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**PODCAST IN ELECTRONIC NEWSPAPERS IN
VIETNAM NOW**

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SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS IN JOURNALISTICS

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The thesis was completed at the Academy of Journalism and Communication

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- National Library of Vietnam, Hanoi.
- Information Center - Library, Academy of Journalism and Communication.

INTRODUCTION

1. Reason for choosing the research topic

Podcasts have become “a worldwide phenomenon,” according to the Reuters Institute for Digital News Report, with 36% of people surveyed accessing podcasts each month and about 15% using news podcasts (Newman N. & N. Gallo, 2020) [57]. Edison Research estimates that there are approximately 90 million podcast listeners each month in the United States, which has doubled since 2015 [26]. As of 2019, 51% of Americans aged 12 and older have listened to a podcast [25]. In the United Kingdom, podcast usage increased by 40% in 2018 [66], while younger audiences (15-24 years old) are trending toward less traditional radio listening [60]. At the same time, the fierce competition between new media/media products and traditional journalism has also led to a trend of press agencies shifting to digital platforms, including podcasts.

Podcasts are becoming a trend among online newspapers around the world, including Vietnam - with the participation of more and more newsrooms from central to local levels in podcast production, contributing to changing the public's information consumption habits, improving the competitiveness of newspapers, keeping readers longer, and at the same time creating new opportunities for newsrooms to attract advertising sources and bring in revenue. In general, initially, podcasts have successfully brought a new look and approach to readers of online newspapers. Podcasts can convey diverse information, which is the key to helping online newspapers attract the public in the context of digital technology. After a period of implementation in online newspapers in Vietnam, podcasts have increasingly shown their flexibility and convenience. However, due to the awareness of the role and importance of podcasts and the general podcast production skills of a large number of media outlets, the quality of podcasts still has many limitations, lacking breakthroughs in format as well as careful investment in content. Some places need to integrate genres such as chats with characters/guests, online chats with readers, or in-depth interviews, commentary, analysis, etc., into their topics. The interface of many podcast sites is sometimes still sketchy and unfriendly, and modern podcasts are not kept up with the world. Many podcast systems need help when streaming online, cannot store large amounts of content, or have insignificant content stores. From these limitations, the biggest challenge for most media outlets in Vietnam today is to improve the quality of podcasts and find ways to reach many podcast listeners on multiple platforms. A comprehensive study to clarify the concept, characteristics, role, and podcast production process, as well as to develop a set of criteria for evaluating the quality of podcasts on online newspapers in Vietnam and propose solutions and recommendations to improve the quality of podcasts on online newspapers in Vietnam is currently a requirement.

Furthermore, researching the topic is of great significance to the author. The author has a particular passion for radio and podcasts, has worked for many years as an editor and producer of radio programs, and has participated in teaching radio and podcasts at universities. Implementing the topic will create opportunities for the author to continue

cultivating necessary knowledge, serving the work, learning more research skills, and improving himself.

For all the above reasons, the author has chosen to research the topic "Podcasts on electronic newspapers in Vietnam today" (Research on Nhan Dan Electronic Newspaper, Lao Dong Electronic Newspaper, VnExpress Electronic Newspaper from January 2022 - December 2023).

2. Research purpose and research topic

2.1. Research purpose

The thesis comprehensively surveys the quality of podcasts in online newspapers in Vietnam today, evaluating their achievements, limitations, and causes. It then identifies the problems facing podcasts in online newspapers in Vietnam today and proposes solutions and recommendations to improve their quality.

2.2. Research topic

To accomplish the above purpose, the thesis must perform the following tasks:

- Establish a theoretical and practical basis for podcasts in online newspapers.
- Survey, analyze, and evaluate the current status of podcasts in electronic newspapers in Vietnam today (on newspapers: *Nhan Dan Electronic Newspaper, Lao Dong Electronic Newspaper, VnExpress Electronic Newspaper*).
- Propose solutions and recommendations to improve the quality of podcasts in online newspapers in Vietnam.

3. Research questions

- How are podcasts being defined in Vietnam? What role and position does a podcast play in the media system? What are the content and form characteristics? What criteria do we apply to evaluate the quality of podcasts?
 - What is the current status of podcasts in electronic newspapers in Vietnam?
 - What success has the quality of podcast content and format on electronic newspaper sites in Vietnam achieved? What are podcasts' limitations, causes, and problems?
 - What solutions and recommendations are needed to improve the quality of content and format of podcasts on electronic newspapers in Vietnam today?

4. Research subjects and scope of the research

4.1. Research subjects

The research object of the thesis is a current podcast on electronic newspapers in Vietnam.

4.2. Scope of the research

- Scope of the survey: The thesis surveys the podcasts of three government agencies: Nhan Dan Newspaper, Lao Dong Electronic Newspaper, and VnExpress Electronic Newspaper. It specifically examines the current news podcasts from three electronic newspapers: Current News (Nhan Dan Electronic Newspaper), Fast News, VnExpress Today (VnExpress electronic newspaper), and Morning News, Column (Lao Dong Electronic Newspaper).

- Reasons for choosing four agencies: These are large, reputable agencies in the country, attracting many people. Nhan Dan Newspaper is the mouthpiece of the party, the

voice of the party, the state, and the people, and one of the most important media channels. Recently, Nhan Dan Newspaper developed a podcast for the online newspaper Nhandan.vn, offering a wide range of categories. Lao Dong Newspaper and VnEpress Electronic Newspaper are two pioneering agencies that use new technologies in journalism activities, including podcast production applications, to provide information and expand their capacity to reach the modern public.

The process of researching, surveying, and evaluating the current status of podcasts on three major online newspapers, Nhan Dan Newspaper, Lao Dong Electronic Newspaper, and VnExpress e-newspaper, not only clarifies the current image but also contributes to finding solutions to improve the quality of podcasts at other online newsrooms, especially in today's context when digital media is developing strongly in Vietnam.

- Survey time: from January 2022 to December 2023.

5. Literature review and research methods

5.1. Literature review

The methodological basis for researching this topic is Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh's ideology and viewpoints, guidelines, and legal policies of the Party and State related to press and communication activities, theories of radio journalism, journalism, and communication in the digital media environment in general, and radio journalism in the digital media environment in particular.

In this thesis, the doctoral student also uses the following theories as a theoretical basis:

- *Agenda setting theory*: The media disseminates information that serves as a foundation for opinions, replicates significant social issues, and mirrors individuals' thoughts. The thesis employs the theory to pinpoint prominent topic areas within podcast content and scrutinizes the podcast's reflection on these topics. To do this, the graduate student used content analysis to measure the frequency of topic areas appearing in different podcast episodes.

- *Uses and gratifications theory*: The researcher identified the limitations based on this theory and an analysis of the current content and format of podcasts from three newspapers, thereby assisting newsrooms in their efforts. Practical solutions exist for designing podcast programs that are engaging and relevant to the target audience.

- *Social Information Processing Theory (SIP)*: Developed by Joseph Walther in 1992, this theory aims to explain how people develop and maintain personal relationships through media that lack nonverbal cues, such as email, text messaging, and other online communication tools. The author uses this theory to understand better how listeners and content creators build and maintain relationships through podcasts. Podcasts are primarily audio and lack nonverbal cues such as gestures or eye contact. However, hosts can use tone, rhythm, and intonation to replace these cues, helping to build a close connection with listeners.

