

Digital Media: Changes in the News Production and Journalistic Practices in Nigeria

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Genevieve Amaka Bosah

School of Media, Communication and Sociology

University of Leicester

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Genevieve Bosah

Abstract

This research contributes to the study of the journalism by analysing the changes in journalistic practice and news production as a result of digital media and the implications thereof. I critically analyse the role of digital media on news production and journalistic practices and argue that the rise of digital media has significantly changed the roles, practices and structures of the journalistic profession in Nigeria. I also argue that these changes require a practice centred approach to explore changes in perceptions of identity and journalistic labour; attitude towards multi-skilling, working conditions of journalists and the commercialisation of news which have the potential to compromise journalistic performance and the news they produce.

A proposed combined approach of Pierre Bourdieu's Field theory and Howard Becker's Social Worlds was used. I support Dickinson's argument that the meso-level analysis offered by field research requires the micro-level analysis of the news world to present a "socially situated, empirically grounded and contextually located" analysis of journalists' adoption/appropriation of media technologies. To this end, the combined approach provides a more rounded understanding of journalism and news production in Nigeria by presenting a contextual understanding of the socio-cultural and political economic context that shape to the changes that are occurring in the newsrooms in Nigeria.

Empirical evidence is drawn from five media organisations in Nigeria (Guardian newspapers, ThisDay, Vanguard, Channels TV and Nigeria Television Authority) to examine these from the perception of journalists. It also argues that the adoption of particular technologies is "socially and culturally determined" and understanding these nuances would contribute to the broader debates on news production and journalism.

Keywords

Digital media, news production, multi-skilling, newsgathering, media ownership, newsrooms Nigeria

Contents

Digital Media: Changes in the News Production and Journalistic Practices in Nigeria	i
1 Chapter One	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background and Context.....	2
1.3 Framework of Analysis.....	6
1.4 Research Aim and Objectives.....	7
1.5 Scope of Study.....	7
1.6 Rationale for the Study	7
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	9
1.8 Thesis Structure and Organisation.....	9
2 Chapter Two: Literature Review and Analytical Framework	12
2.1 Background: The Political Economy of the Media in Nigeria.....	14
2.2 Digital Technology and the Rise of ‘Citizen Journalism’	17
2.3 New Media Technologies in Africa	20
2.3.1 <i>Accountability and Transparency of Political Institutions</i>	21
2.3.2 <i>Engaging and empowering the people</i>	24
2.4 African Newsrooms’ use of New Media.....	29
2.5 Technology and Society	32
2.6 The Changing Role of Journalists and Technology's Impact on News Production	38
2.7 Bourdieu’s Field Theory	42
2.8 Becker’s Social World and “News” World.....	45
2.9 Combining Field Theory and Social World Theory.....	48
2.10 Conclusion.....	51
3 Chapter Three: Research Methodology.....	53
Introduction	53
3.1 Background	54
3.2 Sociocultural Context of Journalism in Nigeria	55
3.2.1 Research Questions.....	57
3.3 Research Design.....	57
3.4 Research Site/Field Study	59

3.4.1	Rationale	61
3.4.2	Gaining Access to Site	62
3.5	Methodology.....	64
3.5.1	Sampling Technique	64
3.5.2	Population and Sample Size	65
3.5.3	Data Collection Procedures.....	66
3.6	Data Collection.....	68
3.6.1	Survey.....	68
3.6.2	Observations.	69
3.6.3	Interviews.....	71
3.6.4	Rationale for combining Observation and Interviews	72
3.6.5	Data Organisation	73
3.7	Data Analysis.....	75
3.8	Ethical Considerations.....	76
3.9	Validity and Reliability.....	77
3.9.1	Internal Validity.....	77
3.9.2	External Validity	78
3.9.3	Pre-Test Reliability	79
3.10	Limitations of the Study	79
3.11	Researcher's Reflection	80
3.12	Conclusion.....	80
4	Chapter Four Socio-economic Influences	82
4.1	Introduction	82
4.2	Digital media: an evolutionary or revolutionary technology?	82
4.3	Newspaper Production in the Age of New Media	85
4.3.1	The 'death' of print news?	85
4.3.2	Declining newspaper production: facts and figures	87
4.4	The decline of the newspaper: causes and implications	89
4.4.1	How new media affects the journalist.....	89
4.4.2	Complementarity	93
4.4.3	Advantages of the old and disadvantages of the new media	94
4.4.4	A positive challenge?	96
4.5	Decrease in Revenue for Media Houses	99

4.5.1	Decreasing advertising spending on print media	99
4.5.2	<i>Reasons for decreased spending on print and challenges for online</i>	101
4.5.3	<i>A struggling economy means splitting advertising budgets</i>	102
4.5.4	<i>Consequences: Downsizing, Retrenchment and Job Loss</i>	103
4.6	New Revenue Generation.....	105
4.6.1	Capturing revenue from online advertisements.....	106
4.6.2	<i>Making the most of the limits of online advertising</i>	108
4.6.3	<i>New sources of revenue beyond advertisements.....</i>	109
4.7	Conclusion.....	110
5	Chapter Five: Remuneration and the working conditions of journalists in Nigeria.....	113
5.1	Introduction	113
5.2	The Political Context	114
5.2.1	<i>Political Parallelism</i>	117
5.2.2	<i>Role of the State.....</i>	119
5.3	Viability of the Nigerian press.....	120
5.3.1	<i>Government-owned and privately-owned media organisations</i>	122
5.4	Working Conditions of Nigerian Journalists.....	124
5.4.1	<i>Public perceptions of journalists' standard of living</i>	124
5.4.2	<i>Working conditions of journalists in Nigeria: the journalists' perspective.....</i>	125
5.5	Remuneration	129
5.5.1	<i>Remuneration rates in media and among other non-media organisations.....</i>	130
5.6	Nigerian journalism: Journalism or PR?	132
5.6.1	<i>The threat of corruption.....</i>	132
5.6.2	<i>Journalism without resources</i>	134
5.7	New and promising developments? Digital media and working conditions	135
5.8	Conclusion: what do journalists want?	137
5.9	Relationship with Sources.....	139
5.10	Conclusion.....	142
6	CHAPTER Six: Journalistic identity in a changing world.....	144
6.1	Introduction	144
	<i>Historical background: the weak underpinnings of journalistic identity in Nigeria</i>	144
6.1.1	<i>The challenge from the modern world.....</i>	144
6.2	Journalistic 'Identity'	146

6.2.1	<i>Identity and journalistic identity</i>	148
6.2.2	<i>The debate: who is a “real” journalist</i>	149
6.2.3	<i>The journalist role in society: consequences of identity for practice</i>	151
6.3	The rise of the citizen-journalist: a new era of collaborative work, or a challenge?	152
6.4	Challenges to the traditional journalist: the debate	154
6.4.1	<i>Nature of journalistic work</i>	156
6.4.2	<i>Quality</i>	162
6.4.3	<i>Ethics</i>	164
6.5	Expanding and shifting the boundaries of journalism	173
7	Chapter Seven: News Production	178
7.1	Introduction	178
7.2	The Organisation of the Nigerian Newsroom	180
7.2.1	<i>Changes in the Physical and Organisational Structure of the Newsroom</i>	181
7.3	Mobile Phones and Messaging Applications	184
7.3.1	<i>Impact and Influence of Mobile Phones on Journalism</i>	184
7.3.2	<i>WhatsApp</i>	188
7.3.3	<i>The Speeding up of the News Cycle</i>	191
7.4	Newsgathering Routines	193
7.4.1	<i>From ‘news gatherers’ to ‘news aggregators’?</i>	193
7.4.2	<i>Monitoring Social Media and Utilising Social Networks</i>	195
7.4.3	<i>Social Media as a Bias-free Source of News</i>	199
7.5	News values	200
7.6	Disrupting physical space and boundaries	203
7.6.1	<i>User Generated Content and Interactivity in Nigeria</i>	203
7.6.2	<i>User Input in News Production Processes</i>	206
7.7	Conclusion	207
8	Chapter Eight: Discussion of Findings	209
8.1	Introduction	209
8.2	Findings	210
8.3	Importance of the Findings	214
8.4	Limitations of the Study	216
8.5	Implications of the Findings	217
8.6	Theoretical Contributions	218

8.7	Future Research	218
9	Appendix I	220
10	References	237

DEDICATION

To God be the glory.

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List of Tables

Table 1: Breakdown of interview participants

Table 2: Emerging themes after coding

List of Figures

Figure 1: Picture of note-taking and coding process

Figure 2: Graphic Representation of Field Theory for Journalism

Figure 3: Graphic Representation of the News World showing fluid boundaries

Figure 4: Representation of Combined Field Theory and News World

Figure 5: Data collection phases

Figure 6: Note taking phase

Figure 7: Picture of newspaper

Figure 8: Screen shot of newspaper showing e-commerce

Figure 9: Social media interactivity on major outlet websites in Nigeria

Figure 10: Comment section of The Guardian, Daily Trust, Vanguard and Channels TV

Figure 11: Lie blog Daily Trust

List of Abbreviations.

Ait Africa Independent Television

BBC British Broadcasting Corporation

CNN Cable News Network

CTP Computer to Plate

NBC National Broadcasting Corporation

NGE Nigerian Guild of Editors

NTA Nigerian Television Authority

NPN National Party of Nigeria

NUJ Nigerian Union of Journalists

NPAN Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria

PDP Peoples Democratic Party

TV Television

PR Public Relations

1 Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

The study of news production has been a constant area of focus. Journalists maintain that news is not created but reported, while academics argue that news is a result of social construction. Although research is gradually increasing, the experiences of African journalists are attracting little attention (Atton and Mabweazara 2011). This leads me to examine what the experiences of journalists in Nigeria are in the context of recent changes in news practices, and how journalists in Nigeria are both following and forging new ways of producing news. By focusing on the situated experiences of these journalists, this chapter takes into account situational contexts in which news is produced. Identifying these influences will enable a better understanding of journalistic practices, the quality of output, and the wider impact on journalism and news production processes.

There are ongoing debates surrounding the nature of digital technologies, their influence and the impact of digital media on journalism in Africa. This can be viewed from various perspectives; in terms of its enhancement of the quality of life of the people, the perceived increase in political participation and the general connectedness that digital media provides. Within these debates, there are discussions around how journalists use digital media and new technologies. Studying this is critical because it provides insights, which are relevant to broader debates. i.e. the changing news landscape and how changing journalistic practices affect news content. These in themselves have a potential impact on the nature of democratic debate in Africa, and how journalistic practices are responding to the rapid changes in information technology.

This research examines the print and broadcast media in Nigeria in the context of how digital technologies are influencing news production and journalistic practices. This also leads me to examine the political economy of Nigeria (political and economic influences) which differs when juxtaposed with the news media in the West. Whilst considering which media to look at, comparisons are made that provide insight into the impact of new media and journalistic practices on the political economy of the nation considering different occupational/media contexts. Are there socioeconomic and political factors influencing journalistic practices and their use of digital technologies?

By examining the socioeconomic context of news production and how it is playing out in Nigeria, the study doesn't claim to be a comparative one, but it does, in part, take a comparative approach in the sense that it applies and perhaps questions the application of Western models of journalism to the particular context of contemporary Nigerian news industry. Thus, it offers a discussion of the changing nature of journalism and news production, with specific focus on news production/journalistic practice in a non-Western context. The thesis also raises questions that are fundamental in terms of the challenges and opportunities that digital technologies pose to journalists in the course of news production and the impact on journalistic practices (Boczkowski 2009, Dahlgren 2009, Deuze, 2009, Fenton 2010, Dickinson et al 2013).

I sought out to explore from the position of the journalists, the changes that are occurring in the newsrooms, how journalists negotiate social and economic considerations in discharging their duties, and if digital media has helped enhance their professional identity. It is widely accepted that digital media, especially with the proliferation of social media platforms, are fast altering the means and context within which journalists work as well as the course of news production. This thesis is in response to the challenges and prospects new technologies portend for the journalists in particular and news production in general. This project thus seeks to explore the connection in the use of digital technologies, journalistic and newsroom practices, and news production in Nigeria. The study will be situated in the context of influences of digital media and examine how this affects news production and journalistic practice in general.

1.2 Background and Context

The ownership of media houses is characterised by the predominance of government influence and wealthy owners who have partisan political and economic agenda and interest (Golding, 1977). In certain cases, the managers are mere front- professionals for the real owners, including foreigners (Oyovbaire, 2001).

A major shift occurred in the structure of media ownership as a result of a change in the regulatory framework governing Nigerian media industry. This occurred after the transition from military rule to democratic rule. In the past, the philosophy underpinning media ownership and operation, particularly broadcasting, was more of public service than commercial (profit making).

However, times have changed. Journalism is now driven by the market. The media responds to the market in several ways and different media organizations react to this in different ways. For instance, a newspaper like The Guardian approaches news differently (conservative news) from The Daily Sun which is a tabloid newspaper and prefers sensational news stories. This difference is accounted for by certain factors — the type of audience and readership, the budget available to the news department and the competition among media organizations.

Ever since the inception of the internet and the proliferation of its services, there has been a noticeable decline in the use of traditional media. This has initiated and sustained a global trend of unrelenting resort to the internet as a means of news and information dissemination. This trend has had a threatening effect on the print media, but conversely, a positive one on online journalism and e-news. This evolution in media practice is also evident in the developing countries of Africa especially Nigeria where the onset of online journalism is gradually putting the demand for newspapers on the wane. The migration of newspapers and television outfits to the web has been consequently accompanied with that of its readership and viewership respectively. For instance, The Punch now runs an online press which avails its readers (both local and diaspora readership) the opportunity to access news stories, and connect with the press on a social network to access and respond to newsfeeds through mobile service. It also features opinion polls that aids in the reception of feedback from its readers. Vanguard offers to its readers a service called I-report where readers upload reports of current events within their vicinity online, while the Daily Sun in addition offers a search engine which enables its readers to access information on trending events.

However, the good comes with the not-so-good; there is a high degree of unethical practices in Nigerian journalism due to the economic situation. Many news organizations struggle to survive and are unable to adequately take care of the welfare of their workers. This has been attributed to the withdrawal of subsidies from government-owned media houses following the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in the 1980s (Ekwo, 1996; Ogbuoshi, 2005; Omenugha and Orji 2007). The effect of the withdrawal in government spending causes the government-run media to explore means of staying afloat with commercialisation as the default route, this also opened up the landscape for competition from privately-owned outlets with profit maximisation as a dominant motive (Oso, 2000). Omenugha and Orji (2007) labelled this phenomenon as the genesis of news commercialisation in Nigeria and the beginning of the decline in ethics and professionalism in news production. For them, the commercialisation of news thrives

in Nigeria because the media outlets have to devise means of counteracting the cost of production as well as competition, even if it means publishing ‘half-truth’ as ‘news’ in order to accommodate or bolster commercial interest. In other words, they argue that poverty is the root cause of the professionalism issue in journalism in Nigeria, both at institutional and individual levels (Omenugha and Orji, 2007).

As such, it can be said that the issue of poverty has seriously whittled down any form of commitment to professionalism among journalists and trivialise the news production process. The implication is that journalists and media outlets struggle for patronage in any guise; sensationalisation of news stories and reporting of commercial, political, sectional or even ethnical celebrations as news-worthy content - the overall effect are unethical practices which compromise the credibility of the press. It makes the press “praise singers” of parochial interest groups and political parties, some news organizations are labelled as ethnic press who are constrained to serve the interest of their owners. An example is the June 12¹ struggle, was considered a 'Yoruba affair'. What this suggests is that the social and institutional context of journalism in Africa is, therefore, invaluable to understanding news production in the age of media digitisation. In other words, to avoid appearing analytically feeble, researching into the nature of news production in Africa in the face of media digitization requires deeper understanding of the underlying socioeconomic and institutional context within which the journalistic profession thrives on the continent.

Contending the epistemological flaw of analysing journalism in Africa in the face of digital media technology deploying western standards, Mabweazara citing Paterson (2014: 259-260) observes that “most African journalists...operate in multifaceted conditions “where news production is sometimes strikingly similar to what might be seen in any global news hub... and, conversely, *sometimes distant from Northern norms in terms of its goals and methods*” (2014: 3, emphasis maintained). Similarly, Obonyo (2011, p.1) reminds us that “there are unique peculiarities that demand that Africa isolates what is relevant and places it in Africa’s unique situations, and weave out of that mosaic a framework that reflects Africa’s reality.” Concurring with Kupe (2004), Obonyo (2011) and Paterson (2014), Mabweazara further notes:

¹ On June 12 1993, Chief M.K.O Abiola (a Yoruba man) won the democratic election to become President of Nigeria. The election was annulled by the Military dictator General Abacha at the time. Abiola was hounded and incarcerated for five years and was eventually poisoned on July 7, 1998. The wife, Kudirat Abiola was shot in Lagos on June 4, 1996 and other prominent Yoruba like Professor Wole Soyinka, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Kayode Fayemi and many others were chased into exile.

Most African journalists work with significantly fewer resources. They have lower status, are poorly paid and operate in multicultural countries that are at various stages of constituting themselves as nations in a globalizing world. These contextual complexities and contradictions tend to be overlooked, consequently resulting in superficial and considerably anachronistic articulations of what developments in digital technologies actually mean for the practice of traditional journalism on the continent (2014, p. 3).

The argument is that the uncritical application and deployment of western standards and norms when analysing journalism in Africa obscures the complex terrain within which journalism on the continent occurs; with the result that researchers are sometimes awkwardly out of context and out of touch with reality. Such research miss the importance of understanding what emerges from, speaks to, and shares in the ontology of the society. This, according to Mabweazara, calls for a conceptual epistemology that, “reconstruct[s] the context and examine[s] the social relations and institutions, the distribution of power and resources, by virtue of which this context forms a social field” (Mabweazara 2014, p.5). So, in understanding the changes as a result of these technologies on the African newsroom, we need to look at the context of African journalism – its culture, institutions, and the broader communication environment - and examine how these collectively provides insights for a better understanding of how journalism is conducted on the continent.

The point is, digital media cannot simply be appropriated in an abstract sense but must be seen in the context of how it is shaped (and is being shaped) by social circumstances on the continent. These peculiarities must not be taken for granted; rather they should be viewed as creating an interaction between society and the new technologies. Understanding changes as a result of digital media means examining and understanding the different forces and fields that predispose journalists to function as they do when faced with it. Hence by examining how social, economic, cultural and political circumstances interact to impact on and in turn is impacted by digital technologies, and the effects on journalism in Nigeria will provide not only contextual insight to news production but also the multi-layer understanding of social worlds the journalists navigate in their day to day activities.

