

The Role of Digital Platforms in Responding to Print Media Challenges in Campus Journalism

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Publication Date: July 26, 2025

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.16610203

Abstract

This paper focused on the issues faced by the official student publication of Sulu State College, Sihmag. Also, it highly recommends the use of the Sihmag CloudPress, a webpage designed by the researchers, for a better outcome for the publication. Specifically, it discussed three concepts. First, this paper identified the challenges encountered in the Sihmag Publication, the official student publication of Sulu State

College. Second, this study proposed the use of a web page designed for the Sihmag Publication named “Sihmag CloudPress” to address the identified struggles in the publication. Third, the researchers suggest utilizing the Sihmag CloudPress to actualize the organizational improvements anticipated with the planned implementation of the webpage.

Keywords: *campus journalism, digital platforms, print media, webpage*

1. Introduction

- Background and rationale

As mandated by the Campus Journalism Act of 1991 (Philippines, 1991), it will uphold and protect press freedom even on campus, as well as foster the advancement and expansion of campus journalism. Sulu State College adheres to the said act, which is why its official student publication, the Sihmag, was espagelished. In October 2020, one of the researchers of this paper assumed the office as the Sihmag Adviser. It was during her time that she intended to preserve the Sihmag magazines. Eventually, it led her to digitize its copies. With the advantages offered by the digitalized versions of the said magazines, the researchers strongly believe that there will be sustainability in the organization. The researchers conceptualized the creation of the webpage, the Sihmag CloudPress, since 2022. The Sihmag CloudPress has been designed appropriately to the Sihmag Publication and the Sulu State College community.

- Review of related literature

This research is based on Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) Theory, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and Organizational Change Theory. The framework begins by recognizing the present issues facing the

student publication organization, particularly those anchored in traditional print media procedures. In response, the proposed digital platform, *Sihnag CloudPress*, is evaluated as an innovative solution. The study investigates how this digital platform may be accepted inside the business using the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, as well as the elements that may impact its acceptability. In addition, the Technology Acceptance Model is utilized to analyze publication members' perceptions of the utility and simplicity of use of *Sihnag CloudPress*, which may forecast their desire to use the platform.

Everette M. Rogers (1931-2004), a communication researcher and sociologist, as cited in García-Avilés (2020), developed the idea of diffusion of innovations (DOI). Rather than examining any high-end technical product, the DOI hypothesis originated in agriculture. In 1928, researchers began studying farmer adoption rates for hybrid grains produced by the Iowa State Agricultural Experiment Station. Between 1933 and 1939, the number of acres planted with hybrid corn climbed from hundreds to thousands. By 1940, almost all Iowa corn producers had embraced it.

DOI research employs logical conceptions of organizational life derived from sociology, management, and communication theory. It creates predictive descriptions of the diffusion phenomena, ostensibly to assist technology implementors in advancing the proliferation of certain technologies. Overall, the DOI approach has tried to explain individual adoption decisions or intents to adopt, focusing on well-defined innovations and relatively homogenous populations. Rogers (2003, p. 5) defines diffusion as "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system." Diffusion is therefore seen as a unique sort of communication in which participants generate and share knowledge in order to achieve mutual understanding. The novelty of the notion in the communication provides dispersion with a distinct character, as some amount of ambiguity is involved (García-Avilés, 2020). In this paper, the researchers are encouraging the *Sihnag* editorial board and the SSC community to adapt to the use of the *Sihnag* webpage in order to reach maximum engagement with viewers through online uploading of the *Sihnag* electronic copies.

Venkatesh and Bala (2008), as cited in Zhang and Wang (2016), address the dearth of research on treatments that can improve managerial decision-making and IT adoption and effectiveness. Due to earlier studies' emphasis on employees' decision-making when choosing and utilizing IT in the workplace, Venkatesh & Davis (2000), as cited in Zhang and Wang (2016), introduced a new model called the Technology Acceptance Model 3 (TAM3) and incorporated TAM2 and the model of perceived ease of use with its factors (Venkatesh, 2000). According to Venkatesh and Bala (2008), managerial decision-making on IT implementation in firms is significantly impacted by the technology acceptance model 3. In this paper, the researchers believe that with the perceived usefulness of the *Sihnag CloudPress*, the rest of the editorial staff and SSC community will be able to appreciate its existence, especially because of the actual experiences of the *Sihnag* organization.