5.2. Research methods

The thesis uses the following specific research methods:

- *Document research method*: This method involves surveying documents, monographs, and podcast documents related to the topic, including secondary sources from the Reuters Research Institute, Edison Research, Ofcom, etc., to measure the level of public

interest in podcasts. The goal is to clarify the theoretical issues of the topic. The survey results can then be evaluated to identify research issues.

- *Content analysis method*: Out of a total of 3,408 news podcast episodes of 5 podcast programs on three online newspapers (News, Morning News, Stories, News Highlights, and VnExpress Today) collected over two years (2022-2023), the researcher randomly selected 1 episode per week over two years (2022-2023) for specific research. The total number of podcast episodes studied from all three newspapers is 393, including 96 episodes of the News Highlights podcast - Nhan Dan Electronic Newspaper, 64 episodes of the Morning News podcast, and 42 episodes of Stories podcast - Lao Dong Electronic Newspaper (due to intermittent production, the number of podcast episodes is less than expected), 92 episodes of News Highlights podcast and 99 episodes of VnExpress Today podcast - VnExpress Electronic Newspaper.

- *In-depth interview method*: Applied to study the awareness, current situation, and podcast production process at several newsrooms, mainly focusing on three press agencies within the scope of the survey. Through this method, we aim to verify and supplement the incomplete theoretical aspects found in the literature and to delve deeper into the practice, experience, methods, and creative approaches used in the production process. Journalism podcasts. We conducted in-depth interviews with 13 cases belonging to three main groups:

+ **Group 1 (5 cases)**: This includes journalists conducting and producing podcasts for the three surveyed newspapers. This is the core group to learn the ins and outs of podcast production's creative process, challenges, and successes.

+ **Group 2 (4 cases)**: This group includes leadership and direct management of the podcast production organization at the three surveyed agencies. For this group, we focused on better understanding podcast strategy and management decisions within the organization's unique context.

+ **Group 3 (4 cases)**: Includes experts with experience in journalism, modern communications, and podcast research. This group helps us learn about trends, changes, and the growth potential of podcasts in today's journalism landscape.

In in-depth interviews, we encrypt all participants to protect the privacy of their personal information.

- *Group discussion method*: Organize group discussions for 2 groups of students from the Academy of Journalism and Communication and the Posts and Telecommunications Institute of Technology to assess the need for receiving information on podcasts of the young audience.

- *Sociological survey method*: The researcher used online questionnaires via Google Forms to collect opinions on podcast quality from the public and identify their needs and capacity to receive podcasts.

Sample selection: The thesis selected the survey subjects as students and workers in the Hanoi area. The reason is that this area has high education and a high population density, and it is convenient for the author to use in the survey collection process. The author intentionally selected five universities and academies in Hanoi, including the Academy of Journalism and Communication, Diplomatic Academy, Academy of Posts and

Telecommunications Technology, Hanoi University of Culture, and Nguyen Trai University. The reason is that these schools are located in districts with high population densities (Cau Giay, Dong Da, Ha Dong), with a large concentration of students. The entrance score rankings of the five schools range from the top and middle to the bottom. For each school, the author selected a faculty; each faculty randomly selected a class; then, the author sent a questionnaire using Google Forms stating the purpose and inviting students to participate in the study and collected 372 votes. Similar to the target group of employees, the author contacted and sent Google Forms to officials and teachers at 5 schools; civil servants and employees at 12 state agencies, companies, state-owned and private enterprises in Hanoi, the author collected 129 votes. At the same time, for the target group of freelance workers and traders, the author intentionally selected areas of districts with high population density and developed socio-economic conditions such as Hoan Kiem, Dong Da, Ha Dong, Cau Giay to contact and send Google Forms, collecting 32 votes. The total results of the collected survey forms were 533. Specifically shown in the table below:

Characteristic	Number	Ratio (%)
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	150	28.1
Female	383	71.9
<i>Ages</i>		
Under 18 years old	43	8.1
18 to 30 years old	385	72.2
31 to 45 years old	65	12.2
Over 45 years old	40	7.5
<i>Education levels</i>		
Secondary/High School	136	25.5
College/University	331	62.2
Postgraduate	66	12.4
<i>Jobs</i>		
Student	372	69.8
Office staff	68	12.8
Self-employed/Business	32	14.9
Civil servant/State official	61	11.4

6. New contributions of the thesis

This thesis is the first research work to systematically systematize the fundamental theoretical issues of podcasts in electronic newspapers. Based on the survey results, the author discovers and analyzes the current status of podcasts on electronic newspapers in Vietnam, evaluating the successes, limitations, and causes of those successes and limitations.

The proposed solutions and recommendations based on scientific evidence and practical basis can serve as a basis for improving the quality of podcasts in electronic newspapers and planning podcast development strategies for press agencies and press management agencies.

7. Theoretical and practical contributions

7.1. Theoretical contributions

The thesis will be the first research project to build a relatively complete theoretical framework for podcasts in online newspapers. This includes building a system of related concepts, presenting the characteristics and roles of podcasts, establishing a set of podcast quality criteria, and establishing podcast production processes and principles in electronic newspapers. Therefore, the thesis makes a practical contribution to the treasury of journalism theory in general and the theory of online newspaper podcasts.

7.2. Practical contributions

The thesis will serve as a practical reference for journalists and leaders of the three agencies under survey. It will also serve as a valuable resource for journalists and editorial boards of agencies that have implemented or plan to implement podcasts in Vietnam. It assists them in identifying theoretical issues related to podcasts and enhances their creative skills, such as electronic newspaper podcasts.

Furthermore, the thesis will be a valuable reference source for journalism training institutions. Lecturers, students, and graduate students can use it to stay up to date on podcast trends and applications in the fields of general communication and online journalism, particularly death.

8. Structure of the thesis

Three chapters structure the thesis content, in addition to the introduction, overview, conclusion, appendix, and reference list:

Chapter 1: Theoretical and practical basis for podcasts in online newspapers.

Chapter 2: Current status of podcasts in electronic newspapers in Vietnam.

Chapter 3: Solutions and recommendations for improving the quality of current podcasts in Vietnam's online newspapers.

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1. Research on podcasts as a product of technology

Most early research on podcasting focused on framing it as a mechanism for distributing audio over the Internet for download and subsequent playback on various devices through feeds. RSS enables listeners to subscribe to a particular podcast. Many scholars, including Potter (2006), Menduni (2007), Harris & Park (2008), Madsen and Potts (2010), Bottomley (2015), and Benoit Marchal (2009), have cited these studies. While Milette (2011) views podcasting as a specific form of online participation, Richard Berry (2006) views it as a grassroots radio form that competes with DAB digital radio technology. Jeremy Wade Morris and Eleanor Patterson (2014) dive deeper into the technological side of podcasting, exploring how podcast apps are driving new listening scenarios and highlighting social features that allow users to share podcasts.

2. Research on podcasts as a journalistic product

Studies on podcasts as a journalistic and media product, in which studies on podcasts in comparison with traditional radio are prominent, currently have two streams of opinion: the first is the view that podcasts are a continuous development of traditional radio in the digital media environment with many similarities, notably the studies of Friedman (2005); Jason Loviglio, Michele Hilmes (2013); Juan Ignacio Gallego Perez (2010); Irene Melgarejo Moreno, María del Mar Rodríguez Rosell (2013); Christopher Cwynar (2015); Kris M.Markman (2015); Tiziano Bonini (2015),...; The second is the view that podcasts and traditional radio are two separate media, with their characteristics, their own lives, serving different public purposes with studies by Luis Miguel Pedrero Esteban (2020), Tiziano Bonini (2015); M.a De La Peña Mónica Pérez-Alaejos, Luis Miguel Pedrero Esteban, Asier Leoz Aizpuru (2018); Eduardo Vicente (2018); Danielle Hancock, Leslie McMurtry (2018); Lourdes Moreno Cazalla (2017); Richard Berry (2018), Spinelli, M. and L. Dann (2019), Dowling D. and K. Miller (2019),... In Vietnam, studies on podcasts based on the correlation between podcasts and traditional radio are still limited in number. However, some studies consider podcasts as a trend of modern radio by Nguyen Thu (2018), Nguyen Thi Lan Phuong (2021).

