

Netizen Journalism on Instagram as Local Digital Media and Communication Dynamics in the @infobekasi Account

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the communication dynamics of netizen journalism within the Instagram account @infobekasi as a local digital media platform in Bekasi. The study was conducted to address the limited understanding of how local social media accounts mediate citizen participation, content curation, and information dissemination. A qualitative research design with a descriptive-interpretative approach was employed. Primary data were collected through documentation of Instagram content, including posts and audience interactions, and were analyzed inductively through data reduction and thematic categorization. The findings showed that @infobekasi functioned as a hybrid media platform that integrated citizen-generated content, administrative curation, and audience interaction. The account also served as a local digital early warning system by enabling rapid circulation and social verification of local information. The study concluded that netizen journalism on social media reflected the transformation of local media practices in the digital era.

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1. Introduction

The rapid development of the internet and social media has significantly transformed the landscape of communication and journalism. Social media platforms no longer function merely as spaces for social interaction, but have also become arenas for public participation in the production and dissemination of information. This transformation has encouraged the growth of citizen journalism, where ordinary citizens actively contribute to news creation by sharing firsthand

information, particularly related to local events.

Local contexts have become an important space for the practice of citizen journalism, as they allow communities to exchange information that is directly relevant to their daily lives. In Bekasi City, public participation in information sharing is evident through various online platforms, one of which is the Instagram account @infobekasi. This account has emerged as a local information hub where residents share updates on traffic accidents, criminal incidents, and other social issues affecting the community. The presence of @infobekasi illustrates that local residents are not only consumers of information but also active content producers who contribute to the circulation of local news (Arifin et al., 2022).

However, the content disseminated through @infobekasi is not solely generated by citizens. A substantial number of posts are produced by the account's management team or internal reporters, including event coverage, culinary reviews, and promotional content related to local activities. This condition reflects a dynamic communication process characterized by the hybridization of citizen journalism practices with elements of professional journalism and commercial content (Gillmor, 2004; Pavlik, 2013). Such hybridity indicates that local social media accounts increasingly operate beyond participatory platforms, functioning instead as hybrid digital media.

Previous studies have emphasized that social media, as part of new media, enables dialogic communication by facilitating interaction, collaboration, and community building among users

(Falkow in Liliweri, 2015; Mayfield, 2008). Within this environment, netizen journalism or citizen journalism has emerged as a form of journalistic practice conducted by non-professional individuals who produce, analyze, and disseminate news content through digital platforms. Roberts (2019) notes that citizen journalism encompasses a wide range of activities, from individual content sharing to participatory media projects and audience engagement through commenting, tagging, and redistributing news.

Scholars have also highlighted the role of social media in reshaping journalistic dynamics. Bruns and Highfield (2012) argue that social media facilitates public participation in news production through interaction and engagement, while Hermida (2010) emphasizes that social media enables real-time news dissemination and decentralizes information flows. As a result, information can originate from diverse sources, allowing multiple perspectives to coexist within the public sphere.

Despite extensive research on social media and citizen journalism, existing studies have largely focused on general participatory practices or national and global contexts. Limited attention has been given to how local social media-based information accounts manage the interaction between citizen-generated content, administrative curation, and professionally produced or commercial content within a single platform. This gap highlights the need for research that examines local digital media accounts as hybrid communication spaces.

This study offers a novel contribution by examining the communication dynamics within the Instagram account @infobekasi as a local netizen journalism platform that integrates citizen participation, content curation by account administrators, and interactive audience engagement. By focusing on how citizen reports, administrative verification, and audience responses interact in the dissemination of local information, this study provides new insights into the transformation of local digital media and the evolving boundaries between citizen journalism and professional journalism in social media environments.

