

The Role of An Editorial Monitoring System in Countering Information Attacks in Online Publications: A Case Study of The Talimxabarlari.Uz Online Publication

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Abstract

The article proposes that countering information attacks in online publications should not be limited to the subsequent refutation of false reports, but should also be approached as a monitoring mechanism aimed at identifying information risks in editorial activity in advance. The results show that the monitoring system is not a tool that directly detects an information attack itself, but a preventive mechanism that systematically records structural vulnerabilities through which a newsroom may amplify disinformation.

Keywords: Information attack, disinformation, online publication, editorial monitoring, content quality, fact-checking, context, headline, editorial analytics.

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1. Introduction

As the creation, processing, and dissemination of information accelerate in the digital media environment, newsrooms perform a dual function: on the one hand, they provide audiences with timely information; on the other, they must prevent unverified, misleading, or decontextualized information from becoming widespread. The concept of an information attack usually refers to harmful informational influence involving a particular objective, actor, and dissemination strategy. In newsroom practice, however, the risk of amplifying such attacks is manifested not only in wholly false reports, but also in unreliable sources, insufficient context, one-sided interpretation, emotive headlines, and advertising presented as journalistic material.[1]

The scholarly literature shows that the term “fake news” does not denote a single phenomenon, but encompasses forms with different levels of factuality and deception, including fabrication, manipulation, propaganda, advertising, parody, and satire.[2]

The relevance of the issue is also associated with the patterns by which false information spreads online. Studies based on large-scale social media data have found that false news travels farther, faster, and more deeply than true news.[3]

For this reason, journalism cannot respond adequately by merely refuting false information after it has already spread. A UNESCO handbook developed for journalism education and practice identifies verification, source

checking, work with digital evidence, and editorial responsibility as core professional competencies for countering disinformation.[4]

The institutionalization of fact-checking demonstrates that answering the question “what is true?” has become a distinct professional practice in journalism. At the same time, its preventive effect is strengthened when verification is integrated into the editorial process while a material is being prepared rather than applied only at a later stage.[5]

Subsequent correction of false information does not always eliminate its effects completely: psychological research shows that even retracted information may continue to influence a person’s later reasoning.[6]

Editorial analytics is commonly associated with measuring audience behaviour and content consumption. However, quantitative tools contribute to meaningful decision-making only when they are combined with editorial objectives, professional criteria, and the editor’s qualitative assessment.[7]

Following this logic, the present study interprets editorial monitoring not as a system for tracking audience metrics, but as a system for observing features of journalistic structure and informational reliability in published materials. The system does not directly identify the actor, purpose, or coordination of an information attack. Its task is to identify systematically the weak points that may

cause a newsroom inadvertently to amplify unreliable, decontextualized, or manipulative interpretations.

2. Methods

The research design was based on a descriptive case study and an automated structural content-analysis approach. The unit of observation in the content analysis was an individual online publication. Clear operational definitions of the coding categories and consistent application of the unit of analysis are important for the consistency of the results.[8]

The pilot implementation of the monitoring system was discussed at an editorial meeting and scheduled for the period from 1 March to 30 June 2026.[9] The empirical database consisted of 1,220 materials published by the outlet from March through June 2026. Because the system’s primary language model was adapted to Uzbek-language content in the Latin script, 1,058 materials were included in the principal quality analysis; 162 Russian-language materials were retained for reference but were not included in the calculation of the overall coefficient.[10]

Because all available materials from the monitoring period, rather than a sample, were analysed, the study constitutes a complete observation within the limits of the specified period and publication. The results cannot automatically be generalized statistically to other publications.

Table 1. Composition of the Research Corpus

Indicator	Number	Status in the Principal Analysis
Total materials	1,220	Complete database
Uzbek – Latin script	1,058	Included in the principal analysis
Russian	162	For reference only

2.1. Evaluation Model

The final coefficient for each material was calculated on

the basis of three components: general editorial criteria, conformity to genre structure, and enhancement

elements. The general criteria were applied to all materials, whereas the genre criteria were applied to the corresponding genre identified by the algorithm.

$$Q = 0.4C + 0.5G + E$$

Where:

Q – the final quality coefficient;

C – the proportion of the four general criteria fulfilled;

G – the proportion of the five genre-specific criteria fulfilled;

E – 0.1 points awarded when a table, screenshot, in-text image, gallery, embed, audio, form, or widget is present.

