News on the Websites of Iraqi Universities

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ABSTRACT

The research analyses the news published on a sample of Iraqi universities websites, aiming to classify them and identify their subjects, sources, and templates used in its editing process during the period from April 1, 2023, to May 31, 2023. The research is descriptive, and the researchers followed the survey method procedures to achieve the intended objectives. The researchers reached a set of conclusions, which include: the interest of Iraqi universities websites in events related to postgraduate students is significant, and the (Prominence) and (Currency) values are clearly evident in the news. In addition, the inverted pyramid template is used as a fundamental template in the editing process of the news published on the websites.

Keywords: News, Websites, News Websites, Iraqi Universities, Journalism, News Editing.

Introduction

News is considered one of the most important journalistic arts and represents the starting point for other arts such as reporting and investigation. Based on this importance and status that the art of journalistic news enjoys, the research came as a new attempt to analyse the news published on the websites of Iraqi universities, represented by the websites: (Al-Nahrain University, University of Diyala, University of Karbala and Mustansiriyah University), being important platforms, took up a clear space, fulfilling various communication functions, such as information, advertising, guidance, and education.

The researchers formulated the research problem in a set of questions and sought to answer by following the methodological steps and procedures of descriptive research, the survey method. The research included a presentation and interpretation of the results that were reached by analysing the news published on the websites in the research sample, which numbered (549) news items. The researchers were keen to use tables and statistical methods in classifying and tabulating the analysis categories, their frequencies, and their percentages.

The research included a set of conclusions and recommendations, as well as a list of sources and references that influenced the theoretical aspects of the research.

Research Methodology

I. The Research Problem

The researchers formulated the research problem in a set of questions:

1. What are the topics of the news published on the websites of the Iraqi universities?

2. What are the news sources published by Iraqi universities websites within the period specified for the research?
3. What are the news values of the news published on the websites of the universities subject to the research?
4. What technical templates did the communicator use in editing the published news?
5. What are the styles of displaying news published on the websites of the Iraqi universities in the research sample?

II. The Importance of the Research

The importance of the research appears in the results it reached by analyzing, classifying, and evaluating the news published on Iraqi universities websites, to identify its strengths and weaknesses. This research is also a new attempt and an addition to the scientific heritage, opening the way for future studies on the content of these websites. The characteristics of its audience, and the nature of the communicator.

III. The Research Objectives

The researchers seek to achieve a set of goals:
1. Knowing the topics of news published on the sites in the research sample.
2. Identify sources of news published within the specified period of research.
3. Determine the news values in the news published on websites.
4. Knowing the technical templates used by the communicator in editing the news.
5. Knowing the presentation styles used to present news on the pages of the websites.

IV. The Research Community and its Sample

The research community includes all types of vocabulary, such as: people, sites, newspapers, and other measurable and countable elements (Ibrahim, 2017, p. 131).

As for the sample, it is a segment or part of that society, bearing its characteristics, and representing it accurately, and the goal of selecting it is to obtain information from it about the original society (Gharib & Helmy, 2019, p. 104).

The research community consists of the websites of Iraqi government universities, which number (35) websites according to data and statistics issued by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research for the year 2023.

The researchers chose the research sample using a random method, by giving each website a specific number, and the researchers drew the sample randomly, the choice fell on (4) websites as a representative sample of the websites of Iraqi public universities.

These websites are: (Al-Nahrain University website, University of Diyala website, University of Karbala website, and Mustansiriyah University website), the researchers were keen to follow up the research sample sites daily to collect the news published therein within the period from April 1, 2023, to May 31, 2023. The total number of news published on the four sites reached (549) news distributed as follows, as in the table below:

Table (1): Distribution of news published on the websites in the research sample

No.	Websites	Total number of news published (during the research period)
1	Al-Nahrain University website (https://nahrainuniv.edu.iq)	98
2	University of Diyala (https://uodiyala.edu.iq)	93
3	University of Karbala (https://uokerbala.edu.iq)	187
4	Mustansiriyah University (https://uomustansiriyah.edu.iq)	171
Total		**549**

V. Type of Research and its Methodology

This research is considered descriptive research, which is research that aims to describe quantitatively or qualitatively the various phenomena in society to know their structure and characteristics (Ismail, 2011, p. 98). The researchers followed the steps of the (analytical) survey approach to achieve the required goals, which is an approach that aims to "describe and document current conditions or trends, that is, it explains what actually exists at the current moment" (Zogheib, 2009, pp. 109-110).