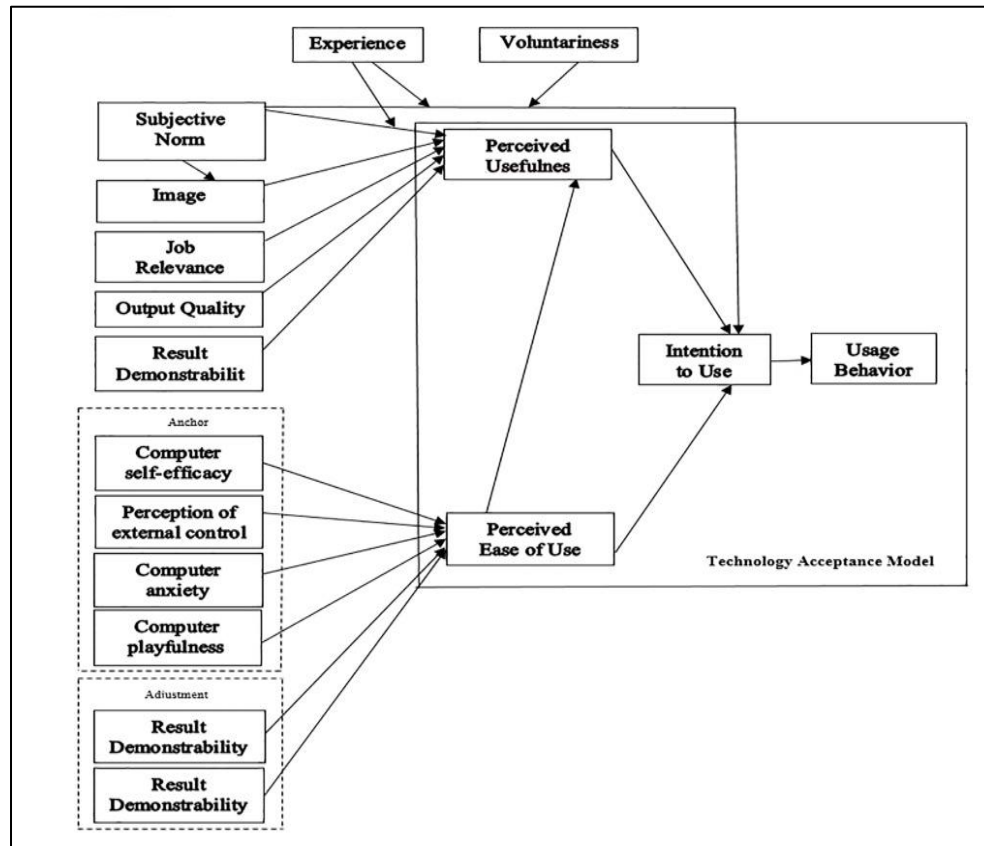


Figure 2. Technology Acceptance Model 3 (TAM3). Source: Venkatesh, V. and Bala, H. "TAM 3: Advancing the Technology Acceptance Model with a Focus on Interventions," Manuscript in-preparation.as cited in Zhang and Wang (2016)

Determinants	Definitions
Computer Self-Efficacy	Computer self-efficacy refers to a belief of one's capability to use a computer (Compeau & Higgins, 1995 as cited in Qin, Qiang & Kanliang, 2011)
Perception of External Control	The degree to which an individual believes that organizational and technical resources exist to support the use of the system (Venkatesh et al., 2003).
Computer Anxiety	The degree of "an individual's apprehension, or even fear, when she/he is faced with the possibility of using computers" (Venkatesh, 2000, p. 349).
Computer Playfulness	"...the degree of cognitive spontaneity in microcomputer interactions" (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008)
Perceived Enjoyment	The extent to which "the activity of using a specific system is perceived to be enjoyable in its own right, aside from any performance consequences resulting from system use" (Venkatesh, 2000, p. 351).
Objective Usability	A "comparison of systems based on the actual level (rather than perceptions) of effort required to completing specific tasks" (Venkatesh, 2000, pp. 350-351).

Figure 3. Venkatesh, V. and Bala, H. (2008), as cited in Zhang and Wang (2016)

- Statement of the problem

This paper addressed the following questions;

1. What are the challenges encountered in Sihmag Publication—the official student publication of Sulu State College?
2. How can the student publication organization's web page—Sihmag CloudPress—address the concerns?
3. What organizational improvements are foreseen with the planned implementation of the web page?

2. Materials and Methods

The research design employed in this study is Qualitative Case Study because it focuses on a specific organization, Sihmag Publication, and its internal challenges along with a proposed intervention, Sihmag CloudPress. Also, the said design was utilized because this paper aims to understand contextual, real-life experiences within the campus journalism at Sulu State College. The questions are exploratory and descriptive and not looking for statistical generalizations but rather insight, understanding, and practical solutions.

A qualitative case study is a research method that allows for the analysis of a phenomenon in its context, utilizing a range of data sources. This guarantees that the subject is examined through a range of lenses, revealing and understanding numerous aspects of the event. (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

This research examines the growing role of digital platforms in resolving the issues encountered by university print media, utilizing Sihmag Publication—Sulu State College's official student publication—as an example. Based on a qualitative case study approach, the research is directed by three fundamental questions that define the investigation into existing difficulties and prospects in the publication's operations.

The first study question looks at the issues that Sihmag Publication faces in its traditional print format. To acquire a thorough knowledge of these concerns, the study utilized descriptive qualitative methodologies such as focus group discussions with the editorial board and examination of key institutional documents. These tools are intended to reveal internal and external hurdles to effective college journalism, such as production delays, funding constraints, and technical gaps.

The second topic focuses on the newspaper's projected digital endeavor, the Sihmag CloudPress, an organizational web page designed to move the journal to an online platform. This section of the research takes an exploratory approach, looking at how this digital solution might address the previously mentioned problems. Key informant interviews with the technical developer, publishing adviser, and student editors provided insights, as did early-stage usability testing of the online platform. The purpose is to investigate the potential of digital media to improve access, speed, and sustainability in university journalism.

