

Kompas TV invests in smartphone journalism and grows audience and revenue

Started in 2011, Kompas TV is an Indonesian TV station with a prolific online digital video and social media presence. It covers national news, politics, sports, and entertainment.

OPPORTUNITY

Kompas TV wanted to improve and standardize its live video broadcasts so that reporters in bureaus all over Indonesia could produce high-quality mobile news coverage leading up to the 2019 national elections (and beyond). It hoped that by investing in mobile equipment and refining processes it would be able to generate more news coverage and reach a wider, younger audience.

APPROACH

Kompas TV purchased equipment, implemented company-wide workflows and processes, and trained staff across 31 regional bureaus in mobile reporting best practices. After successfully covering the 2019 elections, the teams expanded the new mobile journalism practices to other topics and formats.

Building up the team and capabilities: Kompas TV restructured its existing digital video department and hired new staff, growing the team from 13 to 40 people over twelve months. It changed the titles of reporters from 'digital journalists' to 'content creators', shifting staff mindsets so that presenters didn't feel confined by traditional reporting techniques. Concurrently, Kompas TV purchased new equipment — 34 smartphones, stabilizers, clip-on mics, LED lights, and tripods. It distributed the new gear to the digital crew at the head office in Jakarta and the 31 regional bureaus spread out across Indonesia's 34 provinces.

Training staff: Kompas TV then began a training program for staff in mobile journalism and digital content creation. The digital manager and several producers visited the Kompas TV regional bureaus and spent two days at each training reporters on mobile journalism best practices, workflows and processes, and equipment.

Covering the elections: Kompas TV rolled out its new mobile reporting process to cover the April 2019 elections. Almost all live coverage of the event, across all provinces, was done in this way. Reporting live with smartphones gave journalists easier, cheaper, and more intimate access to events, as they were freed up from the constraints of the bulky cameras and expensive satellite trucks they used in the past. Reporting was faster, cheaper, and post-production was easier — just a simple upload or live stream direct to YouTube.

Maintaining new processes post election: The live mobile coverage of the elections was so successful that Kompas TV rolled the approach out to other reporting projects — for example, daily news reporting across all the bureaus and special events like Indonesian independence day. Teams also started to experiment with new formats using this process, such as talk shows, explanatory videos, and news vlogs.

Setting targets to engage audiences and build local content:

Throughout the project, Kompas TV set YouTube upload targets for each bureau in order to drive audience engagement and loyalty. Each day, the 11 larger regional bureaus contributed three digital videos, smaller regional bureaus produced one or two videos, and the main Jakarta office created 10 videos. This process ensures comprehensive coverage of localized events across the whole country, which isn't feasible through traditional media platforms.

RESULTS

Kompas TV successfully built up the video capabilities of all its bureaus and trained reporters in live mobile journalism best practices, which helped them make huge gains in audience and revenue.

- **Over 450M views** during the election period in Q2 2019.
- **More than 3.5X growth** in revenue from Q1 to Q2 2019.

LEARNINGS

The landscape of news consumption has changed: More people are turning to YouTube and other digital platforms as their primary source of news coverage. Traditional media organizations need to realize that today's competition comes not only from TV stations, but also from content creators on YouTube or other social media platforms. To succeed in this new landscape, journalists have to broaden their thinking around content/format ideas, research, storytelling, and creativity.

Hook your audience with a great thumbnail: Thumbnail selection is very important as the right image will catch viewers' attention and encourage them to click on your video. Kompas TV recommends using strong, eye-catching, high-resolution images. You can further increase your chances of engagement through title selection, tagging, and description — use keywords optimized for SEO so that people are more likely to find and watch your content.

Use the right analytics to define success: Digital video success shouldn't be measured the same way as traditional broadcast TV. Use analytics such as likes, watch time, views, shares, engagement, etc. to get a true sense of how your video content is performing. You can also lean into Google and YouTube Trends and Google Search (as well as trending topics on social media platforms) to help you decide which topics might resonate well with your audience.

Embrace mobile journalism: Empowering your reporters with mobile equipment and best-practices guidelines will help them produce content faster, cheaper, and more efficiently. With top-quality smartphones, a single reporter can cover the roles of presenter, camera operator, and editor, and content can be uploaded directly to YouTube, social media sites, or owned and operated platforms. Thanks to smartphones, Kompas TV reporters were able to quickly cover breaking news reports from all across the country at crucial news moments. For example, during the Jakarta demonstrations, the team reported live using smartphones from within the protest crowd and streamed directly onto YouTube.

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Using smartphones, we're able to cover critical, local news events as they happen. For example, when a big accident on the highway between Bandung and Jakarta occurred, one crew member happened to be there, and covered the accident by livestreaming for 7+ hrs.

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