The study on the news podcast format by Rebecca C. Nee & Arthur D. Santana (2021) sheds light on a new norm in the production of news podcasts, which is to put reporters in the role of a character and/or expert on a news topic without ultimately reducing the gatekeeping role of the news organization. Notably, some studies delve deeper into investigative journalism podcasts that report real stories with an intimate audio storytelling method that strengthens the relationship between journalists and listeners, such as the studies of Ellen McCracken et al. (2017), Ellen McCracken et al. (2017), Dario Llinares - Neil Fox - Richard Berry et al. (2018), Siobhán McHugh (2016), Lindgren (2016). Research on the organization of podcast production includes a comprehensive study of the production, distribution, cycle analysis, consumption, and strategies of the Podium Podcast project - a Spanish podcast by Lourdes Moreno Cazalla (2017).

3. Research on podcast public

Several researchers have focused on evaluating podcast listening and consumption from different perspectives: Johnson (2007) compared podcast listening to traditional radio listening, emphasizing the visualization of audio content from podcasts. MacDougall (2011) argued that podcasts blur the distinction between medium and content, making listeners part of the message, even if they cannot directly interact with the program. Qing et al. (2007) found that the podcast listening environment significantly influenced listeners' sense of presence, while audio quality and language style did not make a significant difference. Sharon and John (2019) concluded that podcast listeners "are capable of engaging in emotionally and intellectually complex discussions about podcasts" with others and that podcast listeners are also "sensitive, creative, capable of critical thinking, imaginative, in touch with their emotions, familiar with talk therapy, and highly communicative." Whipple, Ashe, and Cueva Chacón (2023) found that, although listeners consider podcasts to be a valuable form of journalism and source of information, they trust podcasts less than traditional news sources, except news programs.

Studies of podcasts based on uses and gratifications theory have uncovered many essential aspects of the listener experience: Perks and Turner (2019) found that podcasts provide a source of engaging content and help listeners be "productive" in various physical and mental ways. Menduni (2007) found that podcasts are more portable than AM/FM radio, and McClung and Johnson (2010) identified five main reasons why people use podcasts: entertainment, time travel, library building, advertising, and social aspects. Perks and Turner (2019) also noted additional motivations, including cognitive needs, multitasking, and perceived social connectedness, as necessary to podcast appeal. Other studies have shown listeners' support for podcast advertising: McClung and Johnson (2010); Ritter and Cho (2009).

4. Contents that need to be researched

The above studies have provided an in-depth look at podcasts and their role in journalism and communication, clearly identified the essential characteristics of podcasts in journalism, and mentioned the creative perspective as a journalistic product. The study focused on understanding podcasts as a conventional media and a creative platform where journalistic works can develop in a completely new style. In particular, the studies have highlighted how podcasts take advantage of the advantages of sound to convey information and attract listeners effectively. In addition, the studies have also discussed the organization of podcast production, from scripting, recording, and editing to broadcasting and promotion. This helps the author understand how the podcast production process is carried out, thereby being able to apply this knowledge to come up with creative solutions for podcast works in the media. However, although there are, the number of studies on the above contents is still fragile, not forming a standard, comprehensive theoretical framework on podcasts; lacking a summary of practical experiences of countries for application in Vietnamese press agencies; lacking research, evaluation, analysis, and summary of the practice of producing press

podcasts in Vietnam, etc.

This sets a requirement for the thesis; it is necessary to build a complete theoretical framework on podcasts in the press in general, and online newspapers in particular, with theoretical issues that need to be solved, such as:

- Theoretical perspective on podcasts in online newspapers: 1- An accurate concept of what a podcast is in online newspapers; 2- Clearly defining the role, characteristics, skills, and process of producing podcasts in online newspapers; 3- Proposing a set of evaluation criteria to serve as a basis for podcast production in practice at press agencies.

- Practical perspective on podcasts on online newspapers: 1- Summarize the world's experience in the skills of producing and organizing podcasts on online newspapers for reference in Vietnam; 2- Survey the practice of podcasts on online newspapers in Vietnam to see the achievements, limitations, and causes; 3- Identify the problems arising for podcasts on online newspapers in Vietnam today, propose solutions and recommendations to improve the quality of podcasts on online newspapers in Vietnam.

Up to now, the topic of *Podcasts in online newspapers in Vietnam* is still the first topic to comprehensively research the theory and practice of podcasts on online newspapers in Vietnam today.

Chapter 1

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL BASIS FOR PODCASTS IN ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

1.1. Conceptual literature related to the topic

1.1.1. Podcast

A podcast is a digital audio file distributed via RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed that users can download and listen to on their devices.

1.1.2. Online newspaper

In this thesis, we incorporate the concepts of electronic newspapers from the work of author Nguyen Thi Truong Giang: “*Electronic online journalism is a type of journalism that takes the shape of a website and publishes it on the Internet, conveying information quickly, instantaneously, multimedia, and highly interactively*”. The terms online newspaper and electronic newspaper have equivalent meanings.

1.1.3. Podcast on electronic newspaper

A podcast on an online newspaper is a digital audio file distributed via an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed, integrated and presented on an online newspaper, which users can listen to online or download to their devices. Podcasts have become a trend in online newspapers because podcasts are a convergence, a combination of audio, the web, and mobile devices [10]. A podcast can be posted directly to a website; thus, “audio”, which has long been in online newspapers, can also be considered a podcast. However, some people believe that a “true” podcast must have an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed [61, c.vii, p.263]. The author agrees with this view.

1.1.4. Quality and quality of podcasts in online newspapers

- Quality:

There are many ways to understand quality. *Quality is a dynamic concept that can change according to people's notions of standards for things and phenomena. One can comprehend quality as the unmeasurable superiority and unique prominence of objects and phenomena or as adhering to standards to assess their quality and worth, necessitating a collection of precise and scientific standards as a foundation for assessment.*

- Quality of press information:

When assessing the quality of press information, one must take into account both content and form quality. Content quality includes factors such as the topics, events, issues, and characters mentioned, details, and the author's views and perspectives. Meanwhile, formal qualities include capacity and duration, language, genre, structure, design, and presentation. A work, section, or program is considered high quality when content and form meet acceptable standards.

- Quality of podcasts in online newspapers:

The term "podcast quality" in online newspapers refers to the level of satisfaction with the content and form criteria for a podcast, which are set by the editorial office to meet the agency's propaganda requirements and the public's information needs.

