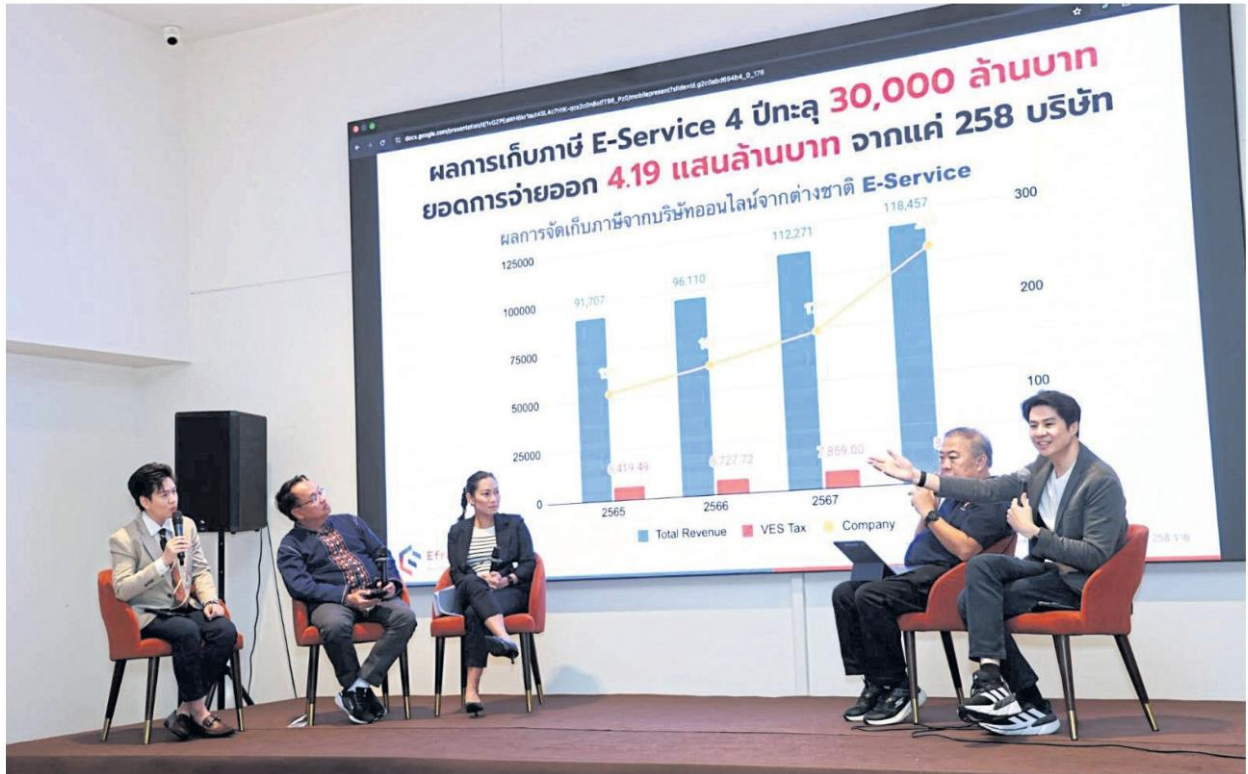


# Media squares up to platform threat



**Pawoot Pongvitayapanu, right, a People's Party list-MP, speaks at a forum called 'The Survival of Thai Media in the Era of Platform Dominance', where he urged the government to regulate foreign platforms.** THAI JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION

## Local industry calls for legal safeguards

**ANUCHA CHAROENPO**

Lawmakers, media professionals and academics are calling for laws to regulate international digital platforms operating in Thailand to strengthen local bargaining power and keep revenue within the country.

Speaking at a forum titled "The Survival of Thai Media in the Era of Platform Dominance" on Sunday to mark World Press Freedom Day, panellists discussed the future of the media ecosystem. They emphasised the urgent need for regulatory reform, platform oversight and the creation of national-level infrastructure to support independent journalism.

Participants agreed that revising existing laws and introducing new measures are essential to level the playing field against global tech giants and ensure domestic revenues are not entirely siphoned off.

"We need to regulate platforms so that we have more negotiating power, and also ensure that financial flows benefit Thailand rather than being taken abroad," Pawoot Pongvitayapanu, a list MP from the People's Party, said at the forum held by the Thai Journalists Association.