1.3 Framework of Analysis

This research adopts a more practice-centred approach to the study of news production, especially as advocated by Dickinson (2008) and Dickinson, Matthews and Saltzis (2013). Dickinson argues that Pierre Bourdieu's *field* and Howard Becker's *social world* are theoretically illuminating and analytically insightful, however, empirically insufficient to understanding the rapidly changing landscape of news production in the face of digital technology revolution. He draws attention to the limitations of conceptualising the world of news production as bounded fields and series of worlds (or sub-worlds), while highlighting what journalists do, how they do it, and how these (i.e. what they do and how they do it) are impacted upon by what others do in relation to the broader context of news production in a fast-paced news environment. This is to support the research focus on situated experiences of journalists by understanding the changing nature of news production from the experiences of journalists as they encounter the changes taking place in their industry. Such focus, according to Dickinson et al, can be justified on theoretical grounds: "the implications of change in the news industry for its traditional democratic role cannot be understood without understanding in detail what journalists do and how they do it". (Dickinson et al 2013: 3)

In conducting the analysis, I will draw heavily on the analytical postulations of Dickinson (2008) and Dickinson et al. (2013)'s practice-centred approach, based on the premise that structured systems (i.e. fields) and news world do not of themselves constitute the reality of news production; rather they contribute to it, through chains of equivalence that link together different people, even from and of different fields and social worlds, working together to bring to fruition a particular objective, i.e. the news (production), while at the same time acknowledging each other, albeit from a distance, and advancing individual self-interest. The practice-centred approach reflects this study sociological stance, which emphasises the importance of taking into account the political, socioeconomic, and organisational conditions in which journalists in Nigeria are predisposed to do their job and how these affect their use of digital media technologies. So far, not a lot has been said about how these changes in the newsrooms are perceived by journalists, nor focused on the interplay of socio-cultural influences as well as political institutions in negotiating these changes.

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

The research seeks to examine the practice of journalism from newsroom to news production. Therefore, the objectives centre on the following:

- a) To examine newsroom practices in some selected newsrooms in Nigeria
- b) To investigate the uses of emerging digital media technologies in newsroom
- c) To study the impact of the emerging new media technology on newsroom practice and news production
- d) To investigate factors influencing the journalism practice in relation to the adoption of new media technologies

Through the above objectives, I will be able to know the extent at which journalism has evolved in Nigeria and the challenges facing it.

1.5 Scope of Study

The study focuses on the perception of the journalists and their practices in the process of news production, against the background of dynamic socio-economic factors and emerging digital technologies. Hence, the study populations are sampled from the major media organizations across the country. They are mainly journalists (both reporters and editors) from print and broadcast media.

1.6 Rationale for the Study

Journalism had been predominantly considered an exclusive preserve of men and women who possessed professional qualifications to investigate, analyse and disseminate information ('truths') as news to an audience (Ezeibe and Nwagwu 2009; Talabi 2011). Alas, today the story is different with almost all facets of journalism undergoing thorough interrogation and unprecedented transformation: from the credibility of news to the substantive question of how news becomes news or how news is produced; from the one-way stream of information to an interactive model of relationship between journalists and their audiences; from media role of gatekeeping to, the new practice of, gate watching by individual bloggers and citizen journalists,

and; to the increasing erosion of the monopoly to report and disseminate information as given as well as shift towards collaborative engagement/participation in news making, journalism and, indeed, news production is undergoing tremendous changes and challenges (Talabi 2011; Bruns 2011).

At the heart of this transformation in news production is the digitisation of media technologies, blurring boundaries and bridging time and space. Digital technology is the basis of digital journalism, widely recognised as any form of journalism where content is fast-paced, generated, disseminated and distributed at the speed of internet-powered platforms. Here, news content disseminates faster and reaches a wide range of audiences hitherto unknown to traditional journalism (Alakwe and Ogbu 2017), which also means increasing devolution and democratisation of news content and creation (Ezeibe and Nwagwu 2009; Talabi 2011) and greater interaction and enhanced political participation (Bruns 2011; Talabi 2017). This fast-paced environment and interactivity of the digital age of news production also carries with it corresponding challenges for the journalist who, now more than ever, has to be wary of content creation, copyright issues, plagiarism, and multitasking (multitasking) in order to survive. Digitisation and introduction of digital platforms like the Computer into newsrooms increased responsibilities for journalists (Talabi 2011; Bruns, 2011; Alakwe and Ogbu, 2017).

In Nigeria, this era coincided with the withdrawal of government subsidies from its media outlets and the boomerang of privately-run media outfits jostling for programme and profit (Omenugha and Orji 2007). Thus, while there is struggle for the journalists and their outfits, private and public, to stay afloat, there is also the crucial need to catch up with the changes in technology and the transformation occasioned by digital media, yet the journalist is expected to live up to expectations and deliver on its traditional role to society. This transformation in the modern newsroom is not only unsettling the traditional role of journalists, but also changing the face of journalism, journalistic practices, as well as news production in general around the world. The unprecedented wave of information technology, the ease of and wide reach of information, the perceived increase and enhancement of political participation, and the role of the media in this digitised era in consolidating Nigeria's nascent democracy all puts the journalist at the centre of which calls for systematic enquiry into the digitisation of news media and how journalists are

responding to these changes in the newsroom practices, especially in developing society like Nigeria. Hence this study is both timely and significant.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study seeks to address the changing nature of journalism in Nigeria, and the dearth of academic studies about the impact of the changing media landscape on journalists in the country. The technological shift from traditional media as the primary source of news for most people to online media sources has meant that journalists in Nigeria have changed their working practices. Also, journalists feel the pressure from media owners to provide more content with fewer resources as the focus on profits has become greater than ever before. This is at a time when there is a greater competition not only between journalists, but also from ‘citizen journalists’ and non-journalists. Nowadays, most journalists have digital devices that perform tasks such as photography, video recording and enabled internet access to ease production and potentially reach a global audience. In this regard, more scientific study is needed about the impact that economics and social factors have on the work that journalists perform in Nigeria.

Furthermore, political issues have a great impact on the work that journalists perform in Nigeria. The Nigerian press has been closely linked to politics through ownership. The major newspapers were either directly owned by the political parties or by politicians affiliated to the political parties. Such link is reflected in contents, the degree of affinity between media and ethnic political parties. In this regard, more investigation is needed about how politics in Nigeria impact the work that journalists perform in the country.

1.8 Thesis Structure and Organisation

Chapter Two: This contains a review of relevant literature for the research. I begin by examining the digitalisation in Africa and changing ecology of news in Africa. I also examine the background of journalism in Nigeria. It further discusses specific issues related to trends and development of

modern journalism in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. This section also looks at the theoretical frame work of Fields by Pierre Bourdieu and news world by Howard Becker and the proposed framework by Roger Dickinson which entails combining these two frameworks.

Chapter Three: This chapter discusses the research methodology, the procedures for data collection and data analysis. The use of ethnographic research was used for the data collection as this reinforces the research focus to explore the situated experiences of journalists in Nigeria. Semi structured interviews and observations were used as research tools and analysis was coded using the thematic approach.

Chapter Four: I look at the socio-economic aspect of digital media on the media industry in Nigeria, issues regarding circulation and production, decrease of revenue which is a result of the decline in production, a by-product of digital media influence. I also look at the responses of journalists in response to new revenue generation

Chapter Five describes the processes of newsgathering and production and the interplay of the digital media in negotiating balance for the journalists while discharging their duties. characteristics of working conditions and discusses the institutional responses of producers to the I highlight the dynamics of using social media as leads, sources and how it affects news values. The chapter examines the impact and the influence of mobile phones and how messaging apps are emerging as a source of news for the journalists. It also examines the implications this might have on news production in Nigeria.

Chapter Six: This looks at the issue of remuneration and the working conditions of journalists in Nigeria. This issue is examined against the background of media ownership, financial instability of the press and political issues that influence changes occurring in the newsrooms in Nigeria.

Chapter Seven examines the changing perceptions of journalistic identity and the tensions that arise from how journalists perceive themselves and how the citizen journalist is encroaching on his territory. This chapter also examines issues of ethics, privacy and copyright in relation to the using digital media in journalism in Nigeria. Also examined is the issue of multi-skilling and skill acquisition, which raises the question on who the journalist is. The impact on practices is also discussed and how the journalist has moved from a gatekeeper to a gate watcher.

Chapter Eight: Discussion Chapter. This is about discussing the findings, the implications and the recommendations for future research. It shows the findings and what they indicated about newsgathering, news production and the perceptions of journalists in Nigeria about the proliferation of digital media.

2 Chapter Two: Literature Review and Analytical Framework

Part I: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Over time, technological advancement has, in one way or another, occasioned corresponding changes in the media. Technological changes such as the appearance of the printing press, transistor radios, television and computers have all altered the media. In the process, the practice of mass communication and its practitioners – the journalists – have not been spared. However, the latest advances in technology, powered by the internet, are transforming the media landscape at an unprecedented rate (Krotoski, 2011; Sanusi et al, 2015). With the domination of the internet and the combination of previously independent media to form multimedia conglomerates, modes of communication are being enhanced, means of communication are being accelerated and the reach of communication has become almost unlimited. Mass media communication is now interactive, blurring the distances of space and time.

Asemah (2009) describes the media as the channel through which messages are conveyed from a source to a heterogeneous audience. The deliberate act of gathering these messages for the purpose of educating or informing the public, especially about current events, is referred to as journalism. This universal definition of journalism does not change in the Nigerian context. However, the media takes on the colouration of the place where journalism is being practiced (Apuke, 2016). This means that, although the basics remain the same across the world, journalistic practices in Nigeria are likely to differ from journalistic practices in America, Saudi Arabia or China. At the centre of these transformations is the journalist, who until now had been unrivalled as the conveyor of news and information to society. Journalists presently face multiple challenges resulting from the advent of digital media. According to Adelabu (2014) “from the time of Gutenberg printing press till now, journalism has always been at the forefront of embracing technology innovation” (cited in Sanusi et al., 2015: 10). This, however, has also placed the journalist at the receiving end of the effects of technological changes. As external developments create space for new practitioners, journalists must seek to engage with and negotiate the changes to their professional

world, and in so doing, both technological change and journalist practitioners are changing the practice of journalism.

This chapter is divided into two related parts. Part I presents the literature review, outlining existing research on journalism in Nigeria and the impact of digital technology. Section 2.1 provides a general background on the political economy of Nigerian media, examining how the organisation of the news field breeds tension between the various actors participating in the production of news. Section 2.2 discusses an examination of the global emergence of a ‘citizen journalism’, and a discussion of scholarly reactions to the rise of the citizen journalist. The following two sections (2.3 and 2.4) discuss the way in which academic literature has engaged with the development of new media technologies in Africa and Nigeria more specifically. It will be argued that, while providing valuable discussions on the possibilities offered by new media as a driver for democratisation, this literature lacks a more practice-based engagement with the changes occurring and therefore cannot reflect the full complexity of the developments taking place. Sections 2.5 and 2.6 of the literature review bring in a number of critical academic analyses which take issue with the simplistic treatment of technological development in general, and the treatment of technology’s impact on journalists in particular. It offers a critique of both a deterministic view of technology - the belief in the overwhelming power of technology to determine the working and direction of society – as well as a critique of the appropriationist view, which sees technology as what society makes of, holding that technology is only adopted and appropriated to meet local demands. It is suggested that only by studying the responses to and interactions occurring from these developments, it will be possible to accurately assess the impact of technological changes on the field of journalism.

Part II presents the analytical framework that will be constructed in order to examine the questions arising from these gaps in the literature. The first two sections offer a discussion of field theory, as espoused by Pierre Bourdieu, and Howard Becker’s social world theory. The third section argues that by combining field theory and social world theory, as proposed by Roger Dickinson, a more comprehensive, practice-based analysis will be made possible.

2.1 Background: The Political Economy of the Media in Nigeria

In Nigeria, broadcast stations are predominantly owned by the government and always influenced by the immensely wealthy, who have partisan political and economic agendas and interests (Golding, 1977). In certain cases, the managers are merely frontmen for the real owners, who may be foreigners (Oyovbaire, 2001). The media in Nigeria rarely operates independently of its proprietors and owners. Onoja (1992) observes how the late Chief M. K. O. Abiola put his newspaper, the *National Concord*, in the service of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), which was then the ruling party in the country. Initially, the paper was used for propaganda to support the proposed policies and programmes of the NPN, but when Abiola did not win the presidential election in 1993, the newspaper immediately changed its editorial policy, serving to launch attacks on other political parties. In other words, it assumed the role of 'opposition' press.

The profession of journalism in Nigeria is divided into clearly defined professional groups, where most practitioners, while all formally identifying as journalists, adhere to informal structures that cater to the specific interests of each group. Traditionally, journalists in Nigeria see themselves as belonging to different occupational groups - reporters, editors, and proprietors. The latter are usually not actively engaged in the day-to-day routine of a traditional journalist, but maintain their own occupational group, the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) to cater to their interests. The other two groups, belong to the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), which cater to the reporters and editors respectively. These two groups – i.e. reporters and editors - are the focus of this study. Ayedun-Aluma (2016) argues that this structural differentiation implies the recognition of distinctions within the workforce of journalism and the establishment of a hierarchy among them, which inevitably creates spaces for tension between, for example, editors as managers and reporters as workers. This structural differentiation carries with it corresponding differences in terms of engagement with new media: "differential access to new media, differential needs for new media, and differential uses and impacts of new media" (Ayedun-Aluma, 2016: 10). This structural alignment invariably affects the difference in perception of how the journalist mediates and navigates through socioeconomic and structural milieu in the course of news production.

Nigeria's media landscape appears to be pluralistic yet polarised, at least, given its history under successive military juntas where the press was suppressed (Oyovbaire, 2001; Ayedun-Aluma, 2016). The pluralism of the Nigerian media is mediated by the monopolistic worldview of the propertied class. Oyovbaire (2001) argues that this is evident in most socio-political programmes and that television commentaries are not objective in their coverage of events and analyses of political issues. Thus, the nature of news production in Nigeria is reflective of the political and economic motivations behind it, revealing its conservative character and commitment to furthering the interests of the propertied class:

The increasing problems of social classes and class formation, increasing poverty and pauperization of the Nigerian social formation, mass unemployment of even graduates from tertiary institutions, ... do not usually attract media attention to mobilize and build popular consciousness against them or to resolve them. The wretched of the earth are yet to be a subject matter... (Oyovbaire, 2001: 22).

Although 2001 is a long time ago in terms of the state of technology, the situation in Nigeria in terms of the interests that govern the media remains the same today. The impact of African politics on news production is often profound, and as politics change, so does the way in which newsrooms motivate their employees. One of the underlying aspects of this is that members of staff need to ensure that they have a high level of financial support from their organisation that protects them from the corrupt politicians who may seek to influence their work (Mudhai, 2011). Within the African economy, different class structures and economic backgrounds of journalists may also contribute to the 'process' of news production, engaging with and reporting on societal issues as part of their daily work.

According to a recent PayScale report, a journalist in the UK earns, between £15,191 and £39,858 (PayScale 2015) while a Nigerian journalist, as a junior reporter with one of the most prestigious newspapers in the country, headquartered in Abuja, earns between N70,000 and N900,000 (£70-£139) per month. While some 'high-flyers' pay about N1500,000 (£245), at a conversion rate of N1 to 0.0035GBP, the average journalist in Nigeria may not earn enough to pay for his basic needs¹, making Nigerian journalists particularly vulnerable to attempts at bribery. This happens in

¹ As at June 2018, the average pay for a Journalist is £23,152 annually. The exchange rate for the pound as at June 2018 was at N481.53 to £1. So, £23,152 a year is equivalent to N11,148,389. However, N150,000 which is at the top end is £311.51 per month which gives N1,800,000 a year which converts to £3,738.08

many countries, compromising the ethical standards of reporters and editors, undermining the independence of the media, and betraying the trust of the people. Some journalists rationalize the practice on the grounds that media owners exploit them by offering meagre salaries and poor working conditions, claiming that bribes cover some of the costs incurred as work-related expenses. However, media ethicists and watchdog organisations strongly denounce the practice, arguing that these bribes are explicitly intended to influence journalists and impair their ability to cover news. In this way, an economic issue faced by journalists raises serious questions in terms of objectivity and fairness in reporting.

The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) guides and regulates the different kinds of broadcast ownership. Irrespective of the ownership structure, all subscribe to certain professional values and ethics, and the NBC Code established in 1992 states that fairness and balance must be observed at all times in the coverage of news in television (NBC 2003). Likewise, the constitution of Nigeria bestows a social responsibility upon the press to function as the watchdogs of society, with specific emphasis on holding public officers accountable to the people (Ayedun-Aluma, 2016).

Paul, Singh and John (2013) also observe that the media has a major role to play in society. The media are so powerful in society that it has been referred to as ‘the fourth estate’ of the realm - the other three being nobility, clergy, and commons (Schultz, 1998). Owen-Ibie (1994) observes that, based on the normative function of the media, journalists should:

Inform the citizenry of what goes on in government, which, in a way, keeps rulers in check. Also, the media should be reporting on and promoting discussion of ideas, opinions and truths towards the end of social refinement; acting as a nation’s ‘bulletin board’ for information and mirroring the society and its people just the way they are, thus exposing the heroes and the villains (cited in Sanusi et al., 2015: 11-12).

As has been noted, the press' accountability to the people is an express proviso of the Nigerian Constitution (Act 85 of 1992). This, no doubt, is an enormous responsibility for the media, only befitting of its prestige as the fourth estate of the realm. However, what is not obvious is the

implicit burden it carries, i.e. the media's responsibility to its citizen, and to the government in keeping faith with its function (Owen-Ibie, 1994):

To the audience, they owe correct news reportage, analysis and editorialising; to the government, they owe constructive criticism, a relay of popular opinion and adequate feedback from the populace; to their proprietors, they owe the survival of the media organisation as a business venture as well as a veritable source of education, enlightenment and entertainment, and; to themselves, they owe fulfilment in their calling, satisfaction and an entire success story. When any of these "judges" of journalistic responsibility is shunted, accountability is dented and automatically, responsibility is affected adversely" (cited in Sanusi et al., 2015: 12).

