, whether through websites or social media pages. What attracted the audience was the immediacy and interactivity offered by electronic newspapers, providing frequent updates on news and events.

This newfound connection between Algerian electronic media, a pivotal new media technology, and the explosive growth of social networking.

#### **Questions:**

- What are the challenges facing electronic journalism in Algeria?
- Do you think that the 2023 media law in Algeria will regulate the practice of electronic journalism? how?
- What is your point of view for the future of electronic journalism in Algeria?