

What Effect? An Appraisal of Journalists' Use and Perception of New Media Technologies in Nigerian Media Practice

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Abstract

The budget padding scandal, which hit the Nigeria in July 2016, is illustrative of one of the different ways the new media have influenced how news is gathered and reported in Nigeria and many other countries. Today, many stories are received by some sort of social media. These changes generate debates on the extent of effects on journalism practice in three key areas: nature of journalists, nature of news gathering, and the way news is disseminated. This study analyzes Nigerian journalists' perception of the possible effect of new media application in Nigeria media practice.

Keywords: budget padding scandal, Nigeria, social media, journalism, new media technologies

Introduction

In July 2016, the budget padding scandal hit the Nigerian airwaves. Abdulmumin Jibrin had accused Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara and House of Rep officers of trying to appropriate N40 Billion Naira through padding. Hon Abdulmumin Jibrin, Former Chairman of House Appropriations Committee and member, representing Kuru/Bebeji Federal Constituency, Kano State, made these allegations against the House of Representatives and its leaders, through his Twitter handle and more recently using his email and even Facebook accounts. The media war started after Yakubu Dogara, speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, announced the sack of Jibrin as the chairman, house committee on appropriation on Wednesday 20th July. Jibrin was immediately replaced with Mustapha Dawaki Bala and Jibrin, in reaction, took to his Twitter page to make the wild allegations the next day and had since continued to use the social media for right to reply to post his own version of the story.

The budget padding scandal cited above that erupted recently in the country is illustrative of one of the different ways the new media have influenced how news is gathered and reported in Nigeria and many other countries. Before the advent of the new media a reporter was given a lead or went out to find a story. Today many stories are received third hand through Facebook accounts, Twitter, Digs or Instagram, so that by the time a story is assigned to the reporter the story in some form or another is already out there in the social media. As these changes occur they continue to generate debates on the extent of effects on journalism practice in three key areas: nature of journalists; nature of news gathering and the way news is disseminated (Fenton, 2010; Hermans, 2009; Olakitan, 2012; Veglis et al., 2005). Prevalent discourses on the issue, seem polarized as to the extent of effect of the new media on media practice, audience preference and audience use. And tend to often generalize these effects, muffling the differences arising from regional specificities from divergent cultures. It is within this interplay of debates that this work interrogates the ways in which Nigerian journalist's jobs change as they increasingly use the new media in their gate keeping function and journalists view of the degree of these changes.

Given the complex interacting factors that seem generally associated with adoption of technology by developing societies, and the potential for individual adoption based on

perceived benefits, we examine the possible influence of new media in Nigeria journalistic practice within the framework of uses and gratification and diffusion of innovation theories respectively. This becomes pertinent when we consider the reality of the poor remuneration of journalists in the country and the attendant high cost of internet connectivity. In the light of these limitations the possibility of extensive integration of internet in newsrooms across the country and the opportunity for extensive use of the Internet for journalism practice becomes limiting. Even in the face of these evolving new media practices, we argue that the implementation of technological innovations may now lead to enhanced means of news media practice and to convergence. In essence they may not have fundamental effect as widely argued to existing journalism practice yet in the country but rather refining and producing new streams of convergence, that reinforces the social functions of journalism.

Research Objectives

The goal of this study is to ascertain Nigerian journalists' perception of the possible effect of new media application in Nigeria media practice. Although various studies have looked at new media use by journalists in Nigeria, majority of these studies focused only on new media and journalist's access and use. Few have however interrogated the journalist's perception of the impact of the new media and possible impact on journalism practice in the country. This study sought to fill the existing knowledge gap on how the utilisation of new media by local journalists in Nigeria is shaping journalistic practices. In line with this, the specific objectives are:

1. To investigate the Nigerian journalists' areas of application of new media technologies in journalism practice.
2. To ascertain the journalists' perception of the impact of the new media technologies in Nigerian media practice.
3. To determine their level of use of new media for enriching local news content.
4. To identify the emergence of any new journalistic practices linked to the use of new media forms in Nigerian journalism practice.