He said while these platforms generate significant revenue, transparency is lacking, adding that data and profits must be examined carefully, not just through surface-level figures.

As for taxation, he noted foreign platforms earn substantial income from Thai users, but questions remain about how much tax is actually paid back to Thailand. Citing an example, Mr Pawoot said Netflix Thailand reported revenues of 570 million baht in 2024, raising concerns about whether such profits are adequately taxed and reinvested domestically.

"Without stronger laws and enforcement, Thailand cannot ensure fairness in competition between local businesses and global platforms, nor guarantee that revenue generated in the country benefits the national economy," he said.

He called for collaboration between media associations and digital organisations to build a more resilient ecosystem, which could help address challenges in advertising sales and prevent industry fragmentation.

### JOURNALISM AT RISK

The panel extensively discussed how the current digital ecosystem undermines professional journalism, as global platforms tighten control over content distribution and revenue streams. They highlighted how algorithms and platform policies have reshaped the Thai media landscape, leaving professional outlets with shrinking revenue shares.

Adisak Limparungpatanakij, Thai PBS deputy director-general for technology, said about 10 years ago, platforms provided more substantial returns to news producers, but today he estimated only about 20% of potential income remains.

Mr Adisak said professional associations lack the power to negotiate effectively with platforms, leaving media organisations vulnerable.

"Without clear standards or trans-

parent revenue-sharing mechanisms, the ecosystem remains unstable, raising questions about the future of journalism in the digital age," he said.

Pointing to structural issues, he said that platforms not only control how content is posted and promoted but also dictate revenue allocation, thereby weakening the sustainability of professional journalism.

He noted that debate continues within Thailand's regulatory framework. The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) has faced prolonged disputes over its authority to oversee digital platforms.

He stressed the need to distinguish between two types of platforms: User-generated content platforms, such as Facebook and YouTube, where owners do not produce content directly and content-owner platforms, where companies commission or produce material themselves, often through streaming services.

Dhanakorn Srisooksai, manager of the Safe and Creative Media Development Fund, said he has studied regulatory models from different countries and found Thailand's digital platform regulation remains fragmented and lacks enforcement.

He warned Thailand risks falling behind in digital governance as other countries adopt stronger frameworks to regulate platforms, protect users and sustain local media industries.

He noted that Europe, Singapore, Australia and China have all introduced comprehensive measures to balance oversight with industry support.

In Europe, the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act give regulators sweeping powers to enforce compliance, including the ability to sanction platforms directly, he said.

Singapore's Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) oversees broadcasting, broadband, telecommunications and online safety in an integrated system, while Australia mandates local content quotas and has begun taxing platform revenues.

China, meanwhile, combines strict control with active promotion of domestic platforms, encouraging content creation while tightening rules on influencers, he said.

By contrast, the NBTC has long

debated its authority over digital platforms, with laws still focused on traditional broadcasting and telecommunications.

"Without updated legislation, Thailand cannot effectively address the economic and social impacts of global platforms, nor ensure fair revenue sharing with local content producers," he said.

"If we do nothing, survival will be very difficult," Mr Dhanakorn said, adding that only a handful of outlets may endure without reform.

### **MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY**

Pijitra Suppasawatgul, a researcher at Chulalongkorn University's Institute of Asian Studies, raised concerns about the sustainability of Thailand's media ecosystem, highlighting issues of economic nationalism, platform competition and the struggle to retain young talent.

She described knowledge and news as "nutritional products" that shape public perception.

She emphasised that quality journalism requires support, citing examples of subsidies and initiatives aimed at strengthening ethical standards and content integrity.

However, she warned that commercial pressures and platform dominance risk undermining collaboration between news organisations.

"We want to highlight diversity rather than see platforms and news agencies fighting each other," she said, urging stakeholders to reach agreements that strengthen the industry.

She also reflected on the career trajectories of communications graduates. While many enter journalism, a significant number leave the profession within a decade, moving into international NGOs or other fields where their skills are transferable.

This trend underscores the need for better compensation and opportunities within news organisations to retain talented professionals, she said.

"Technology remains a source of hope," Ms Pijitra said, suggesting that innovation could help local media compete more effectively with global platforms.