VI. The Research Tool

The researchers used the content analysis tool to analyze news published on Iraqi universities websites to achieve the research objectives.

The researchers followed a set of methodological steps and procedures:

1. Defining the units of analysis: These are the aspects of communication that will be measured and counted directly. There is agreement among researchers on five units in content analysis: (the unit of the word, the unit of the subject, the unit of character, the unit of the media, and the unit of space and time) (Obaidat, Abd Al-Haqq, & Adas, 2015, p. 137). In this research, the researchers identified the unit of the subject as a basic unit in the analysis process.

2. Defining the categories of analysis: The categories of analysis represent the main and sub-categories of the news being analyzed. The categories of analysis are divided into two types, the first: categories of topic (what was said?), and the second: categories of form (how was it said?) (Abd Al-Hamid, 1992, p. 147), and the researchers used the categories of topic and form in this research to achieve its goals and requirements.

3. Validity test: After designing the analysis form and defining the categories in it, the researchers adopted the apparent validity method; It is a method that involves presenting the form to a group of specialized arbitrators[1] in the field of media and journalism, to demonstrate its validity. After considering their comments and amendments, the percentage of agreement on the categories mentioned in the form reached (89.01%), which is a good percentage.

4. Reliability test: The researchers tested the reliability of the analysis process using the consistency method with an external analyst[2]. After applying the method, slight differences appeared between the results reached by the researchers and the external analyst. The reliability rate, after applying the (Holsti) equation, was (86.66%).

VII. The Research Terms

1. **News (terminologically):** A report on an incident, fact, or true idea that affects the interests of a large number of people and arouses their interest (Nasir & Abd Al-Rahman, 2009, p. 48).

2. **Universities websites (procedurally):** These are the websites of Iraqi public universities that publish the activities of the universities and its colleges in the form of news and reports, on a daily or periodic basis.

VIII. Previous Studies

The researchers were keen to access previous studies related to the subject of the research, in general, to benefit from their results and suggestions. These studies are:

1. **(Al-Sudani, 2010):** The study revealed the reality of editing news on the websites of Iraqi radio stations, represented by (Radio Sawa Iraq) website, by classifying news quantitatively and qualitatively, identifying its topics, the technical

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(1) Arbitrators:
1. Hijab, Ezzat. Professor. Faculty of Media, Middle East University.
2. Al-Zaeem, Hala Abbass. Professor, Faculty of Information, Lebanese University.

3. Hafez, Raad. Lecturer. Presidency of University of Anbar.

(2) External analyst: Khudair, Alaa. Lecturer. Faculty of Arts, University of Kufa.

methods adopted in editing it, and the news values that were focused on, using the content analysis tool, within the survey approach. The study was divided into four chapters, in which the researcher reached a set of results and conclusions, the most prominence of which are: local political news is issued at the expense of other types of news, and that the site diversifies in its news editing methods to varying degrees, and some news values result from the union of several values, including the value of importance, proximity, and conflict. In addition to presenting news in the form of text accompanying sound with a still image.

2. **(Namoos, 2010):** The study analyzed a sample of news published on the (BBC Arabic) and (Elaf) websites, and shed light on its types, contents, values, and the technical methods used in presenting it to the audience. The study is considered a descriptive study. The researcher used the survey method and conducted a systematic comparison between the two websites in which he reached a set of conclusions, including: The two sites matched in the level of coverage and components of the news form, as the (colored level) took the lead in them at the expense of (the objective level). The two sites also matched in following modern artistic construction methods, by relying on templates that are compatible with the Internet at the expense of traditional templates used in printed newspapers.

3. **(Al-Zubaie, 2016):** This study shed light on the nature of news editing on (Al-Sabah) newspaper website, which is one of the important news websites in Iraq, by following the steps of the survey method and using the content analysis tool. The study revealed the impact of the Internet on the process of editing news and the way it is published, and the researcher reached a set of conclusions, the most important of which is: the dominance of the (analytical-

interpretive) character in news editing, which is consistent with political news that received attention and priority in publishing, in addition to the use of multimedia as secondary elements, to enhance news.

