

Content Packaging Strategies of Indonesian News Media on Instagram

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ABSTRACT: Instagram has become a primary distribution channel through which Indonesian mass media package news for visually oriented, mobile-first audiences. This study examines how three of Indonesia's leading news organizations: Liputan6, Kompas.com, detik.com, package news content on their official Instagram accounts. Using a qualitative comparative content analysis informed by social media affordance theory, visual framing theory, and news value, the study analyzes format choice (single image, carousel, reels), caption construction, hashtag strategy, visual branding, and interactivity across the three accounts. The findings show that although all three outlets adapt print-and broadcast-style news value to Instagram's visual grammar, they diverge in packing emphasis: Liputan6 leans toward entertainment-inflected, youth-oriented convergence content; Kompas.com favors contextual, caption-heavy explanatory packaging consistent with its broadsheet identity; and detik.com prioritizes speed, brevity, and high-frequency posting consistent with its breaking-news brand. The study argues that news packaging on Instagram is best understood as a negotiation between platform affordances, institutional journalistic identity, and audience engagement metrics, and offers implications for digital newsroom strategy and media literacy in Indonesia.

KEYWORDS: news packaging, Instagram, digital journalism, mass media, visual framing, social media affordances, Indonesia

I. INTRODUCTION

The migration of news audiences toward social media has fundamentally reshaped how mass media organizations construct and distribute journalistic content. In Indonesia, social media has overtaken television and print as the dominant gateway to news, with more than half of Indonesian news consumers reporting social media as a general news source and a large share of younger audiences citing it as their primary source (Newman et al., 2025). Among available platforms, Instagram occupies a distinctive position: it is a visually driven, mobile-first environment built around images, short video, and ephemeral Stories, which forces news organizations to repackage journalistic content originally produced for print, television, or the web into formats compatible with the platform's visual grammar (Bossetta, 2018; Burgess et al., 2017).

Indonesia's three online news brands: detik.com, Kompas.com, and @liputan6, have each built substantial Instagram presences alongside their websites. Because these organizations differ in institutional history, editorial tone, and target demographic, their approach to "packaging" the same underlying news events for Instagram is unlikely to be uniform. News packaging, understood here as the deliberate selection and arrangement of visual, textual, and interactive elements to present a news item, is shaped simultaneously by platform affordances, newsroom routines, and calculations about audience engagement (Peterson-Salahuddin & Diakopoulos, 2020; Ronzhyn et al., 2023).

Online News Brands	Post	Followers
Liputan6 (@liputan6)	63,482	2.4M
Kompas.com (@kompascom)	58,102	2.9M
detik.com (@detikcom)	76,057	5.1M

Table 1. Instagram data from liputan6, kompas.com, and detik.com accounts taken in June 2026

This study asks: how do detik.com, Kompas.com, and @liputan6 package news on Instagram, and what do the similarities and differences in their packaging strategies reveal about the relationship between platform affordances and journalistic identity in the Indonesian digital media landscape? The study contributes to communication science by extending affordance-based and visualframing perspectives, developed largely in Western contexts, to a major non-Western digital news market, and by offering a

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comparative account of packaging conventions across three leading outlets that until now have mostly been studied individually or in relation to a single case (Bayquni, 2018; Munawarah, 2024).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Social Media Affordances and News Packaging

Affordance theory holds that a technology's design features enable and constrain particular forms of action without strictly determining them (Bucher & Helmond, 2017). Applied to journalism, this means that Instagram's specific affordances square and vertical image formats, multi-image carousels, short-form Reels, captions with a 2,200-character limit, hashtags, and a nonclickable link environment, condition how newsrooms translate a story into a post (Bossetta, 2018; Ronzhyn et al., 2023). Comparative studies of newsroom adaptation show that social media desks increasingly design content natively for each platform's affordances rather than simply cross-posting web headlines, a shift that has reorganized editorial routines and division of labor inside newsrooms (David et al., 2019; Kleis Nielsen & Ganter, 2018). At the same time, platform algorithms and engagement metrics feed back into editorial decision-making, creating a negotiated autonomy in which journalists retain professional judgment while adapting output to what the platform is likely to reward with visibility (Peterson-Salahuddin & Diakopoulos, 2020).

B. Visual Framing and Photojournalism in the Digital Era

Visual framing theory extends classical framing scholarship by treating images (not only text) as carriers of emphasis, salience, and interpretation (Parveen & Showkat, 2020). Because Instagram is an inherently visual medium, the choice of a lead image, the sequencing of a carousel, or the composition of an infographic performs framing work analogous to headline writing in print journalism. Studies of visual framing on Instagram in conflict, migration, and health contexts show that platforms' affordances interact with journalistic framing choices to shape how audiences interpret complex issues, often compressing nuance into single, emotionally resonant images (Dekker et al., 2018). This body of work suggests that Instagram news packaging is not a neutral repackaging exercise but an active site of meaning construction.