A Review of Literature

The digital age has created many opportunities and challenges for virtually all profession. In the case of journalism these various effects have at times been accepted, negotiated and also contested depending on the level of adoption and adaptation to the technology. Hermans, (2009) points out that, the advent of new media has changed the way journalists work around the world, as it sweeps across homes, streets, offices and newsrooms where journalists source, process, share and follow feedback on news. What Hermans and other scholars overlook, however is the diversity in the degree and pattern of change across different climes. Today various computerized sources are regularly being used in media organizations (Veglisetal, 2005) leading to the evolution of new trends in media practice. As argued, there have been massive changes in the way in which news is produced and journalism performed. For example the internet has created a whole new platform for the news and information within minutes. With the click of a button, news and information can be posted on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, a blog or website and the world can become aware of recent development instantaneously. Yet, these new innovations may not have significantly changed the face of journalism but rather expanded and improved the methods of doing the gate keeping function.

Some of the ground shifting effects of new media on news media practice as suggested by many scholars include the following: Digital editing , use of online sources in reporting news and scoops as we saw in the Nigerian padding scandal where Jibrin used the new media to tell his side of the story; news stories are now people -driven instead of being just media- outlet driven as before; news is now disseminated both top -down and bottom- up instead of just top- down; journalists are not just gatekeepers but gate watchers and filters for stories emanating from social media while convergence has become the new order of media existence. New posts are also emerging in the news room; Networked journalism, a process of mining public knowledge to add value to the community. The networked journalist changes from being a gatekeeper who delivers to a facilitator who connects. Then there is also the Social media editor or Community editors, Twitter correspondent, the Digital-centric journalist, who is multi-skilled; a covalence of traditional roles of reporter, editor, cameraman, soundman that leans on digital skills. News media organizations in the West have began using Twitter to do live coverage of stories of some selected events. Livetweeting in Nigerian news media as at now is yet to occur. Lowery (2009) explained that the Twitter explosion helped her see a sort of “symbiotic relationship”



between social and traditional media. Those on location can post quickly and traditional journalists can use these accounts, with some basic fact checking, to push vital information to the public in a more efficient manner (Lowery, 2009). They tended to be “a collaborative news style of news gathering — one that combines the contributions of ordinary citizens with the reports and analysis of journalists” (Stelter, 2009).

Looking at these emerging trends, unarguably, they provide opportunities for transforming news media into a more open and useful forum for information and debate in diverse ways. However, as they provide these new opportunities they also raise the possibility as some have argued of professional crisis for journalists and media organizations in developing societies where the old does not easily give way to the new; And where media organizations are reluctant in investing in modern technology and in capacity building for their staff. Apart from investing there is also the problem of capacity building for these journalists, including the problem of maintenance and management of these tools. The issue of maintenance and management has always been a challenge to the country. The problem is compounded for the Nigeria news media that rely heavily on freelance journalists who are poorly remunerated. Evidently, in Nigeria most news organizations have an online presence, with Twitter accounts, Facebook, Instagram, websites and so on. Beyond these obvious trappings of digital-centrism, for most news organizations especially those owned by State governments and not located in major cities, new media integration in news room and routine journalism practice is still a challenge. It is mainly in private commercialized media organizations that we see evidence of integration of new media in news rooms. Anecdotal evidence suggests the possibility of collaboration between journalists to overcome their peculiar challenges. What we have is a situation of collaborative networking between the digital savvy journalists and non- digital journalists and also the use of the most basics of these new media application. We can infer that adoption and adaptation to new media in Nigeria occurs in an uneven pattern at different places even when it is used for the same purpose.

Even as the new media provides opportunities for enhancing journalism and creating real time conversation a number of new ethical considerations emerge from the shift toward journalists' increased use of social media. One of the most discussed ethical considerations by scholars revolves around a journalist's personal and professional presences on social media and social

networking sites. Journalists must know to verify comments before posting them. Journalists must draw the line when tweeting, to know to tweet as a reporter and when as an average citizen to create the personal-work social media balance advocated by scholars. Many professionals agree while journalists can post their own opinions if desired, they must keep their news organizations in mind, and the same values that apply to traditional media also apply to social media (Betancourt, 2009).