Accordingly, the research problem addressed in this study concerns how communication dynamics operate within the Instagram account @infobekasi in mediating citizen journalism and expanding the circulation of local information in Bekasi. This study aims to analyze the role of @infobekasi as a local digital media platform by examining the characteristics of its content, patterns of netizen participation, and the communication processes that emerge through content curation, audience interaction, and contextual verification. The findings are expected to contribute to scholarly discussions on netizen journalism, hybrid journalism practices, and the transformation of local media in the digital era.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive-interpretative approach to examine communication dynamics within the Instagram account @infobekasi. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth understanding of social processes, meanings, and interactions that emerge in digital communication practices. This approach emphasizes inductive reasoning and focuses on analyzing relationships between observed phenomena based on empirical data (Gunawan, 2014).

The research was conducted from April to December 2025 and focused on the city of Bekasi as the local context of the study. The primary object of analysis was the Instagram account @infobekasi, which functions as a local information and netizen journalism platform. Observation of the account was carried out continuously during the research period to capture patterns of content production, interaction, and participation.

The data used in this study consisted of primary data obtained directly from the Instagram account @infobekasi. The data included posts, captions, images, and audience interactions such as comments related to local events and issues. Data were collected through documentation techniques by capturing screenshots of relevant content published on the account. This documentation served as the main research instrument for analyzing communication practices and content characteristics.

To ensure data validity, this study applied a process of careful data selection and contextual interpretation by comparing content themes, posting patterns, and audience responses across different periods. The credibility of the data was strengthened through continuous observation and thematic consistency, allowing the researcher to identify recurring patterns and meanings within the collected data.

Data analysis was conducted through several stages. First, data reduction was performed by selecting and eliminating data that were not relevant to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2014). Second, the selected data were organized and categorized into thematic groups related to netizen participation, content curation, and information dissemination. These thematic categories were then interpreted inductively to formulate analytical claims based on observed patterns. Finally, conclusions were drawn using inductive reasoning, moving from specific empirical findings toward broader interpretations of communication dynamics and netizen journalism practices (Raco, 2010).

3. Results and Discussion

Netizen Participation in Local Information Sharing

The findings indicate that netizen participation plays a central role in the dissemination of local information through the Instagram account @infobekasi. Citizens actively contribute by submitting reports, photos, videos, and brief descriptions of local events such as traffic accidents, criminal incidents, and public disturbances. This participatory practice reflects the core characteristics of netizen journalism, where ordinary citizens function as information providers rather than passive audiences.



Fig. 1. Citizen complaint feed posts

Netizen contributions enable rapid information circulation, particularly for events that require immediate public awareness. In this context, @infobekasi functions as an accessible channel for citizens to report incidents in real time. This finding supports previous studies that emphasize the role of social media in expanding citizen participation and decentralizing news production (Bruns & Highfield, 2012; Hermida, 2010). However, participation is not entirely autonomous, as netizen-generated content is mediated through administrative selection and curation.

Content Curation and Hybrid Journalism Practices

The analysis reveals that @infobekasi does not rely solely on citizen-generated content. A significant portion of the content is produced and curated by the account administrators or internal reporters. This content includes event coverage, informational posts, culinary reviews, and promotional materials related to local businesses or activities. As a result, @infobekasi operates as a hybrid media platform that combines elements of citizen journalism, professional journalism, and commercial communication.

This hybridization reflects a shift in local media practices, where social media accounts adopt journalistic functions while simultaneously maintaining engagement-oriented and promotional strategies. The presence of editorial selection and content packaging indicates that @infobekasi applies a form of gatekeeping, although in a more flexible and informal manner compared to conventional news organizations. This finding aligns with the concept of hybrid journalism, where

professional and participatory practices coexist within digital platforms (Gillmor, 2004; Pavlik, 2013).

Audience Interaction and Social Verification

Audience interaction emerges as a key component of communication dynamics within @infobekasi. Users actively engage with content through comments, likes, and shares, often providing additional information, clarifications, or alternative perspectives related to posted events. In several cases, comment sections function as spaces for collective verification, where audiences confirm, correct, or contextualize reported incidents.