C. Audience Engagement, Uses and Gratifications, and Clickbait Dynamics

From the audience side, uses and gratifications research indicates that users engage with visual platforms such as Instagram to satisfy needs for entertainment, surveillance of current events, social interaction, and self-expression (Alhabash & Ma, 2017). Because engagement metrics—likes, comments, shares, and saves—are visible to both audiences and algorithms, they exert pressure on newsroom packaging choices, sometimes encouraging sensationalized or clickbait-style captions designed to maximize interaction (Jung et al., 2022; Kaushal & Vemuri, 2021; Khawar & Boukes, 2025; Lischka & Garz, 2023; Munger, 2020). Whether an outlet resists or embraces such dynamics is itself a packaging decision that reflects institutional identity and perceived audience expectations.

D. The Indonesian Online Mass Media Landscape

detik.com, Kompas.com, and Liputan6 are consistently ranked among Indonesia's most visited news brands, with detik.com typically leading in urban and youth audiences and Kompas.com maintaining particular strength among rural and older readers (Roy Morgan Research, 2018). Comparative framing research on Kompas.com and detik.com's written coverage has found that Kompas.com tends to emphasize context, background, and victim or public-interest perspectives, while detik.com emphasizes speed, factual chronology, and concise delivery—differences in journalistic identity that plausibly extend into their social media packaging (Mayasari, 2017; Pohan et al., 2023). Liputan6, meanwhile, has pursued a convergence strategy across economic, social, and cultural content aimed at younger audiences, blending hard news with lifestyle and entertainment material (Bayquni, 2018; Munawarah, 2024). Broader Indonesian research on Instagram as a news and information channel further shows that

Indonesian audiences respond strongly to visual clarity, short video, and features such as Reels and Stories (Arifah et al., 2025; Dwiyantri et al., 2024; Khairunnisa et al., 2026; Prihatiningsih, 2017), and that national social media use continues to grow as the primary gateway to news even as trust in individual platforms varies (Digital 2024: Indonesia DataReportal, 2024; Park et al., 2025).

III. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative comparative content analysis of the official Instagram accounts of Liputan6 (@liputan6), Kompas.com (@kompascom), and detik.com (@detikcom). The unit of analysis is the individual Instagram post (feed post, carousel, and Reels), examined for five packaging dimensions derived from the literature review: (1) visual format (single image, multi-image carousel, or short video/Reels); (2) caption style (length, tone, and use of narrative versus summary structure); (3) hashtag and tagging strategy; (4) visual branding elements (logo placement, color scheme, typography, and use of on-image text or infographics); and (5) markers of interactivity and engagement orientation (calls to comment, use of polls or question stickers in Stories, and framing intended to encourage sharing). Coding categories were developed inductively from affordance theory (Burgess et al., 2017; Ronzhyn et al., 2023) and visual framing theory (Parveen & Showkat, 2020) and were refined against prior Indonesian studies of these three outlets' framing conventions (Mayasari, 2017; Munawarah, 2024; Pohan et al., 2023). Because the three accounts differ

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in posting volume and cover an unbounded and continuously updating stream of content, the analysis is interpretive and illustrative rather than exhaustive or statistically representative; it is intended to surface recurring packaging patterns and cross-outlet contrasts rather than to quantify precise engagement outcomes. This approach follows established qualitative traditions in Indonesian digital media research, which have similarly relied on purposive, illustrative sampling of institutional social media accounts (Bayquni, 2018; Efda et al., 2023; Jonanca, 2023).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Liputan6: Convergence and Youth-Oriented Packaging

Consistent with its stated convergence strategy across economic, social, and cultural coverage (Bayquni, 2018), Liputan6's Instagram packaging blends hard news with lifestyle, entertainment, and human-interest material, often within the same daily posting cadence. Carousels are used liberally to break a single event into a short visual sequence an opening dramatic image followed by supporting photos or an infographic slide which lengthens dwell time and invites the swipe interaction that Instagram's algorithm rewards. Captions tend toward a narrative, conversational register rather than strict inverted-pyramid summary, and frequently end with a direct question or prompt intended to solicit comments, a pattern consistent with engagement-oriented packaging documented in clickbait and sensationalism research (Jung et al., 2022; Khawar & Boukes, 2025). Genderbased violence and crime coverage on Liputan6's platforms, for instance, has been found to foreground victim-centered narrative elements within its online framing (Munawarah, 2024), this tendency carries over into the more dramatized visual sequencing observed on Instagram.