The journalist is placed in a delicate position of 'serving' four masters, creating an implicit struggle among interests. It is inevitable that sometimes, different interests will be in opposition to one another, which could affect the quality of the news.

From the previously mentioned problems, it is obvious that the mode of ownership, the different roles of journalists (editor, proprietor, reporters) and financial factors affecting news production and the working conditions of journalists together make up a complex of social forces influencing news production. Briggs and Burke argue that the "media need to be viewed as a system; a system in perpetual change in which different elements play greater or smaller roles" (2003: 5). This systematic conception of the media in society and, more importantly, highlights the presence of different independent but interrelated parts working together toward the overall wellbeing of the whole. This understanding of the media as a complex, not necessarily harmonious, system is central to the theoretical framework guiding this study.

2.2 Digital Technology and the Rise of 'Citizen Journalism'

Technological advancements which combine several media into one are significantly altering the way in which the media today operate. Tapscott (1998) notes that "the traditional media of the fourth estate are converging with computing and telecommunications to create nothing less than a new medium of human communication with the [inter]net at its heart (Folayan, 2004 cited in Sanusi et al., 2015:12). This, according to Folayan, is expanding the sphere of influence of reporters and editors by opening up "new ways of storytelling and... the potential to provide outlets

for non-traditional means of news and information” (2004: 1). In addition, it opens up space for ‘non-traditional journalists’ to participate in journalism in both the production and dissemination of the news.

Stuart Allan (2010) describes the revolution taking place in the news industry as “dynamic” and offers a perspective from Rupert Murdoch “that technology-savvy young people are becoming increasingly likely to turn to the web as their news medium of choice” (Allan 2010:143). Seizing the opportunities offered them by digital technology, citizens are taking advantage of the power that digital media offers in optimising communication, enhancing interactivity and bridging the distance between space and time through what is becoming an increasingly global phenomenon. In some parts of the world, this has led, beyond social and interpersonal interaction, to mass participation in information production, dissemination and consumption. ‘Mass journalism’ or ‘citizen journalism’ has been deployed to challenge the monopoly of news production by traditional journalists, and has already made waves in Africa. Manuel Castells (2007) describes the phenomenon in which the speed, interactivity and multimodal nature of the digital media is fast shifting us from a ‘journalist-centric’ era to a ‘mass-oriented’ and ‘self-driven’ reportorial era, characterised by a massive surge of ordinary citizens emerging to take control of how everyday issues affecting their everyday lives are viewed and represented in the news domain. He termed this the emerging phenomenon ‘mass self-communication’, noting that it is characteristically “self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception by many that communicate with many” (2007: 248). ‘Citizen journalism’, Castells contends, will signal the emergence of a “public space, rooted in communication, [and] is not predetermined in its form by any kind of historical fate or technological necessity” (2007: 259).

The rise in citizen journalism has led to attempts by journalists to strengthen the boundaries of their professional field and bar ‘outsiders’ from claiming membership to it. They view themselves as superior to citizen journalists, who may only provide a story if they happen to be at the scene of an event. Lewis, Kaufhold and Lasorsa (2010) investigated perceptions of citizen journalists among community newspaper editors in the United States, finding that the editors were concerned. The researchers explained, “[i]n the cases in which community editors guarded against citizen

participation, it was overwhelmingly because of concerns over the quality and integrity of contributions” (2010: 13). Similarly, Ornebring (2013) studied journalists’ opinions of citizen journalists in six European nations, finding that journalists attempted to differentiate themselves based their expertise, duty, and commitment to honesty and accuracy.

On the other hand, Stuart Allan (2007) examined the integration of mass participation, in the form of stories and eyewitness accounts, with professional journalistic reports on the London bombing of July 2005. For him, “the spontaneous actions of ordinary people compelled to adopt the role of a journalist in order to bear witness to what was happening during the London bombings” which eventually dominated the mainstream media, is a clear demonstration of ‘mass self-communication’ (2007: 3). Londoners, he argues, took charge of the story and narrated their experiences as they witnessed the events, and this formed the basis of news for both established media and blogs in an unprecedented manner. This mass reporting challenged the traditional journalistic monopoly and signified a major departure from journalist-driven news. The effect of this massive response from the people to have their experience heard, wittingly or unwittingly, expanded the practice of journalism to what Allan referred to as “participatory journalism”, a situation where “‘everyday people’ are able to take charge of their stories” (2007: 18).

A number of scholars have specifically discussed the emergence of citizen journalism in African countries under similar circumstances: “[t]he role of citizen journalists has particularly been highlighted in times of crisis: in Kenya, during the violent election aftermath 2007, while social media were also used to incite riots, bloggers documented human rights abuses” (Mutsvairo, Columbus, & Leijendekker, 2010: 2). However, the practice of citizen journalism in Africa is quite different to its practice in Western culture. My reference to ‘Africa’ as a whole is a very loose generalisation as the situation in various African countries is not entirely homogenous or similar to Nigeria. However, even though there are largely similar conditions with reference to the similarities in colonial histories, amalgamation of different zones and poor conditions of living, the generalisation is in reference to the practice in the West which is markedly different. In North America, for example, the number of cell phone users is in the hundreds of millions, and almost everyone has access to multiple sources of information. North America is highly urbanised and news stories tend to reflect urban views and issues. However, in Africa, cell phone and laptop users tend to be individuals who are relatively wealthy and better educated. As such, citizen journalists

tend to come from a less representative, elite subsection of African cultures (Mutsvairo, Columbus, & Leijendekker, 2010: 4), and therefore the emergence of these ‘citizen journalists’ cannot be said to represent the same level of ‘democratisation’ of the media as elsewhere.

Ezeibe and Nwagwu (2009: 65-66) argue that the phenomenal improvement in digital media has led to a situation where almost everyone is a journalist of some sort. They argue that this development gradually erodes and debases conventional journalism, as professional journalism dissolves into the public domain. Though the potential of citizen journalism is high given its popularity, especially among the young, they argue that its full potential is yet to be realised. However, the events of the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria, where a significant proportion of young people actively engaged in monitoring the conduct and processes of the election, by uploading pictures and videos of malpractices and irregularities at polling stations, has been hailed as a turning point (Vanguard, April 6, 2015). Traditional journalists, on the other hand, have decried this intrusion into their domain and the obliteration of the cherished values of their institution (see chapter six on changing identities for journalists).

2.3 New Media Technologies in Africa

Coronel notes that necessity of a free press to democracy is deeply ingrained within democratic theory and practice: “[a]s early as the 17th century, Enlightenment theorists had argued that publicity and openness provide the best protection against tyranny and the excesses of arbitrary rule” (n.d.: 4). Though this discussion clearly refers to a longstanding tradition of thought within European as opposed to African societies, it also holds true within the context of Africa. This belief can be clearly identified as a strong influence on much of the literature exploring the impact of new media on African nations, which is predominantly concerned with the impact of these developments on the process of democratic consolidation.

The proliferation of Internet-enabled mobile phones throughout Africa that has occurred in recent years has led to an increase in the access to and use of new media technologies within the continent. The unreliable electricity supply and landline infrastructure in many places previously dissuaded some Africans from using computers to access the internet, but the popularisation of smartphones

has meant that they can now do so via mobile phones. This has also led to the rise of domestically produced new media, with African new media now challenging more traditional forms of media (Tumusiime, 2016).

Studies indicate that African Internet users spend considerable amounts of time on social media platforms. These platforms have experienced substantial growth within the continent in recent years (Essoungou, 2010). Blogging is also becoming increasingly popular amongst African millennials, especially within Nigeria. Young Africans are now using digital media platforms as valuable sources of both information and entertainment (Otlhabanye, 2017). With these developments come enormous changes in the production and consumption of news. Within this context, numerous scholars have begun to explore the impact of these changes in the production and dissemination of news, with particular emphasis on the effects of these developments for Nigerian democracy.

2.3.1 Accountability and Transparency of Political Institutions

Exposing corruption

Although the news within Africa is still very much dominated by foreign news companies like CNN and the BBC (Tumusiime, 2016), Einashe argues that the popularisation of new media throughout the continent has democratised the media to at least some extent and provided Africans with the opportunity to report their own stories. This has meant that the narrative about Africa is no longer as extensively controlled by Western media firms that focus predominantly upon tragedies, such as outbreaks of disease and war (Tumusiime, 2016).

According to (Tumusiime, 2016), new media within Africa offer an opportunity to challenge state authorities and expose corruption. Shinkafi (2016) notes that the fact that individuals can remain anonymous on social media sites has meant that Nigerians can express political opinions on these sites without fear of repercussions. It has also facilitated a means of reporting wrongdoing with less risk to the individual who brings it to light. The Nigerian anticorruption organisation *Enough is Enough* has emphasised the utility of anonymous reporting via social media to report corruption. Ajayi and Adesote (2015) note that social media has also been instrumental in creating popular campaigns against electoral corruption. For example, they note that the prompt reporting of corrupt activities via YouTube, Twitter and Facebook plays a

major role in the attempt to consolidate Nigeria's democracy. It effectively transforms citizens into investigative journalists, creating publicly available reports on corrupt practices. Akani (2017) likewise suggests that social media provide more opportunities for regular citizens within Nigeria to report on the activities of the government, which he claims is likely to make its actions more transparent.

However, the authors have pointed out that many corrupt officials who have been exposed via new media have not actually been prosecuted as a result. This suggests that the effectiveness of these media as a force for democracy may be overstated. Nevertheless, they still increase the degree of transparency that exists surrounding issues of corruption (Ajayu & Adesote, 2015). It should be noted that the frequent failure of mainstream media in Nigeria to hold government officials accountable for their actions and report on wrongdoing is partly due to fear of the repercussions. The murder or assault of journalists for expressing controversial opinions is relatively commonplace. There are also laws remaining from the colonial era that place constraints upon freedom of speech, meaning that journalists can also expect legal issues if they touch on certain issues within Nigerian society (Malu, 2016).

Exposing human rights abuses

Citizen journalism via new media has also been argued to benefit the consolidation of democracy in African nations by providing a platform to expose egregious human rights abuses. Videos can be uploaded to platforms such as YouTube, making it impossible to deny abuse (Banda, 2014). Such recordings can be done by anyone who owns a mobile phone. Even though a large percentage of the Nigerian population own a mobile phone, new media become a powerful platform empowering the people to fight back against violent repression. The possession of a mobile phone elevates them a tier higher than those without but there still remains the the issue of high data packages and poor network coverage. Banda offers the example of an incident in which a woman was recorded being beaten by naval officers in Nigeria for failing to move her car out of their way. Bloggers used videos of this content to make this event publicly known. As a result of this, the government was eventually forced to take action against the perpetrators (Banda, 2014).

Accountability in the public eye

Dare (2011) has noted that many new media platforms in Nigeria view themselves as filling the accountability gap that has been left by the country's mainstream media. He points out that one of the roles of journalism has always been to demand government accountability and expose human rights violations, and that citizen journalists who make use of online media embody this notion of the journalist. Many of Nigeria's residents, he notes, have lost faith in the notion that the country's mainstream media are neutral in their reporting, which has paved the way for citizen journalists to become prominent.

Oladebo (2016) has highlighted a number of different ways in which she believes the use of new media technologies in Nigeria is acting as a force for "bottom-up democratisation" through increasing accountability. She characterises this as the bringing about of democracy by the general population, as opposed to political figures. First, she argues, new media draws immediate attention to inconsistencies within government policy. She points out that the attention that such media brought to the *Occupy Nigeria* movement was instrumental in exposing the inconsistencies involved in the nation's policies of fuel subsidies (Oladebo, 2016). Second, Oladebo notes that new media in Nigeria facilitate the open identification of public officials who are responsible for specific policies so that they can be targeted with questions and petitions. By chiding the government into establishing a system of accountability for its actions, she argues, new media are bringing the nation closer to a state of consolidated democracy. This would be difficult, by contrast, to imagine in the case of traditional media, which do not allow for anonymity, and suffer heavy pressure from the rich and powerful (as discussed above).

James (2015) likewise sees the possibilities offered by new media in terms of holding the government accountable: while newspapers tend to provide nation's official stances on an issue, new media have a higher degree of freedom with regard to their reporting. The anonymity that this type of media provides means that the government is no longer able to dictate the point of view that is put across within the press to the same extent as before (James, 2015).

Increasing the public trust in elections

Ajayi and Adesote (2015) have also highlighted the role of citizen journalism via new media in reducing tension following elections. They have pointed out that there can sometimes be a delay when reporting the results via traditional media, which is a source of considerable tension and can

lead to post-election violence. However, new media allow for information to be shared more quickly. This can significantly lessen the levels of tension in the immediate aftermath of an election. This, in turn, is likely to increase citizens' faith in the democratic process and reduce their fear of participating in elections. According to Suntai and Targema (2017), rapid reporting on the election outcomes by citizen journalists via new media also helps to prevent corruption. Having a widespread record of the election results early on means that politicians cannot doctor the results at a later date, and therefore helps to increase the possibility of fair and credible elections, which constitute one of the cornerstones of a fully functional, consolidated democracy.

2.3.2 Engaging and empowering the people

In addition to the above-mentioned effects of new media and the citizen journalist on political institutions in terms of transparency and accountability, many scholars also see the impact of new media in its ability to engage and empower the people. New media, they argue, creates space for new voices and issues, provides access to independent information which increases the public trust and so stimulates engagement and participation in the democratic process.

Increasing political participation

According to Dale (2011), new media in Nigeria have increased the extent to which citizens can debate politics, further contributing to the quality of democracy within the country. New media, he argues, provide a new voice to those who might have otherwise remained voiceless. James (2015) expresses a similar perspective, pointing out that engaging in political activities in person is often a risky activity in Nigeria, where political gatherings can sometimes turn violent. However, people can be anonymous when using online media, which removes this risk and increases participation in politics.

James further notes that new media also allow for the participation of those who want to engage in political discussions, but lack the financial resources to do so. The Internet provides a cost-effective means of expressing an opinion, and can even be used as a tool to facilitate real-world political gatherings. For example, *Occupy Nigeria*, a protest movement against the government removing fuel subsidies, was organised via the social media platform Twitter using the hashtag “#occupyNigeria” (James, 2015). The *Occupy Nigeria* protest, James argues,

increased the extent to which the Nigerian government realised that it needed to engage with its citizens via social media and take their views into consideration. For this reason, he suggests, numerous politicians within the nation are now active on Twitter and Facebook. He also points out that new media serve as a platform for information exchanges about political candidates, which acts as a catalyst for public involvement in democratic processes.

In addition to these points, Salawu (2013) claims that new media have deepened democratic culture within Nigeria by narrowing the previously wide gap between the government and the wider population in terms of access to information. This, he argues, is creating a critical number of politically informed citizens, increasing Nigeria's progress towards democratic consolidation. This, he suggests, is responsible for the increasing political engagement among sections of society that might not otherwise have expressed an interest in being actively involved in political movements.

A platform for the voice of the people

Suntai and Targema (2017) have noted that the popularity of new media in Nigeria has made political figures pay specific attention to public opinion on key issues by monitoring social media platforms. The increasing interest taken by politicians in what the public thinks could be argued to be a force for democracy. It suggests that the masses have a new tool for making their voices heard by the government. Oladepo (2016) similarly notes that new media have created additional channels to communicate on topics related to health and social issues. This, she argues, enables groups that are particularly in need to be targeted more effectively. A true democracy is one in which all members of society are treated equally, so this too can be argued to represent a step towards consolidated democracy.

These developments also signify that the government now has a means of gauging the dominant views within the population more easily. This means that – in theory – it can more effectively implement policies aimed at representing the wishes of the people. However, this does not necessarily mean that government figures will act upon their findings. It might be the case that they simply wish to remain cognisant about public attitudes and beliefs whilst possessing no genuine desire to use them as a force for change.

Independent information

The proliferation of new media in Africa has made information about political parties that is free of propaganda more readily available. Nwagbo, Uzodinma and Chidozie (2017) claim that this is the case in Nigeria. They point out that information that is presented as news and put out via traditional media has often been compromised by political parties seeking to manipulate the message conveyed to serve a specific agenda. Traditional media are also, at times, subject to censorship, which restricts the capacity of such publications to engage in free speech. New media are less affected by such pressures, meaning that they can facilitate the transmission of less biased sources of information to enable voters to develop an informed perspective about each of the potential candidates in the run up to elections (Nwagbo et al., 2017).

Banda (2014) has pointed out that digital media practices also allow professional journalists to create articles without having to get them past editors first, which as such may not be subject to the same levels of censorship or control. By removing the middleman, professional journalists can get their work to the public without an additional gatekeeper, which can be argued to help democratise the journalistic process. It prevents journalists from fearing that their work will be unduly censored or shortened by editors, enhancing their freedom to present articles exactly how they want them to appear (Banda, 2014).

The belief that new media will act as a counterbalance to biased perspectives put across by political parties hinges upon the idea that the Nigerian public will act upon the information that it is presented with. However, such perspectives have since been criticised (Shaw 1979; Gitlin 1978) for overestimating the impact of media upon behaviour. Although new media will likely go some way towards creating an informed voting public, it is possible that some will retain their old approaches to the electoral process and fail to act upon the new information that they have received.

Ojo 2015 conducted interviews with Nigerian citizens to explore what they believed to be the effect of social media on their political involvement. He found a pervasive belief among respondents that social media had increased the amount of information about politics that they were capable of accessing. The participants also believed that social media reduced the opacity surrounding political parties within the nation and reduced tension surrounding elections (Ojo,

2015). Given that this tension could potentially put some people off voting, these results suggest that social media has had a significant part to play in Nigeria's journey towards a consolidated democracy.

Increasing participation & engagement of the young

Ruskell (2016) claims that one of the main ways in which new media aid democracy is by offering new means of engaging and involving young voters. She claims that traditional media have become antiquated, losing the interest of young people, and views new media technology as a means of connecting with them. There is indeed evidence for the claim that new media has increased the extent to which young people within Nigeria vote. Mustapha, Gbonegun and Mustapha (2016) conducted qualitative surveys among Nigerian university students aimed at gauging the effect social media has on them. They believed that social media was making them more likely to vote within national elections. The researchers argue that this effect is due to the fact that social media is unlike traditional forms of media: there is no gatekeeper for the transmission of information. This causes more young people within the nation to engage in political discussions, thus acting as a catalyst for interest in elections. It also means that more people are informed about politics, and hence have a stronger desire to participate in democratic processes (Mustapha et al. 2016).