The third and final research question examines the organizational improvements that may result from the implementation of the Sihmag CloudPress. This forward-looking component of the study draws on predictive qualitative insights, informed by the perspectives of various stakeholders. A thematic analysis of interview data and a SWOT analysis of the digital transition were conducted to uncover expected benefits such as improved workflow, expanded readership, skill development among student journalists, and greater institutional visibility.

Together, these three strands of inquiry are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how a student-run publication can adapt to the digital era through thoughtful innovation, strategic planning, and organizational responsiveness.

The data collection tools were the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) among the editorial board during the organization's meetings and document analysis including the past publication records.

3. Results

1. The challenges encountered in Sihmag publication were the following delayed production time, limited number of copies, and risk of paper degradation. These issues were raised during the organization's meetings, which served as the focus group discussions (FGD). As for the first concern, the organization usually experiences delays in production time. The routinary obligations of the team to produce the Sihmag magazine is semestral, which is one issue per semester. The production process includes from the writer and photojournalist to be approved by the head writer and photojournalist, then to be approved by the editor-in-chief then the paper adviser.

Key Organizational Challenges	Actual Experiences of the Publication
1. Publication Delays	In the experience in the organization, the publication has three phases for its process. The first phase is within the organization, the second phase is for the necessary documents to be signed by the authorized signatories in the administration, and then third phase is within the supplier. It has a domino effect. If the first phase is behind its time frame, already, the rest of the phases follows. Or, if the first phase is on time, and the delay happens in the second phase, rest assured, that the publication time as a whole is delayed as well. There are also times when both the first phase and second phase are on time but the delay is within the third phase.
2. Limited Print Circulation	Because of the increased price of the printed magazine per page, the budget allocation for each magazine issue is constrained. Thus, it was agreed among the members of the administrative council to print 500 copies per issue. This limits reaching the rest of the student population, which ranges from 5000-6000. Thus, the ratio 1:1 is not met.
3. Risk of Paper Degradation	Over time, the printed copies degrade. If there is no backup soft copy of the magazine, it will lose its record-keeping purposes for the organization and will also affect the institution.

Figure 4. Key Organizational Challenges in Sihmag Publication

Publication Delays

The publication process of Sihmag magazine undergoes three phases, as discussed in Figure 4. The timely publication requires that all three phases be on time as well. If one phase fails to be on-time, then there is a domino effect that will delay all the rest of the phases too, which will eventually lead to the delay of the publication and distribution.

Phase 1 of the publication process is within the organization. The managing editor collects all the articles for the semester. The photojournalists would select the photos to be included in each article that they were assigned and submit it to the managing editor. Once collected, the managing editor, together with the associate editor and editor-in-chief, will prepare the dummy of the magazine. The editor-in-chief will proofread everything and submit the dummy to the adviser. The adviser will proofread everything in the dummy. After that, the editor-in-chief will retrieve the dummy from the adviser and hands it to the head layout artist for the layout of the magazine. Once done with the whole layout, the adviser proofreads it again. The final layout of the magazine is the last process in Phase 1.

From Phase 1, the adviser will work out the necessary transactions in Phase 2. This includes communication letter to the college president for the printing of the magazine, and other attachments. Once approved by the college president, the documents will be forwarded by the adviser to the Procurement Office. The Procurement Office will require other documents from the Supplier. Once complied, the Procurement Office will forward the printing documents to the Accounting Office. From the Accounting Office, the check for the supplier will be released in the Cashier's Office. The adviser will deposit the check into the supplier's bank account. The adviser as well sends the electronic file of the magazine to the supplier. Once paid, Phase 2 has concluded.

Phase 3 is within the supplier. Usually, it takes two to three weeks of printing in the supplier. The supplier will make communications with the adviser if they have already shipped the magazines. The adviser receives the printed magazines and forwards it to the Supply Office for inspection. After the inspection, the printed magazines will be forwarded to the Sihmag Office and ready for distribution. The distribution will be done by the Sihmag editorial board. The adviser supervises the student journalists.

Limited Print Circulation

Delgado (2019) stressed that student publications in the Philippines' state universities and colleges (SUCs) are facing one of their most significant operational challenges to date: a financing gap in the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (RA 10931). The free tuition bill, signed into law by President Rodrigo Duterte in August 2017, prevents SUCs from charging matriculation or other school fees, including publishing costs. With the rule in place, student newspapers that previously relied on miscellaneous fees are now looking for cash to meet their operating costs. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has yet to offer alternative funds, which has paralyzed campus press operations at SUCs around the nation.

In consonance to the findings of Delgado (2019), SSC also adhered to the provisions of RA 10931 and do not anymore collect fees. With the increasing population of the SSC students, the allotted budget for the publication does not fulfill the print circulation of the ratio 1:1. Thus, upon the consolidation of decisions in council meetings of SSC, it has been agreed to prioritize giving the students who belong to the student organizations and clubs. *Sihmag* eventually releases 500 copies per semester to students ranging from 4000-

6000. This is in consideration too with the amounts from the supplier including the number of pages to be printed and the paper quality of the magazine.