The maximum contribution of the general criteria was 0.4, that of genre structure was 0.5, and that of enhancement elements was 0.1.

Table 2. Evaluation Structure of the Monitoring System

Evaluation block	Criteria	Maximum contribution
General editorial criteria	Lead, source, context, practical value for the reader	0.4
Genre structure	Five separate criteria for each genre	0.5
Enhancement or active element	Table, screenshot, image, gallery, embed, audio, form, or widget	0.1

Operationally, coefficients from 0.8 to 1.0 were classified as “green,” 0.5 to 0.7 as “yellow,” 0.3 to 0.4 as “dark orange,” and 0 to 0.2 as “red.” Materials outside the primary language scope were retained with a “grey” status.

2.2. Functional Interpretation of the Criteria in Countering Information Attacks

The monitoring criteria do not directly produce a judgment of “false” or “true.” Instead, they record editorial vulnerabilities that may increase the likelihood of amplifying information attacks and disinformation across the following three functional layers:

1. Verification layer – the presence of a source or verifiable comment, evidence, figures, documents, and multiple viewpoints;
2. Context layer – background, the event’s impact on the audience, internal connections, a conclusion, forecast, or solution;
3. Presentation layer – headline precision, presentation of the main result in the lead, conformity to genre structure,

and enhancement elements that explain the information.

The analysis results were described using frequencies, proportions, and arithmetic means. Monthly dynamics were compared across March, April, May, and June. At this stage, an inter-rater reliability coefficient was not calculated because the expert assessment sheet in the data file had not been completed. The findings were therefore interpreted as descriptive results of algorithmic monitoring, and the external validity of the model was not considered confirmed.

3. Results

3.1. Overall Results and Quality Levels

Across the 1,058 materials included in the principal analysis, the mean quality coefficient was 0.789. A total of 728 materials were classified as green, 325 as yellow, and 5 as dark orange. No red or grey categories were recorded in the principal analytical corpus. Thus, 31.2% of the materials fell into the yellow or dark-orange groups and required at least one significant editorial improvement.

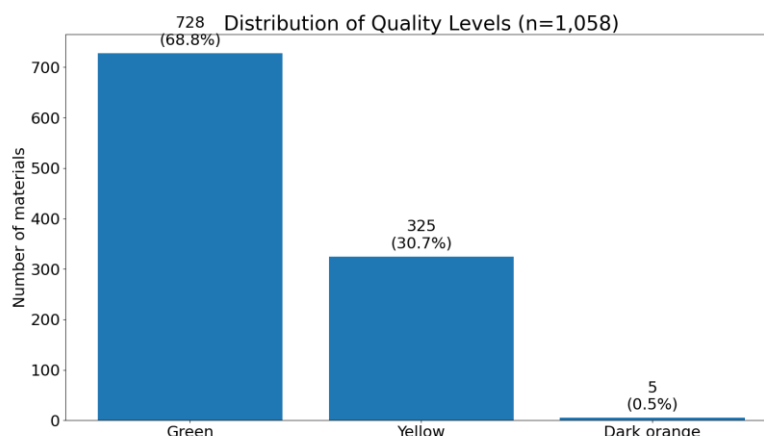


Figure 1. Distribution of Materials by Quality Level

The average fulfilment rate for the general editorial criteria was 90.7%, while conformity to genre structure was 81.6%. Enhancement elements were recorded in 191 materials, equivalent to 18.1% of the corpus. This result indicates that the basic textual structure of the content was relatively strong, but the potential of visual and interactive explanatory tools had not been fully utilized.

During the monitoring period, the number of Uzbek-language materials in the Latin script increased from 176 in March to 362 in June. Nevertheless, the mean coefficient remained between 0.786 and 0.791, with no sharp decline. The difference between March and June was 0.0034 points; rounded to two decimal places, every month produced a result of 0.79.