1.2. Characteristics and production methods of podcasts in online newspapers

1.2.1. Characteristics of podcasts in online newspapers

Podcasts on online newspapers have the following characteristics: *Personalization; immediacy, non-linearity; open, flexible structure, diverse information capacity; audio language is the main language; use of spoken language; easy storage and search capabilities; ability to interact, share, and access hyperlinks.*

1.2.2. Method of producing podcasts on electronic newspapers

Producing a podcast is different from producing a radio program. You must first record a podcast, package it, release it on podcast platforms, and integrate it into an online newspaper. This method cannot be used. Like a radio broadcast, the method should be read with clarity and directness. The pre-recording staging method promotes initiative and independence, making it suitable for products that require complex mixing and minimizing errors. However, a significant drawback of this method is its inability to provide immediate access to current information. Although podcasts allow updating new audio files on the posted file, there is still an inevitable delay compared to the live radio production method. Each podcast released to platforms includes the following main components: *title, description, and audio file, sometimes accompanied by images.* Potential listeners can include keywords related to the podcast's topic in the podcast title and description, which are the first elements they will see, to enhance their search engine visibility search engine. Three main parts often organize podcast audio files: the introduction, the main content, and the ending (outro).

- Podcast production process in electronic newspapers

The podcast production process is similar to that of audio products, including traditional radio and digital audio products. If podcasts are too short, they may not necessitate a complex process. We propose a standard process for podcast production in online newspapers, including seven steps: *1-Search and select topics; 2-Develop a podcast production plan; 3-Collect documents and develop podcast scripts; 4-Prepare technical equipment and conduct podcast recording; 5-Edit and edit podcast audio; 6-Broadcast/publish podcasts, present podcasts on newspaper pages; 7-Listen and monitor feedback.*

1.3. The role of podcasts for the press and the public

1.3.1. The role of podcasts in news organizations

Firstly, it provides a new, diverse, and easy-to-produce content platform.

Secondly, it creates new sources of income for news organizations through various forms, such as advertising and sponsorship, cooperation and alliance, premium or subscription services, and listener support.

Thirdly, it helps strengthen relationships with the public.

1.3.2. The role of podcasts for the public

Firstly, it has diverse public information experiences.

Secondly, it continues the tradition of public radio listening in the digital media, increasing public participation in journalistic works.

Thirdly, it changes the way the public interacts with media. The public no longer receives content passively like before, but they can be utterly proactive in listening to podcasts, choosing their favorite content, and listening at any time they want. It is these amenities that ultimately give podcasts their most considerable appeal.

1.4. Quality criteria for podcasts in online newspapers

1.4.1. Ensure attractive content

Firstly, the topics and themes are diverse, attractive, and closely follow the needs of the public.

Secondly, it ensures timeliness.

Thirdly, it ensures the information's accuracy, honesty, objectivity, humanity, and culture.

Fourth, it ensures "valuable" details in the podcast work, helping journalists create important highlights and increasing the public's focus on the work.

Fifth, it chooses characters and styles suitable for the podcast topic. To choose suitable characters and styles, journalists need to clearly understand their listeners' interests and expectations.

1.4.2. Ensuring vividness and an impression of form

Firstly, the speech ensures intimacy and closeness. The voice in podcasts “is the intimate key to the hearts of listeners.”

Secondly, it ensures the sound quality.

Thirdly, it combines sounds and music. Sounds help create a realistic and vivid sound space, helping listeners feel they are directly experiencing the event. Music makes the program more vivid, recreates the space, and enhances the mood, creating mental stimulation for listeners. Combining sounds and music will help the podcast become more vivid, developing listeners’ ability to associate and imagine.

Fourth, the title and description of the podcast must be concise, and the illustrations must be eye-catching.

Fifth, the podcast opening must be impressive.

Sixth, it ensures the appropriate duration. An engaging and complex story will undoubtedly need a longer duration, but with simple topics, it does not need a prolonged duration. The length of the story also makes listeners impatient. If it feels necessary to extend the duration to convey the entire story and information content, journalists should consider dividing the content into multiple episodes.

1.5. Creating podcasts for world electronic newspapers and some experiences for Vietnam

1.5.1. Experience in producing news podcasts for The New York Times (nytimes.com)

1.5.1.1. Natural, intimate leading, breaking free from the mold of a news program

The host's voice and style when leading the program are also the arts that create the intimacy and closeness of each podcast episode. The listener does not feel distant or “educated” but simply like listening to a close friend tell the news stories that they hear and see every day.

1.5.1.2. Focus on topics closely related to practical life and public needs

Topics that originate from practical life, from the public's need to learn, know, and listen, such as changes related to the government's social security policies, hot political issues both in and outside the US, such as the war situation in Ukraine, the election situation and democracy in Turkey, famous lawsuits in the US, the possibility of Trump winning the Republican nomination for the 2024 election, the prevention of spyware by the Biden administration,... to controversial stories such as: "Is it worth going to college?", personal freedom, the increase in crime, the expensiveness of vegetarian food and the impact on consumer choices,...

1.5.1.3. A variety of audio sources (music, background noise, sound effects)

There is never just one boring, monotonous voice on The Daily, but always a variety of voices and sound formats. The harmonious blend of music with other audio elements makes the podcast extremely interesting. Even with news podcasts like The Daily (The New York

Times), the presence of music breaks up the atmosphere that is extremely serious and sometimes somewhat dry on political topics.

1.5.2. The New York Times's experience in creating investigative podcast Serial (nytimes.com)

1.5.2.1. Compelling storytelling, rich imagery, and a combination of music and sound

The voice still has the advantage of making audio journalism on the Serial podcast intimate. Through Sarah Koenig's narration, listeners can feel that they know the people speaking and the subjects involved. The sounds are carefully invested in even the most minor details in the story, such as knocking on the door, footsteps, etc. The sounds of the scene during the journalist's information-seeking process are also interspersed with the journalist's narration recorded in the studio. The background music also changes continuously depending on the nuances of each narrative; sometimes, it is urgent, as if it wants to urge the journalist to find the truth of the matter. Sometimes, it is mysterious and ghostly, creating a slightly creepy feeling, but it still makes the listener curious and anxiously waiting for the subsequent developments of the story.

1.5.2.2. Integrating multimedia elements

Podcast Serial is integrated with multimedia elements such as the episode cover image, illustrations for the story in each episode (faces of the characters appearing in the episode, letters or a souvenir mentioned in the story, etc.), and text (summary of the story of each episode, detailed script of each episode). This integration of Serial helps the public have an accurate picture of the story, helping them listen to the story more deeply.

1.5.3. The art of narrative podcast storytelling in the UK and Australia

According to Dowling and Miller (2019), journalistic podcast reporting is a type of immersive journalism in which the journalist assumes the role of a character in the story, employing narrative as the primary storytelling element. They also incorporate commentary elements, offering an almost “live” listener experience as reporters discuss their experiences in a friendly, informal “chat” with the podcast host.

- The art of sketching space and context with sound:

A popular form of storytelling art in long-form narrative podcasts uses “scenes” recreated by sound, making it seem like the listener is witnessing the event or setting in the work.

- Take advantage of the art of storytelling by telling personal stories:

The journalist (or presenter) actively participates in the story as an individual. The journalist takes on two roles: as a character in the story and as a journalist who witnesses the story. A podcast monologue acts as a dialogue between hosts and listeners, allowing the individual journalist to speak directly to the listener through the personal storytelling approach. The journalist invites and guides listeners to focus on the journalist and the story.

- The journalist becomes a character in the story:

Crime podcasts often adopt a “cinematic” approach, featuring rich character development across multiple episodes, enabling listeners to “get to know” and empathize with the characters introduced in the story. This includes the journalist, who frequently becomes the central character in the story, sharing how he or she thinks and feels about the production process. Over time, reporters and interviewees emerged as “sound friends” whose experiences mattered to listeners. However, unlike fictional characters, “characters” in journalism podcasts are real people whose lived experiences are the story’s plot, told through the art of journalistic reporting. Podcasts, with their personal approach and informal style, provide a subjective reporting style that is an alternative to traditional forms of journalism.