Atton and Mabweazara (2011) have argued that new media and journalism practice in Africa indeed constitute an agenda for research. They suggest that there are many utopian predictions made about new media in Africa that call for empirically grounded research to test them. Our concern here therefore is to empirically determine how these utopian predictions are holding true in Nigeria news media industry and not necessarily on these debates. The Nigerian news media as one of the big news industry in Sub Saharan African indeed warrants such examination. Abundant evidence exists in literature on the possibilities offered by new media to journalism practice. In analysing the ways in which journalists' jobs change as they increasingly use new media, Koch (1991) argues that online resources such as search engines, blogs, social networking platforms, and cloud encyclopaedias, provide journalists with more information than are possessed by the public or private officials they are assigned to interview. Koch (ibid) contends that intelligent use of these resources does not amount to the same old journalism, but has the potential of altering fundamentally the rules of the public information game. The extent Nigerian journalists use these new media as sources of information instead of the traditional government sources and other established sources constitute one of the concerns of this paper.

Boyd-Barrett (2000) points out, that new media have opened up paths or channels for sharing news and information through uploading and downloading content in both the developed and developing world. While Garrison (2000) study on new media use, documented newspapers' increased use of online sources as reporting tools. The study shows that leading problems journalists identified in using online sources were sites containing unreliable information, badly sourced information and lack of source credibility. The study found a growing need for ongoing newsroom training and development of online research skills among reporters and editors. Fortunati et al. (2009) study on how European journalists evaluate the changes that have

occurred in their profession after the integration of the internet in newsroom across eleven European countries is also relevant for this work. The survey shows that the opportunity to use the Internet to reinforce the social function of journalism has not been fully recognized. In Africa such studies are still few necessitating an empirical inquiry, which this work attempts to fill. Herman et al. (2009) looked into the relationship between journalists' professional opinions about the impact of the internet on journalists' values, on the one hand, and their actual use patterns on the other hand. The study provides empirical insights into the often more contemplative discussion of the impact of the internet on journalism. The researchers argue that although journalists may seem a homogeneous occupational group, they are not expected to use all possibilities provided by the Internet to an equal extent for the same purpose. This present study is similar to Herman's work in the area of journalists actual use patterns of new media tools but differs in the exploration of journalists' view of impact of new media in the profession. Bennett (2012) documents a study on digital journalism, which surveyed 600 journalists from around the world and discovered that more than half (55 per cent) used social channels such as Twitter and Facebook to find stories from known sources, and 43 per cent verified existing stories using these tools. Browne (2013) reports that, with more than one billion people on Facebook, the potential for searching keywords around a breaking news event that have been geo-tagged could quickly give journalists the inside track on finding sources. According to him, new media, Facebook in particular, are useful for breaking news, researching for stories, following up reaction to events and audience engagement. Other scholars (Bennett, 2012; Fenton, 2010; Mitchell et al., 2011; Rogers, 2014; Sayer, 2014) have similarly written extensively on the new media usefulness to professional journalism practice.

However, the media and journalists in developing countries, as the ITU (2004) report indicates, have been caught up in yet another dilemma: inability to tap the full potential of new media and compete with their counterparts in the developed world in terms of pushing (sharing) content through new media channels. No wonder, Airtel, one of the leading Mobile Network companies in Nigeria, from July - August 2015, organized a training programme for journalists across the six geo political zones in the country tagged, 'Airtel Change Your Story', to train journalists on the use of the vast opportunities afforded by the new media. According to the organizers of the training, it had become apparent that many of the Nigerian journalists are yet

to acquire the proficiency needed in tapping the opportunities provided by the new media in their work as journalists, thus corroborating the ITU, 2004 report.

After studying the working conditions of local journalists in Tanzania, Ramaprasad (2001) reports a 'woebegone effect'. Aziz (2014) study on new media use by journalists in Tanzania similarly reports that they mostly use it for entertainment and that new media use for sourcing, sharing and following feedback by journalists in Tanzania is clearly limited. A sharp contrast with data from developed countries.

