



The Role of Search Engine Optimization in Determining Journalism Quality

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Abstract

The SEO strategy for news content is characterized by employing mass media around an issue and then creating it frequently by writing as much as possible. Current event keywords are constantly incorporated into news content. Finally, the news will appear near the top of search engine results. Writing adapts to culture, particularly by observing text dynamics. Remember to evaluate editorial efforts in order to maintain journalistic quality. Data gathered through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. According to the findings of this study, all four media surveyed believe that SEO is a method of increasing traffic so that advertisements can develop. Doing SEO and then showing politically on the top page of Google search also puts other leading media's excellent reputation at danger. Publishers also develop regional content and implement target page view policies to ensure that the editorial staff adheres to the SEO algorithm. Surprisingly, there are limits on how SEO publishers may provide great information.

Keywords: (Search Engine Optimazitation), Media Siber, Jurnalisme

Abstrak

Strategi SEO untuk konten berita ditandai dengan memanfaatkan media massa seputar suatu isu dan kemudian menciptakannya sesering mungkin dengan menulis sebanyak mungkin. Kata kunci peristiwa terkini secara konstan dimasukkan ke dalam konten berita. Terakhir, berita tersebut akan muncul di dekat bagian atas hasil mesin pencari. Menulis menyesuaikan dengan budaya, khususnya dengan mengamati dinamika teks. Ingatlah untuk mengevaluasi upaya editorial demi menjaga kualitas jurnalistik. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Berdasarkan temuan penelitian ini, keempat media yang disurvei meyakini bahwa SEO adalah metode meningkatkan traffic agar iklan dapat berkembang. Melakukan SEO dan kemudian tampil secara politis di halaman teratas pencarian Google juga membahayakan reputasi bagus media terkemuka lainnya. Penerbit juga mengembangkan konten regional dan menerapkan kebijakan tampilan halaman target untuk memastikan bahwa staf editorial mematuhi algoritma SEO. Anehnya, ada batasan bagaimana penerbit SEO dapat memberikan informasi yang bagus.

Kata Kunci : (Search Engine Optimazitation), Media Siber, Jurnalisme

1. INTRODUCTION

The massive strategy is search engine optimization (SEO). SEO strategy for news content is characterized by taking advantage of the multitude of a topic, then fabricating it over and over again by making as many articles as possible. Keywords related to the crowded issue are constantly embedded in the news. Finally, the news will appear in the top rankings of the search engines. When it appears in the highest ranking on the search engine, the chances are that the title will be clicked. Especially if the clickbait strategy is also used in making titles, the impact will be huge. Clickbait, or click feed, is a strategy to attract readers to eat the feed contained in the news headers so that they click on the news title and go to the news content view. According to Chakraborty et al. (2016), clickbait is an attempt to get readers to click on an article. The more people access the article, the more traffic there is. Next, when the title of

the news is clicked, traffic will flow to the relevant cyberspace. Not only the desired traffic but also the image that shows the media to be number one in search engines, beating other cyber media. The editors will continue to work to increase the volume of news that contains issues that are being discussed. Keywords are continuously embedded in the title or content. Even if there's nothing else to be told, the editors will be ripping off the news and broadcasting it over and over again, rotating the same information. In order not to look ridiculous, the title and angle are modified to make it look like the latest news. The content was then broken into pages to generate traffic. It's not uncommon for the media to press the news in a hurry without testing the truth of the information first. The important thing is to be first on the issues announced. Other attempts by cyber media to become an encyclopedia in the cyber realm are based on the search keywords that are always typed in the search engines, so it's not surprising that the schedule of prayer can appear in various cyber-media or the biographies of celebrities that are usually available on the Wiki pages. As a result, the job of a journalist, if you still want to call it that, is potentially shifting to just making viral news while thinking about how to break it apart. No longer focusing on delivering quality news. Qualitative news is news that conforms to the principles of journalism, weighs well, and has great public benefit. The news must be able to present the needs of the community, not just its wishes. The editorial meetings also potentially shifted to no longer talking about how to plan news that applies high standards of journalism rather than talking about the possibilities of any news that is potentially fragmented according to the desire of SEO. If this continues to happen, the media will be a vehicle for the pro-SEO news exhibition, so the diversity of information can be difficult to realize. News that is highlighted, popularized, and disseminated is news that can generate traffic. Meanwhile, the news that can't generate a lot of traffic appears only as a condition.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative research in which the research objects are Pikiranrakyat.com, Metropagi.com, Net.com, and Trans.com. There is no specific reason to choose the four media except because the researchers have access to the data and the fourth is currently undergoing an SEO strategy. Some data will be obtained to answer research questions. Primary data is an interview conducted with a cybersecurity media manager to look at SEO-based content management, including getting in-depth information about the benefits gained and the dynamics of editorial space when adopting an SEO approach. The interviews were conducted between the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022. Although the interviews

