

Host

If somebody were to tell me that they're going to give me news without judgment, my reaction would be, you must be kidding. But then, that's what Editorji has been doing for some years now. We spoke to the man behind the venture, journalists cum technopreneur Vikram Chandra, Editorji has been quite popular in the last couple of years that it started out. In this exclusive chat with us Vikram shares his perspective on how digital consumption of news is going to bring the much-needed democratization in the news industry, how he's using artificial intelligence to empower the news consumers. And he feels the power is going to be in the hands of the masses who consume the news, and not with the editors who sit in some ivory tower and decide what is news and what is not.

Host

Hi, Vikram. Welcome to Mrigashira. Thanks for talking to us. Tell us more about the RPSG deal you signed recently.

Vikram Chandra

So, we've spent, you know, two in the in the two years in Seritage, he was gone, he spent a lot of time working out the concepts, figuring out how it should be done. Now, having built all of that, obviously, what we really needed was scale, because it's one thing to have a good idea, you need to be able to scale it, you need to be able to build it up, you need to be able to make it really large. And that's why the we thought the Sandeep Bindra RPSG group was the perfect partner for that. They are also the very credible house very long-term players, they understand you know, some of the changes that have to be done. And really, if you take the if you take the building blocks of the platform that we have, that we have created, and the IP and the technology and the content that that is there. And you add to that the ability of the RPSG group to help us scale, it becomes a winning partnership.

Host

That's interesting. Tell me, are you also planning to add more Indian languages? Because we find most platforms limiting themselves to English or at best Hindi?

Host

In terms of languages, yes, 100%, Editorji already today I think we are the only app that I know of not just in India, but in the world, which enables you to change languages on the fly from your home screen shared, if you're watching the English, you're watching an English play list which is over there tap, tap that button you can go from English to Hindi, right? And it's very, there is a third language that we're going to be doing very soon.

Host

How is artificial intelligence going to revolutionize newsrooms? How does that work?

Vikram Chandra

Till now on television news, you're used to some big Editorji, like sitting in some studio somewhere in Delhi, dictating or deciding what news you should be seen by nature of television news, you don't have a choice, you can choose to switch off the channel. But you are the as the you are entirely at the at the mercy of some Editorji sitting in some big office somewhere who will decide this is the news that you should see and this is the news that you should not see. Right. That's the way it

fundamentally works. Already, what you have with Editorji is the ability for the AI algorithm to create the news cast for you, based on you, your profile, your interests and some editorial priorities.

Host

Thanks for talking to us. Vikram, we wish you and Editorji all the best.

Host

Welcome back. You're listening to Mrigashira, a podcast that communicates with communicators. Our next topic is one, that's eternally debated. It's about women and PR, the career progression and their salary. I came across an interesting survey done by global women in PR, GWPR, as it's called. The survey pointed out that 65% of those surveyed believe that it will take them much longer to close the gender pay gap. About half of them feel that their job security is at much more risk than men in the PR industry as a direct consequence of the pandemic. Job security, budget cuts, retaining business, adapting to new ways of working and mental health, all our concerns that worry women globally in PR industry. I spoke to Melissa Arulappan, Founder member of GWPR in India, about these and much more.

Hey, Melissa, thanks for talking to us and welcome to Mrigashira. I saw the GWPR survey results. Tell us more about it and also what are your plans for GWPR in India