Therefore, the researchers see:

1. Reviewing the above studies helped define the dimensions of the research problem more clearly.
2. It helped in devising main and sub-categories of analysis and formulating them carefully and precisely.
3. The results of the studies showed complete agreement on the inverted pyramid template as the main technical template in editing news, despite the differences in the circumstances and time duration of each study.
4. The studies agreed that the websites did not deviate from the traditional nature of publishing news.

Presenting and Interpreting the Results of the Analysis of News Published on Iraqi Universities Websites

I. Topics of Published News on Iraqi Universities Websites

Table (2) below shows the frequencies and percentages of the subcategories within the category of news topics published on the websites in the research sample for the period from April 1, 2023, to May 31, 2023, which are as follows:

1. **Al-Nahrain University website:** The category (Postgraduate student discussion) ranked first with a total of (26) frequencies and a percentage of (26.53%), followed by the (Scientific seminars) category in second place with a total of (15) frequencies and a percentage of (15.31%). The (Student activities) category ranked third, recording (11) frequencies and a percentage of (11.22%), while the (Training courses) category ranked fourth, recording (8) frequencies and a percentage of (8.17%), and the (Scientific and/or administrative committee meetings) category ranked fifth with a total of (7) frequencies and a

percentage of (7.14%), followed by the categories (Panel discussions) and (Scientific conferences) in sixth place with a total of (6) frequencies and a percentage of (6.12%), while the categories (Cooperation between universities) and (Workshops) ranked seventh, recording (5) frequencies with a percentage of (5.10%), while other categories, such as: (Publishing scientific research) and (Patents), recorded low frequencies and percentages. The researchers believe that the lack of interest in these topics is an indication of the lack of interest of the university presidency in this type of scientific activities, despite it being a university that includes scientific and applied specializations, in which scientific research often presents new things that deserve to be highlighted and published as news to the audience at all levels.

2. **University of Diyala website:** The category (Postgraduate student discussion) ranked first with a total of (27) frequencies, with a percentage of (29.03%), and the (Student activities) category ranked second, recording (22) frequencies, with a percentage of (23.65%). The communicator publishes news related to the discussion of postgraduate students (Master's and PhD), as well as student activities represented by scientific festivals and competitions, without giving priority importance to the rest of the current events at the university and its colleges, which is what the results of the analysis showed. Further, the category (Scientific seminars) ranked third with a total of (12) frequencies and a percentage of (12.90%), followed in fourth place by the (Scientific conferences) category with a total of (10) frequencies and a percentage of (10.75%), then the (Training courses) category in fifth place with a total of (9) frequencies and a percentage of (9.68%), then the category (Scientific and/or administrative committee meetings) comes in sixth

place with a total of (5) frequencies and a percentage of (5.37%), then the category (Workshops) comes in seventh place with a total of only (4) frequencies and a percentage A percentage of (4.30%), while the other categories for news of scientific research, patents, holders of Master's and PhD degrees, and seminars, recorded a very low percentage of (1.08%) for each category, occupying the eighth and last place in the table below.

3. **University of Karbala website:** The category (Postgraduate student discussion) ranked first with a total of (43) frequencies and a percentage of (22.99%), followed by the (Scientific seminars) category in second place with (37) frequencies and a percentage of (19.80%). Then comes the category (Training courses) with a total of (22) frequencies, with a percentage of (11.76%). The results show that these topics are the most frequent. They received the attention of the communicator on the website within the period specified for the research, and they came at the beginning of his list of priorities and were presented as main news. In addition, the (Workshops) category came in fourth place with a total of (18) and a percentage of (9.63%), followed by the (Scientific conferences) category in fifth place with a total of (16) frequencies and a percentage of (8.56%), then came the (Awareness and educational lectures) category, ranked sixth, recording (14) frequencies, with a percentage of (7.49%), and the (Publishing scientific research) category ranked seventh with a total of (12) frequencies, with a percentage of (6.42%). The researchers believe that this website paid attention to the scientific activities that took place during that period and presented them in a way that highlights the scientific outputs of faculty members in the university's colleges. The results also show that the category (Recruitment of graduates)

came in eighth place with a total of (10) frequencies and a percentage of (5.35%). This type of news did not receive the attention of the previous websites, despite its importance as it concerns a large segment of individuals within society.