Downsides

Suntai and Targema (2017) have noted that new media, while creating opportunities to move towards a consolidated democracy in Nigeria, also poses threats to it. Nigeria is a country that is characterised by profound divisions between the predominantly Muslim north and mostly Christian south, something that has been a major source of conflict in the past. New media are frequently used as a platform for region-based hate speech, in which the citizens of northern Nigeria espouse their hatred for the citizens of the south of the nation and vice versa (Suntai & Targema, 2017). Seen from this perspective, new media have created space for hateful perspectives that would previously have gone unexpressed. The tensions created by such speech, they argue, can easily shake Nigeria's fragile democracy. They point out that it has created the threat of violence at elections, especially during the 2015 elections. The fact that anyone can use new media platforms to spread their message also creates the possibility for groups that are opposed to the

democratically elected government to spread their message. Suntai and Targema note that, in the case of the Independent People of Biafra, social media is enabling this separatist movement to gain more power each day. Whereas such a group would be excluded from journalistic support in traditional media, it is free to spread its message via articles online, which amplifies the strength of a distinctly anti-democratic group within Nigerian society.

Suntai and Targema further note that new media are occasionally manipulated by politicians in an attempt to spread misinformation. The misinformation and hate speech online by politicians created threats of violence which, they argue, in the 2015 elections, which could have led to conflict. This suggests that citizen journalism, far from always acting as a counterbalance to propaganda spread via traditional media within the nation, can itself become a source of propaganda. However, Banda (2014) has noted that citizen journalism via blogs sometimes also manages to put misinformation spread on social media right. He points out that this has in the past prevented violent incidents from occurring in Africa, indicating that new media can also help to quell potential violence stemming from false information which might otherwise lead to conflicts that could endanger the democratic system.

While many scholars have focused on the impact that new media has had on Nigerian democracy, either by providing channels to enhance accountability and report abuse of power, or by engaging Nigerian people by providing them with reliable information, another set of literature explores the advent of new media in Nigeria from a different perspective. While the literature discussed above offers a valuable perspective on the possibilities offered by new media by virtue of the factors that *distinguish* it from traditional media – speed, anonymity, democratization of access and use – it may be objected that this literature treats new media as an entirely distinct field of journalistic production, a compliment to or replacement of traditional journalism, and thereby neglects the interplay occurring between the two. The following section explores the literature that deals with the ways in which African newsrooms have engaged with and made use of new media to enhance or alter their journalism practices.

2.4 African Newsrooms' use of New Media

New media is not only a new source of news production and dissemination; it also constitutes a source of content for traditional media. Content that is initially made available via new media platforms is often incorporated into traditional media reports put together in African newsrooms (Tumusiime, 2016). Einashe, quoting South African journalist Justin Arenstein, notes that “[w]hen there's a big story in Africa now, the tendency is to look out for local... bloggers for [perspective]” (cited in Tumusiime, 2016). This indicates that traditional media actors look to users of new media platforms to provide a local perspective of the issues that they are writing about. As such, it suggests that new media has a significant impact not only on the ways in which content is produced, but also on the content itself, increasing the focus upon the narratives of actors who live in the areas that the stories take place in.

However, many scholars note that this democratising effect and the inclusion of local perspectives is limited for a number of reasons. Internet access is far more prevalent amongst more affluent members of Nigerian society (Salawu, 2013). This indicates that by looking to new media creators for perspectives, African newsrooms are giving the perspectives of the affluent a greater degree of prominence than those of the poor and underprivileged. Salawu (2013) further notes that new media are more popular in urban areas of Nigeria than in rural areas. This suggests that by incorporating opinions expressed in such media in their news reports, African newsrooms are also privileging urban perspectives over their rural counterparts. Rather than representing democratic participation in media narratives within Africa, it may instead appear that this practice foregrounds the perspectives of an elite group.

Banda (2014) also notes that illiteracy excludes some Africans from participation in citizen journalism via some forms of new media. With over half of the population of Nigeria being illiterate (Idoko, 2017), new media within the nation can hardly be said to be inclusive of the average citizen in the country. Although new media use seems to democratise the media to some extent, there are still clear limitations on the degree to which it does this, with written media, such

as blogs, remaining inaccessible. However, it is notable that those who cannot read or write are still able to contribute to video blogging sites, which do not necessarily rely upon the written word, thereby creating an avenue for this group to engage in news production in a way that would otherwise not be accessible to them. Moreover, Ogola (2015) has pointed out that some African newspapers have implemented deliberate measures aimed at using new media to ensure that marginalised voices are heard. They have established blogs that include content by these individuals as an adjunct to their main publications. However, these platforms have generally only had limited success (Ogola, 2015).

Akinfemisoye (2015) is likewise critical of attempts by traditional media platforms to incorporate voices from new media, noting that while some Nigerian newspapers claim to be providing a platform for citizen journalism using new media, this is actually an illusion. He provides the example of the *Vanguard*'s soliciting of citizen reports for an interactive online community. He posits that this was done to give the impression that the newspaper is democratising its content, whereas in reality, this was solely aimed at driving traffic to the paper's website. Indeed, a senior editor at the *Vanguard* admitted this was the motivation behind the initiative. He stated that it was "simply part of the gizmo to drive traffic to our website" (Akinfemisoye, 2015: 176). This highlights the fact that the paper made no genuine effort to involve the public in its reporting process in any meaningful way.

James (2015) argues that in addition to using new media content, newsrooms in Africa have also started using approaches to news that are typically associated with new media. For example, traditional media have taken on one of the characteristic and potentially one of the most appealing aspects of new media: interactivity. Nigerian's most prominent satellite television channel *Channels TV*, he notes, has established an interactive application that enables eyewitnesses to report events. Moreover, many Nigerian newspapers now upload their content online, incorporating online videos and other media typically associated with new media into their output, in response to the popularity of new media (Obalanlege, 2015).

Social media is also now used within African newsrooms to interact with their audiences to a higher degree than before. The relationship between journalists and their target audiences is no longer subject to a strict hierarchy, but is now far more horizontal. There is. Ogola (2015) notes, a mutual dialogue between both sides, with a spread of power between the two parties, and the

majority of African news organisations now use social media pages to develop their audiences, distribute their stories and receive feedback.

New media's influence on the content produced through traditional media is not limited to the local perspectives it adds; it can drive the identification and selection of stories reported on and themes investigated. Akinfemisoye (2015) has noted that journalists in Nigerian newsrooms devote time to checking new media websites during the course of putting together their news reports, in order to gain a feel for the hot topics of the moment. They also use these websites as a source of news, particularly those maintained and run by Nigerians elsewhere in the world.

Given the claim, discussed above, that new media sources in Africa are often less biased than their traditional media counterparts, it would be logical to assume that by basing stories on them, traditional media journalists also reduce the degree of bias that exists in their stories. However, in practice, this is not actually the case. Akinfemisoye (2015) notes that Nigerian journalists tend to only appropriate social media content that aligns with their pre-existing editorial positions. Nevertheless, there is evidence that journalists have used content appropriated from new media to criticise those in power (Akinfemisoye, 2015), which indicates that it is still utilised as a force for free speech in some cases.

2.5 Technology and Society

In this section I examine media technology from three dominant points of view: technological determinism – a theoretical disposition that holds technology as the driver of (change in) society; appropriation or domestication – the belief that technology is what we make it and what we can do with it; and, finally, the social shaping of technology – a theoretical position which holds that users of technology are not passive recipients but active agents in technological and broader societal transformations.

Technological Determinism

One way of understanding media is to look at it as though it has a life of its own. This typically assumes that technological change in society operates on an independent plane and its impact is *sui generis*. In media studies, this understanding is largely influenced by McLuhan's "the medium is the message" thesis. The thesis in this tradition is that the media is all-pervasive and its influence on all aspects of society is overarching (McLuhan 1964; Postman 1970; Innis 1972). More specifically, Postman (2000) argues that media does not only give character to society but shapes and determines it. For him, the media is a medium through which society is structured, where a medium is taken as "a technology within which a culture grows and gives form to a culture's politics, social organisation and habitual ways of thinking" (1970). In this conception of the media, the media has all the outward trappings of a dictator, dictating the course of social interactions, with the audience having little or no control over how it comes into being, or what it consumes. It assumes that technological innovation, production, use – in one word, change – occurs of its own accord, without any active interference from outside. The implication is thus that users of technology have to cut their feet to fit their shoes. This is another way of saying that users have to adapt to technology rather than shape and adapt technology to their own needs.

As asserted by MacKenzie and Wajcman (1996: 2), a review of the literature on technology reveals one main thing: "technology matters", alongside "[i]t matters not just to the material condition of our lives and to our biological and physical environment – that much is obvious – but to the way we live together socially". However, 'technicists', those who believe in the overwhelming control and use of technology to bring about change in society, insist that technology is the 'black-box' of

society, the space from which social, economic and political patterns evolve. Technological determinists assume that social adjustment, and indeed, social change, is predicated upon technological progress. This suggests that not only are social actions influenced by technology but that technology necessarily requires people to (re)adjust or be left in oblivion. Scolari captures this determining or controlling effect of media technology on society by observing that “communication technologies create environments that affect the people who use them” (2012: 207), with Mabweazara concurring that “digital technologies are changing the informational needs of citizens and newsrooms (alongside their journalists) are being forced to adapt in various ways” (2013: 2).

Technological determinism is one of the oldest attitudes towards technology and one which many, even critical, social commentators would rather deal with at a face level. It holds two main creeds as sacred:

1. That the nature of technologies and the direction of change are unproblematic or pre-determined (perhaps subject to an inner ‘technical logic’ or ‘economic imperative’);
2. That technology had necessary and determinate ‘impacts’ upon work, upon economic life and upon society as a whole; technological change thus produces social and organisational change (William and Edge 1996: 865).

It emphasises the imperative of technology as a major force of organisational change while downplaying the complex interplay of social and economic factors that constrain, and sometimes induce difficulties in technologies’ application, appropriation and implementation.

However, the inadequacies of the technicians’ view of new technology have been severely contested, calling for a more inclusive approach that touches on the varieties and complexities of factors that surround technological innovation, production and use:

As a simple cause-and-effect theory of historical change, technological determinism is at best an oversimplification. Changing technology will always be only one factor amongst many others; political, economic, cultural, and so on. If technology’s physical and biological effects are complex and contested matters (and, for example, the literature on perceptions of risk strongly suggests this), it would clearly be foolish to expect its social effects to be any simpler. A ‘hard’,

simple cause-and-effect technological determinism is not a good candidate as a theory of social change (MacKenzie and Wajcman 1996: 3).

They further observe that though the notion of hard technological determinism is difficult to sustain, it does not however rule out subtle effects or ‘soft determinism’. They contend: “to say that technology’s social effects are complex and contingent is not to say that it has *no* social effects” (ibid.: 4, emphasis added in the original).

The ‘Appropriationist’ Approach

This appropriationist approach derives its impetus from previous studies in media and communication which hold that technology’s usefulness is manifested in the context of its use (Miller 1984; Baudrillard 1988; Livingstone 2002; Silverstone 2006). Undoubtedly, technology matters, as it affects how things are done in society; but does this automatically suggest that we passively respond to how technology ‘becomes’ and how it acquires meaning in society? Rather than mere passive participation, society actively respond to technology and this is the crux of the domestication theory approach to new technologies. Here, new media is seen as a medium adopted and adapted to match specific spatio-temporal contexts, not one whose access automatically leads to use. As an approach to understand new media, it therefore stands in contrast to technological determinism. According to Livingstone (2002: 35), appropriation as an approach approbates “local practices of use which [it] develop[s] around a new object anchoring it within particular temporal, spatial and social relations”. Its emphasis is to mend or mould a medium for meeting and reflecting the local or domestic need of its, presumably, new environment; this is done with a view of making it (the medium) function more effectively. Thus appropriation in new media refers to the way users of new media evaluate, adopt, adapt and integrate it into their everyday routines (Carroll et al. 2003).

In an empirical study examining the impact of mobile phones in Latin America, Bar et al. (2007: 2) define appropriation as “the process through which mobile users go beyond adoption to make the technology their own and to embed it within social, economic and political practices”. They argue that appropriation is fundamentally political as it is predominantly a battle of configuration, one in which the users of technology try to reinvent it, even as they try to understand its residual

functions and technicalities. In other words, technology users are shapers who reconfigure it in a process of negotiation and renegotiation. It is political because it is an energetic attempt to exercise control over technology or better still, to ensure its reconfiguration for better serving local needs. Bar et al. further observe that this attempt to tweak technologies usually opens up a vista of possibilities that are not expressly associated with the world of new technologies.

However, appropriating a medium is not a certification of its effective functioning because “there is an awareness that domestication is not always successful” (Ling and Donner 2009: 18), and this stands out in this approach. Like Karl Popper’s falsification theory, the appropriation approach is consciously aware of its limitations, that is, not being a linear process but more importantly, it acknowledges that domesticating a medium does not necessarily guarantee its success. Rather, while attempting to make new technologies suitable for domestic use, some “users may reject or abandon the technologies” altogether due to lack of compatibility and or ‘failure’ to meet a desired end.

It is also important to note that while appropriation demonstrates how technology is adopted and adapted to meet local needs, this domestication of technology is not only shaped by users, but is also ultimately influenced by the social realities of society, of which the users are but micro entities. Put differently, the collective users of technology are society writ large and the individual control they exercise over technology is but a minute part of the social force that is expended over it. Therefore, while it would be inadequate to emphasise the collective over the individual, it is equally lopsided to emphasise the individual’s ability to shape technology at the detriment of social forces.

Social Shaping of Technology

We live in both social and technological worlds. In contrast to the common-sense understanding of technological development as the product of individual ingenuity, scholars have long stressed the significance of social forces in driving technological advances. As early as 1922, William Ogburn and Dorothy Thomas, commenting on the notion of invention and the use of technology as a product of individual ingenuity, argue that technology is an inevitable part of social progress:

“Far from being the result of unpredictable flashes of inspiration, inventions were *inevitable*. Once the necessary constituent cultural elements are present – most importantly including component technologies – there is a sense in which an invention *must* occur. Given the boat and the steam engine, is not the steamboat inevitable?” (Ogburn and Thomas 1922: 90, cited in MacKenzie and Wajcman 1999: 10).

While technology (or technological precedent) shapes technology, this is not the only or overriding influence, but rather constitutes a component of a complex social system. Technological invention and use spring from an existing vacuum in society. Understanding unmet needs drives innovation, and this is a social phenomenon as much as a technological one. Technologies do not just spring into being: they are socially inspired, rather than merely appropriated or amended by society once in existence. They embody potential use and it is this use that is modified and extended to accommodate changes beyond the initial design. The technological force behind technology “is never merely technical; its real-world functioning has technical, economic, organisational, political, and even cultural aspects” (Nye 1990). From this, we can conclude:

Largely it is a matter of the minute and painstaking modification of existing technology. It is a creative and imaginative process, but that imagination lies above all in seeing ways in which existing devices are improved, and in extending the scope of techniques successful in one area into new areas... New technology, then, typically emerges not from flashes of disembodied inspiration but from existing technology, by a process of gradual change to, and new combinations of, that existing technology (MacKenzie and Wajcman 1999: 11-12).

MacKenzie and Wajcman further argue that even we encounter an unprecedented ‘shift’, or technological revolution, it often turns out that the ‘revolution’ is actually a slow process – a summation of accumulated bits and pieces of individual, collective and social efforts. In this way, new technology does not just appear, but “evolves from the perceived needs of society, and encapsulates its use and meanings from what we build around it. It provides the basis of devices and techniques to be modified, and is a rich set of intellectual resources available for imaginative use in new settings” (1999: 12). Thus, technology, more than just a precondition of new technology, is the product of societal forces that caters to and addresses perceived needs, and as such, society actively shapes the use and development of technology. Put differently, rather than technology propelling itself, it is propelled by the interplay of active forces in society that contribute to how it is shaped, spurring technological development.

There is broad agreement among scholars regarding the social shaping of technology that what is often referred to as ‘technical’ is never really technical, but rather, that the ‘technical’ is another way of expressing the ‘social’ in a non-social field (Williams and Edge 1996). Consequently, approaches that see technology as either a self-driving force propelling changes in society, or on the other hand those that understand technology as having an impact only insofar as people decide to make use of it, are limited. When applied to the case of journalism in particular, scholars are of the opinion that a more nuanced approach is necessary. Cottle argues that researchers interested in how technology is influencing journalism in Africa “need to examine the fast-changing ecology of news, its changing industrialised and technological basis and its response to the changing structuration of society” (2000: 432). According to Conboy (2013), to better understand digital media, “[a]n assessment of journalism and technology needs insight from both the practice of journalism as well as a general awareness of broader cultural trends and how technology forms part of social history”(Conboy 2013, cited in Mabweazara 2013:4). Hays (1994: 66) argues that this approach helps to propel movement beyond the limitations of either the ‘technicists’, with their unequivocal belief in the efficacy of a self-directing technology within society, and the ‘appropriationists’, who believe that digital media can be adopted and applied to match contextual realities. A ‘social shaping’ approach to digital media moves beyond appropriation and offers insight into the deeper socioeconomic and political factors at play in the “cultural and relational milieu” (Hays, 1994: 66).

The social shaping of technology (SST) comprises a broad array of literature sharing a common position that opposes the notion that technological innovation propels itself; in its more subtle form, the notion can be reframed as though technology is the basis of technological innovation – that is, subsequent technological development, appropriation, modification and use are the logical progression and outcome of previous technologies. Social shaping theorists, however, reject the different guises of this linear notion of technology. MacKenzie and Wajcman (1999: 2) summarise the position of technological determinists, of which social shaping stands in contradistinction, thus: “technological change is often seen as something that follows its own logic – something we may welcome, or about which we may protest, but which we are unable to alter fundamentally”. However, before we proceed, at this stage, it is pertinent to lay bare the point, that although, social shaping theorists oppose the self-deterministic logic of technology espoused by the technicists, they nonetheless acknowledge the transformative potential of technology; at the same time, still

posing a formidable and uncompromising front whereby users of technology are not merely passive recipients but an active force in the unfolding nature of technological evolution, appropriation and use.