Bicol University's *Budyong*, which used to have a newspaper to student ratio of 1:1, can now only distribute 500 copies to a college of 938 students divided into seven departments. *Outcrop*, UP Baguio's lone student journal, is presently operating on money raised before to the RA's adoption. EIC Adrianne Aniban highlights considerable operational changes in preparation of the unavoidable loss of financing. To cover operating costs, publications have to employ inventive and innovative strategies. Advertisers, alumni solicitations, item sales, fundraising activities, phone donations, and contributions from personnel (patak) are some of the methods used by newspapers to recuperate their costs. They have also switched to online reporting. However, its disadvantages are not overlooked. One of its drawbacks is its inaccessibility to some pupils and diversions from social media, thus tangible copies are still valued and sought for despite a lack of cash. (Delgado, 2019).

Risk of Paper Degradation

Collections of Sihmag magazines per issue are stored in the Sihmag Office. However, some of the old issues have already degraded. And since, there were no electronic copies as back-up, then it is a high risk that the degraded Sihmag magazine issue will soon be forgotten. Area and Hervé (2011) stressed that paper is a multi-component material, and due to its complexity and diversity. Their research findings include that many variables contribute to the degradation of paper, including acid hydrolysis, oxidative agents, light, air pollution, and the presence of microbes. The origin of the cellulosic material, as well as pulping and papermaking techniques, additives, and storage conditions, are all important considerations. The chemical changes that occur within paper are thus multi-parameter processes. With that being said, it is no wonder that some of the old Sihmag magazines have degraded over time. As a strong gesture, such magazines must be preserved well and archived. Thus, the researchers opted to formulate the webpage in order to address this concern.

2)How can the student publication organization's web page—Sihmag CloudPress—address the concerns?

With the various problems encountered by different student publications, Delgado (2019) highlighted that some of them opted to report online. This implies the acknowledgement of the choice for digital platform. In *Sihmag*, as the challenges were encountered, the editorial board also considered a digital platform such as social media. In this case, the publication has created a Facebook Page where the articles were posted on the same day of the event. The maximum delay publication time is three days. At times, while waiting for the supplier to deliver the printed magazines to the organization, the editorial board uploads the electronic copies to the Facebook page. However, through further brainstorming, the researchers came up with the idea of creating a formal digital platform for the organization, which they called *Sihmag CloudPress*. The *Sihmag CloudPress* was designed appropriately for the organization. It has the admin panel and user panel.

Gallardo et. al (2022) found out in their study that school media began to shift toward internet publishing. A number of digital channels were employed to disseminate and collect data. Among the most popular were social media sites, where many students were involved. Furthermore, periodicals launched their own websites to share their news, features, and other topics. Students have used social media,

particularly Facebook, to write news articles. Aside from that, artworks, folio-like poetries and stories, and photographs keep college students up to speed on the campus's current system administration. The publications learnt to move from traditional to internet publishing. This conversion is made feasible by the internet and other technical technologies. The amount to which online journalism employs technology assets such as interaction, multimedia, and hypertext is commonly used to assess its performance. Another avenue for school publications to collect and share information has been opened up by the use of various internet platforms, particularly social media. The effective transition in publishing methodology espagelished a new standard of journalism for school publications. Further, Gallardo et. al (2022) recommended that a website customized specifically for the content of the school newspaper must be created.

Dzula et. al (2020) emphasized these findings in their study entitled “Digital Participation and Risk Contexts in Journalism Education”; A sense of belonging to both a publishing team and to the institution; A sense of pride in seeing digital writing circulate and garner public attention; A sense of satisfaction in learning how to ethically use digital tools effectively; A sense of efficacy in mobilizing voice on meaningful platforms of communication; and a sense of passion and purpose in developing civic identities and civic agency. The researchers also highlight that journalists generally expressed satisfaction with the distribution of their work. One of the benefits of risk is gaining the attention of an audience. Students regard their publishing record as a measure of achievement. That is, they worry about how frequently they can complete the publication cycle; they want to see their work 'out there.' Similarly, in *Sihnag*, the student journalists enjoy when their articles are being posted online in the Facebook Page. These are manifested in their respective Facebook Profiles. Whenever their articles (words, photos they captured, arts they layout) are posted online, they share it from the *Sihnag* Publication Facebook Page to their individual profiles and caption it with something that celebrates their success. Their peers from the organization would also comment to their posts and they exchange compliments of success.

Another emphasis from the study of Dzula et. al (2020) is the contrast to print, digital involvement allows for greater modal diversity and interactivity. Technology also provides ways for journalists to engage with their audiences. That is, technology is not an objective in itself; it only assists to broaden journalists' reach. This is true with the *Sihnag* as well because the staffers can connect with their audiences, see the audience's compliments, which boost their confidence.