Chapter 2

CURRENT STATUS OF PODCASTS IN ELECTRONIC NEWSPAPERS IN VIETNAM

2.1. Overview of electronic news agencies and podcasts included in the survey

2.1.1. Electronic news organizations

- *Nhan Dan Electronic Newspaper (nhandan.vn) - (ND)*

Nhan Dan Electronic Newspaper is a product of the Nhan Dan Newspaper. The Nhan Dan Newspaper, the central agency of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Voice of the Party, State, and People of Vietnam, issued its first issue on March 11, 1951, in the Viet Bac War Zone during the resistance war against the French colonialists. On June 21, 1998, Nhan Dan Electronic Newspaper was the first official Vietnamese daily newspaper online at nhandan.org.vn, nhandan.vn, and nhandan.com.vn. Nhan Dan Electronic Newspaper currently releases six language versions: Vietnamese, English, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish, with about 1.5 million visitors daily.

- *Lao Dong Electronic Newspaper (laodong.vn) - (LD)*

Lao Dong Newspaper is one of the two oldest newspapers in Vietnam. An agency of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor published its first issue on August 14, 1929. Lao Dong Newspaper currently has two forms of publication: paper newspapers (print newspapers) and online newspapers. Lao Dong Newspaper is the number one newspaper for protecting workers' legitimate rights and interests; it is the voice of Vietnamese workers, officials, and laborers. The newspaper also actively propagates and encourages patriotic emulation movements nationwide. In particular, the Board of Directors has a strong voice in the fight against corruption and waste. Lao Dong E-Newspaper was born on May 19, 1999, at laodong.vn, one of the first agencies in Vietnam to publish electronic boards.

- *VnExpress electronic newspaper (vnexpress.net) - (VNE)*

Vietnam Express News is an electronic newspaper - VnExpress was first born on February 26, 2001, and is operated by FPT Corporation. Currently, VnExpress serves as the Ministry of Science and Technology's mouthpiece. This newspaper takes pride in its status as "the Vietnamese newspaper with the most views," evidenced by its consistent top rankings on traffic statistics sites like alexa.com and SimilarWeb. The most visited websites in Vietnam. In 2022, after implementing the National Press Development and Management Plan

until 2025, Vietnam Express News Electronic Newspaper (VnExpress) and Science and Development Newspaper will merge into VnExpress Newspaper. In addition to the main page at VnExpress.net, the newspaper also has specialized pages such as Star, iOne, and the English version of VnExpress International.

2.1.2. Podcasts are subject to the survey

The Current News Podcast is the ND's most crucial podcast, produced by the People's Television Center. The podcast first aired on October 1, 2021, and was organized to produce two programs per day, released in the morning from 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and in the afternoon from 5:00 p.m. Each newscast has a variable duration, typically lasting approximately 10 minutes. The structure of the morning and afternoon news is different, as the end of the morning news is weather information, while the end of the afternoon news is a thematic report.

We selected two podcasts from LD for our thesis survey: Morning News and Stories. Morning News Podcat (or Morning News), with an average duration of about 5 minutes, is the news in the leading newsletter. Each news story conveys content as information, primarily addressing the questions 5W + 1H without delving into the two questions, Why and How. The duration of each news story ranges from ten to a few dozen seconds, primarily focusing on reading the news with background music. Story Podcast is a news podcast with an unfixed duration and frequency, delving into a topic of public interest or a specific story with social impact.

The two podcasts selected for the survey in the thesis are News and VnExpress Today. The News Podcast serves as a concise newsletter, delivering daily hot news updates at 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., with an average runtime of 5 minutes for the 6 o'clock and 10 o'clock news and 10 minutes for the 21 o'clock news. Today's VnExpress podcast delves into discussing prominent issues in daily life that interest the public, with an average duration of about 10 minutes per episode, one episode per day.

2.2. Surveying the current status of podcasts in electronic newspapers in Vietnam

2.2.1. The current situation of podcasts in online newspapers in Vietnam

Podcasts in Vietnam began to develop strongly since 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic boosted the demand for digital content consumption. Many major newspapers such as Tuoi Tre, VietnamPlus, VnExpress and Lao Dong launched podcasts, creating a "wave" in newsrooms, including local newspapers. By November 2024, 40/63 local newspapers had participated in podcast production.

However, newsrooms face many challenges such as lack of professional human resources, limited funding and competition from independent podcasts such as HIEUTV, Have a Sip, Tri ky cam chuc,... The content of podcasts of online newspaper newsrooms mainly focuses on news but lacks creativity, following the traditional radio model. Ignoring popular areas such as psychology and life skills causes them to miss out on a large potential audience.

2.2.2. Current status of podcast content in electronic newspapers in Vietnam

2.2.2.1. Topic and theme

Regarding content distribution, ND's podcasts focus heavily on Politics (54.2%) and Social Life (18.8%), with other topics such as Policy (11.5%), Health - Education (7.3%), Economy (4.2%), Law (2.1%), Sports (1%). The Board of Directors focuses heavily on Sports (60.4%) and Life - Society (26.4%), with other topics such as Good Examples (10.4%), Culture - Arts - Awards intelligence (1.9%), and other topics (0.9%). VNE focuses on Life - Society (39.8%), Economy (22.5%), Politics (13.1%), and other topics such as Culture - Arts - Entertainment (9.4%), Law (7.3%), Policy (2.1%), Sports (1%), Good Example (0.5%), and other topics (4.2%). Public survey results show that VNE achieved the highest rating in terms of topic diversity (3.35 points), followed by LD (3.12 points) and ND (3.1 points).

2.2.2.2. On the topicality of podcasts

The regular update schedule reflects the topicality of podcasts in the news bulletins of ND, VNE, and LD; each newspaper has a different approach to maintaining updates for listeners. ND updates twice a day (7 am and 4 pm) with the number of news items from 15 to under 20 (51%) and over 20 (34.4%). This shows a commitment to providing continuous information. VNE provides information early in the morning (6 am) and late in the evening (9-11 pm) when listeners often choose to listen to podcasts. The density of news articles is flexible, from 10 to 15 news items (38%), over 20 news items (31.5%), and under ten news items (16.3%). When listeners have more time, VNE focuses more on news in the evening. LD updates information daily at 7 am, with a news density of 10 to 15 news (98.4%). The ND, LD, and VNE podcasts closely follow social developments regarding article genre. Regarding frequency, ND and VNE broadcast daily, ensuring timeliness and appeal. In contrast, LD broadcasts less, irregularly, and sometimes does not reflect hot events, leading to a lower timeliness rating than ND and VNE. The average score for timeliness assessment through public surveys: VNE (3.5), ND (3.41), LD (3.35).

2.2.2.3. On the honesty, objectivity, humanity, and culture of information

The three newspapers' podcasts have diverse and official sources from reputable agencies, ensuring that the information is always accurate and not distorted. At the same time, focus on real-life stories, honoring human values and community spirit. Avoid using offensive language or images, showing respect and sensitivity to cultural and social issues.