Unlike the ‘determinists’ or ‘technicists’, who would have us understand society as the handiwork of technological propulsion, a social shaping approach would argue that the sociocultural and body politics of society exerts a unique influence on digital technologies and the way in which they influence and are influenced by a society. As Conboy (2013) states: “technology, in isolation, has never made journalism better or worse ... [it] does not drive change. It has to adapt to the patterns of cultural expectation within particular societies at specific moments in time” (Conboy 2013, cited in Mabweazara 2013:4). Here, in contrast to the ‘technist’ view, technology is seen as having no life of its own outside that assigned to it by society. The social shaping of technology is viewed as more or less neutral, acquiring relevance only because of the way society uses it, and what is available to it (MacKenzie and Wajcman 1999). Thus, digital technologies alone, in and of themselves, are not sufficient to explain emerging social practices. Neither does personal agency alone explain the social practices surrounding digital media; rather, both are part of a complex set of interactions (Mabweazara 2013). This study brings together the different aspects of technological change with social, political and economic factors that together influence and affect news production.

2.6 The Changing Role of Journalists and Technology's Impact on News Production

The rapid developments in digital technologies are introducing changes in the newsroom. The practice of journalism is changing fast: from job-loss to multitasking, journalists are under pressure to meet the demand for news in a faster-paced environment or face being left behind. Technological convergence demands that journalists be versatile, tech-savvy and tech-friendly (in terms of both the use and acquisition of new skills). Pavlik argues that there are at least four ways in which technology influences journalism: “how journalists work; the content of news; the organisation of the newsroom; and the relationships between news organisations and their publics” (2000: 343). According to the PEW Research Centre Report (2008), the media industry is under the grip of two powerful but contradictory forces - financial pressure and the rise of the web. These

forces unsettle the journalist, but also open new forms of journalism with unprecedented potential. The report's major findings were that digital technology creates severe cutbacks in newsroom staff, changes content, and demands "a generation of young, versatile, tech-savvy, high-energy staff, as financial pressures drive out higher-salaried veteran reporters and editors" (Journalism.org 2008).

Some scholars have been quick to investigate the impact of technological developments on journalistic practices. Garcia, Avilés and Leon (2002) examined the rise of technology as a 'threat' to journalistic practice and explored ways to deal with it. Their study of two commercial television stations in Spain revealed that all categories of staff engaged in news production experienced technological developments and the corresponding changes in news production practices as a threat. They observed that journalists, managers and engineers developed a collaborative effort in implementing a digital system that all professionals involved would be comfortable using. The extent and consequences of multi-skilling for the workload of journalists and for their editorial responsibilities were identified as problems. Cottle (1999), who claimed that the increasing demands on journalists create a pressurised working environment that diminishes standards, shares this concern. Thus the responsibility for content development, pre-print, news writing, and design becomes concentrated in the newsroom, exerting more pressure on the journalist while at the same time creating possibilities for media organisations to cut back on their staff.

Tameling and Broersma (2013) argue that rather than 'convergence', what is happening in the newsroom is 'de-convergence'. At a Dutch newspaper, *de Volkskrant*, they observed a situation where specialisation and expertise is demanded of non-specialists. Using an in-depth ethnographic method of research, they found that a clear division of skills and knowledge was taking place. Specialists for the newspapers produced high quality news, while generalists aggregated fast and freely available news for the website. The authors argued that the lack of a solid business model as well as cultural resistance from reporters were the two main factors that hindered the sharing of knowledge or content. In other words, there is a resistance to changes occasioned by new technology spreading across the newsroom. At *de Volkskrant*, most reporters refused to develop a multimedia mindset and insisted on remaining specialists (a radio, television, or newspaper reporter, or a website editor) rather than being a 'multi-specialist'. They argued against combining different professions, however, they were unable to escape the effects of digitisation, which

requires the production of news for a fast and easily accessible audience on the internet (Tameling and Broersma, 2013).

Deuze (2008) analysed the impact of new media technologies on the duties of journalists and found that news organisations have focused on standardisation in recent years, leading more news organisations to rely on global news services such as the Associated Press and Reuters. Concerns about reducing costs and using technology to make news production more efficient have meant that journalists must focus less on specialisation and more on being able to do everything, from taking photos or videos to writing, editing, and posting stories to various locations (Witschge & Nygren, 2009). This trend towards news-morphism, fuelled by an increased reliance on digital technology, is primarily the result of efforts to standardise existing practices and cut costs, enabling reporters to do more general work with less specialised staff or resources (Deuze, 2008: 20). At the same time, these journalists must compete with citizen journalists who have access to essentially the same technology, and can post information about events and situations as quickly, if not more so, to the internet and social media applications. In the face of increasing competition and cost-cutting, journalists are being forced to give up their specialized advantages over citizen journalists, while the power and efficiency of citizen journalists expands, increasing a cycle of cost-cutting and generalization.

Forces outside of the field of journalism, such as technology, have influenced the actions and behaviours of journalists and the production of the news. Reese argues that “journalism has been deeply affected by the process of cultural globalisation; in a far more complicated way than the early simplistic predictions would indicate” (2010: 352). Technology has connected journalists and citizens and has changed the relationship between journalists and the consumers of news. Traditional journalists have become even more connected to citizen journalists, whether in a competitive relationship or a cooperative one. Mitchelstein and Boczkowski note that “some journalists and members of the public have embraced relatively novel spaces and forms of content creation made possible by the online medium, such as blogging” (2009: 563). Others, however, have embraced the online space as a way to avoid what might be considered the problems of traditional journalist practices, such as fact-checking before publishing or broadcasting.

Journalists and their responses to the rise of new media are not homogenous. Some have embraced what might be considered a more ‘soft news’ approach to journalism, while others attempt to

maintain traditional hard news standards and practices (Gentry, 1996; Boczkowski, 2009; Martin, 2014). Journalists can see this separation between so-called ‘hard news’, practiced by traditional journalists, and the journalists who have embraced the internet in their use of Twitter (Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton, 2012). These researchers note that journalists who worked for national newspapers, national television networks and cable news networks were less likely to provide their personal opinions of news stories on Twitter than the journalists working for smaller or online news organisations. This demonstrates the heterogeneity among journalists and their practices, and as such, calls for a practice-based approach to the study of new media’s impact on journalism.

The increasing proliferation of citizens’ participation in news production suggests the need to explore how these digital media-powered changes are impacting both news production practices and the journalists who produce the news. Thus, navigating through the previously exclusive field of journalism, the influx and influence of new actors calls for an understanding of this transformation in light of digital media. As discussed in the preceding sections, new media and new media practitioners do more than simply provide new sources of information. This section has demonstrated that journalists are aware of the developments occurring and that their responses to these are not at all homogenous. Consequently, studying the impact of new media can only be done through an analysis of the practices of journalists themselves as they respond to the developments taking place. However, current literature dealing with the impact of new media tends to follow a determinist approach, which neglects the complex process through which new media influences and is influenced by the journalists engaging with it. Part II explores two sociological frameworks for the study of journalism, based on either social worlds (Becker) or fields (Bourdieu). A combination of field theory and social world theory as a framework for a practice-based study of the changes occurring in the field of journalism will then be outlined.

Part II: Analytical Framework

2.7 Bourdieu's Field Theory

Field theory, developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, is based on the premise that modern society is increasingly differentiated into semi-autonomous and more specialized spheres of action, or 'fields' (Bourdieu 1979, 1988). For Bourdieu, the acquisition and, especially, the retention of 'social power' is the logic underlying any given field. According to Bourdieu, fields are action-oriented spheres with actors (or members) that interact with one another based on a shared understanding of the objective or purpose of the field and a shared desire to protect it from 'outsiders'. Any given field has its rules governing legitimate relationships among actors including rules on how people can enter, progress, or be rewarded within the field, which preserves the integrity of the group over time (Bourdieu 1994; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Thus, fields are structured systems of social relations, with each field corresponding to specialized activities and within which members of a specific field recognize themselves as distinct from other fields.

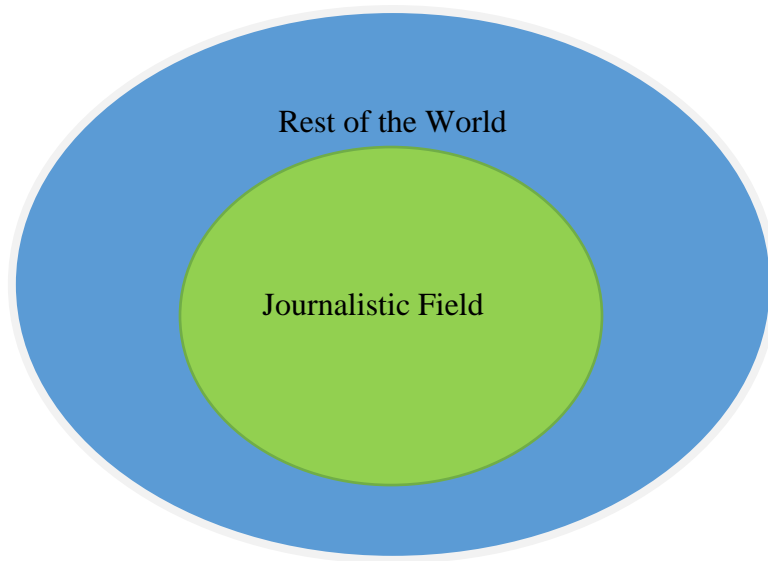
Bourdieu (1998: 43) argues that "a field is a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and others who are dominated". Within the field, there is competition among members, meaning that the fields are not simply structured systems, but symbols of power and systems of domination. The fields – economic, cultural, social and political – are differentiated based on the forms of capital they afford the individual and each, regardless of capital, is relatively autonomous from the others (Bourdieu 1979; Benson 1999; Sallaz 2010). These fields, though distinct, are interconnected and not necessarily reinforcing, but mutually influential spheres in their own right. Thus, Bourdieu's field presupposes that struggles occurring in social spaces or fields are the result of an agent's social position, i.e., the amount, or combination, of capital at an agent's disposal. Bourdieu argues that competition occurs within fields based on the interaction between economic, social, and cultural capital. Economic capital refers to money or other assets that can be used as money (Benson, 2006: 189), and social capital includes membership of networks, friendships with the 'right' people, and social connections (Benson, 2006: 8). Cultural capital consists of such things as technical knowledge, expertise,

artistic abilities, and education (Bourdieu 1979; Benson, 2006; Dickinson 2008). Bourdieu contends that capital accumulation translates into struggle within fields, since its possession is paramount to the social reproduction of individual agents and of the collective. Therefore, for Bourdieu, a field cannot be understood solely by examining external forces, as there are unique internal forces related to issues revolving around economic, social and cultural capital that impact the actions of the players within the field.

In this way, journalism can be understood as a field: it is a specialised area of activity, within which journalists compete based on the capital, or the combination of capitals at their disposal. Understanding journalism through this analytical prism has the advantage of laying bare the importance of socioeconomic dynamics existing between individual journalists in the overall production of news. In other words, it is not possible to understand the field of journalism by only examining external factors, such as the condition of the larger economy or the changing nature of technology. It has been argued that it is important to understand that fields are autonomous, and that it is through autonomy that a field can fully operate in a way that it is relatively independent of other areas of society (Benson, 1999). Journalism can be understood as a field as it has its own rules and social processes that dictate its actions. While not of course fully autonomous from forces coming from other fields, journalism can be analytically separated from these. Benson (2004) notes that field theory is a useful analytical framework through which to examine journalists, because it draws our attention to the economic and cultural rules within the field of journalism and the actions and behaviours of individual journalists as distinct from the broader economic and cultural rules that impact society.

Figure 1 provides a representation of field theory; with the journalistic field clearly circumscribed from the rest of the world.

Figure 1: Graphic Representation of Field Theory for Journalism



Bourdieu's Field Theory

However, while Bourdieu's field theory seems to provide a strong foundation from which to make sense of the actions and behaviours of journalists based on the rules by which the field operates, this approach has its limitations. One of the criticisms of Bourdieu's field theory regarding journalists and news production is that it does not recognise the larger social and economic conditions that might affect journalism (Dickinson, 2008). While field's focus on the socioeconomic conditions present *within* the field of journalism is insightful, external factors such as readership and advertising revenues as well as broader macro-economic conditions also impact how people spend their money, and, in turn, whether they buy newspapers or consume news in other formats.

Bourdieu's fields are bounded and closed to those outside, making them exclusive and restricted domains, open only to their members (Becker & Pessin, 2006; Dickinson, 2008; Lima & Campos, 2015). Such an approach has difficulty accommodating those who, though distanced from the news production (i.e. guest columnists), contribute directly or indirectly to its overall

outcome. The barriers inherent in field analysis can result in obscuring the significance of all those individuals and processes involved in news production.

Another critique of the application of field theory to understand journalism is made by Hallin (2005), who argues that Bourdieu seemed to view the actions of journalists as essentially competing over economic and cultural resources and capital. Competition among journalists is an inherent part of the field of journalism. However, on the one hand, competition between journalists and non-members or competition with other fields is also of great significance for the process of news production. On the other hand, moreover, journalists frequently collaborate with members and non-members of their field to report on events that are of great importance or issues that they believe deserve a great deal of attention from the public. Field theory does not provide a way to view the actions of journalists as anything other than a struggle over capitals, even when they may not always view themselves or their actions as being in competition with each other.

2.8 Becker's Social World and "News" World

The notion of a 'social world' is not new to sociological studies, with intellectual roots that can be traced to the writings of scholars such as Everett Hughes, Robert Park, George Simmel and others of the Chicago School (Dickinson 2008). One definition of the social world that considers people engaged in activity that involves production is given by Gilmore as follows:

In a social world, people's collaborative activity ties them into a set of direct relations that have meaning for them. The cluster of individuals who interact with each other produce a relatively stable aggregation of relations. This pattern of meaningful aggregated relations represents a social world. (Gilmore 1990: 148).

As a theory, the social worlds framework opposes the fixed and rigid boundaries associated with Bourdieu's field. Premised on the understanding that humans are the drivers of social structures and institutions in society, it holds that social structures are continually undergoing changes due to people working together to arrive at social outcomes. Social world theory is, therefore, based on people being involved in the continual and on-going process of creating and changing social

forces and social structures. Thus, it is the actions and interactions among people that create the social world around which human activities are organized (Becker, 1984; Gilmore, 1990; Dickinson 2008).

Applying this understanding to the study of social production, Howard Becker (1984) argues that the field of art is far from being an exclusive preserve of artists, and its social world - in this case the art world - comprises a network of people cooperating at different levels. These joint efforts create what we know as the art world. In other words, the production of art is a collective social effort by people, actively and passively engaged, doing things together in the course of social interaction. In this sense, as Dickinson argues, we can likewise consider “[p]eople engaged in that activity that involves the production of news as belonging to the ‘news world’ ” (Dickinson, 2008: 16).

Elaborating on the actors and agents engaged in any given social world, Unruh 1980 cited in Dickinson 2008 observes the presence of several actors with differing degrees of involvement in the production of that social world. There are: 1) those deeply involved in the activities of the social world or at its core, known as ‘insiders’; 2) those who are habitually active and routinely engaged and, usually, the most visible participants in the social world and as such are regarded as ‘regulars’; 3) those who are attached to the social world by virtue of a regular but intermittent appearance that contributes to that world, but who are not involved in its workings, can be referred to as ‘tourists’ or ‘onlookers’, and; 4) those who are not of the social world, but whose work (outside the social world) is important to and impacts those belonging to the social world, who as such are more or less ‘strangers’. The actions and interactions of these agents is the basis underlying the social structures and institutions of the society. Thus, the social world approach emphasises processes over structures (Becker 1984, 2006).

Applying these four categories to the present analysis of the ‘news world’, Dickinson adopts Unruh’s typology as follows: ‘tourists’ are those not directly involved in the news world and its workings, but whose occasional visits and/or contributions to the news world have an impact on journalism. This group would include columnists or outsiders who write op-eds based on their work in politics or other professions. ‘Regulars’, the normal participants in a social world, would be the journalists and editors. Here, unlike Bourdieu’s field, from which they would be excluded, bloggers and citizen journalists also belong to the regulars, situated clearly within the social world – albeit as

partners of some sort and with varying degree of status (when considered in a Bourdieusian sense). Finally, 'insiders' are those individuals who have a great deal of control and involvement over a social world, and in the case of the news world these would be the owners or executives of news organizations.

Understanding the process of news production in terms of the social worlds framework, where social worlds are actively created and changed based on the actions and interactions of those involved, allows for the recognition that people may indeed compete - an important aspect of Bourdieu's field theory - but also the potential for cooperation to achieve a common goal (Becker & Pessin, 2006 cited in Dickinson 2008). The significance of 'social world' lies in its emphasis on interactions and the ways in which those interactions impact organisations and social structures, rather than whether these interactions are competitive or cooperative. As Becker and Pessin explain with reference to musical composers, actors within a field compete and cooperate at different points in time: "[t]hey might have joined forces for this one occasion, as composers who otherwise compete with each other for scarce commissions and posts will cooperate to put on a concert of contemporary music" (2006: 283 cited in Dickinson 2008).

In another important difference between a 'social world' approach and field theory is that a particular social world can be impacted by the people who are directly involved in that world, as well as by people who may only have short-term or even distant interactions with it (Becker & Pessin, 2006 cited in Dickinson 2008). In this way, the macro-environment of groups of people beyond a particular social world can be as important as the individual people within the microenvironment constituting that world. For example, a citizen journalist who has only entered the field or social world of journalism by being in the right place at the right time to provide information about a major news story can certainly have as large an impact on journalism as a professional journalist. While that impact might be relatively short-lived, such an individual still has an impact on journalism and the work performed by journalists, and consequently can be considered as a part of the news world.

As discussed above, current analyses of the implications of the rise of new media for news production tend to treat new media either as a separate sphere – one that will either complement or compete with traditional journalism. As such, there is little understanding of the processes

through which new media has engaged and been engaged with by traditional media, the struggles and cooperation that have taken place and the impact that this has had for journalism as a whole. Such an analysis requires a framework allowing for a focus on the struggles over inclusion and exclusion on one hand, an approach which surpasses field theory's more narrow internal focus. On the other hand, the approach can gain much from Bourdieu's focus on the processes through which interactions create the rules of the world within its specific socioeconomic context.