Sihnag CloudPress can be accessed through the address “sihnag.online”. As shown in Figure 5, there is a landing page for the Sihmag Publication which has five pages which are Home, News, Videos, Contact, and About. There is also a button for “Download e-magazine”. This button will allow the visitors to go directly to downloading the e-magazines. In the landing page, as shown in Figure 5, front pages of some issues are also shown. And when these thumbnails are clicked, the flipped pages of its contents are available at view, as shown in Figure 6. In the “Videos” page of the Sihmag CloudPress, as illustrated in Figure 7, it shows the available video which is at the moment uploaded in the Sihmag Publication Facebook Page. Once the viewer clicks it, it will redirect the viewer to the link. Further, the contact details of the Sihmag Publication can also be seen in the “Contact” page of Sihmag CloudPress. The official e-mail address and school address of the publication are displayed in the said page, as displayed in Figure 8. Figure 9 shows the “About” page of Sihmag CloudPress. The “About” page includes the vision, mission, and the working team of the Sihmag Publication. It allows the viewers to get to know the members of the editorial board of the organization.

If the viewer clicks the “Download e-magazine” button in Figure 5, it will redirect him to the download page of the Sihmag CloudPress, as shown in Figure 10. The user can download any magazine issue that he wants. He also has the chance to view the magazine issue first before downloading. Or, if he would like to just read it online without downloading it, he can. This accessibility provides ease and comfort to the users.

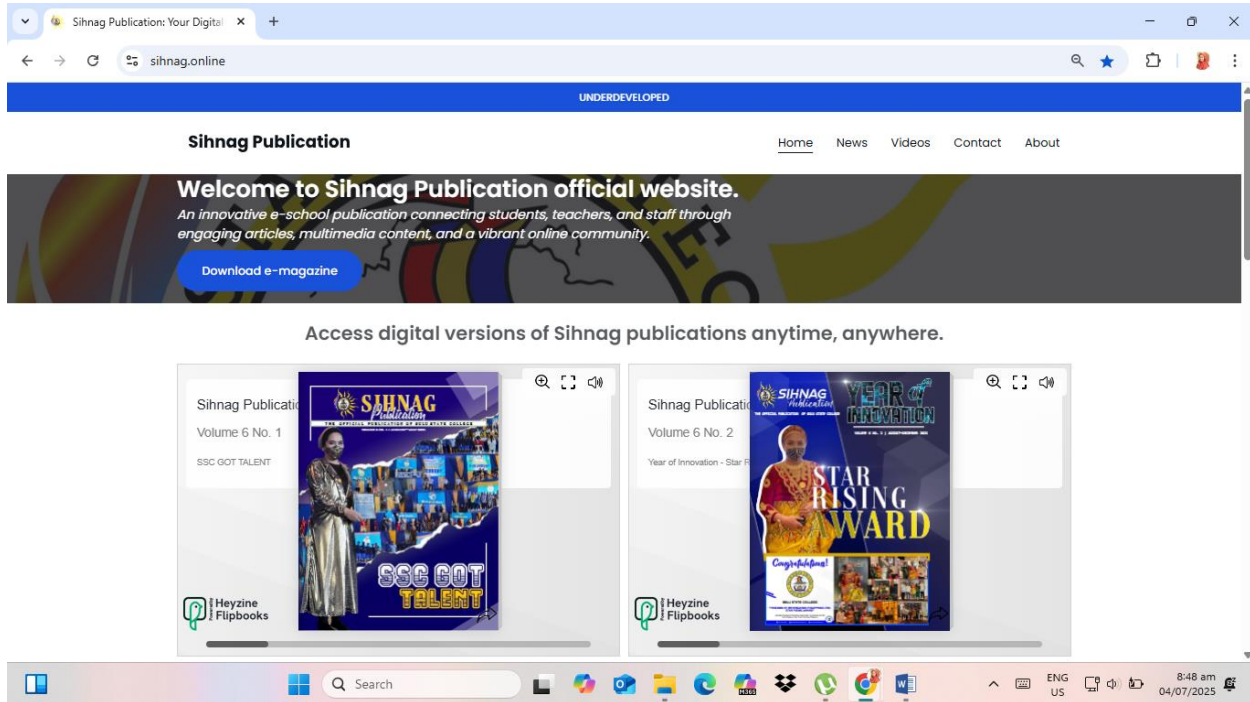


Figure 5. Landing Page of Sihntag CloudPress



Figure 6. Landing Page of Sihntag CloudPress with flipped pages available at display