The present study is similar to what Aziz did in Tanzania since it sought to understand the different ways Nigerian journalists are using the vast array of opportunities provided by the new media. This study also differs from previous works in that beyond the issue of use, it also interrogates new media use from the lens of the journalist and in this way probe beyond the surface to understand journalists' views on the impact of new media on journalism practice. Existing studies (see, Ekwughu & Nwamuo, & Ukonu et al.) that investigated journalists' use of new media were also limited in their sample, causing a serious problem for generalization. The present study endeavoured to fill this gap, as practically all news media outlets in Nigeria were represented. Since the prediction from developing societies point to under utilization of new media in journalism practice (see, Atton & Mabweazara, 2011; Aziz, 2014; Ramaprasad, 2001). We therefore empirically surveyed Nigerian journalism practice to determine similarities or dissimilarities to what obtains in other African countries.

As mentioned previously, adapting to new trends in journalism profession as they emerge, has not been easy for many journalists working in the developing world where poverty and other socio cultural variables make it difficult to afford and appropriate most technologies. As a result, what Boyd-Barrett (2000) argues in respect to Tanzania becomes relevant to Nigerian situation maybe with minor differences as he states that the use of new media by journalists in developing countries, such as Tanzania, has always largely been ineffective and rather limited. Beyond the knowledge of new media application we argue that journalist's use of the new media may also be linked to individual preferences and benefits. Therefore, their use or lack of use in this instance will also be tied to the perceived and desired gratifications derivable from

the new media applications. In situations where the new media application tools are available, personal needs and desires may yet affect their use, constraining proper and regular use.

Communication scholars have raised grave concern about the interactive nature of the new media. Schultz (2006), for example, elucidates that new media have the potential of increasing interactive attempts in journalism, but journalists and their respective media organizations do not necessarily exploit this opportunity effectively. According to the scholar, the hierarchical structure of modern mass communication imposes a “don't talk back” format on audiences. This format is largely familiar and seem to be dominant in Nigerian media landscape despite the evolution of the new media and its wide spread use by Nigerians. This dominance of the 'old' in terms of journalism format seems to indicate that the change as argued by some may not necessarily change the face of journalism as we know it.

When you collapse the bundle of evidence on new media and journalism practice and sieve critically, what evidently emerges could be summarized under these three streams: new media's ability to amplify existing ways of performing gate keeping functions; new media used to supplement and compliment rather than radically change mode of work; and difference in pattern of assimilation of the new media tool in different societies in different degrees. As the new media continue to evolve and definitely impact on journalism practice we interrogate the extent of its sedimentation into working cultures of Nigerian journalism institutions.

Methodology

This is a Nigerian study that covered all the 36 states of the country, however a purposive decision was taken to delimit the study to the six geo-political zones which guides the federal character principles in Nigeria. In each of the geo-political zones, a state each was selected for study. Due to the insurgency in North East States, Abuja the Federal Capital Territory was used to replace the zone in the study. The study was also delimited to the registered journalists in these states' chapels.

The study adopted the survey design. Census was used for all the registered journalists in the chapels of the selected states studied based on their manageable size except in Abuja and Lagos

that have large population where Meyer (1973) table for determination of sample size was used to find the representative sample.

For Lagos with a population of 2871 registered journalists, the table was used to determine a sample size of 322 while Abuja with a population of 1643 had 278 as sample size. In terms of instrument administration, copies of questionnaire corresponding to the population of registered journalists or sample size for each state were distributed among them during chapel meetings with the help of chapel presidents who assisted in administering them to their members. As earlier mentioned, Abuja the federal capital of Nigeria which is usually accorded a state status was used to replace the North East States where the problem of insurgency of Boko Haram prevented us from going to. The details of the states with the population of registered journalists, copies of questionnaire distributed, number returned which formed the active population/sample size of the study is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Sample Distribution

S/ N	STATE	GEO-POLITICAL ZONE	NO OF REGISTERED JOURNALISTS	COPIES OF QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTED	NO OF QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNED
1	Benue	North-Central	364	364	293
2	Abuja	In place of North-East	1643	278 (Meyer's table)	210
3	Kaduna	North-West	451	451	309
4	Anambra	South-East	297	297	232
5	Delta	South-South	285	285	285
6	Lagos	South-West	2871	322 (Meyer's table)	198
	Total		5911	1997	1527

A total of 1527 journalists actively responded to the questionnaire and formed the basis for analysis of data. Data generated from these responses are presented using major themes explored in the study.