This study combines field theory with Becker's social worlds approach to explore the role of the journalist in the face of the digital production of news. Therefore, news world – combining the strengths of field theory and social world theory, as espoused by Dickson, is appropriated to explore and explicate how digital technologies and different people from different social worlds are using digital media to 'do something'. More specifically, this study will explore how journalists participate in the hitherto complex and exclusive process of news production and how this shapes and is in turn shaped by the developments affecting news production in contemporary times.

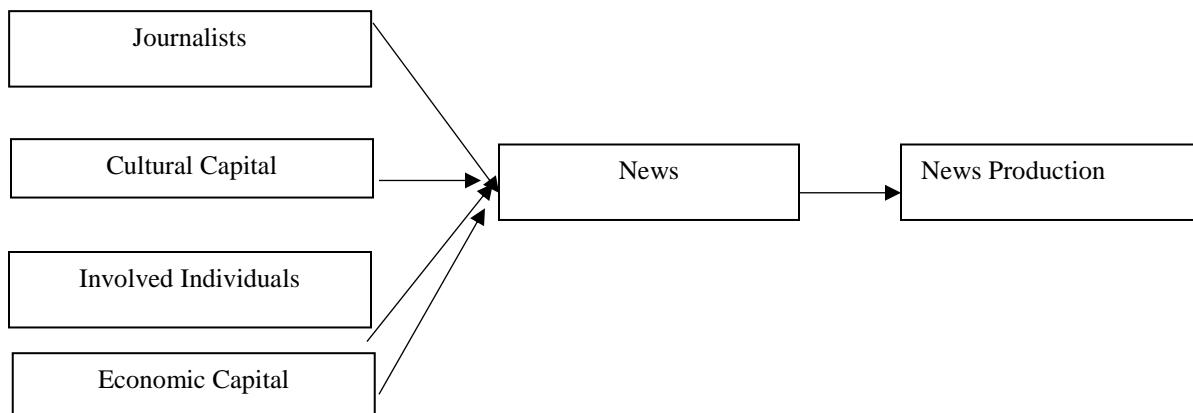
2.9 Combining Field Theory and Social World Theory

Dickinson (2008) argues that by combining field theory and the social world approach, the limitations of the field theory can be reduced, enhancing our ability to better understand the actions and behaviours of journalists in relation to the changes taking place in their profession. The combination of field theory and social world theory enables an investigation of the micro-level actions of journalists in newsroom, while also being able to focus on the broader issues and people that influence the production of news on different levels. Such an approach draws attention to multiple aspects of the news production process: the entire context by which journalists interact with each other as well as the people, economic issues, and cultural issues that impact the way in which news production takes place.

In addition, the social world approach moves beyond journalists as the focus of study, without deemphasizing their importance to understanding a new mode of news production. Dickinson observes that "combining the insights this could provide with those offered in a Bourdieusian

analysis of the journalistic field and its interrelations with the field of power would help to build a more sophisticated and rounded understanding of news production” (2008: 25). In this way, the focus can remain on the actual journalists, while considering other factors and issues with regard to news production. This makes it possible to distinguish those issues and individuals who are separate from journalists, but who nonetheless influence the actions and behaviours of journalists, and then explore how journalists respond to those issues and individuals and ultimately examine the impact this has on news production. Figure 3 shows this relationship based on the combination of field theory and the social world.

Figure 3: Representation of Combined Field Theory and Social World



Bridging Bourdieu’s field, which presupposes conflict as an inherent part of field’s existence, and the more pragmatic social world theory, as explicated by Becker, can be difficult. However, the two approaches allow for different levels of analysis, which allows the theories to complement one another, enhancing the researcher’s ability to examine the full scope of the news production process. As Dickinson explains: "for a more comprehensive sociology of news production, the meso-level analysis offered by field research actually *requires* the micro-level analysis of the news world that an interactionist perspective can provide and *vice versa*" (Dickinson, 2008: 26). In this way, the combination of approaches makes it possible to examine conflicts about economic and cultural resources, and the pragmatic concerns of journalists, such as how changes in technology affect the medium through which people obtain news.

Nevertheless, unlike Bourdieu's field, the news world is a fluid space with permeable boundaries, penetrable based on the degree of involvement by those who encounter, or participate in, the world. Whereas a field appears to be heavily guarded everywhere by those within from 'outsiders' or intruders, social worlds are, more or less, unbounded and flexible, thus providing an analytical frame within which to examine both the contestation over membership of and legitimacy within the news world, and the concrete impact of all those engaging in activities linked to the production of news – whether or not they are considered 'real' journalists – who, by virtue of these activities, are considered a part of this social world. As Dickinson puts it, "anyone contributing to what gets done in a given social world becomes a part of it" (2008: 20).

Since members of a given social world are categorised based on the extent and type of involvement in the particular social world, not all members or participants in a given sphere have an equal role. For example, newspapers with high national circulation will generally be considered more important members of the news world than their counterparts with low national or regional circulation. In addition, since the role and function of an editor differs from that of a reporter, professionally employed journalists and editors will have higher status than news bloggers and citizen journalists, even though both categories share membership as 'regulars' in the news world. These categories are not fixed, however, and are constantly negotiated and renegotiated through interactions with the larger world. For instance, the status of a professionally employed journalist does not necessarily remain higher, at all times, than that of a serial 'news blogger' whose blogging frequency and credibility has grown over time and, as such, enjoyed some legitimation, even without – or precisely because of the lack of – institutional affiliation.

One major limitation of Bourdieu's field theory is that this framework posits unchanging social boundaries that do not adequately describe relatively unstable fields that fluctuate and shift as situations demand. Boundaries are constructed on a situational basis, rather than bounded by a specific field force. For as long as the conflict resulting from such legislation lasts, journalists, bloggers and citizen journalists would be likely to unite – thereby constituting a common field transcending Bourdieusian border, a complex social world - to oppose such legislation, rather than stand divided in claims of furthering their individual field interest. What this suggests is that boundaries can be fleeting and undergo continual (re)adjustment on a situational basis.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has compared Pierre Bourdieu's 'field theory' to Howard Becker's 'social world', arguing for a combined framework to better understand the field of journalism. Analyses of both theories were discussed, highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of each theory in terms of understanding the various issues and forces at work within the field of journalism, as well as the forces outside of the field of journalism that impact the actions and behaviours of journalists. As also discussed in the literature review above, technological developments have set in motion a series of changes within the field of journalism. These changes have created space for new struggles over access to the field of journalism, over the right to define the rules governing its practice, the type of work produced and the very identity of the journalist. However, as has been discussed earlier, much of the current literature on digital media neglects these more complex interactions. Much of the literature is technologically determinist, drawing implications from technological possibilities, without adequately acknowledging that this is a thoroughly social process, that only occurs through the mediation of human beings and a restructuration of social and professional relations far messier than this literature implies. A significant portion of the literature relating to Nigeria focuses almost exclusively on the potential impact such media may or may not have on the democratic process. New media is treated as a separate sphere, complement or competitor, to the traditional journalist, and as a result, the messy process of social contestation and negotiation taking place is neglected.

Yet the literature presented here also showed that journalists recognise that there are forces and conditions both within and outside the field of journalism that impact their work. These conditions may even determine whether they continue to have work in traditional news organizations at all. If journalists recognise that internal and external forces in the field of journalism impact their roles and news production, then it certainly seems imperative for sociologists and other researchers to step away from the use of a single theory, such as field theory or the social world, to examine the full range of forces and issues impacting journalism and news production. At a time when journalism is changing so rapidly, particularly due to the rise of new media, enabling people who are not considered traditional journalists to participate, it is no longer possible to focus solely on what might be considered the small realm of the field of journalism when discussing news production.

Dickinson, Matthews and Saltzis (2013) argue that as times change, it is necessary to consider the actions and perceptions of journalists as they encounter the changing social climate in which they practice their profession. One of the important benefits of combining field theory and the news world perspective is that it puts journalists at the forefront of any investigation of journalism. While it is possible to focus on changing technology or changing economic conditions, the study of journalism must ultimately focus on journalists. By combining field theory with the social world approach, it is possible to consider the internal and external challenges facing journalists, while also making journalists and the way in which they engage in news production the central focus of the research. In this way, it is possible to examine the current actions, behaviours, and practices of journalists.

In conclusion, studying journalists requires a change from the approach that many sociologists and researchers have taken in the past. The research reviewed has demonstrated why this combined theoretical approach is not only appropriate, but is indeed necessary to understand the changes in journalism. With this new combined approach, new issues and conditions that journalists face, as well as the way in which journalists respond to those issues and conditions, can be fully explored in relation to their actions and behaviours and how they continue to engage in the practice of news production.

3 Chapter Three: Research Methodology

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I focused on the theoretical underpinnings of this research and considered the extant body of literature as it relates to the thrust of my study. This chapter provides the context for the study and rationale for the question(s) it seeks to address. In this chapter, my main purpose is to provide a detailed explanation of the methodology that was used to conduct my study.

Before I begin, I would like to put forth that the media environment in Nigeria is complicated because of the political, social and economic conditions that exist in the country, as well as the changes brought about by digital media. In this regard, investigating the current trends and development of new media and the implication of these technologies on journalistic practices in the democratic setting of Nigeria required the use of a mixed methods approach. The goal in using more than one method for collecting data was to ensure that relevant data was collected from observations and semi-structured interviews, with each covering for the weaknesses of the other. In turn, this helps to understand both their perceptions and ideas about the challenges facing the media in Nigeria given the current conditions facing the industry, and to be able to better validate those perceptions and ideas with the actual conditions and issues they face in the course of work.

The chapter is divided into eleven sections: background; sociocultural context of journalism in Nigeria; research design; research site/field of study; methodology; data collection; data analysis; ethical consideration; validity and reliability; limitations of the study, and summary. I begin with a brief background and the sociocultural context of journalism in Nigeria from which the research questions were derived. The third section provides the research design and this is followed by research site. Here the rationale for the study site was provided and process of gaining access was detailed. The fifth section outlines the sampling technique, population and sample size, and data collection procedure. This is followed by data collection process. Here, the different process such as survey, observation and semi-structured interviews were explained, and the rationale for combining observation and interview was provided. The seventh section deals with data analysis while ethical considerations was addressed in the eight section. Section nine looks at validity and

reliability of the study. Here, the internal validity, external validity, as well as pre-test reliability were explained, and the chapter concludes with a summary.

3.1 Background

The previous chapter has seen the development of a much more focused work within the sociology of news, dedicated to identifying and outlining relevant themes from the data in relationship with significant literature drawing on the journalistic field and news world. This section will consider the context of this research. The research seeks to understand the social shaping of technology how it is influencing journalistic practices and news production in Nigeria. In other words, it aims to reveal the behind-the-scenes perceptions of journalists in Nigeria as “active players” in the news production and in journalistic practices whilst employing new media. Also, it seeks to identify factors that affect news production and the employment of these technologies.

The need for clarity in structuring research questions and objectives was crucial in the research design and the flexibility of answers that may arise from responses to the questions. In an effort to examine these issues, data have been drawn from six Nigerian news organisations, to track their respective adoptions of new media in news production; the strategic perspectives and factors (political/economic) informing their “different” practices, the consequences for the journalists who make use of them and the news they produce.

The media houses consist of four newspapers – The Guardian, Vanguard, This Day and Daily Trust – and two television stations – Channels Television and the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA). Before I proceed to give a brief overview of the reasons for choosing these media houses, I must stress that unlike the UK that has a National Readership Survey (NRS), Nigeria has no such survey because of its poor data culture and as a result, it was difficult to rank the newspapers on such metrics as circulation, coverage and revenue. This made me rely on the newspapers for basic information; even though not all their claims can be validated.

3.2 Sociocultural Context of Journalism in Nigeria

This study addresses the experiences of journalists in Nigeria in navigating changes in journalistic practices and the factors that also influence these changes. Focusing on the situated experiences of the journalists, this project takes into account the political-economic, organisational conditions in which journalists in Nigeria do their job and how these affect their use of new media technologies. So far, there has not been a lot of research about how these changes in the newsrooms are perceived by journalists in the region nor focus on interplay of socio-cultural influences as well as political institutions in negotiating these changes. Thus, this research seeks to contribute to the generation of new understandings of the differences in adoption of new media in developing countries such as Nigeria and examine the interplay of factors in shaping news production in this context.

The sociocultural context within which journalism takes place is not as inelastic as the concept of profession, so that while one can talk of journalism as a profession due to certain fixed and identifiable properties, one cannot equally stress the fixity or permanence of the cultural and social foundation making specific historic context of journalism (Ayedun-Aluma, 2013). What this means is that, like culture, the practice of journalism is predicated on the dynamism of historical and situational context the journalist finds his or her self at every point in time, in response to the problems the environment pose. Salawu (2006) observes that the environment Nigerian journalist operates includes both the challenges and limitations which she has to overcome to effectively perform her responsibility to society. Ayedun-Aluma (2013, p. 3) argues that the sociocultural setting of journalism in Nigeria will include, but not limited to, “tacit or informal knowledge, morals, values, ‘street wisdom’ that shape the actions of journalist in the field”. In other words, the cultural basis is produced by the totality of factors, including problems and prospects, predisposing the journalist to respond to external exigencies or problems. Thus understood, it suffices to note that the cultural basis draws in and underlies the political, socioeconomic, and organisational complexities surrounding the journalist. Therefore, understanding news production calls for understanding how the journalist negotiate and navigate these complexities.

To be more specific, Nigeria’s political atmosphere is unapologetically confrontational, whereby every move of the journalist is interpreted as either being in support of the ruling party or opposed to it – which translates to support of the opposition party (Sunday, 2003; Ayedun-

Aluma, 2013). Closely associated with this is the ever present fear of litigation. In Nigeria there appears to be guarantee of freedom of speech but no guarantee of freedom after the speech, with the effect that the fear of expressing one's self is always rife. On the economic front, the unstable and demeaning economic condition in the country reverberates everywhere in the economy and manifests as poor working condition in the field of journalism. The implication is that, the journalist, regardless of the amount of time and effort committed to work, is underpaid and exposed to the vagaries of insecurity which guarantees nothing during work, and moments after ceding his/her job (Sunday, 2003). Also, organisational pressure factors in by way of expectation, for instance. The expectation of journalist to function by certain minimum standard of professionalism; dealing with the hassle of following and maintaining leads on the news, and; to deliver the news timely and accurately to an equally informed audience, thanks to digital media, all exert pressure of one form or another on the journalist in his/her daily routine.

In addition to these, Nigeria's cultural consciousness exudes a normative ideal of journalism as the watchdogs of society and this is backed by Nigeria's constitutional provision, which requires of the press, as part of its function and responsibility to society, to hold public officers accountable to the people (Nassanga, 2008; Ayedun-Aluma, 2013). Thus the journalist is placed in a context, what Dickinson et al. (2013) has termed "situated experience", that requires her to draw from her experience in order to navigate these worlds amidst a fast-paced environment enabled by digital media. However, the combination of the factors bears upon the journalist as he/she struggle to keep pace with a rapidly changing world of digital media.

Nevertheless, the political economy outlook on society presupposes that social structures, that is the 'visible' aspects of social relations derive their bearing from the invisible aspect, that is, non-tangibles relations, most evidently represented in economic relations, or sub-structures (Ake, 2005; Ayedun-Aluma, 2013). In other words, social structure such as journalism, or its practitioner's, actions tends to conform to their awareness of their position in the economic relations of society. In specific terms, how a journalist acts or would act in the larger society is a reflection of his or her economic condition. For more detail on the socioeconomic condition of social structure in Africa see Claude Ake's *A Political Economy of Africa* (1981[2005]). A subsequent chapter in this study examines the working conditions of journalist in Nigeria.

However, the concern here is how to reconcile a journalist who, faces acute financial setback in terms of poor wage for labour; has recoiled to self-censorship due to fear of litigation for reporting on the anomaly in government or its cronies, and; one who is required to not only break the news but do so on time and accurately too, in order to better understand news production in contemporary Africa. Leveraging on the need to understand better the situated experience of journalists in Nigeria in the face of digital media that, of itself has in some ways accentuated these challenges, this study explores how journalism in Africa is responding to changes in newsroom and news production.

3.2.1 Research Questions

From the foregoing, the following research questions were formulated to explore the situated experience of journalists within which the task of news production is carried out. These questions were derived from the literature reviewed about the conditions facing the media and journalists in Nigeria.

- a. What are the economic and social factors influencing journalistic practice in relation to the adoption of new media in Nigeria?
- b. What are the challenges in the newsroom in relation to the adoption of the new media?
- c. How do these challenges affect news production?
- d. What are the challenges facing journalists in Nigeria in relation to the adoption of the new media?

3.3 Research Design

The purpose of this study is to investigate the current trends and development of new media technologies and the implication of those technologies on journalistic practices in a developing country such as Nigeria. The goal of the study is not only to investigate current trends and development of new media technologies, but also to study the implications of new media technologies on the actual practices of journalists in Nigeria. Deriving from the above needs, a number of qualitative methods were required which will allow for adequate data collection. Thus the need to combine survey, observation, and interviews was envisaged.

A variety of mixed methods research designs exist that involve different approaches to collecting different types of data and bringing those data together to address the research problem

or research questions that have been formulated for a study. One of the mixed methods approaches that can be used is to compare different perspectives that are drawn from collecting both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2014). For example, interviews might be conducted with participants to gain data related to their perceptions about an issue or event, and observations might be made of the participants to collect data of their actions and behaviours related to the issue or event of interest. This is known as the convergent parallel design (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

The convergent parallel mixed methods design is the most common and well-known mixed methods research design, and is based on the idea of collecting different types of data that are complementary to each other to allow for a better understanding of an issue or topic (Creswell & Clark, 2011). One of the advantages of using a convergent parallel mixed methods design is because it can allow for some of the weaknesses of individual research designs, such as the lack of ability to generalize findings that is often found in qualitative studies with limited samples, to be overcome. In addition, the convergent parallel mixed methods design allows for the triangulation of data by comparing and contrasting the data obtained from different data collection methods (Creswell, 2014).