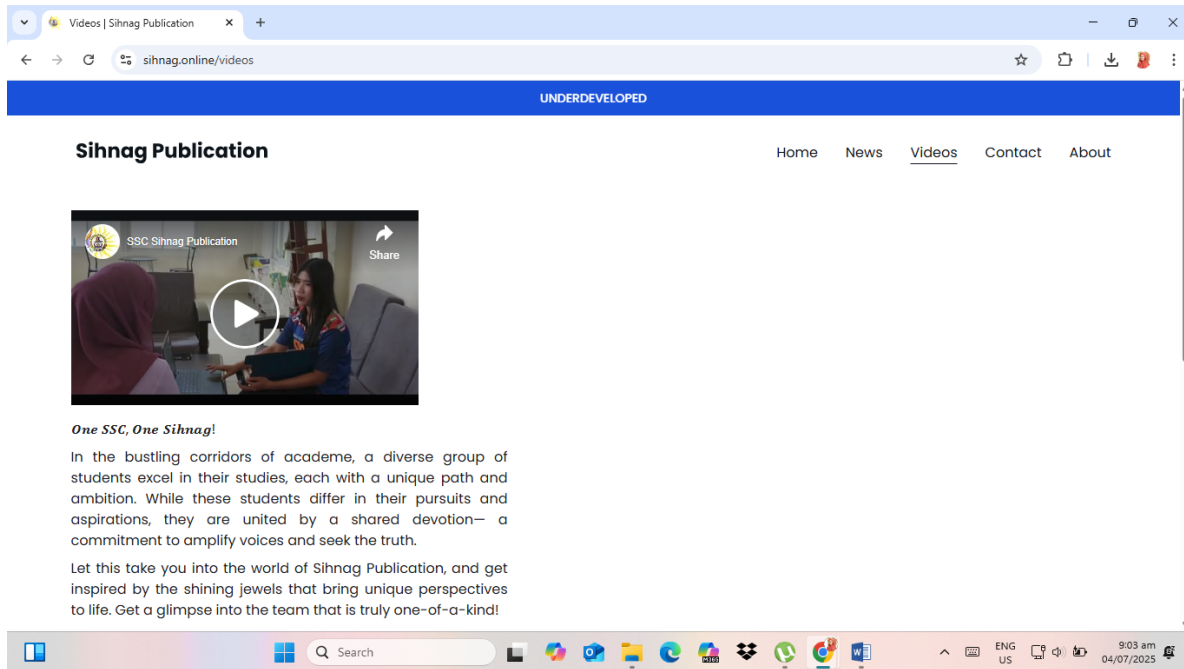


Figure 7. "Videos" Page of Sihmag CloudPress

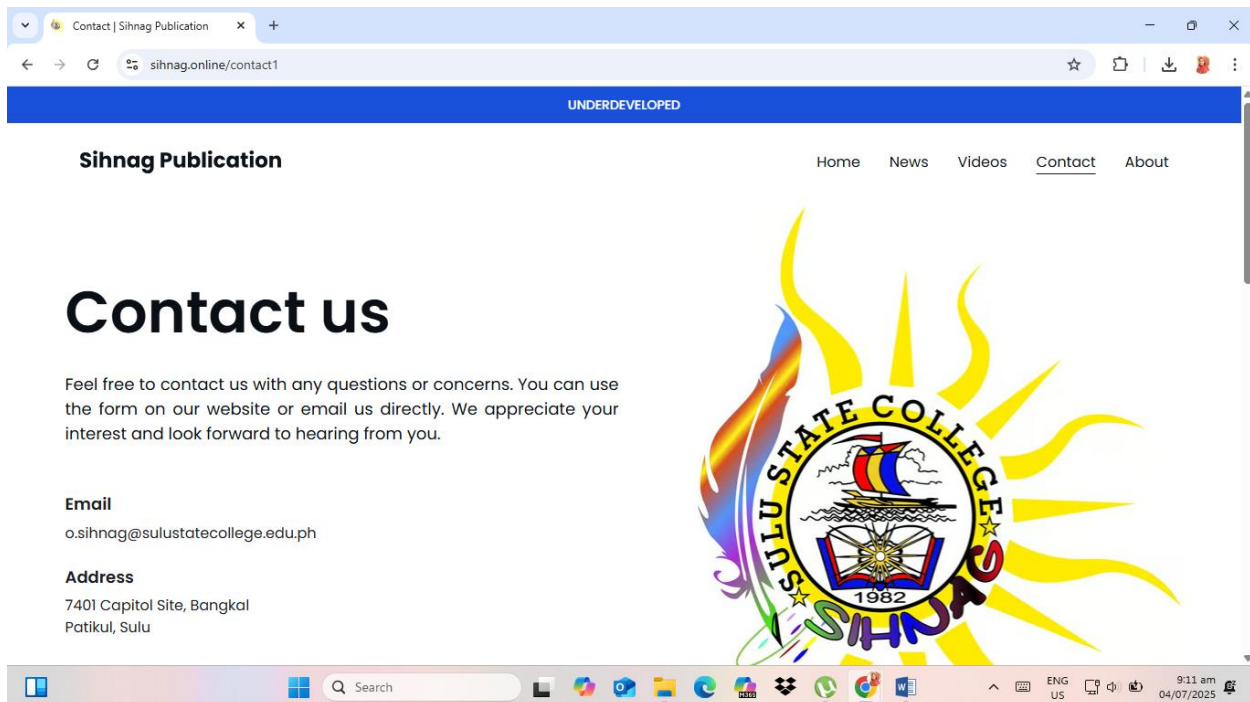


Figure 8. "Contact" Page of Sihmag CloudPress

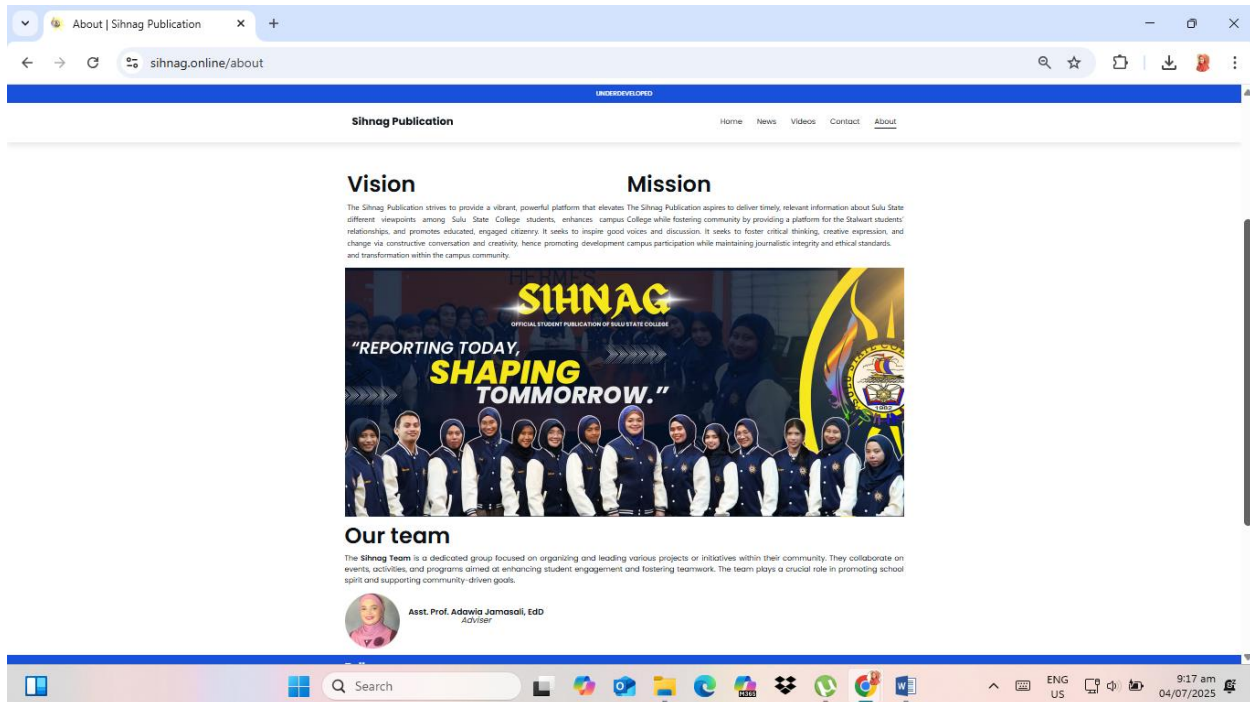


Figure 9. "About" Page of Sihmag CloudPress

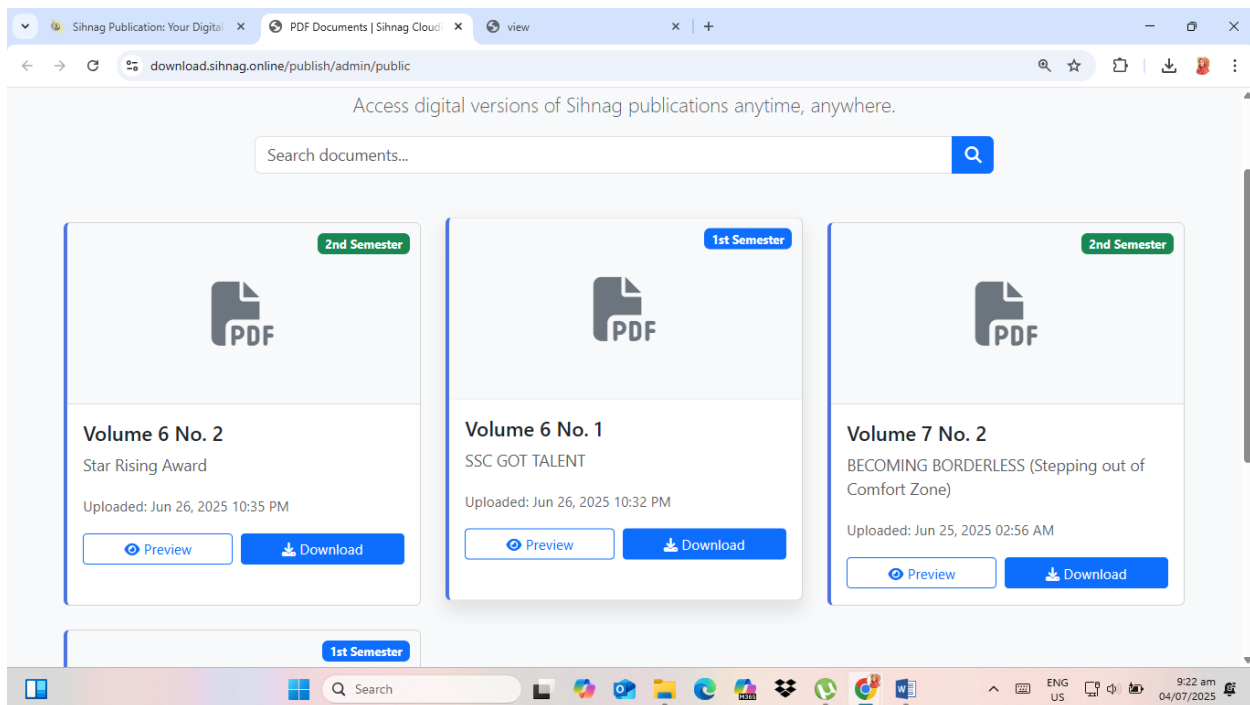


Figure 10. Download Page of Sihmag CloudPress

Key Organizational Challenges	Solutions Offered by the Sihmag CloudPress
1. Publication Delays	On-time Publication
2. Limited Print Circulation	Unlimited Number of Recipients
3. Risk of Paper Degradation	Content Preservation Recorded Documentation