Analysis of Data

The researchers explored the working status of the journalists thus:

Table 2: Journalists’ media affiliation and media online presence

JOURNALISTS’ MEDIA AFFILIATION	FREQUENCY / PERCENTAGE	MEDIA ESTABLISHMENT’S ONLINE PRESENCE	FREQUENCY / PERCENTAGE
Government	1249 (81.8%)	Yes	1314 (86.1%)
Private	278 (18.2%)	No	213 (13.9%)
Total	1527 (100%)	Total	1527 (100%)

The table above shows that a total of 1249 journalists amounting to 81.8% work in government owned media or related establishments, while 278 (18.2%) work in private establishments. Obviously this shows that majority of the Nigerian media are government owned and therefore controlled by government, which perhaps may have implications for provision and access to technology and even media practice. Majority of the journalists 1314 (86.1%) agree to the online presence of their establishments, while a few, 213 (13.9%) submit to the absence of their establishment online. This data supports evidence from literature of online presence of most Nigerian media.

Table 3: Respondents Sex, Age, Marital Status, Educational Qualification and Designation

SEX	%	AGE	%	MARITAL STATUS	%	EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	%	DESIGNATION	%
Male	77.5	18-24	11.1	Single	31.6	SSCE	7.4	Editor	8.5
Female	22.5	25-29	22.4	Married	68.4	OND/NCE	34.7	Reporter	91.5
Total	100	30-39	21.9	Total	100	HND/Degree	51.2	Total	100
		40-49	33.5			Higher Degrees	6.7		
		50 & above	11.1			Total	100		
		Total	100						

We next, explored the demographic profile of the Nigerian journalists studied. The data from the table indicate the presence of more male journalists than females 77.5% against 22.5% respectively. In terms of age, greatest percentage of the journalists fall between 40-49 years (33.5%) while majority of them are married at 68.4% against 31.6% that are single. In terms of educational qualification majority of the journalists possess either HND or Bachelor’s Degree (51.2%) followed by OND/NCE (34.7%). In terms of rank or designation most of the journalists are Reporters (91.5%) while only 8.5% are Editors. The data from the demographic variables support existing literature on the continued male domination of the media industry in Nigeria (see Dunu, 2015; GMMP, 2010; IWMPF, Global Report, 2011). Having determined the demographics of these respondents we next analyzed data on their usage pattern of the new media technologies in journalism practice in terms of access, and areas of use.

Table 4: Journalists’ Access to New Media, Devices for Access, Sources of Access

JOURNALIST’ ACCESS TO NEW MEDIA	%	DEVICES FOR ACCESS	%	SOURCES OF ACCESS TO INTERNET	%
Yes	97.2	Desktop computer	11.4%	Office	30.6%
No	2.8	Laptops	44.6%	Personal subscription	40.4%
Total	100	Mobile phones	31.3%	Cybercafé	27.0%
		Others	2.7%	Others	2.0%
		Total	100%	Total	100%

The above table shows that almost all the journalists have access to new media technologies powered by the Internet (97.2%) while only insignificant minority of 2.8% do not have access. On the devices for accessing the Internet majority of the journalists use laptops (44.6%) followed by the use of mobile or smart phones (31.3%). Responding on their sources of access to the Internet majority indicated that it is through personal subscription (40.4%) followed by their offices (30.6%) and cybercafés (27.0%) with other undisclosed sources amounting to just 2%. This implies that without personal efforts through subscription to data plans or visiting the cybercafé, Internet access by the journalists will be a mirage. This data points to possibility of limited integration of new media in news organizations in the country, with the implication of uneven pattern of use of tools by journalists.

