



COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT AT WASPADA ONLINE IN NEWS PUBLICATION

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the internal communication management between editors and journalists at Waspada Online in the news publication process and to identify the factors that support and hinder the effectiveness of internal communication. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research was conducted at the editorial office of Waspada Online in Medan City and involved two purposively selected informants: a managing editor and a journalist who were directly engaged in the news production and publication process. Data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was established through source triangulation and methodological triangulation. The findings indicate that internal communication management at Waspada Online is carried out through four management functions: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. The planning function is implemented through editorial briefings and the determination of news coverage agendas; organizing involves the allocation of tasks and responsibilities; actuating is conducted through direct communication and digital platforms such as WhatsApp, telephone, and the Content Management System; while controlling is performed through editing, verification, revision, and evaluation of news content prior to publication. Factors supporting the effectiveness of internal communication include structured briefings, clear task allocation, two-way communication, the use of communication technology, and editorial supervision. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include deadline pressure, network disruptions, limited access to field information, differences in perception, and repeated news revisions. This study demonstrates that structured internal communication management contributes to effective coordination, information accuracy, and the credibility of news publication at Waspada Online, although its effectiveness remains influenced by time constraints and the dynamic nature of digital media work.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the way mass media produce, manage, and distribute information to the public. Online media are required to operate rapidly, provide up-to-date information, and ensure easy accessibility while continuing to maintain news accuracy, completeness, and credibility. This condition means that media organizations can no longer rely solely on technological speed but also require well-planned and coordinated internal communication systems. In the context of digital media, news production takes place in a more dynamic and real-time environment, making coordination among editorial personnel a crucial factor in maintaining the quality of published information (Kustiawan et al., 2022; Nasrullah, 2024). Therefore, communication management has become a strategic necessity for media organizations in responding to rapidly changing digital environments (Riswanto et al., 2024; Vdovichen et al., 2023).

In the news publication process, communication between editors and journalists plays a central role. Journalists are responsible for covering events, gathering data, interviewing sources, and preparing



initial news drafts. Editors, meanwhile, are responsible for providing direction, checking the completeness of information, editing content, verifying facts, and ensuring that news reports are suitable for publication. This process demonstrates that news publication is a collaborative activity that depends heavily on the effectiveness of internal communication. Unclear communication can lead to differences in news angles, delays in submitting reports, incomplete information, and even a decline in the quality of news coverage. Conversely, open, well-directed, and continuous internal communication can strengthen work coordination and improve task effectiveness within media organizations (Dewanti, 2023; Jannah, 2024; Muhariani, 2022).

Internal communication management in media organizations can be understood as the process of managing communication through the stages of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. George R. Terry explains that management functions consist of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling, all of which are interrelated in achieving organizational objectives (Terry & Rue, 2019). In the context of online media editorial work, the planning function is reflected in editorial briefings and the determination of coverage agendas; organizing is manifested in the allocation of assignments to journalists; actuating occurs through coordination during the reporting process; and controlling is carried out through editing, verification, and evaluation before news is published. Thus, internal communication management functions not merely as a mechanism for transmitting instructions but also as a coordination system that ensures editorial workflows remain effective, timely, and consistent with journalistic standards (Riswanto et al., 2024; Susanto et al., 2024).

Several previous studies have shown that editorial planning, internal coordination, and the use of communication technologies play important roles in supporting the effectiveness of online media operations. Fauziah and Suci (2025) explain that editorial management initiated through effective planning and coordination can improve the effectiveness of news presentation. Mustikasari et al. (2021) demonstrate that the implementation of communication management functions helps online media respond to competition in the digital media environment. Della Aulia and Alfikri (2022) also emphasize that the utilization of communication technology is an important strategy for mass media in maintaining their relevance and operational effectiveness in the digital era. In addition, Johara et al. (2023) highlight the importance of effective communication in preserving information credibility amid the increasingly intensive flow of digital news. These findings suggest that the success of online media is determined not only by their technical capacity to disseminate information but also by the quality of internal communication connecting editorial actors.