4. **Mustansiriyah University website:** The results show that the category (Postgraduate student discussion) came in first place with a total of (55) frequencies and a percentage of (32.16%), which is a result consistent with the results that appeared in the previous three websites, while the rest of the frequencies and percentages are in fairly close proportions, as the category (Student activities) ranked second with a total of (18) frequencies and a percentage of (10.53%), followed in third place by the category (Scientific and/or administrative committee meetings) with a total of (17) frequencies and a percentage of (9.94%).

The two categories included news about students' community and sports activities, as well as news about committee meetings in the university's colleges, such as: academic promotion committees, examination committees, and various administrative committees. The results also show that the category (Scientific conferences) recorded (15) frequencies, at a rate of (8.77%), ranking fourth, followed by the categories (Scientific seminars) and (Publishing scientific research), in fifth place, with a total of (14) frequencies, at a rate of (8.19%). Then the category (Patents) ranked sixth with a total of (13) frequencies and a percentage of (7.60%), and the categories (Training courses) and (Workshops) ranked seventh with (9) frequencies and a percentage of (5.26%). Then the rest of the categories come in late ranks, recording low frequencies and percentages.

Table (2): Topics of Published News on Iraqi Universities Websites

No.	Websites / Categories	Al-Nahrain University website		University of Diyala website		University of Karbala website		Mustansiriyah University website	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Awareness and educational lectures	3	3.06	1	1.08	14	7.49	6	3.51
2	Cooperation between universities	5	5.10	-	-	1	0.53	1	0.59
3	Panel discussions	6	6.12	1	1.08	5	2.67	-	-
4	Patents	2	2.04	1	1.08	1	0.53	13	7.60
5	Postgraduate student discussion	26	26.53	27	29.03	43	22.99	55	32.16
6	Publishing scientific research	3	3.07	-	-	12	6.42	14	8.19
7	Recruitment of graduates	1	1.02	1	1.08	10	5.35	-	-
8	Scientific and/or administrative	7	7.14	5	5.37	3	1.60	17	9.94

No.		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	committee meetings								
9	Scientific conferences	6	6.12	10	10.75	16	8.56	15	8.77
10	Scientific seminars	15	15.31	12	12.90	37	19.80	14	8.19
11	Student activities	11	11.22	22	23.65	5	2.67	18	10.53
12	Training courses	8	8.17	9	9.68	22	11.76	9	5.26
13	Workshops	5	5.10	4	4.30	18	9.63	9	5.26
	Total	**98**	**100**	**93**	**100**	**187**	**100**	**171**	**100**

The researchers believe that there is an agreement between the four websites sampled in the research in making events and topics related to graduate students' discussion at the beginning of their list of priorities and presenting it to the audience as news, the analysis process also showed that the news was similar across the websites, including specific paragraphs such as the title of the thesis, the name of the researcher, members of the discussion committee, and some important results.

The researchers also believe that the websites did not pay attention to the topics of publishing scientific research, or other scientific activities such as training courses, despite their importance and role as news in enhancing the universities' status inside and outside society.

II. Sources of News Published on Iraqi Universities Websites

The results of table (3) below show that the category (Colleges, institutes and their scientific departments) is the first source for websites to obtain information and news and present it to the audience. The category achieved first place in the four websites in the research sample and was distributed in high frequencies and percentages, shown as follows:

1. It was recorded on the University of Karbala website (113) frequencies, with a percentage of (60.43%).

2. It was recorded on the Mustansiriyah University website (105) frequencies, with a percentage of (61.40%).

3. It was recorded on Al-Nahrain University website (80) frequencies, with a percentage of (81.64%).

4. On the University of Diyala website, it achieved (65) frequencies and a percentage of (69.90%).

While the category (The presidency of the university, its sections, and its centers) came in second place on the websites, followed by the category (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research) in last place with low frequencies and percentages, while it did not appear on the University of Diyala website within the period specified for the search.