Therefore, this study utilises three different data collection methods: semi-structured interviews, observations, and surveys, which had to be carried out in different locations at different times and with different populations. The initial design was to follow the sequence: survey, observation and then, interview. Survey was designed to elicit information from a broad range of journalists with a view of framing questions for the interview. Thus, the survey served as a testing ground for the questions to be administered to the journalists. The observation was intended to gather first hand details of the functioning of the news environment, while the scheduled interviews is intended to elicit information from about practices from the participants and to shed lights on areas where observations was insufficient to garner understanding. However, on getting to the field, the order was altered to accommodate the reality on ground. Consequently, following the survey, interviews and observation took place almost simultaneously. The rationale behind this change is reflected upon in the data collection section.

More specifically, it should be recognized that the nature of journalism and the use of technology between newspapers and television may be different. Even more, between newspapers or between television stations, the means of newsgathering and how technology is used as part of the journalistic process may be different. In this regard, the use of a convergent parallel mixed-

methods research design allowed for the ability to completely understand the unique experiences of all of the participants (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). The mixed methods research design made it possible to accommodate and consider the diversity that may exist in journalistic practices in Nigeria with regards to the use of new media (Denscombe, 2008). The use of a single method of data collection would not provide the depth of data that would be needed to fully understand the use of new media in journalism in Nigeria, especially given that data gathered from participants working in different types of media.

Based on the research design that was chosen for this study, the methodological commitment for this study was to fully utilize the different types of data that were collected. The aim is to compare and contrast data (where applicable) the use of new media across the different news organizations and types of media in which the participants in this study work. At the same time, the methodological commitment of this study was to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of each of the types of data collected for this study, and to utilize them in ways that reduce their individual limitations, and increase their strengths to ensure the highest validity of the data analysis and findings.

3.4 Research Site/Field Study

The news organisations were located in industrial districts, which made them easily accessible. They were often located within walking distance of each other within a five kilometres radius. The locations (Abuja and Lagos) gave a blend of ethnicity in the recruitment of journalists and helped raise the profile of decentralisation/de-tribalisation in profiles of journalists

The four newspapers were selected for their use of digital media in their production processes, in the diversification of output, online influence and wide readership. They have also been chosen according to their regional influence with The Guardian and Vanguard based in Lagos, the former capital of Nigeria in the southern part of the country, while This Day and Daily Trust are based in Abuja. These newspapers have signed agreements with the telecommunication companies and deliver news to subscribers via SMS, a commercial feature for both parties. On the other hand, both Channels Television and the NTA have established presence in Abuja and Lagos. Thus, the study site consists of newspapers and television stations.

Newspapers

The Guardian is one of Nigeria's major dailies and has as its slogan "conscience, nurtured by truth". The newspaper claims to be conservative in its reporting which refers to its claim for fairness and objectivity and providing readers with a balanced reportage (The Guardian 2014). Alex Ibru who was a former minister of internal affairs during the military regime in the 1990s owns the Guardian.

This Day According to claims the paper makes about itself on its website, "This Day remains the preferred newspaper among the business, political and diplomatic elite, and is easily the most recognisable and influential national media brand globally. It is also claimed to be "the corporate and political advertiser's first choice" (www.thisdaylive.com). This Day is the only high profile newspaper that appeals to both young and old because of its straightforward news reporting, strong editorial content, lifestyle features and business coverage (www.thisdaylive.com). It has a major presence in the news industry, constituting the dominant print journalism organisation in northern Nigeria's metropolitan environs (Ronning and Kupe 2000).

Vanguard and **Daily Trust** newspapers were also selected for being leading in terms of readership. Although considerably smaller than the This Day and The Guardian newspapers, they constitute important rivals in contributing to public discourse because of the opposing views they portray. More significantly, the two newspapers have been receptive to change in the use of new technologies. They have stretched the boundaries of how Nigerian newspapers have traditionally interacted with readers and sources, especially through their interactive websites and the use of the mobile phone. For instance, both Vanguard and Daily Trust have incorporated user generated video submissions as Wardle and Williams called "audience material" on their websites. This feature is not present on the Guardian and This Day websites.

Television Stations

Two TV stations were selected for this research. The first is Channels Television, one of the 13 commercial/privately owned stations currently broadcasting in Nigeria, since the broadcast

media deregulation in 1992 by the Federal Government of Nigeria, and now broadcasts to an audience of over 20 million people (www.channelstv.com). The station has won the 'Best Television Station of the Year' an award endowed by the Nigerian Media Merit Award Trust – 11 times in the last 16 years (2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015), thereby making Channels Television “the Station of the decade” (www.channelstv.com).

Channels Television has a mobile application, which is downloadable via phones and mobile devices with Android, Blackberry and Windows IOS operating systems. Channels' Television mobile app has an eyewitness feature boldly headlined: “Contact Us: Eye witness” which allow users to upload pictures, videos and audio recordings, alongside text describing or giving information about the content uploaded as well as detail of the user. The eyewitness feature is accompanied by the media's other digital media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Broadcasting real-time 24/7, Channels' Television encourages viewers to upload content and “tell us what's happening around you” (www.channelstv.com).

The second is the government-owned media house NTA (Nigeria Television Authority) in charge of television broadcasting in the country. The NTA claims to run the biggest television network in Africa with stations in several parts of Nigeria and is widely viewed as the authentic voice of the Nigerian government. The Guardian in its editorial of Sunday October 18, 2009 stated that “The federal government-owned television network, the Nigeria Television Authority, (NTA) is arguably the largest of its type in Africa, but it is yet to have the operational freedom required to maximise its potentials”. This statement could be attributed to the fact that it is government-owned and funded; it has a reputation for protecting and preserving the image of the ruling party.

3.4.1 Rationale

Both television stations have a significant online presence on the web and have introduced digital technology in their production processes. Channels TV is seen as a pioneer for its use of digital technology in delivering 24-hour news channel and live streaming. Besides its mobile app, eyewitness feature and availability on DSTV channel 254 and GOTV channel 95, Channels TV has global presence on Dish Network broadcasting on Sky channel 575, thus making it a tech-savvy media.

The NTA upgraded its facilities and began live streaming more recently. It has also signed a joint venture agreement with a Chinese broadcaster (StarTV Network- a part of Rupert

Murdoch's media empire – News International, Fox News, etc) and has set up a digital transmission network – NTA-StarTV Network. Also, the station prides as the largest in Africa and most sophisticated in terms of broadcast infrastructure, making it technological-friendly.

On the other hand, the choice of two different media institutions (print and TV) is designed to provide comparison and contrasts not just in institutional contexts but also in organisational differences. The news organisations however, are similar as far as they share a common history of public service broadcast regulation and news production. However, they also differ in the markets they face, ownership structures, their scale of operations and their prospects.

3.4.2 Gaining Access to Site

The process of identification of the participants began prior to the field visit. This involved reading/watching news reports from the selected newspapers and TV channels for the research, exploring their social and digital media engagement, following them online, sending emails, and direct messages on digital platforms to establish contact and introduce the subject of the research.

On getting to the field, even though some of the journalists had already been identified and contacted via email for interviews, I had to change my approach from purposive sampling to snowballing technique or chain referral sampling. This was because of the social network structure of journalists in Nigeria and how they value relationships and referrals. Also, it was a cost-effective approach for me as they referred me to other colleagues in the same organisation that fit the criteria for the research, thus saving me time and effort. Cohen and Arieli (2011, p. 427) describe the sampling method as one that is useful for conducting research in “marginalised societies or populations that are hard to reach or hidden”, while Dwyer and Buckle (2009, p. 60) acknowledged the tension between ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ consideration when it comes to access to research site and stress the importance of weighing the “costs and benefit”.

It is important to point out that the choice of organisations from which to obtain participants for this study was influenced by the anticipated ease of access to the newsrooms because of my prior professional role and Nigerian background. According to Bryman and Burgess (1999), gaining access to many settings is fraught with difficulty, so the prior professional connections were crucial to establishing a working relationship with participants that eliminated the difficulties

that might have otherwise arisen in attempting to conduct observations. As ethnography is not just about interviews and observation, but also very much about informant cultivation (Metcalf 1998), this 'insider-status' not only allowed access to the news organisations, but also enhanced the rapport with the journalists. I made initial contacts with the various news organisations and kept in touch via phone calls, messages and emails. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) point out that however skilful a researcher is in negotiating entry into the research context, some information will not be available at first hand. Hence, my 'insider-status' informed my understanding of the nuances of the political context, the dispositions of the research subjects and the ideological persuasions of the newsrooms. This understanding facilitated careful navigation of the research context: knowing what to say and what not to say in given contexts, whom to associate with, and more importantly, the demeanour to adopt when approaching specific individuals.

As noted earlier, journalists in Nigeria value relationships and respect referrals, this can be traced to the general belief that most Nigerians are suspicious of outsiders and in the political environment; they are usually on their guard when speaking on the record to outsiders for fear of intimidation from authorities or the police. It was easier to approach another journalist, saying that Mr X referred me to you and Mr Y relaxes because he trusts and respects his colleague. They can consent to a meeting or an interview because of the referee. Therefore, referrals grant me quick access to the field and I commenced fieldwork immediately.

However, I got to observe that access did not always translate into availability. The journalists were extremely busy and had tight deadlines, as expected. Access just gets you into the door and to the right people but does not get them talking. After an initial introduction as a researcher from a university in the UK, a level of respect which elicited pleasantries was usually observed; questions were then directed at me. Soon after this, the respect was replaced by expectation. People within the organisations asked about what was “brought for them”, in terms of a gift or money because of the idea that I was from a “much better place”. My response was to switch to “pidgin English” and say “haba! I am your sister na! Na book I go read”. (Translation: I am your sister, I just went to study). This was then followed by gratitude to God on the part of the potential participants for bestowing me with blessings and resources to afford to study abroad. However, upon reflection, I found it important to consider to what extent money or gifts played a role in forming relationships among journalists. Could this be a result of the economic hardship or

meagre remuneration journalists received in Nigeria? Perhaps. The socioeconomic condition of journalists has been examined in chapter five as *Working Conditions of Journalists*.

On the other hand, access to the Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ) in Abuja, a training facility that organises courses for practising journalists and certification courses for new journalists, was facilitated by a journalist at one of the media houses I visited. I had contacted him before arrival and upon meeting I explained that I had to conduct a pre-test of questions. He gave me the contact details of the Director of the institute who was a professional colleague of his. Making contact with the Director was fairly straight-forward as he had earlier been notified of my coming. I met him at the institute, after discussing the research objective with him; he gave me a timetable of the classes and suggested the one to attend. I met with the students/journalists, discussed the research objective with them, and invite them to participate in the survey by availing me with their emails.

3.5 Methodology

3.5.1 Sampling Technique

I had decided to use the purposive sampling technique as my research focused on a selection of journalists to be interviewed. The switch to the snowballing sampling method from purposive sampling was because other participants were able to refer other suitable participants. It The selection of journalists with 10 years of experience and above and five years' experience and below as a sample was as a result of the need to balance out the data from these two different groups of people. However, preliminary interaction with journalists revealed that journalists with less than five years' experience would be more digitally native than their bosses and their response would provide a different perspective to the research. For the journalists with 10 years' experience and above, I had hoped to chronicle from their experiences, the changes that have occurred and how they adapted to these changes. Also, preliminary interaction with journalists have hinted on a potential discrepancy of data from the respondents owing to occupational, or what Ayedun-Aluma (2013) has termed as "structural differentials", divide between reporters as 'workers' and editors as 'managers'. The latter has also been identified as professional front of proprietors, which often make them function unprofessionally (Oyovbaire, 2001). I had hoped to explore the perceived differences in perspective as it relates to access, use and response to digital media in news production.

3.5.2 Population and Sample Size

The population of this study is made up of journalists of six media organisations. However, the sample size consisted of 66 journalists who took part in this study: a total of 37 journalists took part in the surveys; while 30 journalists took part in the interviews and observations. In other words, the sample size consists of the 30 journalists who participated in the interviews and observations.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of the journalists who took part in the interviews.

Table 1: Breakdown of interview participants

Descriptor	Gender	Age	Job Position	Years of Experience	Higher Education
P1	M	40-49	Editor	10-15	Bachelor's Degree
P2	M	50-59	Editor	25-30	Bachelor's Degree
P3	M	40-49	Associate Editor	20-25	Bachelor's Degree
P4	M	30-39	News Reporter	5-10	Bachelor's Degree
P5	M	20-29	News Correspondent	5-10	Bachelor's Degree
P6	M	50-59	Associate Editor	10-19	Bachelor's Degree
P7	M	40-49	Editor in Chief	15-20	Masters' Degree
P8	M	20-29	News Reporter	5-10	Bachelor's Degree
P9	M	40-49	News Reporter	10-15	Masters' Degree
P10	F	40-49	Producer	10-15	Masters' Degree
P11	M	40-49	News Reporter and Producer	10-15	Bachelor's Degree
P12	M	50-59	Editor	25-30	Bachelor's Degree
P13	M	50-59	New Reporter	25-30	Bachelor's Degree
P14	M	40-49	News Reporter	5-10	Bachelor's Degree

P15	M	20-29	News Correspondent	5-10	Bachelor Degree
P16	M	50-59	Associate Editor	20-29	Bachelor's Degree
P17	M	40-49	Editor in Chief	15-20	Masters' Degree
P18	M	20-29	News Reporter	5-10	Bachelor's Degree
P19	M	30-39	News Reporter	5-10	Bachelor's Degree
P20	F	40-49	Producer	10-15	Bachelor's Degree
P21	M	40-49	News Reporter and Producer	10-15	Masters' Degree
P22	M	30-39	Digital Media Editor	25-30	Bachelor's Degree
P23	M	50-59	Reporter and Producer	25-30	Bachelor's Degree
P24	M	40-49	News Reporter	5-10	Bachelor Degree
P25	M	20-29	News Correspondent	5-10	Bachelor Degree
P26 Mgt	M	50-59	Senior Mgt	20-29	Doctorate Degree
P27 Mgt	M	40-49	Senior Mgt	25-30	Masters' Degree
P28 Mgt	M	50-59	Senior Mgt	25-30	Bachelor's Degree
P29 Mgt	M	40-49	Senior Mgt	20-25	Masters' Degree
P30 Mgt	F	40-49	Senior Management	20-29	Bachelor's Degree

3.5.3 Data Collection Procedures

My research methodology is qualitative in nature, which involved interviews and observations in newsrooms. The data collection process was conducted in four phases.



Phase 1: Survey

The first phase of the research fieldwork took place in August 2015 in Abuja and it involved the pre-testing of interview questions prepared. I tested the questions on journalists at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ), Abuja. The survey questions were sent to 78 journalists, of which 36 responded. The questions addressed the themes of uses and impacts of digital technologies in newsrooms; the factors influencing journalistic practices; the threat or survival of traditional news media in the face of emerging digital media practices. The results from the survey helped to streamline the questions and frame questions that explored the changing perceptions of journalistic labour and identity among journalists. This phase took about four weeks to complete during which I collated the results and fine-tuned the questions for the semi-structured interviews.

Phase 2: The second phase was the semi-structured interviews. The journalists were interviewed based on updated questions that were developed from the survey. In some cases, the journalists were in the newsrooms or on location depending on their schedule. The journalists interviewed were 30 in number. Most of the interviews took place in the newsrooms and on site during assignment breaks. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. I visited the two locations (Lagos and Abuja) spending a total of eight weeks at each location. The interview process did not always go according to plan as some appointments had to be re-scheduled a couple of times.

Phase 3: The third phase was the focused observation where I spent 12 weeks in six newsrooms observing various journalists and taking notes. This period overlapped with the interviews. The initial design was to conduct the interviews after weeks of observations. However, this choice proves problematic as the busy schedule of the journalists made it difficult to access on different occasions. Thus, the strategy was reconsidered. The optimal choice was to engage simultaneously with the interviews and observation. To this end, the early parts of my observation were a ‘go-along’ with interview. The later part, during which rapport have been firmly established, observation was then conducted. However, during the observation period, I also had some follow-up interviews with the journalists for clarification purposes.

Phase 4: The fourth phase involved transcribing the data, reading and re-reading to get familiar with the data, transcripts and field notes until I felt comfortable enough to begin grouping them into sub-sets. This phase involved a lot of note taking which served as initial/potential codes from the raw data. This stage helped me identify participant responses that were in line with the research questions and note responses that were out of the scope of the research. This phase is equally the writing up stage.

Details of the three phases highlighted above are elaborated further in the next section, Data Collection.

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Survey

A surveys was administered to participants in order to allow data to be collected about their perceptions and opinions of social media on their work as journalists, on the media industry, and to understand the specific social media sites that were used. The surveys were administered online in order to allow the participants greater freedom and ease of taking part in the surveys. The survey instrument was designed to allow for as much information to be gathered while also allowing the participants to complete it as quickly as possible. To this end, the questionnaire was worded in a way that it was neither too long nor complex for participants to complete. If participants become bored completing a survey and begin to provide answers without thinking, then the data that are collected will not be valid or reliable (Creswell, 2014).

The participants for the survey were from the NIJ and were not same participants interviewed. However, they are journalists with busy schedules who were often difficult to contact to even ask to take part in the survey. They were provided with a link they could use to access the surveys, and were told that they could complete the surveys on any internet-connected device. In this regard, administering the survey online and being able to email a link to the participants with instructions that they could complete the survey on any device at their convenience was appropriate.

The survey instrument (in appendix III) contained 22 questions, and it was expected that the survey could be completed in 20 minutes or less. The full survey that was given to the participants is provided in the appendix. The participants were contacted and informed that they would receive an email with the link to the website to complete the survey. They were asked to complete the survey within two weeks. This timeline was created in order to avoid having the participants completely forgetting to complete the surveys, but to ensure that they felt free to complete the survey at their convenience.

A strength of surveys is that it is possible to collect a large amount of data quickly and efficiently in a way that is convenient for research participants. However, the survey does not allow for probing questions to be asked about why participants may hold certain views or perceptions. Survey data often allows for the ability to understand the relationship between variables, but not the underlying reasons why relationships exist between variables (Creswell, 2014).

3.6.2 Observations.

The observations were conducted in order to gain information about the structure and organisation of the newsrooms for which the participants worked, as well as to be able to discuss any recent changes in the structure of the newsrooms with editors and senior management. I participated in the activities of the newsrooms that were being observed by asking journalists, editors, and senior managers' questions about the activities and events that I witnessed. The benefit of engaging in observation was the ability to compare the structure in newspaper houses, TV stations and three online newspapers that were visited in Abuja and Lagos. It was also possible for me to observe the news production routines among journalists and the influences of news beats,

which are areas of assignment for a reporter, such as the local government, the police department, or the financial market.