were conducted in those years, the information provided by the source was still in line with the purposes of the research.

Tabel 1. Research Informant

No.	Informan Name	Department
1.	Tedi Setiawan	<i>Managing editor</i> Pikiranrakyat.com
2.	Riko Maulana	Pjs Editor-in-Chief Metropagi.com
3.	Muhammad Yusuf	Net.com's editor-in-chief
4.	Putri Tanjung	Trans.com Editor's Leader

Meanwhile, secondary data is data found from the results of observations and document searches. Researchers perform non-participating observations by observing the web of the four media. Further, researchers also perform document searching to obtain statistical information about the benefits, traffic numbers, and other related efforts to answer research questions. The secondary data search continues until this entry is created. The data obtained will be cross-checked against each other so that the truth of the information can be held accountable. After that, the findings are categorized according to the direction of the research question, analyzed, and concluded.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Running SEO or Losing Competition

The fierce competition of the cyber media in getting advertising in Indonesia has affected the race to find strategies to get a larger portion of advertising. Not only are they competing with their cybermedia counterparts, but they also compete with e-commerce and social media giants. One attempt to improve advertising is to follow the logic of SEO. This high traffic is a deterrent to getting ads. All the media investigated in this research endorse the logic of thinking like that. The cybersecurity media must change quickly following the logic of SEO; otherwise, it will lose the competition. However, talking about losing and winning in the competition of grabbing ads, running SEO, and then appearing in the top pages of Google searches politically means also risking a good name to be the first among other media. Running SEO to increase traffic has economic as well as political purposes, and both are interrelated. The economy has become a major motivator for the cybermedia to run SEO. SEO is thought to increase news content traffic that ends in advertising revenue. This profit has become the most decisive factor in running a cybermedia business. It's like rating on TV; it's on print media; then on cybersecurity, the most attractive measure in the eyes of advertisers is traffic. If traffic doesn't grow, advertisers will think twice about advertising and compare it to competing media. Meanwhile, at Trans.com, traffic growth tends to rise steadily year after year. Of the 400

million page views targeted in 2021, 90 percent were achieved, and in one day there were tens of thousands of page views attached to Trans.com. "It's still stable. In the sense, the content is if a day is 500 to 600 content we produce," said Princess Tanjung. Net.com also gained traffic, and Muhammad Yusuf is one of them because of the use of SEO. The average page view that net.com obtained each month in 2021 was 119 million, with unique user averages per month of 39 million–54 million. "The best in 2021: 151 million page views for September. One day of news produced over 400 articles and 15 videos per day. Target growth of 22–303 percent in page views and users in 2022," said Muhammad Yusuf. So, it can't be denied that exploiting SEO by cybersecurity can scratch traffic. But the high traffic still doesn't significantly overwhelm the advertising. When all the cybersecurity media use the same strategy in using SEO, then the battle of advertising cakes becomes more and more competitive. This is not in line with the growth of advertising, which is still dominated by technology companies and e-commerce. Many people use SEO to scratch traffic, politically save the face of the cyber media from its competitors, and keep advertising cookie revenues limited. Metropagi.com says the attempt to use SEO to increase traffic is a test. While Pikiranrakyat.com, Net.com, and Trans.com consider that using SEO today is a trend, it's better to follow. If you don't, it'll be left behind by readers and advertisers.

