

# NEWSROOM CONVERGENCE AND LOCAL MEDIA ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TRIBUN PEKANBARU AND RIAU POS IN THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION ERA

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## Abstract

*This study aims to analyze newsroom convergence processes and newsroom models implemented by Tribun Pekanbaru and Riau Pos, while also examining how newsroom convergence is utilized as an economic strategy to maintain the sustainability of local media businesses amid digital disruption. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation studies involving newsroom managers, editors, and journalists from both media organizations. The findings indicate that Tribun Pekanbaru and Riau Pos have adopted different newsroom convergence strategies. Tribun Pekanbaru has implemented an integrated newsroom model that combines Cross Media Newsroom and Integrated Media Newsroom approaches, emphasizing digital-first production and multi-platform content distribution. Meanwhile, Riau Pos continues to maintain a separated newsroom model between print and digital divisions, reflecting a gradual adaptation process toward digital transformation. The study further reveals that these differences are influenced not only by technological factors and organizational culture but also by economic considerations. Tribun Pekanbaru develops an integrated newsroom to improve production efficiency and expand digital content monetization, while Riau Pos maintains separated newsrooms because print media remains a significant source of company revenue. This study concludes that newsroom convergence has evolved beyond a technological transformation into an economic adaptation strategy for local media organizations. The findings suggest that newsroom convergence enables media companies to improve operational efficiency, broaden audience reach, optimize resource utilization, and strengthen business sustainability in an increasingly competitive digital environment.*

**Keywords:** *Newsroom Convergence, Media Economics, Digital Transformation, Local Media, Newsroom Model, Business Sustainability*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought about major changes to the mass media industry worldwide. The advancement of the internet, smartphones, and social media platforms has transformed the way people access, consume, and distribute information. While previously print media was the primary source of public information, audiences now rely more heavily on digital platforms that offer speed, ease of access, and real-time information updates. This shift in audience behavior has driven media companies to undertake various forms of organizational and technological transformation to remain competitive in an increasingly competitive media landscape (Jenkins, 2006).

Digital transformation has not only changed information consumption patterns but also impacted the structure of the media industry as a whole. The presence of online media and social media has created new competition in information distribution. Media outlets no longer compete solely with other press companies but also with global digital platforms capable of reaching a much broader audience. This situation has forced media companies to adapt their business models, content production strategies, and newsroom work patterns to maintain their relevance and competitiveness amidst the changing media ecosystem (Hasfi et al., 2023).

One form of adaptation widely adopted by media companies is newsroom convergence. Media convergence is the process of integrating various communication platforms, enabling the simultaneous production and distribution of content across multiple media channels (Jenkins, 2006). In practice, convergence is not only related to the use of digital technology but also involves changes in organizational structure, work culture, and business strategy of media companies. Newsrooms that previously operated separately based on media platforms are now being reoriented towards a more integrated and flexible work system.

Newsroom convergence has become increasingly important as the print media industry faces increasing economic pressures. In recent years, many newspaper companies have experienced declining circulation and shrinking market share due to changes in public information consumption patterns. This phenomenon is not limited to national media outlets but is also felt by local media outlets, which have traditionally relied on revenue from newspaper sales and print advertising. Various reports indicate that many print media outlets in various countries are experiencing declining circulation and even ceasing publication due to the inability to maintain conventional business models (Muliana, 2017; Setiawan, 2023).

From a media economics perspective, digital transformation has significantly altered the revenue structure of the media industry. The decline in newspaper circulation and the migration of advertising spending to digital platforms have placed media companies under increasing financial pressure. Global platforms like Google, Meta, and YouTube now control the majority of digital advertising revenue, forcing local media to compete in an increasingly unbalanced economic environment. This situation forces media companies to adopt various adaptation strategies to maintain business sustainability. In this context, newsroom convergence is understood not only as a form of technological and organizational innovation, but also as an economic strategy that enables media companies to increase production efficiency, optimize human resource utilization, reduce operational costs, and expand content monetization opportunities through various digital platforms (Jenkins, 2006; Schantin, 2023).