Although studies on online media strategies, editorial management, and the use of communication technologies have been widely conducted, research specifically examining internal communication management between editors and journalists in the news publication process at Waspada Online remains limited. As a local digital media outlet based in Medan City, Waspada Online presents an important editorial context because it must balance the demands of rapid publication with the need to maintain news accuracy and credibility. In practice, the news publication process involves not only technical challenges but also communication barriers, including deadline pressure, network disruptions, incomplete field information, and differences in perception between editors and journalists. Therefore, this study is important for examining how communication management functions are implemented within the editorial environment of a local online media organization and how supporting and inhibiting factors influence the effectiveness of news publication.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze internal communication management between editors and journalists at Waspada Online in the news publication process and to identify the factors that support and hinder the effectiveness of internal communication. The study employs George R. Terry's management functions—planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling—as its analytical framework. Through this framework, the study is expected to contribute to the development of scholarship on media organizational communication, particularly by advancing an understanding of internal communication as an instrument for coordination, quality control, and the maintenance of news credibility in the digital media era. In addition, the findings are expected to provide practical insights for online editorial management so that news publication processes can be conducted in a more systematic, effective, and accountable manner.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to gain an in-depth understanding of internal communication management between editors and journalists in the news publication process at Waspada Online. A qualitative approach was selected because the study seeks to portray organizational communication phenomena naturally based on the experiences, actions, and perspectives of informants directly involved in editorial work (Sugiyono, 2022). The research was conducted at the editorial office of Waspada Online, located at Jalan Brigjend Katamso No. 1, Aur Subdistrict, Medan Maimun District, Medan City, North Sumatra, from March to April 2026. The study focused on the implementation of internal communication management functions, including planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling, within the news publication process. Accordingly, this research not only describes editorial communication patterns but also analyzes how internal communication supports coordination, editing, verification, and the assessment of newsworthiness prior to publication.

The research informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in internal communication and the news publication process at Waspada Online (Jailani, 2023). The study involved two key informants: Rizaldi Anwar, S.H., as Managing Editor, and M. Ferdinan Sembiring as a journalist. They were selected because they represent two essential positions within the news production workflow: the editorial side, which is responsible for providing direction, editing, and verifying news content, and the journalist, who is responsible for field reporting, collecting information, and preparing news drafts. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to examine internal communication processes within the editorial environment, while semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to explore patterns of coordination, task allocation, the use of communication media, and factors supporting and inhibiting internal communication. Documentation was used to obtain supporting data related to editorial activities and the news publication process (Rivaldi et al., 2023). The interviews provided informants with sufficient opportunity to openly describe their editorial work experiences, particularly regarding editorial briefings, coordination through WhatsApp, telephone, and the Content Management System (CMS), as well as news revision and verification procedures.

Data analysis was conducted through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, the researchers selected and categorized the data according to the main themes, namely planning, organizing, actuating, controlling, supporting factors, and inhibiting factors in internal communication management. During the data display stage, findings from observations, interviews, and documentation were organized into thematic narratives so that the relationship between empirical evidence and communication management concepts could be presented systematically. Conclusions were then drawn by interpreting the findings through George R. Terry's management functions and assessing their relevance to internal communication practices in online media. To ensure data trustworthiness, the study employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing information obtained from the editor and journalist and cross-checking interview data against observations and documentation (Luthfiyani & Murhayati, 2024). The researchers also maintained objectivity by positioning themselves as academic observers, refraining from involvement in editorial decision-making, and limiting the analysis to data obtained from informants and observed editorial activities.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Result

Internal Communication Management in the News Publication Process

The findings indicate that internal communication management between editors and journalists at Waspada Online is carried out through four interrelated management functions: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling and evaluation. These four functions operate continuously, beginning with the determination of news agendas and continuing through the editing and publication stages.

Table 1. Internal Communication Management in the News Publication Process

No.	Management Function	Form of Communication	Research Findings
1	Planning	Editorial briefings and determination of coverage agendas	Determines priority issues, news focus, task allocation, and deadlines for news submission

No.	Management Function	Form of Communication	Research Findings
2	Organizing	Allocation of tasks and responsibilities	Assigns journalists according to their respective beats and coverage requirements
3	Actuating	Direct and digital communication	Utilizes face-to-face communication, WhatsApp, telephone, and CMS
4	Controlling and evaluation	Editing, verification, and revision	Ensures data completeness, accuracy, language quality, and overall newsworthiness

Source: Interviews, observations, and documentation, 2026.

Communication Planning through Editorial Briefings

Communication planning represents the initial stage of the news publication process. The findings show that communication between editors and journalists begins before field reporting takes place. At this stage, editors determine priority issues, assign coverage tasks, provide direction regarding the intended news angle, and specify the information that journalists are expected to collect.

