

DEAR COLLEAGUES

Thank you for inviting me to represent the ABU in this important forum!  
Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present the view point of media in the Digital Era.

There is no doubt that media and technology are closely connected and that the technological advances in the last decades have changed media profoundly and for ever.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century many people around the world still relied on newspapers to get the news.

Very often the news was from the previous day or even older. Radio and television are of course much quicker in spreading information.

Several ABU members celebrate a century of services in a year or two.

Many things have changed since the dawn of broadcasting in 1920s. Now fewer people remember the world before the Internet. We live in a digital age and digital technology rules.

It is difficult to imagine our work as broadcasters without computers, fact finding sites, Facebook, Twitter and other social networks.

Is digital media important? It is not difficult to answer this question. Just look at the fact that the richest person on Earth is the owner of Twitter.

His other interests include space travel!! But it is also important to **mention that when Mr Musk said: "The bird is free", many people** were worried. A heated debate followed. There were voices that the ability to share information with just a click is also a HUGE RESPONSIBILITY.

For many people around the world the question now is not "Where can I get information?" but rather "Who can I trust".

With the development of new technologies, information travels very fast and covers the whole world in seconds. Social media makes communication fast and easy.

Information, or rather misinformation can unfortunately cause harm or even be used to mislead the audiences.

This is why the role of public media is **EVEN BIGGER THAN BEFORE.**

They have the obligation to CHECK and RE - CHECK the information they disseminate. They have to be even more confident in guarding their reputation as the trusted source of reliable and objective information.

Unfortunately, not everything published online is true. Far from it.

Fake news, conspiracy theories and hate posts are mass produced. Not long ago there were many conspiracy theories about the Covid pandemic. Many of them were flourishing on social media.

The ease with which technology can translate material into different languages also plays a role. The problem is that some people are more likely to believe any fantastic and totally ungrounded theory and disregard the information coming from the official authorities.

Media is constantly developing and with the advancement of new technologies the changes are quicker and quicker. Any media outlet is impossible to survive without keeping track with the latest technological developments and investing in new software and hardware.

Everyone knows the advantages of digital media technologies. Almost countless radio and TV channels. We can watch what we want and when we want. We rely more and more on artificial intelligence. Virtual reality is not part of science fiction any more.

New media and new technologies play an important role not only in media but also in education, business and other fields.

Some statistics show that traditional media is losing the race with the far more dynamic digital media. It's difficult to deny that there is a decline in the use of traditional media such as newspapers, magazines and even radio and television.

The traditional media has no other option but to adapt, to change and embrace the new technologies. It is not a secret that many people, especially the younger generation, listen to radio, watch television and read newspapers online using their smart phones or computers.

However, I would not agree with the predictions that traditional media is becoming extinct. In the past, there were people who expected that cinema would be the end of theatre but that did not happen. The same applies for radio. Even at the age of 100 it can be with us for many years to come.

Another characteristic of digital media is that it fosters a sense of community. Digital media technologies like Skype, Facebook, YouTube, and others incorporate a sense of community among the users.

Creativity is also a feature of digital media technologies. No user plays a passive role anymore, instead, they communicate actively in transmitting messages through web technologies.

New media technologies enable its users to create videos, edit videos, post blogs or comments and create their own content. Everyone with a computer or even just a smart phone can think they are a journalist.

People in this digital age not only read, listen to, or view the content available online, but also edit, comment, and interact in other ways.

At the end, I would like to stress that as much as new technologies contribute for the development of media, they cannot exist by themselves. Because technologies are just the tools of communications like the pen, the typing machine, the computer.

Technologies are nothing without quality content which, at least for now, can only be created by well trained and honest broadcasters.

It is highly commendable that the leadership of Turkmenistan has organised this Forum to explore how the latest technological advances can be put to the service of the great Turkmenistan people.

Thank you!