2.2.2.4. Using "expensive" details in podcast works

The news podcasts of ND, LD, and VNE often lack "expensive" details, reducing their appeal and ability to retain listeners. In contrast, reportage and interview podcasts such as "VnExpress today," "The story" of LD, and the final reportage "Afternoon news" of ND have paid attention to adding valuable details: on-site sounds, character narration, descriptive elements... However, valuable details can become overshadowed without sophistication in sound mixing, as seen in some LD podcasts. This shows the need to skillfully use valuable details to create a unique and unforgettable listening experience while enhancing the work's artistic value.

2.2.2.5. Using characters and podcast style

In the news podcasts of the three newspapers ND, LD, and VNE, there is usually only a monologue reading, except for ND's Afternoon news, which has a final reportage with the participating characters. These podcasts have a style similar to regular radio and are not groundbreaking. On the contrary, the three newspapers' podcasts in the form of reports, reflections, and interviews all make efforts to find suitable characters and delivery styles. VnExpress today often uses the voices of insiders to tell the story. LD also lets the characters tell the story themselves, but the characters in the program "The Story" are more diverse. ND builds the podcast like a traditional radio work, with many character voices to increase objectivity and multi-dimensionality.

2.2.3. Current status of podcast format

2.2.3.1. About the voice and communication style of the host

ND: using completely human hosts, creating realistic and friendly emotions. The host can improvise and adjust the presentation style, bringing a sense of authenticity and credibility. ND has an average rating from the public, nearly equivalent to VNE (3.26 compared to 3.27). Listeners appreciate the quality of ND's voice, thanks to his inspiring reading voice. ND uses two leading voices in 100% of News & News podcast programs, creating a unique, lively, and close look.

LD: Employing 99.1% human hosts with diverse voices from the North and South, reflecting cultural and linguistic richness, creating intimacy, and attracting listeners. However, some local voices need to have more accurate pronunciation, affecting the reception of information. The public's rating for LD is the lowest among the three newspapers (3.21/4 points).

VNE: Pioneer in using AI voice in news podcasts. Although the AI voice lacks naturalness and emotion, VNE received the highest rating of 4 (43.5%) for today's VnExpress podcast programs with human voices; the average public rating is 3.27, the highest among the three newspapers.

2.2.3.2. About sound quality and use of noise and music elements

- About sound quality:

Through the survey, the sound quality among the three newspapers' podcasts is uneven: VNE's podcasts have the best sound quality thanks to investments in high-end recording equipment and a professional recording environment. The sound is clear, without noise or low resonance, making it easy for listeners to receive information. Substandard recording environments or untested recording equipment contribute significantly to the noise in LD's podcast. The difference in sound quality between LD's podcast episodes shows a need for more consistency in the production process and sound quality control. ND's podcast has a problem with uneven volume levels between broadcasters, causing listeners to adjust the volume constantly.

The public's sound quality assessment score is: LD is the lowest (3.27), followed by ND (3.34), and VNE is the highest (3.38).

- About using sound and music:

ND's podcasts often overuse background music, lack noise, and reduce vividness and authenticity. The background music used does not match the content, causing boredom. The public rated music and sound effects low (3.32).

For LD, the use of background music that does not match the content and the lack of noise makes the podcast fragmented and lacking in connection. The podcast receives the lowest score (3.25) for its music and sound effects. There is a situation where the background music is too loud, drowning out the speech.

VNE has seriously invested in sound and background music, harmoniously combining sound elements and creating a vivid experience for listeners. VNE uses appropriate background music for each piece of content, helping to increase authenticity and appeal. It has the highest rating for music and sound effects (3.39).

2.2.3.3. Podcast Title, Description, and Image

The podcast titles of the three newspapers surveyed were generally short, under 20 words. In particular, the podcast titles of ND were always under ten words (100%), LD (96.2%), and VNE (70.7%). However, the content of ND's title did not reflect the podcast content; it only included the program name and date. This made it challenging to find the podcast, as listeners often searched by event rather than the date of publication. In contrast, LD and VNE used titles that reflected the podcast content: LD (60.4% reflected some content, 39.6% reflected most of the content) and VNE (48.2% reflected some content, 51.8% reflected most of the content).

Podcast descriptions are also essential factors in helping potential listeners better understand the content and purpose of the podcast. ND usually summarizes the main content, LD introduces suggestive content, and VNE chooses prominent details to arouse curiosity. VNE and LD usually write short descriptions of less than 40 words, while ND writes longer descriptions, usually over 60 words.

The number of images used in popular podcasts of all three newspapers is 1. Even with ND, 26% of podcasts do not use images; this rate is lower at LD at 1.9%. The rate of not using images at ND is relatively high, reflecting the need for more investment in the visual aspect of the product. For LD, although the rate of using images is high, all of them are illustrations, not actual images recorded by reporters or even just drawings, showing the limitation in exploiting the potential of visual elements in this newspaper's podcast. VNE has 32.5% of podcasts with authentic images, and the remaining large proportion - 67.5% are illustrations, showing that there is still room for improvement. Illustrations need to provide accurate context or images of related characters and more objectivity and authenticity, reducing the credibility of podcasts with the public.

2.2.3.4. Podcast opening (Intro)

Of the three newspapers, ND has the least creative way of opening podcasts, almost unchanged; 100% of podcasts open by summarizing the main content of the podcast episode. Although LD is also popular with the opening summarizing the main content of the episode (accounting for 60.4%), there is still diversity in the opening of the remaining podcasts, such as directly citing the main content (23%), quoting the words of a few characters (17%), asking

attention-grabbing questions (2%). With VNE, the two preferred opening methods are directly quoting the main content (47.6%) and quoting the words of a few characters (38.7%); summarizing the main content of the episode only accounts for 13.6%.

2.2.3.5. *About podcast length*

ND: 97.9% of "Current News" podcasts are over 10 minutes long, meeting detailed requirements; 2.1% are 5-10 minutes for newsletters with few events.

LD: 72.6% of podcasts are 5-10 minutes long, providing brief news; 21.7% are over 10 minutes long for profound stories; 5.7% are under 5 minutes for short notifications.

VNE: 71.7% of podcasts are over 10 minutes long, focusing on details and analysis; 26.7% are 5-10 minutes; 1.6% are under 5 minutes.

The public's assessment of podcast duration is quite similar: VNE (3.28), ND (3.21), and LD (3.2) show high satisfaction.

2.2.3.6. *Some other issues*

- *Format*: None of the three newspapers have demonstrated significant innovation or inventiveness in their podcast presentations. Mainly, they still focus on monologue reporting, accounting for a reasonably high proportion in all three newspapers: 47.9% in ND, 60.4% in LD, and 47.6% in VNE. LD and VNE have made some progress in storytelling with characters. LD with the podcast program "Story" used this form at 39.6%, while VNE with the program "VnExpress Today" had a higher rate, reaching 51.8%.

- *Category*: Regarding the journalism genre used in podcasts, there is an overwhelming proportion using the news genre (100% - ND, 60.4% - LD, 48.2% - VNE), followed by reportage (50% - ND - because there is a report in the afternoon news, the calculation method is different from the other newspapers but does not affect the overall comparison results, 26.4% - LD, 45.5% - VNE), article type reflects that only the Board of Directors uses it with 13.2%, and the interview genre is only used by VNE with 6.3%. The news and reportage genres clearly favor ND. However, the lack of diversity in other types of journalism may reduce its appeal to some listeners desiring more reflective or interview content. The Board of Directors tries to strike a better balance between news, reports, and reflection articles, creating diverse content. However, not taking advantage of many interview genres may be a limitation. VNE has a variety of journalistic genres, especially reports and interviews, making the content more prosperous and attractive. However, these are all genres of traditional journalism; there has yet to be any breakthrough or creativity by the three newspapers in forming a new genre of podcasts.