Table 5: Journalist’ Use, Areas of Use and Regularity of Use of the New Media Technologies

JOURNALIST USE OF NEW MEDIA IN JOURNALISM PRACTICE	Percentage	AREAS OF USE	FREQUENCY / PERCENTAGE	REGULARITY OF USE	
		News gathering	-	Always	72.7
Yes	92.8%	News reporting	-	Occasionally	27.0
No	2.2%	Presenting programmes	-	Never	3.0
Total	100	Research	-	Total	100
		Networking with colleagues	-	-	-
		Interacting with fans and sources	-	-	-
		All of the above	100%		
		Total	100%		

From the table above, majority of the journalists were in agreement that they use the new media technology in journalism practice (92.8%) while only 2.2% disagreed. Interestingly, all the journalists agreed that they deploy the new media technology in areas of news gathering, news

reporting, programme presentation, Research, networking with colleagues and interacting with fans and sources. This implies that Nigerian journalists not only use the Internet enabled new media but engage the new media as powered by the Internet for a number of functions. We further, asked the journalist an open ended questions to probe beyond the surface and determine actual usage. The respondents defined the nature and pattern of usage in the following excerpts:

Respondent1: We normally go online these days to source for news .We use Google/news channel websites and others.

Respondent2: We normally subscribe to different news blogs so that we get hold of news as it breaks. The truth is that for scoops you go online.

Respondent3: For scoops definitely it is what is trending in the social media that you go to. But there is a vast array of news there .As a seasoned journalist you need to sieve carefully. You know that the public still depend on us to confirm these stories even when it is already on the net.

Respondent4: Majorly we source news from online now it makes things easier.

Respondent5: Yes, we go online for sourcing news but we also use online to do research and get background details to the stories. Take the budget padding issue Jibril’s account was on his Twitter page and email and Facebook.

Respondent 6: We don’t stop at that we still use government sources and other officials to verify what we get from the net .As for me I will say we use both now.

Respondent7: Social media is an important source for writing stories and for sending news too. It also provides a lot of information for background story but going online is expensive for us too.

Table 6: New/Social Media mostly used by Journalists

TYPES OF NEW/SOCIAL MEDIA	PERCENTAGE
Facebook	17.4
Skype	11.3
Twitter	13.0
YouTube	7.8
Instagram	5.8
Blogs	13.7
Official media website	9.6
Others unspecified	4.8
Multiple account/two or more of the options	16.7
Total	100%

The types of social media in use by the journalists are shown in table 6 above. Greater number of journalists (17.4%) use Facebook followed by those who indicated using multiple platforms other than one as indicated amounting to 16.7%; 13.7% use Blogs; 13.0 use Twitter; 11.3% use Skype; 9.6% use official website accounts of their establishments; 7.8% use YouTube, on the least are Instagram users (5.8%) and users of other accounts not listed (4.8%).

We next, sought to find out journalists' perception of the impact of the new media technologies in Nigeria media practice.

Table 7: Respondents' views on whether New Media is redefining, supplementing or replacing the Traditional Media in Nigeria

RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON ARGUMENTS	NEW MEDIA	FREQUENCY/PERCENTAGE
Redefining Traditional Media		503 (33%)
Supplementing Traditional Media		656 (43%)
Replacing Traditional Media		291 (19%)
Can't say (indecisive)		74 (5%)
Total		1527 (100%)

The table above shows journalists' views on nature of new media impact on journalism practice. A total of 503 representing 33% are of the view that it is redefining the old media; 656 (43%) perceive it as a supplementing the old media while only 291 out of the 1527 respondents representing 19% were of the view that it is replacing the old media. However, only 74 (5%) were indecisive. The implication here is that the new media is rather supplementing and redefining the traditional media rather than replacing it. With limited Internet access by the journalists except through personal efforts by subscription and use of cybercafé, as found in this study, how can new media technologies quickly replace the traditional journalism practice? This is not feasible for now. What is evident by the implication of these responses is that the use of new media technologies has enhanced the quality of journalism practice (redefining) and has provided alternatives (supplementing) rather than outright replacement.

The perception of journalists in Nigeria may not necessarily indicate clear cut division in the area of effect as contained in literature from different climes. Rather it may point to a situation indicative of journalist's view of the enhancing capacity and amplification possibilities of the

new media to journalism practice. To further determine this we probed with this open ended question by asking them what type of effect? We here, provide some of these comments:

Respondent1: Of course the new media has greatly impacted on journalism, it has made our work easier and more convenient. You can now send your story through Wassap to the station.