Edit Space Adaptation

SEO adaptation has to be done to increase traffic; this is the key sentence of the four media studied. But adaptation isn't easy. A "awareness" strategy is needed because not all journalists are willing to accept the culture of SEO. SEO is considered to underestimate journalistic work. The other factor is the difficult adaptation of technology, if not adding trouble. The rejection mainly emerged from senior journalists, so management tried to do things so that the understanding of SEO was acceptable to the entire media crew. In this section, the researchers showed the process of adaptation or reception in the editorial room. It doesn't track how high-level management makes decisions to run SEO in the business units they manage. Slowly, the opposition to editorial space using SEO decreases. Training: training done continuously has an impact on the fading of the debate. Moreover, Trans.com imposed a job separation between the editorial team and the DM team. The editorial team only takes care of content according to SEO, while the DM will process content that is already made to be at the top of the Google search engines. In addition to the establishment of a content factory, the designation for the editorial line is dedicated to processing as much viral information as possible to be content in accordance with SEO in Yogyakarta, which is paid by the regional

standards. "They're creating content that's trend-oriented and SEO-friendly. So, what's sometimes unfortunate is the origin of content, then the origins of trend, right? So the factory," Princess continued. Net.com also got opposition from its journalists. Muhammad Yusuf said that some of his editors still have a way of viewing newspapers and magazines, so what Net.com did awakened his journalists. "For those who think printed-minded, those who print Yes, maybe it's a joke. But for us who move, me and my friends who move online, SEO is the guide," Anton said. Net.com is not like Trans.com, which makes content factories, because it has many constraints, including infrastructure and human resources. What Net.com is doing is focusing on content issues centralized in Jakarta and promoting excellence. Muhammad Yusuf claims Net.com's excellence is being able to present exclusive issues that cannot be raised by other media and its "high-level" journalist lobby. Content that falls into this category is sought to emerge with the SEO approach. "We raise the portion for the things that are our advantage. We play on the competitive side that we have that the average person doesn't have while slowly chasing speed," Anton continued. Conflicts in the editorial room when implementing SEO also occurred on Metropagi.com. SEO is considered inconsistent with its idealism by some, but for others, SEO does not want to have to do it if it wants to survive. However, when it is proven that SEO traffic can grow, contradictions change. "Once they try SEO with content journalism, it's amazing results," said Riko Maulana. The establishment of a content factory in Bandung is not the only way that Pikiranrakyat.com makes sure that the entire editorial team accepts the editorial desire to run SEO. Another way is through the continuous socialization of the team in Jakarta. Socialization, if you don't want to call it coercion, is done by providing data and evidence why you should follow SEO. For journalists unable to drive change, management offers early retirement. Based on the explanation above, hiring an editor to run SEO is a challenging job. But, in order for the goal of traffic growth to be achieved, different ways have to be chosen from the four media. Starting from socialization through training and editorial meetings, creating a content factory by hiring new employees to suppress conflict at the same time can save expenditure because making a content factory in the area of cost management becomes cheaper, and creating a page view target that should be met by journalists so they do not want to follow the ways of SEO to highlight implementing SEO or lagging behind.