The Managing Editor explained:

"Before journalists go into the field, we usually determine which issues should be prioritized for coverage. We then assign tasks according to each journalist's reporting beat. During the briefing, we also explain the news angle that should be developed, the deadline for submitting the article, and the key information that journalists need to obtain." (Rizaldi Anwar, Managing Editor, interview, April 7, 2026)

The journalist similarly explained:

"We receive instructions from the editor regarding the stories that need to be covered. These instructions help us understand the focus of the story, so when we are in the field, we know what information needs to be collected and which sources should be interviewed." (M. Ferdinan Sembiring, Journalist, interview, April 7, 2026)

Based on these interview findings, editorial briefings function as an important mechanism for establishing a shared understanding between editors and journalists. The briefings do not merely serve to assign tasks; they also determine the direction of news coverage, the focus of reporting, and the expected work targets.

Organizing through Task Allocation

Communication organization is carried out through the allocation of assignments based on reporting beats, journalists' competencies, and news coverage requirements. This division of responsibilities is intended to clarify each journalist's duties and establish a more structured coordination process.

Table 2. Communication Organization in the Editorial Process

No.	Organizing Aspect	Practice at Waspada Online	Communication Function
1	Coverage assignment	Assignments based on reporting beat and geographical area	Clarifies individual responsibilities
2	Journalists' competencies	Adjustment of assignments according to journalists' capabilities	Supports reporting effectiveness
3	Coordination	Communication with editors during field reporting	Facilitates rapid editorial direction
4	Progress reporting	Submission of field information and reporting updates	Enables monitoring of the reporting process

Source: Research data, 2026.

The findings indicate that task allocation is closely related to internal communication. Journalists clearly understand their respective responsibilities, while editors continue to coordinate with and monitor them throughout the reporting process.

Communication Implementation through Direct and Digital Media

At the implementation stage, communication between journalists and editors takes place continuously from the field-reporting process until the news is ready for publication. Communication is conducted through both direct interaction and digital communication media.

Table 3. Communication Media in the News Publication Process

No.	Communication Medium	Primary Function
1	Face-to-face communication	Editorial coordination and discussion
2	WhatsApp	Exchange of information and reporting progress updates
3	Telephone	Communication of urgent information
4	Content Management System (CMS)	Submission, editing, and revision of news articles

Source: Research data, 2026

The use of digital communication media enables coordination to continue even when journalists are working outside the office. Journalists can provide updates and transmit information directly from the field, while editors can respond with instructions, clarification, and feedback in a timely manner.

The findings further indicate that internal communication operates as a two-way process. Journalists communicate information and developments from their reporting activities, while editors provide direction, corrections, and evaluations. This condition demonstrates that internal communication at Waspada Online is not characterized by one-way instruction; rather, it involves an ongoing exchange of information between journalists and editorial personnel.

Controlling and Evaluation through Editing and Verification

The controlling and evaluation functions are implemented through the examination, editing, verification, and revision of news reports prior to publication. Editors assess the completeness of information, data accuracy, clarity and credibility of sources, compliance with journalistic language conventions, and consistency between headlines and the content of news reports.

The journalist explained:

"Usually, after I submit a story through the CMS, the editor immediately reviews it. If a quotation from a source is unclear or the data are incomplete, I am asked to contact the source again. Sometimes a single news story has to be revised two or three times before it is finally approved for publication." (M. Ferdinan Sembiring, Journalist, interview, April 7, 2026)

This statement demonstrates that the editing process does not merely function to correct writing errors but also serves to ensure that information intended for publication has undergone an appropriate process of editorial scrutiny and verification.

Editorial control also functions as a mechanism of feedback between editors and journalists. When shortcomings are identified in a news report, journalists receive instructions to revise the article or obtain additional information. Accordingly, controlling is carried out as a continuous process rather than being restricted solely to the final stage before publication.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Internal Communication Management

The findings reveal several factors that support and hinder the effectiveness of internal communication between journalists and editors.