- *Storage capacity*: VNE, LD, and ND newspapers' podcast storage systems allow readers to search for and listen to programs again.

- *Interactivity*: VNE supports comments under each podcast, allowing full display. Although LD has integrated a comment feature, it hides comments, preventing the public from reading comments submitted by itself and other users. For ND, this feature is completely cut off. The absence of a comment feature on ND can be seen as a significant limitation in building and maintaining relationships with listeners.

- *Searchability*: The VNE newspaper prominently features podcasts on its homepage, whereas ND and LD hide them in subtabs, posing a challenge for new readers. Thanks to podcast titles containing keywords, VNE and LD newspapers have better search capabilities. In contrast, ND's title method can make it difficult for listeners to search because it only includes the podcast program name and posting date.

2.2.4. Current status of the podcast production process in electronic newspapers in Vietnam

For the ND, podcasts are mainly produced by the People's Television Center, with the most crucial podcast being the News Bulletin, produced daily. The production process includes four main steps: content selection, news reading, audio editing, and posting. The LD has a 7-step process for clearly dividing roles, but there are difficulties with reporter independence and sound quality. VNE has a substantial investment in facilities and a high level of independence for reporters who use artificial intelligence to produce news podcasts. The podcast production processes of these three agencies all reflect inconsistency and a lack of human resources for podcasts.

2.3. Evaluating the Success and limitations of current podcasts in electronic newspapers in Vietnam

2.3.1. Success and Causes of Success

2.3.1.1. Success

1- The three newspapers are among the pioneering editorial offices in podcast production, which has partly formed the habit of listening to podcasts for the public of e-newspaper. 2- The production of podcasts in the three newspapers has initially established podcasts as a form of journalistic work with its own identity in e-newspaper. 3- The podcasts are diverse and rich in topics, suitable for listeners' needs. 4- The podcasts are highly topical. 5- Ensuring honesty, objectivity, social significance, and profound humanistic values. 6- The editorial offices aim to simplify the podcast production process, helping to reduce costs, shorten time, and save human resources and finances. 7- VNE's Success uses podcasts to increase interaction and engage the public.

2.3.1.2. Reasons for Success

1- Awareness from leadership about the importance of podcasts. 2- Acumen and quick pace with podcast production by the reporters and editors. 3- Development of supporting technology.

2.3.2. Limitations and causes of limitations

2.3.2.1. Limit

1- Some podcasts have not made any breakthroughs, are still formulaic, and follow the beaten path. 2- Lack of podcasts with in-depth commentary and analysis. 3- Lack of impressive and creative openings. 4- The sound quality in many podcasts of LD and ND is not good. 5- Lack of sound and lack of richness and harmony of background music in podcast

products. 6- The hosts' ability in some podcasts still needs to be improved. 7- Abusing AI voices makes podcasts lose their naturalness and closeness to listeners. 8- Lack of podcast promotion activities to expand the audience.

2.3.2.2. Reasons for limited

1- There is no specialized team for podcast production. 2- The capacity and awareness of some reporters and editors about podcasts still need to be improved. 3- Need to spend adequate investment resources on facilities for podcast production. 4- The production process needs to be standardized.

Chapter 3

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF PODCASTS IN ONLINE NEWSPAPERS IN VIETNAM TODAY

3.1. Issues current podcasts are facing in electronic newspapers in Vietnam

3.1.1. The challenge of shaping the unique style and identity for each newspaper's podcast

The most significant limitation of podcasts, particularly those on e-commerce in Vietnam today, is the “old-fashioned” mindset. The thesis surveyed three newspapers and found that podcasts generally need more creativity and a unique style. Notably, the news podcast format remains popular, resembling a traditional radio program in its news bulletin format. As for other news podcasts such as The Story (LD), VnExpress Today, they are generally similar in form and have not yet made their own mark. Furthermore, the selection of topics has been careless, resulting in a lack of exploration and fresh perspectives on social and personal issues.

Furthermore, a notable problem is the lack of topics that use the power of sound to convey messages. Most podcasts in electronic newspapers are still done relatively simply, without a breakthrough, worthy of investment, and not attractive enough to listeners. Most of the podcast programs surveyed by the thesis still maintain the mindset of traditional radio program production and have not found a way to develop that suits the characteristics of podcasts. Some podcasts lack sustainably organized sections (such as the LD Stories section, which broadcasts irregularly), and their posting frequency frequently relies on production resources, causing instability and affecting loyal listeners' psychology.

3.1.2. Challenges in building a specialized team for podcast production in online newspaper offices

Currently, the human resources for podcast production in newsrooms are mainly taken advantage of by the human resources of departments that need more experience and in-depth training in podcasting. Podcast production in newsrooms today is mainly self-taught by reporters, “learning from” each other. The concurrent responsibility of podcast production by “non-specialized” departments is also a big problem in newsrooms, quickly leading to the mentality of considering podcast production as just a "secondary" task.

The “audio journalism” mindset when making podcasts is very different from other forms of journalism. It requires journalists to have talent and aesthetic taste in sound, sensitive ears, observance, and knowledge of conveying what they see and hear into sound so that listeners can imagine and visualize.

3.1.3. Challenges in balancing equipment investment costs, technical and technological improvements with the economic efficiency of podcast products

Despite its great potential, podcasts have not yet received adequate attention and investment from news agencies. Improving quality and creating multiple podcast production and distribution platforms requires serious investment in technology and technical platforms. To improve the listening experience for the public with high sound quality, in addition to investing in upgrading recording equipment and accompanying software, it also requires investment in upgrading hosting storage capacity, etc. Thus, newsrooms will incur significant costs. Currently, podcasts have not brought much economic value to newsrooms, and advertising on podcasts has not developed, mainly relying on advertising forms on newspaper websites. This is the most challenging problem, especially for newsrooms with limited budgets, forcing them to calculate and balance the costs of production and operation of the newsroom, leading to a lack of boldness in investing in improving the technical platform for podcast production.

3.1.4. The challenge of forming a habit of listening to podcasts and keeping the public on the electronic newspaper site

The unoptimized user experience, complex search, and access are significant barriers that prevent listeners from fully accessing the content on the newspaper page. Furthermore, when the public listens to podcasts through other application platforms without returning to the original newspaper site, it reduces the opportunity to interact and engage with other newspaper content. Interaction with listeners is also an essential factor. Electronic newspapers need to create opportunities for the public to participate, contribute opinions, and give feedback on podcast content. This interaction enhances the quality of the content and fosters a community of dedicated listeners who remain loyal to the newspaper. Building a friendly, easy-to-use, and highly interactive website interface to keep the public in the newspaper longer is also a big challenge that newsrooms need to consider and research seriously. Newsrooms must take steps to overcome shortcomings and promote advantages.

3.2. Solutions to improve the quality of current podcasts on electronic newspapers in Vietnam

3.2.1. Solutions for podcast production processes

Firstly, they need to standardize the podcast production process. This process includes searching and selecting topics, Developing a podcast production plan, Collecting materials and developing a podcast script, Preparing technical equipment and recording podcasts, editing and editing podcast audio episodes, Playing/publishing podcasts, and Listening and tracking responses.

Secondly, they need to form a dedicated team for podcast production. The stages in the podcast production process corresponding to each job position need to be assigned to people with strengths, abilities, and expertise. Avoid letting one person “embrace” all the work.