The organizational structure in which the media department/division/unit works, or the entity responsible for publishing news on each of the websites, is evident through people in the various colleges and departments of the university whose job is to provide the websites with news and information. We find that the largest percentage of the news concerns colleges, institutes, and scientific/administrative departments, and it is an indication of the keenness of those responsible for covering the events taking place within their universities on a regular basis and presenting it as news to the audience.

Table (3): The Sources of News Published on Iraqi Universities Websites

No.	Websites / Sources	Al-Nahrain University website		University of Diyala website		University of Karbala website		Mustansiriyah University website	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%

1	Colleges, institutes and their scientific departments	80	81.64	65	69.90	113	60.43	105	61.40
2	The presidency of the university, its sections, and its centers	17	17.34	28	30.10	55	29.41	62	36.26
3	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	1	1.02	-	-	19	10.16	4	2.34
	Total	**98**	**100**	**93**	**100**	**187**	**100**	**171**	**100**

III. News Values in News Published on Iraqi Universities Websites

The data in table (4) below shows the frequencies and percentages of news values that appeared in the news published on the websites of the Iraqi universities in the research sample within the period specified for the analysis, and they are as follows:

1. **Al-Nahrain University website:** The value of (Prominence) ranked first with a total of (55) frequencies and a percentage of (35.26%), followed in second place by the value of (Currency), recording (51) frequencies and a percentage of (32.69%). The value of (Proximity) came in third place with a total of (46) and a percentage of (29.49%), while the value of (Innovation and invention) ranked fourth and last with a total of (4) frequencies only and a low percentage of (2.56%).

2. **University of Diyala website:** The value of (Currency) came in first place with a total of (51) frequencies and a percentage of (34.69%), followed by the value of (Proximity) in second place with (46) frequencies and a percentage of (31.30%) to come Then the value of (Prominence) ranked third with a total of (43) frequencies and a percentage of (29.25%), while the value of (Innovation and invention) ranked fourth and last

with a total of (7) frequencies and a percentage of (4.76%).

3. **University of Karbala website:** The value of (Currency) ranked first with a total of (136) frequencies and a percentage of (61.82%), while the other values received a low total of frequencies and percentages, as the value of (Proximity) recorded (35) frequencies with a percentage (15.90%), achieving second place, followed by the value of (Innovation and invention) in third place with a total of (28) frequencies and a percentage of (12.73%), and the value of (Prominence) came in fourth and last place with a total of (21) frequencies and a percentage of (15.90%). 9.55%).

4. **Mustansiriyah University website:** The value of (Currency) ranked first with a total of (115) frequencies and a percentage of (40.93%), followed by the value of (Proximity) with (70) frequencies and a percentage of (24.91%) in second place, then The value of (Prominence) came in third place with a total of (62) frequencies and a percentage of (22.06%), while the value of (Innovation and invention) came in fourth and last place with a total of (34) frequencies and a percentage of (12.10%).

Table (4): The News Values in the News Published on Iraqi Universities Websites

No.	Websites / News Values	Al-Nahrain University website		University of Diyala website		University of Karbala website		Mustansiriyah University website	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Currency	51	32.69	46	31.30	136	61.82	115	40.93
2	Innovation and invention	4	2.56	7	4.76	28	12.73	34	12.10
3	Prominence	55	35.26	43	29.25	21	9.55	62	22.06
4	Proximity	46	29.49	51	34.69	35	15.90	70	24.91
	Total	156	100	147	100	220	100	281	100

News values represent a set of standards that are not clear to the traditional reader and are understood by communicators and workers in the field of journalism and media, based on the importance of the news to the media (Jawad, 2001, pp. 52-53), this is also the case in websites, as the results of the analysis showed that the communicator on the websites placed the currency value and prominence value at the beginning of his list of priorities to determine the importance of the news published on the website pages, as he focused on what was new in addition to the personalities at the center of the event, such as the university president, his assistants, or the deans. In addition, news that carried the value of innovation and invention did not receive much attention from the communicators on the websites sampled in the research. This is related to their lack of interest in news of scientific research and scientific activities, and it is a negative indicator for a university website where scientific research should have a special and distinguished status.