Melissa

The recent GWPR, or Global Women in PR Research on the impact of COVID-19 on the working lives of women and PR globally, does not augur very well for women's advancement in the industry. The momentum towards a more gender balanced world has in fact, taken a step backwards. In the survey, 65% of respondents believe it will now take longer to close the gender pay gap. While 52% believe that the progression towards women reaching leadership positions will slow down. Job security is also a concern, with nearly half of those surveyed, indicating that women in the PR industry will have less job security than men. While the news is both disturbing and disconcerting for Indian practitioners to feed into the study. And I do not believe it is very different in India. And in fact, might be even more accentuated. When GWPR did its global annual survey in 2019. And in fact, the next survey is underway right now. And I would encourage everyone in PR and communications, man or woman to participate. The survey indicated that there was still a lot of work we needed to do in India, for women to be in PR to advance in their careers. Issues like child caring responsibilities, lack of flexi and family friendly policies, lack of work life balance in senior roles, lack of leadership training for women, lack of senior women role models, the fact that there is no progress in removing barriers to advance women, the lack of transparency in recruitment and promotion. And that it is primarily men who take promotion decisions, and promote people like themselves. We're all seen as primary barriers in India to women progressing to senior positions. The latter is particularly concerning. If you look at the Indian homegrown agencies, and at the advisory boards, the boards of directors, the expert team, or whatever nomenclature they may use, you will see that most are predominantly men. In fact, some have no women at all. What does this say about the opportunities for women in the industry, if they do not have a seat, or voice at the table. Layer this was a situation created by the pandemic and it's not difficult to see why the climb to the top is going to be a harder challenge for women in India going forward, which is why GWPR India. GWPR is a global organization for women in senior positions in PR and communications, which offers networking opportunities and events, cross border support and knowledge sharing and information on best practices in the industry. The focus is on supporting women in the PR industry and helping them advance into leadership positions. We started discussions on the formation of an India chapter for GWPR last year

by holding multi-city roundtables for senior women in PR and communications which helped us develop our charter. The pandemic put pause to our plans to have a formal launch. So, we've had a soft launch via a LinkedIn group we recreated and have started to roll out our programs. Our initiatives are built around last year's survey results and we will add this year's findings as well when they come out later this year. So, we will continue to find two new programs, our programs, our programs into mentoring both formal and informal building leadership skills, knowledge sharing, not just within India, but across geographies and networking events. They will also include conversations on the challenges and issues that women face in the PR and communications industry in India. And conversations with those who matter and make decisions. The focus is on creating a strong support backbone for women in PR and communications, where we can all progress together. It is an all of us, for each of us. And in each of us for all of us approach. We hope more women will join what I believe is a very important platform for women in the PR and communications industry in India.

Host

Thanks for talking to us Melissa, we wish GWPR and India becomes an integral part of all women PR professionals in the country. Best wishes to you and to your team. Each of us, for all of us, and all of us, for each of us. That's what the PR industry is all about, isn't it? And I think it's time that we all come together, be a part of GWPR in India and work for each other. Participate in the survey that Melissa spoke about. Please visit the LinkedIn page and see how you can be part of this initiative.

Host

Consider me retired does that ring a bell? Yes, of course. This is how cricketer MS Dhoni announced his retirement on Instagram. What we all noticed is Dhoni took to Instagram to make this announcement. It was not Twitter, it was not Facebook, it was not a press conference, it was Insta. Isn't this a huge promo for Insta? Like TV channels they can now say you heard it first on our platform. We spoke to Harish Bijoor and asked him what he thought of this move and how will it benefit Insta, Harish Bijoor as we all know needs no introduction. He is a brand expert, he is a strategy expert.

Hi Harish Welcome to Mrigashira. What do you make out of Dhoni taking to Insta to make his retirement announcement?

Harish Bijoor

For Instagram, you know getting a celebrity to make pathbreaking announcements such as the one that you and I heard Dhoni making actually center stages, the medium, actually center stages the medium across other mediums as well to say that, hey, Insta is bigger than all of you. Take that Facebook, take that Twitter, take that everyone else. We live in a new day and age all together. And Mahendra Singh Dhoni actually deciding to announce his retirement on Insta is an example of new mediums dominating over the old. Insta is that one quick instant medium. It is visual, it's audio centric, and it's tech centric, and you connect directly with your constituency. One is to one. So, to that extent, Dhoni was connecting with his constituency of Insta followers. One is to one very appropriate as far as I'm concerned.

Host

Thanks, Harish for your powerful insight.