Trying To Maintain the Quality of Journalism

How can SEO interfere with the quality of journalism? As explained earlier, in order for content to appear in a Google search (especially on the first page of a search), journalists must include the keywords that are trending in the content structure (news titles, news content,

and news tags). If important events occur, journalists should also insert keywords into the content. After the screening, the content should not be forgotten and be distributed continuously. The more content you create using the same keyword and associate it with content links with the same issue, the more the Google algorithm will record it and display it on the search page. It becomes a formula understood by each medium. Besides, the media is also concerned that over-following SEO tastes will affect the good name of the media itself. Fear of being labeled a "child" SEO media that sacrifices the quality of journalism. The researchers assume that although the four media surveyed deliberately applied SEO to highlight traffic, there was an attempt to take a middle position. Negotiations are necessary so that, once again, they are not considered to be the "child" media of SEO when implementing SEO practices. (Maulana, 2022). What is beneficial will follow; what is not beneficial will be left behind. Net.com chose to keep the discussion in the editorial room dynamic. When troublesome content appears, the editor freely comments to fix the problem. Muhammad Yusuf said that the culture of self-criticism in Net.com's editorial room is still going well. Anton claims that Net.com has a branding that presents exclusive information and a typical storytelling style that not many other media do. Moreover, not immediately content is created without adhering to journalistic ethics and organizational values, although SEO-specific topics are interesting to raise and are sure to scratch traffic. "SEO is a trap if not investigated. No, what's important is SEO; no, what's important is attractiveness. The principle must still be followed by the principle of tempo," Anton continued. Metropagi.com creates parameters so that the content is not considered problematic when running SEO. These parameters are restrictions on any content that can be retrieved and that is not based on SEO trends. According to Riko Maulana, there are two parameters that are applied on Metropagi.com. First, understand where the private territory is and where the public territory is. Secondly, it is not contrary to the values of journalism. These two parameters, the Great Claim, are the differentiators between Metropagi.com and media-implementing SEO parallels. "And the risk is we can't be as big as them, right? It's a rumor that our artists don't play. But that's a lot of traffic potential. And we're not better, no. It's a choice. We have to be consistent with the parameters that we set ourselves," said the Great. Mindranakyat.com still gives room for in-depth content on several of its channels, including ensuring that reporters in the field control publicly required information according to their respective desks, as well as opening and maintaining editorial discussion rooms to monitor errors that arise, one of them due to using SEO. Tedi further, the goal of Pikiranakyat.com is to be there in every search of people in search engines, and the information is the right information. "Whether you have any good content when you do not

appear in the search is irrelevant," Tedi continued. Although the media under investigation has made various efforts to ensure that the content produced is of high quality, there are still visible possibilities that could result in the quality of journalism falling. When the criticism of journalists weakens, Kushendar (2022) says not to expect quality news. Journalists won't have much time to work on the bulky news because they're targeting the bulk of news and page views. Besides, the desire to increase traffic as much as possible could potentially make the news displayed uniform. When events of high news value occur, for example, the media will continuously produce news that is displayed, mechanized, and highlighted both on the web of the media itself and through social media exploitation strategies and media aggregators. While non-viral or unusual news will be quickly displaced by the latest news.

Discussion

Capital owners will strictly control editors and direct them to produce news with a profit orientation. When the public still considers the mass media as a source of information, but the information presented in the market is more diverse, then the diversity of information becomes a utopia. Moreover, when the media is owned by the people, it is not impossible that information is produced for the political interests of owners aspiring to power. Kushendar (2021) suggests that the practice of journalism in the United States is not capable of being an ideal monitor of power. For efficiency's sake, journalists are fired. News is constantly obtained and processed by syndicates, whose pay is cheaper than funding journalists. The criticism of journalists is weak. If you don't cooperate, you'll be fired by an easy-to-control journalist. Lack of critical journalists, strict efficiency, and low journalist morals create journalistic situations that only provide simple coverage but can be profitable. Kushendar (2013) also insulted the fact that the Internet presence that gave birth to cyber journalism was also responsible for the poor quality of journalistic work. In the name of speed, news verification is considered the eye. Journalists are forced to work with targeted news, so they refuse to produce quality news. Making a content factory in the area by some cyber media that has large capital seems to be a formula to increase traffic at a cheap cost. It doesn't stop there; the content generated by this content factory is positioned high on specialized channels and is constantly popularized, potentially generating traffic. Besides, it's also popularized through social media and media aggregators, so it goes viral. Not only the editorial staff assigned to the content factory gets news targets and page views, but those in the main office also get news targets and page views. In the beginning, they resisted using SEO in producing news, but because of the target page view, they finally had to run SEO. In a situation where all journalists are directed in such a way