IV. Technical Templates (Writing Styles) Used in Editing News Published on Iraqi Universities Websites

The results of table (5) below show the technical templates used in editing news published in the four websites in the research sample. We notice that there is agreement between the websites on using the (Inverted pyramid) template in editing news, as it ranked first in total frequencies and a high percentage, showing as follows:

1. It was recorded on the Mustansiriyah University website (149) frequencies (87.13%).
2. It was recorded on the University of Karbala website (122) frequencies, with a percentage of (65.24%).
3. On the University of Diyala website, it achieved (84) frequencies, with a percentage of (90.32%).
4. It was recorded on Al-Nahrain University website (47) frequencies, with a percentage of (47.96%).

The results also showed that the (Design panel) template was used in only two websites:

1. Al-Nahrain University website recorded (31) frequencies, with a percentage of (31.63%), in second place.
2. The website of Mustansiriyah University recorded only (5) frequencies, with a percentage of (2.92%) in third place.

While we notice from the results below that there are news stories in which the communicator did not use any of the technical templates or styles known in the field of journalism, and they were presented in a random, unprofessional manner that has no connection to the news editing process, the researchers placed them in the (Unclassified) category and distributed them as follows:

1. On the University of Karbala website (65) frequencies (34.76%), ranked second.
2. On Al-Nahrain University website (20) frequencies (20.41%), ranked third.

3. On the Mustansiriyah University website (17) frequencies, with a percentage of (9.95%) in second place.

4. On the University of Diyala website, there were nine frequencies, with a percentage of (9.68%) in second place.

Table (5): The Technical Templates (Writing Styles) Used in Editing News Published on Iraqi Universities Websites

No.	Websites / Technical Templates	Al-Nahrain University website		University of Diyala website		University of Karbala website		Mustansiriyah University website	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Inverted pyramid	47	47.96	84	90.32	122	65.24	149	87.13
2	Design panel	31	31.63	-	-	-	-	5	2.92
3	Unclassified	20	20.41	9	9.68	65	34.76	17	9.95
	Total	98	100	93	100	187	100	171	100

V. Styles of Presenting News Published on Iraqi Universities Websites

It is clear from table (6) below that the universities websites in the research sample agreed to present their published news using the (Text + Images) style. The news consisted of text along with one or several relevant images. The category achieved first place in the four sites distributed as follows:

1. It was recorded on the Mustansiriyah University website (167) frequencies, with a percentage of (97.66%).

2. It was recorded on the University of Karbala website (112) frequencies, with a percentage of (59.90%).
3. On Al-Nahrain University website, it achieved (98) frequencies with a percentage of (100%).
4. It achieved (88) frequencies on the University of Diyala website, with a percentage of (94.62%).

Table (6): The Styles of Presenting News Published on Iraqi Universities Websites

No.	Websites / Presenting Styles	Al-Nahrain University website		University of Diyala website		University of Karbala website		Mustansiriyah University website	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Text + Images	98	100	88	94.62	112	59.90	167	97.66
2	Text only	-	-	5	5.38	75	40.10	4	2.34
	Total	98	100	93	100	187	100	171	100

Conclusion

1. The websites of the Iraqi universities in the research sample paid great attention to postgraduate student discussion events and presented them as main news on their pages to the audience.
2. The published researches, patents, and books, did not receive the attention of the websites, and the communicator presented them as secondary news.
3. University colleges, institutes, and scientific departments represented a primary source of news published on the four websites under analysis.
4. The value of (Prominence) and (Currency) was clear in the news published on the websites, and the

communicator considered them basic criteria for publication.

5. The dominance of the inverted pyramid template over the editing process in the websites sampled in the research, as the largest percentage of published news was edited using it, despite the presence of other templates and writing styles that are compatible with the nature of the Internet.

6. The styles of presenting and displaying news on the pages of the websites in the research sample were limited to the use of text and images related to the topic only and represented a fixed and unchanging pattern.

Recommendations

1. The Iraqi universities websites need to pay more attention to scientific events, such as: publishing researches, conferences, and seminars, and highlighting them.

2. Universities websites need more development to raise their interactive levels, and achieve the goals and functions of communication messages.

3. Using modern templates and writing styles that are interactive, as well as using new attractions and presentation methods.

4. Activating the role of social media pages (Facebook, for example), and considering them as secondary publishing platforms for delivering news to the audience.

5. For researchers, conduct field studies to find out the characteristics of the communicator in Iraqi universities websites, his skills, qualifications, and experience in the field of media.

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