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Investigating whether Twitter plays any role in SABC’s television news production and if so how

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Abstract

The internet and social media have changed news production. Consumer are now also potential producers of information that is available mostly free, anytime, anywhere, and everywhere. This has had a dramatic effect on traditional media who now compete with their former audience to produce news. It has weakened traditional media's power to determine the public agenda. The social media platform Twitter enables its users instantly to create and disseminate news as it happens to many consumers. This has inspired ongoing research studies that examine Twitter's role in news creation. This study focuses on SABC, South Africa's only public broadcaster. It examines whether Twitter, despite SABC News not yet having adopted an official social media policy, nonetheless influences SABC News production and, if so, how. It applies key tenets of sociology of news and agenda-setting theory to answer these two key research questions. The findings conclude that Twitter has impacted on news production at the SABC. Twitter is regarded as an important tool in SABC's news production and has affected journalistic routines and practices, and content decision making.