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## **PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM STANDARDS AND THE CHALLENGES OF TELEGRAM NEWS CHANNELS IN UKRAINE**

*The purpose of this article is to analyze the professional standards of journalism in Ukraine, with a particular focus on the ethical challenges faced by journalists during the full-scale war triggered by the Russian Federation. The work aims to examine how Ukrainian media outlets, including traditional press, online platforms, and Telegram channels, adhere to journalistic principles such as objectivity, separation of facts from commentary, and accuracy. Moreover, it investigates the impact of misinformation, manipulative content, and propaganda on public opinion and national security, highlighting the evolving role of journalists in a conflict zone.*

***Research methodology.** The study employs a qualitative and descriptive research methodology. It is based on the analysis of academic literature, professional guidelines, and ethical codes, as well as monitoring materials from Ukrainian media organizations such as the Detector Media, the Institute of Mass Information, and the Pylyp Orlyk Institute of Democracy. In addition, specific Telegram channels were examined to understand their influence on information dissemination and public perception. The research methodology includes content analysis, comparative analysis, and case study evaluation, focusing on the accuracy, neutrality, and reliability of media content, particularly under wartime conditions.*

***Results.** The results demonstrate that Ukrainian journalists face significant ethical and operational challenges during wartime reporting. While traditional media maintain professional standards, online platforms and Telegram channels often struggle with balancing rapid news dissemination and fact verification. The study highlights that adherence to international standards – such as the principles of independence, accuracy, transparency, and separation of facts from opinions – is critical for maintaining public trust and countering propaganda. Findings indicate that misinformation spreads rapidly on digital platforms, and unverified sources can compromise journalistic integrity. However, journalists actively adapt to new challenges, developing practical strategies to uphold objectivity while ensuring timely reporting, thus reinforcing the societal role of media in providing reliable information even in conflict zones.*

***The novelty** of this research lies in its comprehensive approach to examining both traditional and digital media platforms under the conditions of armed conflict, highlighting Telegram's unique role in information dissemination.*

***The practical significance** includes recommendations for improving journalistic practices, enhancing media literacy, and developing automated tools for fact-checking and separating commentary from facts. The study provides insights for media regulators, journalists, and policymakers to strengthen ethical standards and resilience against manipulative content, thereby contributing to the broader goal of ensuring information security and informed public discourse in Ukraine.*

***Key words:** journalism ethics, professional standards, media literacy, Telegram channels, misinformation, Ukraine, wartime journalism, information security.*

### **I. Introduction**

Professional journalism standards play a critical role in ensuring society receives high-quality, reliable information disseminated through mass media. In contemporary Ukraine, adherence to journalistic norms has become especially urgent, as it is essential not only for strengthening the credibility of Ukrainian media but also for countering adversarial information campaigns in the context of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war. General principles and standards of journalism are universal in international practice, but they can vary slightly according to national, ethnic, and religious traditions [4].

Most Ukrainian media organizations recognize six international professional standards that journalists must follow: balance of opinions and perspectives, accuracy, timeliness, separation of facts from commentary and journalist evaluations, completeness, and thoroughness [5]. Researchers I. Kulyas and O. Makarenko identify a seventh standard – simplicity of information presentation [7].

The primary ethical document in Ukrainian journalism today is the Code of Ethics of the Ukrainian Journalist, developed based on international legal documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN World Press Freedom Charter, the Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of

Journalists by the International Federation of Journalists, the Constitution of Ukraine, and national legislation. The Code consists of 19 articles covering freedom of expression, respect for privacy, objective coverage of legal proceedings, confidentiality of sources, and the clear separation of facts from opinions, among other principles. The rapid proliferation of Telegram news channels in Ukraine has significantly transformed the media landscape, raising critical questions about the adherence to professional journalism standards. Ensuring accuracy, objectivity, and ethical reporting in such a fast-paced digital environment has become a major challenge for both professional and citizen journalists.