3.2. Monthly Dynamics

Table 3. Monthly Indicator Dynamics

Month	Materials	Mean coefficient	Green share, %	General criteria, %	Genre conformity, %
March	176	0.788	65.3	88.4	82.3
April	259	0.786	68.7	90.9	81.1
May	261	0.789	68.6	91.4	80.8
June	362	0.791	70.7	91.2	82.2

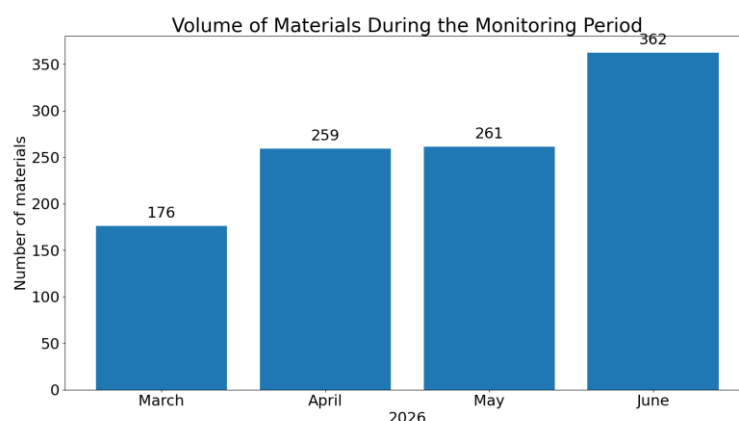


Figure 2. Change in the Volume of Materials During the Monitoring Period

Among the general criteria, reliance on a source or verifiable comment increased from 89.2% in March to 91.2% in June, while context or internal linkage rose from 66.5% to 74.3%. However, the simultaneous presence of a subject, action, and key detail in news headlines declined from 41.9% in March to 37.8% in June and remained a consistently weak indicator throughout the period.

3.3. Results by General Criteria

Among the four general criteria applied to all 1,058 materials, the highest result was observed in the clear presentation of the main outcome in the lead – 100%. A signal of practical value for the reader was present in 99.4% of materials, while a source or verifiable comment was present in 91.1%. The lowest universal indicator was recorded for context or internal linkage – 72.3%.

Table 4. General Criteria Applied to All Materials

Criterion	Compliant materials	Match, %	Gap, %
Main outcome clearly stated in the lead	1,058	100.0	0.0
Source or verifiable comment present	964	91.1	8.9
Context or internal linkage present	765	72.3	27.7
Signal of practical value for the reader present	1,052	99.4	0.6

3.4. Genre Composition and Genre-Specific Vulnerabilities

The corpus was classified as follows: 732 news items

(69.2%), 158 interviews or profiles (14.9%), 115 guides (10.9%), 37 analytical or extended articles (3.5%), 14 reportages (1.3%), and 2 partnership-advertising materials (0.2%).

Table 5. Key Results by Genre

Genre	n	Share, %	Mean coefficient	Genre criteria, %
News	732	69.2	0.774	78.9
Interview or profile	158	14.9	0.878	96.6
Guide	115	10.9	0.767	80.7
Analytical or extended article	37	3.5	0.735	70.3
Reportage	14	1.3	0.864	90.0
Partnership/advertising material	2	0.2	0.800	70.0

In news items, the main news was presented in the opening block in 100% of cases, while a detail, figure, or reason was present in 98.4%. However, the complete expression of the subject, action, and key detail in the headline was recorded in only 37.2%, while background or a link to a preceding event was present in 70.2%.

Evidence, figures, or documents were present in all 37 analytical and extended articles. Nevertheless, multiple sources or viewpoints were recorded in 51.4% of the materials, while a conclusion, forecast, or solution appeared in 21.6%. In the guides, deadlines, documents, or conditions were present in 99.1%, and useful links in 95.7%; however, only 54.8% of headlines promised a

solution or procedure. Direct quotations or eyewitness views were present in 57.1% of reportages. Because

there were only two partnership-advertising materials, no general conclusion was drawn for this genre.