as to meet targets after targets, the impact on journalism is the decline in the quality of journalism and the destruction of the diversity of information. If news content containing information based on the most searches for keywords in Google's search engines pops up continuously, is displayed prominently on cybersecurity media websites, is unceasingly adapted, and is filled up from time to time, then what about the diversity of information and the quality of journalism? Referring to Bagdikian and Kushendar that have been presented at the beginning of the discussion, it will be difficult for journalists to be reliable in delivering quality content if targeted for the desire of the owners of the media to gain the greatest profits. Another disturbing thing is that until this writing is made, there is still insufficient evidence suggesting that when the cyber mass media uses SEO to increase traffic, it will dramatically increase advertising revenue. Traffic growth is really felt when SEO is used. But, with the advertising cake still limited, the cyber-media competition is likely to be heavier. Running SEO is like going through an uncertain day. The experiments carried out by the cybermedia using SEO to increase traffic are extremely risky for the quality of journalism. Despite this, editorial anticipation efforts to save journalism as a result of the exploitation of SEO should not be considered by the eye. The methods used by the four cyber media researchers to keep the editorial room clean are good for saving journalism in the midst of SEO trends.

Conclusions and Recommendations

SEO is a way or one of the attempts to increase traffic so that ads grow. The simplest logic is that by doing a SEO strategy then high traffic will be achieved. This high traffic is a deterrent to getting ads. All the media that's been investigated in this research supports the logic of thinking like that. The cybersecurity media must change quickly and follow the logic of SEO, otherwise it will lose to compete in the advertising cake race. But not only is talking about losing and winning in the competition of grabbing ads, running SEO and then appearing in the top pages of Google searches politically means also risking a good name to be the leading among other media. Being number one or always showing up on the search pages means fighting a fancy name, especially if the content generated is of quality. Running SEO to increase traffic, in addition to economic as well as political purposes and both are interrelated.

Each of the cybersecurity media that is being investigated is trying to make the editorial staff aware that they are prepared to undergo SEO. SEO is considered to underestimate journalistic work. The other factor is the technological adaptation that is not easy, if not added trouble, so the management is trying to do a way so that the understanding of SEO can be accepted by the entire media crew. In addition to constantly socializing, editors set up a content

factory in the area, and create a page view policy for editors so that slowly, if not forcibly, follow the logic of SEO.

There are deliberately set limits to keep the editors, when implementing SEO, presenting quality information. The media is also concerned that excessive follow-up to SEO will have an impact on the good name of the media itself, fearing being labeled as a “child” SEO media that sacrifices the quality of journalism. The researchers assume that although the four media surveyed deliberately applied SEO in highlighting traffic, there was an attempt to take a middle position. Negotiations are needed to, once again, not be seen as a media that is becoming a “child” of SEO when implementing SEO practices.

When all journalists are directed in such a way as to meet the target for the target page view, the impact on journalism is the decline in the quality of journalistic work and the destruction of the diversity of information. Referring to Bagdikian and Kushendar, journalists are difficult to rely on in delivering quality content because they are targeted in the desire of media owners to make the greatest profits. Interestingly, there is no strong evidence of a sharp revenue growth when cybersecurity masses use SEO to increase traffic. But, with the advertising cakes still limited, the cyber-media competition is likely to be heavier.

Further research could focus on the resilience of the editorial team in doing SEO. It could also focus on commodification practices in depth to see the management of content factories deliberately created by cyber media multiplying content that is in the trend according to SEO. Interesting also to study how the content generated using SEO meets journalistic principles. Besides, it could also be investigated how Google's hegemony through SEO against the editorial space and editorial efforts to investigate the hegemon. In fact, it's interesting to observe the strategies of the post-SEO media to increase revenue.

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