Respondent 2: It is a good way of doing journalism but we are not yet there most of the things we do as journalists young people that are not journalists know and do it better than us.

Respondent 3: Sure it has affected journalism positively but not much after all I still go to cover stories. For me it has created its own problems too and the media houses are not helping by not sending us for training. Almost everything you do is by self-effort.

Respondent4: Most of us in government media houses don't use the new media that much we just use it primarily for sourcing stories and sending stories all the other things you asked about we are yet to see and use here.

Respondent5: You know not up to 50% of us journalists in Nigeria are new media savvy because there are still too many older people here than young people. Journalism in Nigeria is not very lucrative they owe us a lot and there is a lot of freelancing and collaboration of stories, so to say. In the federal yes the percentage is high but down here in the state it is a different ball game. Most people down here still do things the old way in the news room you are assigned a beat you cover and report. The only difference is that you may send it through WhatsApp not even email.

Respondent6: For me it is minimal that is the change. We operate as usual but WhatsApp and text messaging are helping and Twitter accounts too. What I think is that it has improved and enhanced the way we work not radically changed it.

Respondent7: New media are now incorporated in the news room everybody has an online presence so that you get your own share of the revenue and traffic. We have all learnt to twitt, to blog and post things and have comments in the Facebook. Personally, I think the revolutionary thing the new media has done is to make feedback easier for us and create conversation with the audience .All those things about citizen journalist are not yet too many. We are still doing the old job of writing news and distributing even though we may not be the first source of the story.

We now sought to determine journalists' level of preference for both media – new media and traditional media; reasons for use and challenges to usage of new media in the composite table below:

Table 8: Media Use Preferences, Reasons and Challenges To Usage

JOURNALISTS' Media PREFERENCE	FREQUENCY / PERCENTAGE	REASONS FOR PREFERENCE OF NEW MEDIA	PERCENTAGE	REASON FOR PREFERENCE OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA	FREQUENCY	Challenges to Use Of New Medai	FREQUENCY / PERCENTAGE
New media	646 (42.3)	Versatility	593 (38.8%)	Familiarity	641 (42.0%)	Finance	495 (32.4%)
Traditional media	402 (26.3)	Speed	134 (8.8%)	Convenience	92 (6.0%)	Internet Access	574 (37.6%)
Both	479 (31.4)	Convenience	551 (36.1%)	Popularity	565 (37.0%)	Technological Skill	244 (16.0%)
		All of the above	249 (16.3%)	All of the above	229 (15.0%)	Power supply	183 (12.0%)
		All of the above				All of the above	31 (2.0%)
Total	1527 (100)	Total	1527 (100)	Total	1527 (100%)	Total	1527 (100%)

As indicated from the above table, Out of the 1527 respondents, 646 (42.3%) prefer the new media; 402 (26.3%) prefer the traditional media, while 479 (31.4%) said they prefer both new media and traditional media. Their stand here on preference imply that they use both media as supplements to one another and do not intend to do away with any. On the reasons for the preference of the new media by the journalists, majority 593 (38.8%) responded that they prefer the new media based on their versatility followed by 551 (36.1%) that said it is based on convenience; 249 (16.3%) accepted all the reasons advanced as the basis of their preference while 134 (8.8%) said it is because of the rapid speed of the new media platforms. In the same way the above table examined the reasons for preference of the traditional media by Nigerian journalists. A total of 641 (42%) said it is because of their familiarity with the traditional media. This is followed by 565 (37%) who prefer it based on its popularity with the audiences while 229 (15%) accepted all the reasons advanced as basis for their preference and only 92 (6%) accepted convenience as the yardstick for their preference. The implication here is that the familiarity and popularity of the traditional media is a potent weapon for its sustenance amidst competition from the new media. On the issue of constraints for the use of new media forms in Nigerian journalism the table above identified the major reasons affecting the use of new media technologies in Nigeria this way. Majority of the respondents 574 (37.6%) said access to the Internet is their major problem followed by 495 (32.4%) ascribing it to financial problems which jeopardize their regularity of subscription to Internet and purchase of relevant gadgets.