Fig. 2. Weather update news

This interactive process contributes to what can be described as social or contextual verification. Rather than relying solely on formal journalistic verification procedures, information credibility is constructed through audience participation and repeated confirmation by multiple users. This finding demonstrates how verification practices in netizen journalism differ from conventional journalism, emphasizing collective validation over institutional authority. Such dynamics illustrate the participatory nature of information validation in social media-based journalism.



Fig. 3. Citizens' comments

@infobekasi as a Local Digital Early Warning System

Another important finding is the function of @infobekasi as a local digital early warning system. Through rapid dissemination of reports related to accidents, crimes, natural disturbances, or public safety issues, the account enables residents to become aware of potential risks in their surroundings. Netizen reports often precede official information from authorities, highlighting the practical value of citizen-generated content in local contexts.



Fig. 4. Fire reports from residents

This function demonstrates that netizen journalism extends beyond information sharing to include social responsiveness and community awareness. The ability of @infobekasi to circulate timely information reinforces its role as a digital community medium that supports public vigilance and collective awareness. This finding expands existing discussions on citizen journalism by highlighting its preventive and situational awareness functions at the local level.

Transformation of Local Media in Social Media Environments

Overall, the findings illustrate a broader transformation of local media practices within social media environments. @infobekasi represents a shift from traditional local media toward platform-based communication spaces where information production, distribution, and validation are shaped by interactions among netizens, administrators, and audiences. The blurred boundaries between producers and consumers of information indicate a reconfiguration of journalistic roles in the digital era.

These results confirm that local social media accounts function not merely as participatory platforms but as hybrid digital media that mediate citizen journalism, professional content, and commercial interests simultaneously. This transformation challenges conventional distinctions between journalism and non-journalistic content, suggesting that local information ecosystems are increasingly shaped by flexible, community-driven communication practices.

Compatibility and Future Prospects

In line with the objectives stated in the Introduction, this study expected to reveal how communication dynamics operate within a local social media-based netizen journalism platform. The results and discussion demonstrate that these expectations are fulfilled through empirical findings showing the interaction between citizen participation, content curation, and audience engagement within the Instagram account @infobekasi. The analysis confirms that the platform functions not only as a space for citizen reporting but also as a hybrid digital media that mediates local information dissemination, verification processes, and community awareness, thereby addressing the research problem formulated in this study.

Furthermore, the findings open prospects for the development and application of future research. The communication model observed in @infobekasi may serve as a reference for understanding similar local information accounts in other regions. Future studies may apply

comparative approaches across platforms or cities, incorporate audience reception analysis, or examine the long-term implications of hybrid netizen journalism for local media sustainability and public information governance. These prospects highlight the relevance of the present findings for both academic research and practical applications in digital journalism and community-based media development.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the Instagram account @infobekasi plays a significant role as a local digital media platform that mediates netizen journalism in Bekasi. The findings demonstrate that communication dynamics within the account are shaped by the interaction between citizen participation, administrative content curation, and audience engagement. Through this interaction, @infobekasi facilitates the circulation of local information that is relevant, timely, and closely connected to community needs.

The study also concludes that netizen journalism practices within @infobekasi do not operate independently but are embedded within a hybrid media model. Citizen-generated content is complemented and moderated by content produced or curated by account administrators, resulting in a combination of participatory reporting, professional-style coverage, and promotional communication. This hybridization reflects the ongoing transformation of local media practices in social media environments, where traditional journalistic boundaries become increasingly flexible. Furthermore, the findings indicate that audience interaction contributes to a form of social verification, in which information credibility is constructed collectively through comments and responses from other users. This process highlights a shift from institutional verification toward participatory validation, emphasizing the role of digital communities in shaping information reliability. In addition, @infobekasi functions as a local digital early warning system by enabling rapid dissemination of information related to public safety and local incidents, thereby enhancing community awareness and responsiveness.

Based on these conclusions, future research is encouraged to explore netizen journalism practices across different local social media platforms to allow comparative analysis. Further studies may also examine the ethical implications, editorial decision-making processes, and sustainability of hybrid local media models in the digital era.

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