Table 4. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

No.	Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
1	Structured editorial briefings	Publication deadline pressure
2	Clear task allocation	Communication network disruptions
3	Two-way communication	Incomplete field information

No.	Supporting Factors	Inhibiting Factors
4	Utilization of digital communication media	Differences in perception
5	Editorial supervision and evaluation	Repeated news revisions

The first supporting factor is structured editorial briefings. Briefings facilitate the communication of news agendas, the determination of priority issues, and the allocation of assignments to journalists. Through these briefings, editorial staff develop a more consistent understanding of the direction and focus of news coverage. The second factor is clear task allocation. Assigning responsibilities based on reporting beats and coverage requirements helps reduce overlapping tasks and clarifies the responsibilities of individual journalists. The third factor is two-way communication. Open communication enables journalists to report developments and difficulties encountered in the field, while editors can provide direction and feedback. The fourth factor is the use of digital communication media. WhatsApp, telephone, and the Content Management System (CMS) facilitate rapid information exchange and support the submission and editing of news reports. The fifth factor is editorial supervision and evaluation. The processes of reviewing and revising news content contribute to maintaining the quality, accuracy, and overall newsworthiness of reports prior to publication.

Table 5. Analysis of Supporting Factors

No.	Supporting Factor	Communication Practice	Contribution to News Publication
1	Structured briefings	Determination of news agendas and task allocation	Aligns the direction of news coverage
2	Clear task allocation	Assignment based on reporting beats	Reduces overlapping responsibilities
3	Two-way communication	Direction, feedback, and discussion	Accelerates problem-solving
4	Digital communication media	WhatsApp, telephone, and CMS	Accelerates information exchange
5	Supervision and evaluation	Editing and verification	Maintains news quality and accuracy

Source: Research data, 2026.

The study also identified several factors that inhibit effective internal communication. The first is publication deadline pressure. The nature of online media, which demands rapid publication, requires journalists and editors to coordinate and verify information within limited timeframes. The second obstacle is communication network disruption. Because field reporting relies heavily on digital communication, unstable network connections can delay information exchange and the submission of news reports. The third obstacle is incomplete field information. When available data or confirmation from sources is insufficient, editors may require journalists to conduct additional verification or follow-up reporting. The fourth obstacle involves differences in perception between journalists and editors regarding the angle, emphasis, or framing of a news story. Such differences may result in additional discussion and revisions before a report can be approved for publication.

Table 6. Inhibiting Factors and Management Strategies

No.	Inhibiting Factor	Impact	Management Strategy
1	Publication deadlines	Limited time for verification	Rapid coordination and communication
2	Network disruptions	Delays in information transmission	Use of alternative communication channels
3	Incomplete information	Additional verification and revision	Reconfirmation with news sources
4	Differences in perception	Revision of content or news angle	Discussion and clarification

Source: Research data, 2026.

Despite these constraints, the findings indicate that such barriers do not directly halt the news publication process. Instead, they are addressed through continuous coordination, open communication, repeated verification, and editorial revision. These mechanisms enable editors and journalists to

maintain the continuity of the publication process while simultaneously attempting to preserve the accuracy and quality of the information disseminated.

Overall Analysis of Internal Communication Management

Based on the overall findings, internal communication management at Waspada Online operates as a structured and continuous system. Communication begins with planning through editorial briefings, followed by organizing through task allocation, actuating through direct and digital communication, and controlling through editing, verification, and revision.

Table 7. Synthesis of Internal Communication Management Analysis

No.	Management Function	Practice at Waspada Online	Analytical Result
1	Planning	Editorial briefings and determination of coverage agendas	Establishes the direction and objectives of news coverage
2	Organizing	Allocation of tasks and responsibilities	Clarifies workflow and communication channels
3	Actuating	Direct and digital communication	Supports continuous coordination
4	Controlling	Editing, verification, and revision	Maintains news accuracy and quality

Source: Research data, 2026.

The findings indicate that these four management functions do not operate independently. Planning determines the direction of work, organizing distributes responsibilities, actuating facilitates the communication process, while controlling ensures that the resulting news reports comply with established standards.

Accordingly, the effectiveness of internal communication management at Waspada Online is determined not only by the use of communication media but also by the clarity of the organizational structure, task allocation, openness of communication, speed of feedback, and editorial supervision mechanisms.

The principal finding of this study demonstrates that internal communication management functions as an integrated system that brings together planning, task allocation, coordination, feedback, and evaluation. This system supports a news publication process that is timely, accurate, and consistent with journalistic standards.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that internal communication management between editors and journalists at Waspada Online operates as a structured editorial system through the functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. From the perspective of George R. Terry's management theory, these four functions do not operate independently but are interconnected in directing organizational resources toward the effective achievement of institutional objectives (Terry & Rue, 2019). At Waspada Online, the planning function is reflected in editorial briefings and the determination of coverage agendas; organizing is manifested through task allocation based on news production needs; actuating occurs through direct and digital coordination; and controlling is undertaken through editing, verification, revision, and evaluation prior to publication. Interpretively, these findings suggest that internal communication functions not merely as a process of message transmission but as an editorial control mechanism that enables news production to remain timely and well-directed while maintaining journalistic standards.