Other reasons are lack of skills for exposure to the Internet as accepted by 244 journalists representing 16%; 183 (12%) who blamed it to epileptic power supply and 31 (2%) who said all the problems apply to them. The implication is that all these are major problems in developing countries like Nigeria and have negatively affected even other sectors of life not only the media profession. The Internet penetration rate according to literature even though high in Nigeria is still expensive.

Discussion of Findings

After exhaustive analysis of data generated from the study the following core findings were made: The gender pattern of Nigerian journalists is still skewed in favour of men as 77.5% are males and only 22.5% being females. Most of the Nigerian journalists are reporters that work mostly in government establishments (86.1%) and fairly educated.

The study found a high level of awareness (97.2%) and use (92.8%) of the new media technologies among Nigerian journalists, corroborating evidence from literature. The degree of use of the new media however was mostly through personal subscription or resort to cybercafés. This goes to show that integration of new media in news room across the country as we have it in developed country is still a challenge. There is also regular use of new media (72.7%) as they indicated that Facebook, Twitter and Skype etc as major social media in use. All the respondents unanimously accepted deploying the new media in the areas of news gathering, news reporting, programme presentation, research; networking with colleagues and interacting with fans and sources. However, reading critically we found from their comments that they do not engage in sophisticated use of the new media as was found in Literature but rather seem to deploy the new media in a peripheral way majorly in sourcing for scoops and writing and sending stories.

One other major finding on perception shows that majority of the journalists believe that new media technology has supplemented the traditional media (43%), up to 33% believe it has redefined the traditional media while only 19% were of the view that it is replacing the traditional media. Nigerian journalists see the new media in terms of complimentary effect, as a supplementary tool in the gate keeping function and not displacement or replacement as argued in discourses from Western countries.

The data showing journalists preference of both media further substantiates the previous finding. Also the data from their comments buttress this stand. Even though majority (42.3%) indicated preference for new media, up to 31.4% said they have equal preference for both all pointing to the new media being a supplement or alternative platform for them. They gave reasons for their preference of new media as their versatility, rapid speed and convenience and that of old media based on familiarity, popularity and convenience.

Data from the open-ended questions and structured questions gave ample support to the challenges Nigerian journalist face in accessing and deploying new media in routine journalism practice. Some of the identified major problems militating against new media use by journalists range from lack of Internet Access, finance, adequate skills for exposure to the Internet to power supply all of which characterize developing countries. This agrees with the findings of Rodman (2009) and Okoye (2011).

Conclusion

Without a doubt, by examining the above data and results, one can conclude that the new media indeed has affected Nigerian journalism and will continue to affect it in the future. For example, from “Digital Editing” to Breaking News from Tweets and other online tools to sending stories online and to online presence of virtually all news media in the country, the possibilities are endless. However, as some have argued the important thing to learn isn’t necessarily how to use tools since many young people are already using them instead, news media organizations should focus on how “tools can be applied to enrich the craft of reporting and producing the news and ultimately telling the story in the best possible way” (Lavrusik, 2009). While many aspects of journalism have been touched still the dominant format of storytelling still subsists. The study has revealed the value as well as the advantages the new tools can bring to media organizations. As was evident, new media tools have given journalists new ways to report and disseminate information. It has as in the case of Jibrin in the budget padding scandal cited in the introduction, opened the door for members of the general public who have something to say but can’t go through a journalist for one reason or another. As Harper (2010) explains:



Finally, as it has already done to a degree, new media will continue to enhance the way journalists gather and report the news. Reporters can find sources and disseminate information using social media tools. Eyewitnesses will become reporters, but the world will still need “traditional” journalists to go in and verify the facts. Perhaps in the future, professional journalists won’t be so much pure information disseminators but truth disseminators. If you want to see what people say is happening right now, check Twitter; if you want to see what’s actually true and what might be false, check CNN or *The New York Times*. In the end, no matter the direction it moves in or the new shape or form it takes, news organizations will never cease to exist as long as democracy and freedom of speech exists preserve the basic premise of journalism: Witnessing an event and telling the story about it. After all, story telling, the defining thread of journalism, no matter what strange and new forms it may take, will never, ever cease to exist (p.16).



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