Within this framework, the differences in convergence strategies adopted by local media outlets are interesting to examine. Some media outlets have chosen to fully integrate their newsrooms to strengthen efficiency and digital business growth, while others maintain a separation between print and digital newsrooms for specific economic reasons. These differences in choice demonstrate that newsroom convergence does not always occur uniformly, but is instead influenced by the company's economic conditions, organizational culture, human resources, and the business strategies implemented by each outlet.

Tribun Pekanbaru and Riau Pos, two of the largest local media outlets in Riau Province, demonstrate different approaches to digital transformation. Tribun Pekanbaru has

developed a more integrated newsroom, primarily focused on digital platforms and multi-platform content distribution. Conversely, Riau Pos maintains a relatively separate newsroom model for print and digital platforms, as print remains a key source of revenue for the company. These differences in strategy demonstrate the variety of economic adaptation models used by local media outlets in response to changes in the digital media industry.

From a media economics perspective, the choice of newsroom model is not only related to the effectiveness of news production but also to organizational efficiency and the business sustainability of media companies. An integrated newsroom model allows for resource savings through multitasking and cross-platform content distribution. Conversely, separate newsrooms allow for stronger work specialization but potentially incur higher operational costs. Therefore, the newsroom convergence model can be understood as part of a media company's economic strategy in addressing market pressures and changing audience behavior. Previous research has primarily addressed media convergence from the perspectives of technology, organization, and journalistic practice. Several studies have highlighted changes in journalists' work patterns, media platform integration, and newsroom challenges in navigating digital transformation (Avilés & Carvajal, 2008; Ramadhani & Yasir, 2022; Dwiyantri, 2023). Meanwhile, studies linking newsroom convergence to local media's economic sustainability strategies are relatively limited. Yet, in the current media industry context, economic aspects are a key factor determining the direction of media organizations' transformation.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze the newsroom convergence process and newsroom models implemented by Tribun Pekanbaru and Riau Pos, while also examining how this convergence is used as an economic strategy to maintain the sustainability of local media businesses amidst digital disruption. By comparing two different newsroom models, this study is expected to contribute to the development of media economics studies, particularly regarding the relationship between newsroom transformation, organizational efficiency, and the economic sustainability of local media companies in the digital era.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a comparative case study method to analyze newsroom convergence and media economic sustainability strategies at Tribun Pekanbaru and Riau Pos. A qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to deeply understand the newsroom transformation process, changes in organizational structure, journalistic work patterns, and the economic considerations behind the implementation of the newsroom model in both media outlets. The comparative case study is used to systematically compare the convergence process occurring at two local media companies with different characteristics and business strategies in facing digital disruption. According to Moleong (2017), qualitative research allows researchers to understand social phenomena holistically from the perspectives of actors directly involved in an event. Meanwhile, case studies provide an opportunity to explore phenomena in depth within a real and specific context (Sugiyono, 2017).

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were conducted with informants directly involved in newsroom management and organizational decision-making, including the editor-in-chief, deputy editor-in-chief, editors, coverage coordinators, and journalists from *Tribun Pekanbaru* and *Riau Pos*. Interviews were used to obtain information on the newsroom convergence process, changes in journalistic work patterns, digital platform management strategies, and economic considerations influencing media company policies. Furthermore, observations were conducted to directly understand newsroom work patterns, news production flows, and interactions between actors within the newsroom. Documentation studies were conducted through a review of company documents, editorial organizational structures, news archives, internal reports, and various literature sources relevant to the themes of media convergence and media economics. The combination of these three techniques aimed to increase the depth of data while strengthening the validity of the research findings (Moleong, 2017).