The implementation of the planning function through editorial briefings demonstrates that internal communication plays an important role in establishing a shared understanding between editors and journalists before field reporting begins. Editorial briefings are not limited to the distribution of work agendas; they also provide a forum for determining priority issues, establishing news angles, setting deadlines, and specifying the information that journalists are expected to obtain. Within communication management theory, planning functions to reduce uncertainty, clarify objectives, and minimize coordination errors within organizations (Riswanto et al., 2024). Editorial briefings at Waspada Online can therefore be understood as a form of strategic communication that directs journalists to work not only according to the demands of publication speed but also with attention to the substantive quality of news content. This finding is consistent with Fauziah and Suci (2025), who

emphasize that the effectiveness of editorial work is strongly influenced by planning and coordination undertaken from the initial stages of the news production process.

The organizing function in Waspada Online's internal communication management is evident in the allocation of tasks and responsibilities between editors and journalists. Such task allocation clarifies the workflow, minimizes potential overlaps in news coverage, and facilitates more effective coordination throughout the news production process. Analytically, organizing concerns not only the distribution of work but also the establishment of a communication structure that enables each editorial actor to understand their position and responsibilities. According to Terry and Rue (2019), organizing is the process of arranging tasks, authority, and working relationships so that organizational objectives can be achieved efficiently. In the context of online media, this structural clarity is particularly important because journalists operate under considerable time pressure, while editors must ensure that incoming information can be processed, verified, and published promptly. Clear task allocation therefore constitutes a fundamental basis for effective internal communication within the newsroom.

At the actuating stage, internal communication at Waspada Online takes place through a combination of direct interaction and digital media, including WhatsApp, telephone, and the Content Management System (CMS). The use of digital communication media enables coordination between editors and journalists to continue even when journalists are working in the field. This indicates that communication technology functions not merely as a technical support tool but as an integral component of the editorial management system that accelerates information exchange and feedback. From the perspective of organizational communication, two-way communication enables organizational members to continuously exchange information, provide clarification, and offer corrective feedback (Muhariani, 2022). This finding is also consistent with Della Aulia and Alfikri (2022), who argue that adaptation to communication technologies is an important strategy for mass media organizations seeking to maintain operational effectiveness in the digital era. Nevertheless, reliance on technology also introduces challenges, particularly when network disruptions occur or when the transmission of field data is delayed.

The controlling function, implemented through editing, verification, revision, and evaluation, demonstrates that internal communication management at Waspada Online plays an important role in maintaining news quality and credibility. Editors function not only as coordinators but also as quality controllers who ensure the reliability of information before publication. Interpretively, the controlling process is particularly significant because the characteristics of online media often place editorial teams in a dilemma between publication speed and information accuracy. Constraints such as deadline pressure, incomplete field information, differences in perception, and repeated revisions indicate that internal communication continuously operates within a process of negotiation between technical demands and journalistic responsibility. According to Susanto et al. (2024), editorial processes involving editing and verification constitute an essential part of the press's responsibility to maintain the accuracy, balance, and credibility of information. Therefore, the effectiveness of internal communication management at Waspada Online is determined not merely by the availability of communication media, but also by the quality of coordination, openness of communication, speed of feedback, and consistency of editorial supervision in maintaining journalistic standards.

4. CONCLUSION

This study reflects that internal communication management between editors and journalists at Waspada Online constitutes an essential element in ensuring the smooth operation of the news publication process amid the demands for speed in digital media. Internal communication carried out through planning, task allocation, reporting coordination, editing, verification, and evaluation demonstrates that news publication is not merely a technical process but a collaborative activity that requires clear direction, openness of information, and timely editorial decision-making. The findings indicate that editorial briefings, two-way communication, the use of digital communication media, and editorial supervision contribute to the effectiveness of newsroom operations while helping maintain the quality of published news. However, the dynamics of online media work also present several challenges, including deadline pressure, network disruptions, limited field information, differences in perception, and repeated revisions, all of which may affect the smoothness of internal communication. Thus, this study confirms that successful news publication at Waspada Online is determined not only by technological speed but also by the editorial organization's ability to establish a structured, adaptive,

and accountable internal communication system capable of maintaining the accuracy, quality, and credibility of the media.

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