Thirdly, they need to use the right AI to optimize the news podcast production process. AI can summarize prominent news editing, take notes, distribute character interview tapes, identify original audio tapes, and even write articles.

3.2.2. Podcast content solutions

Firstly, they need to increase podcasts that comment and analyze in-depth on topics of public interest.

Secondly, they need to increase listeners’ interaction and participation in podcast content.

Thirdly, they need to increase content that is close to young people.

3.2.3. Podcast format solutions

Firstly, they need to diversify the form of news podcasts. Many different podcast formats can be developed, such as short podcasts (micro-podcasts), long-form podcasts (serial podcasts), interviews (interviews), panel discussions (panel discussions), and storytelling (storytelling).

Secondly, they need to invest in the podcast’s title, description, and illustration.

Thirdly, they need to create an impressive podcast opening.

Fourth, professionalize the host and build the host’s image associated with the podcast program brand.

Fifth, they need to invest in sound and diversify background music.

Sixth, they need to optimize the duration of each podcast.

Seventh, they need to build a friendly and professional podcast interface.

3.3. Recommendations to improve the quality of current podcasts on electronic newspapers in Vietnam

3.3.1. For the Ministry of Information and Communications

Firstly, the Ministry of Information and Communications needs to propose and update legal regulations related to podcast production and distribution. There are currently no legal regulations governing podcasts in Vietnam. The lack of legal regulations in Vietnam has resulted in numerous legal gaps concerning copyright protection, personal data protection, and advertising. These gaps aim to restrict the dissemination of fake news and misleading information within the podcast realm, thereby fostering a healthy and equitable environment for all parties involved.

Secondly, the Ministry of Information and Communications needs to invest in upgrading nationwide internet infrastructure.

Thirdly, the Ministry of Information and Communications needs to encourage press agencies to participate in podcast production. They can help increase reliable information content for the public in the podcast environment, contribute to limiting the spread of fake news in the digital media environment, and contribute to improving the quality of information available to the public and successfully realizing the goals of the party and state.

3.3.2. For training facilities

Firstly, training facilities need to introduce podcasts into university training programs in journalism and communications, creating human resources for podcast production at press organizations.

Secondly, training facilities need to organize short-term training courses on podcasts for journalists and reporters working at press organizations.

3.3.3. For press organizations

Firstly, press organizations need to focus on organizing professional training activities on podcasts for journalists.

Secondly, press organizations need to have policies to encourage journalists to participate in podcast production and promptly encourage high-quality podcast products.

Thirdly, press organizations need to build a plan to produce and promote podcasts systematically and effectively.

Fourth, press organizations need to invest in building a database system to store podcasts.

Fifth, press organizations need to constantly improve the means, techniques, and technology to serve podcasts.

3.3.4. For the team involved in podcast production

Firstly, they need to learn and improve podcast production skills constantly.

Secondly, they need to listen to the needs and habits of the public regularly.

CONCLUSION

Podcasts are gradually becoming an indispensable part of the communication strategy of online newspapers. They can provide diverse information and are flexible in approaching and engaging with the public. In the context of increasingly fierce competition in digital content, developing attractive and accessible podcast programs will help newsrooms expand their ability to reach a young, dynamic audience that tends to receive information through many different platforms.

Within the framework of 3 chapters, with more than 180 pages of the main text, the thesis has clarified the theoretical and practical basis of podcasts in online newspapers, including concepts, characteristics of podcasts in online newspapers, the role of podcasts for online newspapers and the public, production methods and a set of criteria for evaluating the quality of podcast content and form. Based on a survey of 393 news podcasts of three newspapers (ND, LD, VNE), the author found that the surveyed newspapers have achieved the following successes: The three newspapers are among the pioneering editorial offices in podcast production, partly forming the habit of listening to podcasts for the public of online

newspapers; The production of podcasts in the three newspapers has initially established podcasts as a form of journalism product with its own identity in online newspapers; The podcasts are diverse and rich in topics, suitable for the needs of listeners; The podcasts are highly topical; Ensuring honesty, objectivity, social significance, and profound human values; The editorial offices aim to simplify the podcast production process, helping to reduce costs, shorten time, and save human resources and finances; The success of VNE is using podcasts to increase interaction and create engagement with the public. The reasons for success are Awareness from leaders about the importance of podcasts, The sensitivity and quickness to catch up with podcast production of the team of reporters and editors, and The development of supporting technology. In addition, there are also some limitations: Some podcasts have not made a breakthrough, are still stereotyped, and follow the beaten path; Lack of podcast commentary and in-depth analysis; The sound quality in many podcasts of LD and ND is not good; Lack of sound and lack of richness and harmony of background music in podcast products; The capacity of the hosts in some podcasts is still limited; Abusing AI voices makes the podcast lose its naturalness and closeness to listeners; Lack of podcast promotion activities to expand the audience. The limitations are: There is no specialized team for podcast production; the capacity and awareness of reporters and editors about podcasts still need to be improved; adequate investment resources are not being devoted to facilities for podcast production; And the production process is not being standardized.

From the current situation of podcasts on three online newspapers, we identified the following issues: Challenges in shaping the style and identity of each newspaper's podcast; Challenges in building a specialized team for podcast production at online newspaper editorial offices; Challenges in balancing the cost of investing in equipment, improving technology with the economic efficiency of podcast products; Challenges in forming the habit of listening to podcasts and keeping the public on the online newspaper page. From there, we have proposed specific solutions to improve the quality of podcasts in online newspapers in Vietnam today. Regarding the production process, editorial offices need to Standardize the podcast production process, Form a specialized team for podcast production, and Use appropriate AI to optimize the news podcast production process. Regarding content: Increase podcasts that comment on and analyze in-depth topics of public interest; Increase the interaction and participation of listeners in podcast content; Increase content that is close to young people. In terms of form: Diversify the form of presenting news podcasts; Invest in titles, descriptions, and podcast illustrations; Create an impressive podcast opening; Professionalize the host, build the host's image associated with the podcast program brand; Invest in sound and diversify background music; Optimize the duration of each podcast; Build a friendly and professional podcast interface. We also propose several recommendations, specifically for the Ministry of Information and Communications, to Propose and update legal regulations related to podcast production and distribution, Invest in upgrading the national internet infrastructure, and Encourage press agencies to participate in podcast production. For training institutions: Include podcasts in university training programs in journalism and communications, creating human resources for podcast production at press agencies; Organize short-term training courses on podcasts for journalists and reporters working at press agencies. For press agencies: Focus on organizing professional training activities on podcasts for journalists; Have policies to encourage journalists to participate in podcast

production, promptly encourage high-quality podcast products; Develop a plan to produce and promote podcasts systematically and effectively; Invest in upgrading the podcast storage database system; Continuously improve the means, techniques, and technology serving podcasts. For the team participating in podcast production: Continuously learn and improve podcast production skills; Regularly listen to the needs and habits of the public.

During the implementation of the topic, we realized that the current situation of podcasts in electronic newspapers in Vietnam poses many issues that need further study. For example, podcast production skills for journalists; podcasts from the perspective of journalism economics, such as podcast revenue development strategies for press agencies, podcast market research in Vietnam; issues about podcast audiences, such as the impact of podcasts on changes in public behavior and habits, podcast audience psychology; future podcast development trends, etc.

In a limited amount of time, we have tried to research, apply theory, and analyze the practice of podcasts to solve the tasks and requirements, but the thesis still needs to be revised. We look forward to receiving the forgiveness and guidance of scientists, experts, colleagues, and journalists nationwide./.

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