Research highlights the importance of the separation of facts from commentary, which requires that journalist opinions, expert analyses, and participant statements be clearly delineated from factual reporting. As noted, «an informational journalist should act as an observer, refraining from expressing personal opinions or evaluative judgments about the event, and not making personal emotions part of the material» [3]. Ukrainian media monitoring organizations, including Detector Media, the Institute of Mass Information, and the Pylyp Orlyk Institute of Democracy, conduct analyses of journalism standards in television, online media, and Telegram channels, providing the foundation for this study. Recent studies emphasize the significant role of Telegram channels in shaping public opinion and the challenges they pose for journalistic standards and information verification. Droz [1] characterizes the popular channel *Trukha* as an «information garbage dump», highlighting its tendency to spread unverified or manipulated content. Dukach [2] further illustrates how *Trukha* disseminates fake news while providing excuses when inaccuracies are identified, underscoring the difficulties in maintaining journalistic integrity in such fast-paced environments. Similarly, Hurzhiy [4] examines modern threats posed by Telegram channels to state interests, stressing their capacity to influence public perception and destabilize national information spaces.

Gulay and Vorobets [3] explore the manipulative potential of Telegram channels, analyzing how these platforms can systematically shape public opinion through targeted disinformation campaigns. The ICWR [5] study investigates security risks associated with Telegram, including alleged links to Russian intelligence services, which raises concerns about the messenger's role in information warfare. Tonkih [10] focuses on the transformation of Telegram news channels during the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, noting changes in editorial approaches, audience engagement, and content verification practices under wartime pressures. Finally, Kyianytsia [8] provides a comprehensive mediological analysis of Telegram channels, evaluating their scope of influence and highlighting the limits of accountability and responsibility in online journalism.

Several studies demonstrate the growing influence of Telegram channels in Ukraine, especially during the Russian-Ukrainian war. Researchers emphasize the risks of disinformation, propaganda, and manipulative messaging, noting the challenges in verifying information rapidly disseminated in real time [6].

Collectively, these studies provide a foundation for understanding the dual nature of Telegram as both an innovative news dissemination tool and a conduit for disinformation, emphasizing the need for professional standards, media literacy, and monitoring mechanisms to mitigate risks while preserving the benefits of rapid information delivery.

## II. Problem statement and research methods

The main research problem is to examine how professional journalism standards are upheld in the fast-changing digital media environment, particularly on Telegram channels during the Russian-Ukrainian war. The study focuses on how Ukrainian journalists can maintain objectivity under the pressures of wartime reporting, as well as how Telegram channels shape public perception and what strategies can help to reduce the spread of disinformation.

The research methodology combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. Content analysis was conducted on selected Ukrainian Telegram news channels, including *Trukha*, *Klymenko Time*, *Lachen pyshe*, focusing on their adherence to professional standards such as accuracy, fact-comment separation, and source transparency. Data were cross-referenced with secondary sources, including reports from Detector Media, the Institute of Mass Information, and the Cybersecurity Division of Ukraine [8]. Semantic analysis tools were considered for potential automation of fact-comment separation, although manual review remains the primary method.

## III. Results

The analysis reveals that while many Ukrainian journalists strive to maintain objectivity, the speed and immediacy of Telegram news delivery create significant challenges. News often arrives in the form of amateur videos from the front lines, requiring careful verification before publication. Failure to verify information or to distinguish clearly between fact and opinion can lead to the dissemination of incomplete or misleading content.

Professional standards such as separating facts from commentary are applied inconsistently across channels. For instance, some Telegram channels combine unverified frontline videos with interpretive commentary, creating an implicit evaluative bias [9]. Despite these challenges, journalists and editors actively attempt to ensure that every reported fact has a competent source and that opinions are clearly attributed. In more flexible formats, such as analytical or authorial programs, journalists may express personal viewpoints, but they must explicitly signal that these are subjective interpretations rather than factual claims.

Furthermore, Telegram channels have been exploited by pro-Russian actors to destabilize Ukrainian society. In 2021, the Security Service of Ukraine identified an extensive network of channels promoting Russian propaganda, including *Legitimny*, *Nikolaev Live*, and *Resident*, managed by the 85th Main Center of the Russian Armed Forces' General Staff. These channels use manipulative techniques to discredit the Ukrainian government and armed forces, while camouflaging themselves as legitimate Ukrainian sources [6].

German regulatory experience offers valuable insights into controlling disinformation. The 2017 Network Enforcement Act requires social networks with more than two million users to remove illegal content within 24 hours or face fines up to \$57 million [11]. Telegram, however, remains largely outside such regulation, raising concerns regarding its potential misuse in Ukraine [3].