Figure 1. Instagram @liputan6

B Kompas.com: Contextual, Caption-Heavy Explanatory Packaging

Kompas.com's Instagram packaging reflects its broadsheet identity and its documented emphasis on context, background, and public-interest framing in written coverage (Mayasari, 2017; Pohan et al., 2023). Posts more frequently pair a single strong image or infographic with a longer, structured caption that supplies chronology, causal explanation, and relevant data this approach that trades some of the swipe-driven engagement of carousels for perceived credibility and completeness. Infographic-style slides summarizing statistics, policy explainers, or timelines appear more often than in the other two accounts, aligning with Kompas.com's traditional strength among readers seeking depth and its broader reach in rural, and often older, audience segments (Roy Morgan Research, 2018). This packaging choice illustrates how an outlet's institutional identity as a paper of record continues to inform its social media output even where competing outlets pursue shorter, more visually terse formats (Hendrickx & Opgenhaffen, 2024; Kleis Nielsen & Ganter, 2018).



Figure 2. Instagram @kompascom

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C. detik.com: Speed, Brevity, and High-Frequency Posting

detik.com's packaging privileges immediacy and brevity, consistent with its brand identity as Indonesia's leading breaking-news outlet and its documented emphasis on factual chronology over contextual elaboration (Pohan et al., 2023). Feed posts more often use a single striking image with a short, direct caption restating the headline, while Reels are used heavily for rapid-turnaround footage of unfolding events, press statements, or short explainer clips—formats well suited to detik.com's high posting frequency and its strategy of maximizing reach among urban and younger audiences (Roy Morgan Research, 2018). This orientation mirrors broader findings that news organizations built around speed tend to adopt platform affordances that minimize production time while maximizing immediate visibility, such as short video and minimal on-image text (David et al., 2019; Munger, 2020).



Figure 3. Instagram @detikcom

D. Comparative Discussion

Read together, the three accounts illustrate that Instagram news packaging in Indonesia is shaped by an interaction of three forces: platform affordances that make certain formats (carousels, Reels, captions) available; institutional journalistic identity that predisposes each outlet toward particular uses of those formats; and audience engagement incentives that reward dramatization, brevity, or narrative depth differently depending on the outlet's established audience. Liputan6's convergence identity manifests as narrative, engagement-seeking carousels; Kompas.com's broadsheet identity manifests as caption-heavy, infographic-supported explainer packaging; and detik.com's breaking-news identity manifests as terse, high-frequency, video-forward packaging. These patterns support the theoretical claim that affordances condition rather than determine journalistic output (Burgess et al., 2018), and they extend prior comparative framing research on Kompas.com and detik.com's written news (Mayasari, 2017; Pohan et al., 2023) into the distinct, more visually constrained environment of Instagram. They also echo global findings that engagement metrics create pressure toward sensationalized packaging (Kaushal & Vemuri, 2021; Lischka & Garz, 2023), a pressure that appears strongest in Liputan6's more entertainment-inflected material and comparatively muted in Kompas.com's explanatory style.

These findings carry implications for digital newsroom strategy and media literacy in Indonesia. As social media becomes the dominant gateway to news for Indonesian audiences, especially those under 25 (Newman et al., 2025; Park et al., 2025) the packaging choices documented here increasingly function as the primary point of contact between mass media institutions and the public, rather than as a secondary distribution channel. Newsrooms seeking to balance engagement with credibility may look to Kompas.com's caption-heavy explanatory model, while those prioritizing reach among younger, mobile-first audiences may find detik.com's brevity-and-video approach instructive. For media literacy educators and researchers, the divergence in packaging strategy underscores that audiences encountering the same underlying event through different outlets' Instagram accounts may receive meaningfully different visual and narrative framings, even before considering the written news article each post links to.

V. CONCLUSION

This study compared how three leading Indonesian mass media organizations—Liputan6, Kompas.com, and detik.com—package news for Instagram. Using a framework combining social media affordance theory, visual framing theory, and uses and gratifications research, the analysis found that each outlet adapts Instagram's shared set of formats (feed images, carousels, and Reels) in ways that reflect its distinct institutional identity: Liputan6 toward convergence and youth-oriented, engagement-seeking narrative packaging; Kompas.com toward contextual, infographic-supported explanatory packaging; and detik.com toward speed-oriented,

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high-frequency, video-forward packaging. These findings suggest that news packaging on Instagram should be understood not as a uniform technical adaptation to a single platform, but as an ongoing negotiation between platform affordances, journalistic identity, and audience engagement incentives. Future research could extend this qualitative comparison with systematic quantitative content analysis of engagement metrics across a fixed sampling period, and could examine how audiences themselves interpret and evaluate these differing packaging strategies, particularly given the platform's growing role as Indonesians' primary gateway to news.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The heading of the Acknowledgment section and the References section must not be numbered.

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