Data analysis was conducted interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing as proposed by Miles and Huberman, adopted in qualitative research (Sugiyono, 2017). Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were first selected, categorized, and organized based on research themes related to newsroom convergence, newsroom models, journalistic productivity, and media economic sustainability strategies. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using the media convergence perspective from Jenkins (2006) and the newsroom model developed by Schantin (2009), then interpreted in the context of media economics to explain the relationship between newsroom transformation, organizational efficiency, and the business sustainability of local media companies. Through this approach, this study not only explains the changes in media organizations due to digitalization, but also reveals how newsroom convergence is utilized as an economic adaptation strategy in facing changes in the structure of the media industry.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Dynamics of Newsroom Convergence in Local Media**

Research results indicate that newsroom convergence at *Tribun Pekanbaru* and *Riau Pos* developed in response to changes in the media ecosystem triggered by digital disruption. Changing audience behavior, which increasingly relies on digital platforms, has forced both media outlets to adapt their information production and distribution patterns. Although both are moving toward a digital media environment, the two companies are implementing different strategies according to their respective organizational circumstances and business needs.

Editor in Chief of *Riau Pos*, Firman Agus explained that this change was inevitable because people's information consumption patterns have changed drastically over the past decade. "Today, readers want information that is fast and accessible anytime via smartphones. Therefore, the media must adapt to remain relevant to people's needs." (Interview with Firman Agus at the *Riau Pos* office, October 15, 2025). This statement indicates that newsroom convergence emerged in response to changes in the increasingly digital-oriented media market.

This finding aligns with Jenkins' (2006) concept of media convergence, which explains that convergence is not just a technological issue, but also involves changes in industry, organizational culture, and audience behavior. In the context of local media, these changes impact how media companies manage their newsrooms, produce content, and build relationships with readers across multiple platforms.

Thus, newsroom convergence in local media can be understood as a form of organizational adaptation to changes in the media business environment. This change is not only related to journalistic needs but also part of a strategy to maintain the company's existence amidst increasing digital information competition.

### **Separate Newsroom Model at Riau Pos**

Research shows that Riau Pos still maintains a relatively separate newsroom for its print and digital platforms. The organizational structure, workflow, and human resource allocation are still differentiated based on the characteristics of the platforms they manage. This model allows the print and digital teams to have their own work focuses, despite remaining within the same media organization.

According to Deputy Editor in Chief of Riau Pos, Abdul Gapur, this separation is implemented because print media remains the product that provides the largest economic contribution to the company. "The reason Riau Pos' editorial staff is still concentrated on print products is because this platform still provides greater business benefits than digital products," (Interview with Abdul Gapur at the Riau Pos office, October 15, 2025). This statement indicates that newsroom organizational decisions are influenced not only by technological factors but also by the company's economic considerations.

The model implemented by Riau Pos aligns with the Newsroom 1.0 or Multiple Media Newsroom concept proposed by Schantin (2009). In this model, print and digital media still operate within relatively separate structures, with distinct production responsibilities for each platform. Integration is indeed beginning to occur, but it hasn't yet reached the stage of full integration.

From a media economics perspective, this strategy demonstrates that digital transformation is occurring gradually, as companies continue to derive economic benefits from traditional business models. As long as print media continues to contribute significantly to company revenue, a separate newsroom is considered a better fit for the organization's needs.

### **Integrated Newsroom Model at Tribun Pekanbaru**

Unlike Riau Pos, Tribun Pekanbaru has implemented a more integrated newsroom, primarily focused on digital platforms. Journalists, editors, and social media managers work within an interconnected system, allowing a single event to be produced into various forms of content simultaneously.

Tribun Pekanbaru Editor-in-Chief Erwin Ardian explained that the entire editorial work process is now geared towards multiplatform needs. "Now, reporters no longer just send text news. They also take photos, make videos, and even conduct live reports when needed. All of their coverage is used for multiple platforms simultaneously." (Interview with

Erwin Ardian at the Tribun Pekanbaru office, October 20, 2025). These findings indicate that the newsroom has moved toward a more flexible and integrated work system.

This situation aligns with the concept of a Cross-Media Newsroom, and some practices are leading to an Integrated Media Newsroom, as described by Schantin (2009). In this model, the organization's primary focus is no longer on a specific media platform, but on the ability to produce and distribute information quickly through various communication channels.

From a media economics perspective, an integrated newsroom offers benefits in the form of organizational efficiency and accelerated information distribution. This integration also enables companies to expand their audience reach while strengthening their digital business position, which is a source of future media growth.