Promoting media literacy among citizens emerges as a critical strategy for mitigating the influence of manipulative channels. Initiatives by Ukrainian Cyber Police and educational programs focus on safe use of messaging platforms, critical evaluation of sources, and responsible consumption of digital information [1].

Overall, professional standards remain fundamental even in conflict zones. Ukrainian journalists not only inform the public but also serve as guides, helping audiences distinguish truth from manipulation, interpret complex events, and resist information attacks. Adherence to journalistic ethics during wartime is therefore not only a matter of professional reputation but also a key component of national information security.

#### IV. Conclusions

Journalistic ethics define the framework for professional conduct, emphasizing truthfulness, fairness, respect for human dignity, and neutrality. In wartime conditions, these principles face acute challenges as national security interests and information warfare pressures may conflict with traditional norms. Journalists often encounter dilemmas regarding how to balance objectivity with patriotic duties, requiring careful reflection and adaptation of practices.

The Ukrainian experience demonstrates the importance of integrating professional standards with contemporary technological and social realities. While Telegram channels provide rapid communication and accessibility, they also pose risks of misinformation, propaganda, and manipulation. Media literacy programs, regulatory strategies, and automated monitoring tools are essential to uphold journalistic standards in this evolving landscape. Ultimately, ethical journalism during armed conflict supports both the integrity of the profession and the information security of the state.

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#### Кіца М. О. Професійні стандарти журналістики та виклики новинних телеграм-каналів в Україні

**Мета дослідження** полягає в осмисленні професійних стандартів журналістики в Україні з особливим акцентом на етичні виклики, що постають перед журналістами під час повномасштабної війни, розв'язаної російською федерацією. Дослідження спрямоване на аналіз того, як українські медіа, включно з традиційними виданнями, онлайн-платформами та телеграм-каналами, дотримуються принципів журналістики, таких як об'єктивність, відокремлення фактів від коментарів і точність інформації. Крім того, розглянуто вплив дезінформації, маніпулятивного контенту та пропаганди на громадську думку й національну безпеку, акцентовано на трансформації ролі журналіста в зоні конфлікту.

**Методологія дослідження.** У дослідженні застосовано якісний описовий підхід, що базується на аналізі наукової літератури, професійних настанов і кодексів етики, а також моніторингу контенту українських медіаорганізацій, зокрема Детектора Медіа, Інституту масової інформації та Інституту демократії імені Пилипа Орлика. Додатково проаналізовано окремі телеграм-канали, щоб оцінити їхній вплив на поширення інформації та формування громадської думки. Методи дослідження включають контент-аналіз, порівняльний аналіз та оцінку кейсів, зосереджену на точності, нейтральності та достовірності медійного контенту, особливо в умовах війни.

**Результати** дослідження показують, що українські журналісти стикаються зі значними етичними та операційними викликами під час висвітлення воєнних подій. Традиційні медіа переважно дотримуються професійних стандартів, тоді як онлайн-платформи та телеграм-канали часто стикаються з проблемою балансу між швидкістю поширення новин і перевіркою фактів. Підкреслено, що дотримання міжнародних стандартів, таких як незалежність, точність, прозорість та відокремлення фактів від оцінок, є критично важливим для підтримки довіри суспільства й протидії пропаганді. Виявлено, що дезінформація швидко поширюється на цифрових платформах, а неперевірені джерела можуть підірвати довіру до журналістики. Водночас журналісти активно адаптуються до нових викликів, розробляючи практичні стратегії для збереження об'єктивності при оперативному висвітленні подій, що підкреслює соціальну роль медіа в наданні достовірної інформації навіть у зонах конфлікту.

**Новизна** дослідження полягає в комплексному аналізі як традиційних, так і цифрових медіаплатформ в умовах воєнного конфлікту, зокрема ролі телеграму в поширенні інформації.

**Практичне значення** включає рекомендації щодо вдосконалення журналістських практик, підвищення медіаграмотності та розробку автоматизованих інструментів для перевірки фактів і відокремлення коментарів від фактів. Робота надає цінну інформацію для медіарегуляторів, журналістів та політиків для зміцнення етичних стандартів і протидії маніпулятивному контенту, сприяючи забезпеченню інформаційної безпеки та об'єктивної громадської дискусії в Україні.

**Ключові слова:** журналістська етика, професійні стандарти, медіаграмотність, телеграм-канали, дезінформація, Україна, воєнна журналістика, інформаційна безпека.