Table 7. Most Significant Genre Gaps from the Perspective of Information Risk

Genre and criterion	Match, %	Gap, %	Interpretation
News: subject–action–key detail in the headline	37.2	62.8	Risk of a misleading or vague headline
News: background present	70.2	29.8	Risk of decontextualized interpretation
Analysis: multiple sources or viewpoints	51.4	48.6	Risk of one-sided interpretation
Analysis: conclusion, forecast, or solution	21.6	78.4	Insufficient explanation and solution
Guide: next action clearly stated	67.8	32.2	Weak audience guidance
Reportage: eyewitness or direct quotation	57.1	42.9	Insufficient evidentiary vividness

4. Discussion

The results showed that the most important function of the editorial monitoring system is not to issue an automatic judgment that a material is “true” or “false.” By tracking observable features such as sources, context, headlines, and genre structure, the system identifies conditions that may cause a newsroom inadvertently to amplify information attacks and disinformation. In this sense, monitoring operates at the journalistic-process level of information security.

The first significant finding is that the mean coefficient remained around 0.79 even though the volume of materials more than doubled. This indicates that the content structure did not deteriorate sharply as the pace of production increased. However, the near stability of the mean does not confirm that implementation of the monitoring system automatically improved quality. Assessing the system’s impact requires a pre-implementation period, a control group, or a pretest-posttest comparison of materials of the same type.

The second finding is that context was the lowest-performing universal criterion, at 72.3%. Context or internal linkage was not identified in 293 materials. Even when a fact itself is accurate, information that is not connected to its cause, preceding circumstances, scope of impact, or a relevant document may enable an incorrect conclusion. Because presenting a true fact outside its context is one of the effective methods of harmful interpretation in information attacks, the monitoring system continuously tracks this indicator as part of preventive control.

The third finding concerns the structural precision of news headlines. Only 37.2% of the news headlines expressed the subject, action, and key detail together. This does not mean that all remaining headlines were manipulative. However, because headlines circulate separately from the material on social networks, search engines, or messaging platforms, ambiguity may increase the risk that audiences misunderstand the event, respond emotionally, or share the item without reading the text. A media environment resilient to information

disorder depends not only on external platform policies, but also on the stability of professional, trust-based journalistic institutions.[11]

The fourth finding is the limited number of analytical materials and the weakness of their conclusion-and-solution sections. Only 3.5% of the corpus consisted of analytical or extended articles, and no conclusion, forecast, or solution was identified in 78.4% of these materials. When countering information attacks, journalists should not limit themselves to reporting an immediate fact; they should also explain its causes, interested parties, possible consequences, and meaning for the audience. Otherwise, even when a newsroom publishes a reliable fact, the audience's need to understand a complex information situation remains unmet.

The fifth finding is that enhancement elements were present in only 18.1% of the materials. A table, link to a document, screenshot, chart, or other visual evidence can facilitate the verification and comprehension of complex information. However, the presence of an enhancement element does not in itself prove that a material is accurate; an incorrect chart or a decontextualized screenshot may also serve as a tool of manipulation. Therefore, a future version of the model should assess not merely the presence of such an element, but also its source, explanation, and correspondence to the claim made in the material.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The empirical analysis conducted using Talimxabarlari.uz as a case study showed that an editorial monitoring system can function as an auxiliary, preventive, and management-oriented mechanism for countering information attacks in an online publication. The system does not identify the actor or coordination of an information attack and does not automatically confirm the absolute truth of a material. Its scientific and practical value lies in recording, on the basis of consistent criteria, risk signals related to verification, context, and presentation in newsroom content.

Across 1,058 materials, the mean coefficient of 0.789 and the 68.8% green share demonstrated the general stability of the editorial structure. At the same time, the fact that 31.2% of materials fell into the yellow or dark-orange group indicates the need for regular editorial oversight. Among the universal criteria, context was the principal weakness, at 72.3%. By genre, the structural

precision of news headlines was 37.2%, while conclusions, forecasts, or solutions were present in 21.6% of analytical materials. Thus, in addition to producing an overall average score, the system can identify precisely which editorial practices generate informational vulnerability.

The findings above show that an editorial monitoring system functions not as a reactive, but as a preventive and institutional mechanism for countering information attacks. Rather than being limited to issuing refutations or conducting post-factum fact-checking, the system enables the identification of risky content features before publication, the grounding of editorial decisions in evidence, and the continuous improvement of journalists' professional standards. The editorial monitoring system can therefore be regarded as a practical mechanism that helps ensure content reliability in online publications, prevent the dissemination of manipulative information, and strengthen the institutional resilience of newsrooms to information attacks.

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