### **The Impact of Convergence on Journalists' Roles and Productivity**

Newsroom convergence has transformed the role of journalists in both media outlets. Journalists are no longer solely news writers but are also required to be skilled at producing photos, videos, and other digital content. This change has created a more dynamic work environment than in the era of conventional print media.

Hendrawan Kariman, a journalist for Riau Pos, explained that journalists now have to deliver news in real time while simultaneously completing visual requirements for various publication platforms. "We are also required to take photos related to the news we submit. These news and photos must be sent directly. In the late afternoon, we are usually asked to complete the news for publication in the newspaper." (Interview with Hendrawan Kariman at the Riau Pos office, October 15, 2025).

These findings indicate that newsroom convergence is fostering the emergence of multitasking journalists. Avilés and Carvajal (2008) explain that newsroom convergence requires media workers to master various cross-platform skills so that organizations can operate more efficiently and respond to the needs of digital audiences.

On the other hand, this increased productivity also presents challenges in the form of an increased workload for journalists. Therefore, the success of newsroom convergence is determined not only by the technology used, but also by the organization's ability to effectively manage human resources.

### **Newsroom Convergence as a Media Economic Efficiency Strategy**

Research results show that the decision to converge newsrooms at Tribun Pekanbaru and Riau Pos was heavily influenced by economic considerations. Tribun Pekanbaru implemented an integrated newsroom, enabling a single reporting process to simultaneously produce various forms of content for the website, social media, video, and print media. This model improves production cost efficiency and journalist productivity, as a single resource can produce multiple journalistic products simultaneously.

Conversely, Riau Pos maintains a separate newsroom because print media remains the company's largest revenue contributor. Abdul Gapur explained that business profitability from newspapers remains a primary consideration in determining the newsroom model used. These findings demonstrate that digital transformation in local media is influenced not only by technological readiness but also by the company's revenue structure and business model.

From a media economic perspective, newsroom convergence is a strategy to reduce operational costs, increase organizational productivity, expand market reach, and create new revenue streams through digital platforms. Tribun Pekanbaru's newsroom integration demonstrates the company's efforts to achieve operational efficiency through human resource optimization and multi-platform content production.

Thus, newsroom convergence can be understood as a form of economic adaptation that enables media organizations to balance the demands of digital innovation with the company's financial sustainability. These findings demonstrate that the convergence strategies chosen by local media outlets are ultimately heavily influenced by business sustainability considerations and the company's ability to respond to changes in the media industry's economic structure.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that newsroom convergence at Tribun Pekanbaru and Riau Pos has evolved through different pathways in response to digital disruption in the media industry. Tribun Pekanbaru has implemented a more integrated newsroom model with a digital-first orientation, where news production is conducted across multiple platforms by integrating the work functions of journalists, editors, and digital content managers. In contrast, Riau Pos maintains a relatively separate newsroom for print and digital platforms, as print remains the company's primary product. These differences indicate that newsroom convergence in local media is not occurring uniformly, but rather is influenced by the organizational characteristics and business strategies of each media company.

The results also indicate that the newsroom model adopted influences journalistic work patterns and media organization management. Tribun Pekanbaru has moved toward a Cross-Media Newsroom model, and some of its practices point to an Integrated Media Newsroom, as proposed by Schantin. This model allows for a faster, more flexible, and more integrated news production process. Meanwhile, Riau Pos remains in a Multiple Media Newsroom model, with a more specific division of labor between print and digital media. Despite differing levels of integration, both media outlets are adapting to changing audience behavior and digital technology developments to maintain relevance amidst the increasingly competitive media industry.

From a media economics perspective, this study demonstrates that newsroom convergence is a crucial strategy for maintaining the sustainability of local media businesses amidst changes in the media industry ecosystem. Newsroom integration enables companies to improve operational efficiency, optimize human resource utilization, and expand content distribution and monetization through various digital platforms. The differences in approach between Tribun Pekanbaru and Riau Pos indicate that convergence strategies are heavily influenced by revenue structure, business orientation, and organizational readiness for digital transformation. Therefore, the success of newsroom convergence is determined not only by technological and journalistic aspects, but also by the media company's ability to develop a sustainable business model.

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