Figure 11. Solutions offered by the Sihmag CloudPress

The *Sihmag CloudPress* was created by the researchers in order to address the key organizational challenges experienced in the Sihmag Publication. To eliminate the first problem, which is the publication delays, the *Sihmag CloudPress* offers on-time publication of the Sihmag Magazines, especially if the first phase of the publication is not behind time. Once the editorial board has completed the final proofreading and final layout of the whole magazine, it can be posted in the *Sihmag CloudPress* as soon as possible, thus, making it reach the viewers with fresh reading articles. With this being said, while the *Sihmag CloudPress* successfully uploaded the Sihmag e-magazine after the first phase of publication, it has already reached viewers while simultaneously waiting for the second and third phases of the publication process. This will boost the engagement and interaction among the viewers because it is timely.

For the second solution offered by the *Sihmag CloudPress*, it will diminish the second key organizational challenge which is the limited print circulation. With the 500 copies per semester of the Sihmag magazine, the *Sihmag CloudPress* can reach as many viewers as it can. The researchers have designed the webpage in order that many SSC students can download the Sihmag e-copies. This will also allow the SSC community to be aware of the institutional updates and for the students to secure their own copies of the magazine. The webpage also has features that can be soon enhanced whether the editorial board would want non-SSC students could access the digital copies as well.

Some of the old Sihmag magazines which were stored in the Sihmag Office degraded. Since there were no back-up copies yet for those old copies, once the hard copies would be gone, then, there will be no more record of it. Such is an alarming issue because every Sihmag magazine is highly valuable. Its contents speak of the students' voice. It contains the students' skills, passion, and talents in campus journalism. Aside from these, those magazines are one of the credible printed resources for the Sulu State College. So, losing copies of old Sihmag magazines is like erasing a part of SSC's history. This has brought concern to the researchers which prompted them to create the webpage. On the other hand, the webpage can preserve the contents of the Sihmag magazines. It can be sustained for the longest time. Eventually, whoever would need to seek the resources coming from the publication would be able to do so. With the digital form of the Sihmag magazines, there will no longer be risks of paper degradation. They will also serve as the strong back-up copies for the printed Sihmag magazines. In case the hard copies would finally degrade, then electronic copies are still available at the *Sihmag CloudPress*.

3. What organizational improvements are foreseen with the planned implementation of the web page?

With the advent of technology, through the digitalization of the Sihmag magazines, the researchers believed there will be organizational improvements are foreseen with the planned implementation. These organizational improvements are timely posting, maximum reader engagement, and preserved copies of the Sihmag magazines.

Further, SWOT analysis was employed in order to predict the possibilities of utilizing the Sihneg CloudPress, as illustrated in figures 12 and 13.

Strengths	Weaknesses
✓ Faster content delivery and timely publication	⚠ Limited technical expertise among editorial staff
✓ Broader reach beyond campus (e.g., alumni, public)	⚠ Inconsistent internet access within the institution
✓ Reduced printing and production costs	⚠ Risk of alienating readers who prefer print
✓ Skill development in digital journalism (e.g., CMS, multimedia editing)	⚠ Possible drop in editorial standards if rushed for online publication
✓ Better archiving and long-term accessibility of articles Preserved Copies	

Figure 12. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Sihneg CloudPress

Opportunities	Threats
🌐 Rising digital literacy among students and readers	🚫 Exposure to cybersecurity issues and digital vandalism
💡 Potential collaborations with IT units, media partners, and alumni	📦 Administrative or institutional resistance to digital transition
📢 Increased visibility via search engines and social media	📉 Sustainability issues if funding/support is withdrawn
📊 Ability to use data analytics for audience insights and engagement	💬 Criticism or lack of credibility from stakeholders preferring print

Figure 13. Opportunities and Threats of the Sihneg CloudPress

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers have arrived to conclude the following;

- 1) Sticking to the traditional ways of publication, through print media, leads to challenges faced both the editorial board of Sihneg Publication and even the SSC administration as a whole. These issues are the publication delays, limited number of printed copies, and risk of paper degradation.
- 2) The proposed and designed webpage by the researchers, the Sihneg CloudPress, addresses the issues concerning the Sihneg Publication. Further, it will help improve the management system within the organization, especially that the feature of the webpage can be enhanced more by the successors of the editorial board.
- 3) The organizational improvements are foreseen with the planned implementation of the web page. These include the timely posting, maximum reader engagement, and preserved copies of the Sihneg magazines.

Recommendations

With the conduct of this study, the researchers highly recommend the following;

- 1) To utilize in the institution, the proposed webpage, the Sihmag CloudPress
- 2) To monitor feedback from the users of the Sihmag CloudPress
- 3) To further enhance the Sihmag CloudPress as deemed necessary based on the feedback survey

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