As with the semi-structured interviews, I did not make any effort to conduct any audio or video recording of the newsrooms or other situations that were observed. Instead, I made every effort to take notes about the actions, events, and conversations that occurred in the most inconspicuous manner possible. Although, audio recording interviews in social research are quite common in social research, in the Nigerian context, issues of marginality, precarious employment, political threats etc. increases the likelihood for participants to be unusually uncomfortable and suspicious of audio recording. The goal was to reduce any unnecessary attention that might be brought to me because of making notes about the observations. If the participants had been constantly reminded that their actions, behaviours, and discussions were being recorded, this would have likely caused them to change their actions and behaviours (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

Furthermore, because the goal was to take notes during the observations in an inconspicuous manner, large data collection sheets were not used. Instead, I made use of a small notebook to collect the notes during the observations. Once again, my use of a notebook likely added to the comfort of the journalists, editors, and the members of senior management who were observed, as it is common for people in newsrooms to use notebooks in their professional activities. Even though observation was used in which I became part of the situation being observed, it was still important to ensure the highest validity of the data that were collected. If the participants had constantly thought about the fact that they were being observed for a study, they would not have conducted themselves as they would have had I not been present (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

The times in which to conduct the observations were negotiated with the participants. The goal was to conduct the observations at times that were convenient to the participants, but to do so during periods that would be representative of the work they carried out in their organizations. Overall, the participants were accommodating and allowed the observations to occur any time that was deemed appropriate and convenient to the researcher.

It must be noted that while observation was used, my actual involvement in the newsroom activities were highly limited. I did not at any time actively engage in any of the actual duties of the journalists, editors, or senior management who were being observed. I did not attempt to act as a journalist, editor, or member of senior management of the newsrooms that I observed.

A strength of participant observation is the ability to understand the reality involving how people live and how they interact with the environment around them. Furthermore, participant observation allows for the ability to gain information about the personal experiences of individuals. However, participant observation is very time consuming, which means that the sample size is generally very small and can impact the ability to generalize the findings. In addition, the threat of researcher bias is increased as the researcher may attempt to understand the actions and interactions of participants through his or her perceptions and viewpoints (Atkinson, Coffey & Delamont, 2003).

I also observed that there were no noticeable differences between the news production sites that were visited nor amongst media genres. It was my expectation to identify and highlight these differences between sites with regards to digital media technologies use and appropriation but the changes seem to be fairly general across all the sites visited.

3.6.3 Interviews

Most of the interviews were scheduled to occur in the newsrooms. However, it became necessary to constantly make changes to the scheduled interview sessions due to constant rescheduling on the part of the participants. In this regard, the interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participants, which often meant conducting impromptu interviews in private rooms in the newsrooms and organisations in which the journalists worked when the participants had a few minutes between completing assignments or other tasks.

The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that a set of questions was created before any of the interviews were conducted. The questions were framed based on the survey response which helped to shape and modify the questions to better elicit answers to the research questions. However, I was free to ask questions that were not part of the pre-planned questions in order to elicit more information from the participants based on the responses that they provided. The benefit of conducting semi-structured interviews is that the participants have greater freedom to lead the interviews and provide information that they deem to be important or interesting. Because of the conversational tone of a semi-structured interview, participants often feel more comfortable providing information that they might otherwise not provide. In addition, a researcher has the ability to ask questions about topics and issues that he or she might not have known about before conducting the interviews (Wengraf, 2001).

The interview sessions were recorded. I refrain from taking note as such would foist the impression of being recorded and could alter their attitude and the way and manner of response, thereby impairing the possibility of collecting valid data. With the interview taken care of by my recorder, the atmosphere was conversational and liberating for the participants to free express themselves. The recorded interviews were later transcribed and coded. A total of 15 questions were pre-planned for the interviews and these are contained in the appendix. The questions that were designed to the interviews were intended to gain basic information about the participants and their work, while also encouraging the participants to provide information that was create further discussions and questions. The goal was to have specific basic questions for which the responses could be compared and contrasted across the participants. Then, as the participants provided additional information, the interviews could move in the directions that were deemed important or interesting to the participants. In this way, more in-depth information and data would be obtained.

One of the strengths of semi-structured interviews is that they are flexible in that the researcher can ask additional questions based on the information provided by the participants. In this regard, semi-structured interviews allow a researcher to probe more deeply into issues that are raised by the participants. However, a limitation of semi-structured interviews is that it can be difficult to compare the responses provided by different participants as all of the participants are generally not asked the same questions. In addition, the responses provided in semi-structured interviews do not necessarily indicate a cause and effect relationship. In this regard, researchers must be careful not to infer cause and effect relationships from the information provided by the participants (Wengraf, 2001).

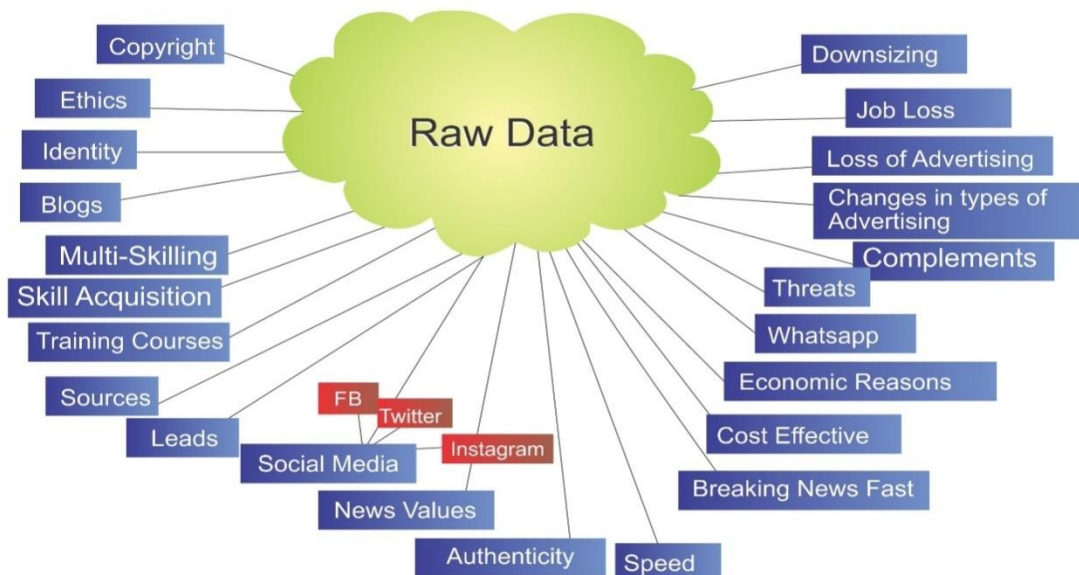
3.6.4 Rationale for combining Observation and Interviews

Participant observation provides access to “naturally unfolding events” and speaks to issue(s) where participants’, in a controlled or unnatural environment such as interview setting, might not be unwilling or uncomfortable talking about (Kusenbach, 2003 p. 461). It was particularly useful for this study as it exposes researcher to the natural setting of news organisation and how technology impacts on organisation of activities within the media. More importantly, it provides ease to juxtapose, compare and contrast what is said and what is done since it allows the researcher to directly observe explicit aspects of the journalists’ daily routines.

Semi-structured interviews was adopted to allow participants express their experience and how the presence of digital technologies is affecting how thing are done around them. Known for its receptiveness to participant’s views and opinions, semi-structured interview is a “fluid and flexible process” which discourages reluctance and encourages participation (Yin, 2009 p.106). This is particularly useful as it enable the journalists to highlight areas not adequately captured in the questionnaire design, delve into areas they consider relevant to the subject under discussion, and allows them to provide thorough responses and contributions without placing restricting them to some predetermined suggestions. Thus besides making the journalists free to express themselves, semi-structured interview also allows them to contribute to academic discussion on the impact of technology in news production.

3.6.5 Data Organisation

Drawing on Braun and Clarke’s (2006) simple steps in thematic analysis, I organise the data according to emerging themes which forms the basis of analysis. They identified six steps are as follows: Getting familiar with the data; Generating initial codes; Searching for themes; Reviewing themes; Defining and naming themes, and; Producing report. Thus, in line with this pattern, the following emerged:



Picture of initial note-taking and coding process

After reading the transcripts and taking notes, I grouped most of the responses according to research questions and then used Nvivo to aid the coding process. I manually coded sources to nodes and sub-nodes. This helped me to identify similar codes and group similar ones to generate themes. This exercise was useful in generating themes for the analysis chapters and to eliminate responses that were beyond the scope of the research.

Several themes were consistent across the interviews, observations, and these I grouped as sub-themes to be analysed in the analysis chapters.

The resulting overarching themes were:

- . News Value
- . Agency
- . Regulations
- . Political Interference/control
- . Recognition
- . Global exposure
- . Increased pressure to break news
- . Ethical considerations
- . Reliability of leads & sources
- . News media as leads
- . Bureaucracy
- . Loss of professional identity
- . Personal and professional branding
- . Losing autonomy
- . Immediacy and technology
- . Prominence
- . Verification of sources

Categories	Emerging themes
Economic considerations	Decrease of revenue for media houses. Decline in news production, New revenue generation
News values	Privacy, Ethical considerations, credibility, Challenges of verification, interactivity, Copyright
Newsgathering & Production	News media as source, Multi-skilling, Time pressures, Breaking news, Leads, Messaging apps: WhatsApp & Instagram, Twitter
Implications for Journalistic practices	Impact on practices Reporting styles, Flexibility, Quality of work, Training, Time, Logistics, Autonomy, news values, relationship with the audience, work overload, Perceptions of Journalistic Identity, Perceptions of Journalistic labour

Table showing emerging themes after coding

3.7 Data Analysis

Wynn and Williams (2012, p. 799) note that the purpose of data analysis is “identify the most complete and logically compelling explanation of the observed events given the specific conditions of the contextual environment”, be it qualitative or quantitative data. By ‘observed events’ they mean the corpus of data gathered concerning a specific phenomenon, and this includes data obtained from interviews, participant observation, ethnography, focus group discussion, etc.,. Thus, organising the data obtained through this process or combination of processes into identifiable patterns and categories is crux of data analysis (Creswell, 2009; Wynn and Williams, 2012). In this study, the data is qualitative and obtained through primary sources such as observations and semi-structured interviews. Data from observations made up my field notes, while semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed, and both comprise the primary qualitative data of this study.

In chapter two, I have situated this study in the context of news world as the guiding principle of this study. To this end, I have emphasised the political economy paradigm as valuable in exploring the situated experience of journalists and, in so doing, aligned this study towards induction. However, following Braun and Clarke (2006), I examined the data; became familiar with it and generated codes with a view to categorising and identifying themes. Data analysis is an

interactive process which, according to Creswell (2009, 185-188), involves “organisation and preparation of the data for analysis, transcribing interviews, optically scanning materials, typing up field notes or sorting and arranging the data into different types depending on sources of information”. In other words, the data were organised into broad categories based on evolving patterns and themes, and then analysis was conducted based on the emerging themes. Triangulation was made between observed phenomena and opinions of participants. Inferences were drawn by comparing and contrasting the data.

The comparative dimension of this study between the different journalists and the different media in which they work is an important part the data analysis. The data collected from the participants will be compared and contrasted based on the types of news organisations for which they work, as well as the specific jobs that they perform in those news organisations. In this way, it will be possible to understand how the journalists in Nigeria perceive and utilize new media from a broad perspective, as well as from a more specific perspective based on their specific jobs and the specific organisations in which they work.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

A necessary consideration in carrying out this study was the protection of human subjects. Any study that involves human subjects must be conducted with a concern about how to protect participants from any negative effects that might arise from their involvement (Fowler, 2013). The primary concern for this study was to ensure that the participants did not face any negative repercussions in their jobs (such as their appointments being terminated) from agreeing to take part in the investigation. One of the ways in which the participants were protected was by ensuring that their involvement in the study was voluntary, and that they could terminate participation at any time without facing any negative consequences.

Furthermore, efforts were taken to protect the participants from negative repercussions in their personal and professional lives. First, the identities of the participants were not used in this study. The names of the participants were not used in this study, and an effort was made to avoid providing information that would connect personal responses with specific individuals in the organisations that agreed to take part in the investigation. However, to further anonymise the identity of the respondents, the thirty participants interviewed were classified into three categories: reporters, editors, and columnists, which serve as the code name of each participant. Each code

(name) is followed by two suffixes: a number and the name of a city i.e. Reporter 1, Abuja; Editor 2, Lagos; Columnist 3, Abuja. The number represents the count of participants interviewed (i.e. field reporter), while the name of the city (i.e. Abuja or Lagos) represents the location the interview was conducted. This 'label' is important in shielding (or disguising) the identity of participants since every news outlets has reporters and editors, and most news media in Nigeria have established presence in cities. Thus, besides anonymising the identity of participants, the label is deployed for ease of reference and analysis.

It should be noted that the names of the news organisations that participated in this study have been provided. However, this was not viewed as bringing unnecessary harm to any specific individuals as most of the news organisations in the area of Nigeria in which the study was conducted took part in the investigation, meaning that providing the names of the news organisations would not be useful to connecting specific comments or observations with specific individuals because of the fact that most of the local news organisations were part of the study.

In addition, another step that was taken to protect the participants in this study was that the individual responses of the participants to the interviews and the surveys were not directly shared with the news organisations for which they worked (Somekh & Lewin, 2005). I only knew the individual responses of the participants. The management of the news organisations were not given the responses of the participants so that they could not examine how specific employees responded to specific questions. The goal was to ensure that the news organisations could not retaliate (in the form of taking disciplinary action, suspension from work or termination of appointment) against individual employees because of their perceptions or opinions of new media or the media industry in general.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

3.9.1 Internal Validity

The validity of this study is also important in order to be able to make generalisations about the findings of this study. Validity is the idea that a study measures what is intended to be measured, which, for this study, is the perceptions and opinions about the impact of new media on the media industry in Nigeria. The data collection methods that were used in this study was based on the literature that was reviewed regarding new media, changes in the media industry in Nigeria, and the political, social, and economic issues affecting media in the country. Every effort was made to ensure that the data that were collected were directly related to the issues that were of

concern for this study, and that the data collection methods allowed for data to be obtained that were as free of bias as possible on my part (Creswell, 2014).

The fact that I had worked in the media industry in Nigeria and had contacts within said industry was an important issue because while it allowed this study to be conducted, it also raised the concern about bias in terms of both the information provided by the participants and the conclusions subsequently reached by me. In order to eliminate this potential for bias based on professional familiarity, I made every effort to avoid having any effect on the information provided by the participants during the semi-structured interviews, such as not bringing up any of my past experiences from working in the media industry in Nigeria. Furthermore, I avoided injecting any opinions or making comments when taking part in the observations. In this way, the participants were able to provide their opinions and engage in their own behaviours without any manipulation on my part (Creswell, 2014). Also, the choice to eliminate radio organisations and focus on just TV and newspapers was to avoid any analytical blind spot as these two organisations were relatively out of my professional expertise.

Even more, the use of three different sets of data for this study further increased the validity of the findings. The use of different data collection methods allowed for the ability to compare and contrast the findings of the data from the semi-structured interviews, the observations, and the survey. In this way, any major differences in the opinions expressed by the participants or any major differences from the observations and the opinions expressed by the participants during the interviews or from the survey could be discussed.

3.9.2 External Validity

External validity refers to the applicability of the findings of a study to other settings (Creswell, 2014). For this study, it is difficult to know if the results have a high level of external validity because of the limited nature of the study in terms of how the participants were obtained and the relatively limited area from which the participants were drawn. However the external validity of this study was increased by discussing the findings of this study in relation to previous studies and other information about the media industry in Nigeria. The results of this study were not discussed in isolation. Instead, they were discussed in relation to the more substantial amount of information that is available about the issues facing the media industry in Nigeria.

3.9.3 Pre-Test Reliability

From the pilot study testing conducted, 36 out of the 78 members of the Institute of Journalism completed the survey. The responses that were provided were consistent across most of the participants. This is important because it indicated that the questions were worded in a way that was clear.

Though the responses were not the same, which is not part of the effort to determine reliability, but were answered in a consistent manner, which indicated that if the survey instrument were used across different groups of journalists in Nigeria, similar results would be obtained. Also, the pilot test went a long way in determining the internal validity of the questionnaire and the intelligibility of the questions. The questionnaire is contained in the appendix.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

I would say that the primary limitation of this study the limit on the use of the snowballing sampling method to obtain the participants. The use of snowballing sampling method potentially excludes participants that are not in the network of the person doing the referral. This may have excluded certain people although steps were taken to ensure this did not happen as I ensured I researched on the journalists in the organisations, looked up some on social media as well. However, as has already been noted, this study could not have been carried out without the use of snowballing sampling method because gaining access to those journalists and to the news organisations for which they worked would not have been possible without these referrals especially within the time frame. In this regard, the use of snowballing sampling was appropriate because of the conditions under which the study was conducted.

However, the limitation of the use of a sample to obtain the participants did not impact the validity of the findings because in discussing the findings, the effort was made to ensure that inferences and generalisations were discussed based on the fact that a snowballing technique was used, and that the participants came from a limited area. However, it was possible to examine how the findings of this study compared and contrasted to other studies and information that were available. This placed the findings of this study into the larger context of what is known about the impact of new media and the media industry in general in Nigeria.

3.11 Researcher's Reflection

The design and execution of my research methods greatly benefitted from my long standing career in the media. I was able to adopt both an emic and etic approach. Having worked as an active journalist, I had a broad inside knowledge on newsroom configuration and ethics. This helped sharpen my inquiry, understand nuances of the profession and interpret cultural undertones that may appear salient to an observer. We were able to connect at certain levels thereby easing access both spatially and on personal terms. In essence, I had just the necessary understanding to engage the journalists on the field and in the newsrooms. However, I was careful to work on the margins so as to retain the needed level of detachment for objective observation.

There have been schools of thought that argue against doing research at home. "Home" could mean familiar parts (locality, career and so on). I agree with the counter argument that a working knowledge does not negate the value of access, deep insights and what an embodied experience can bring to bear on research. My background enabled me to draw attention to aspects of the culture and practice the participants considered unimportant and banal. This for me were the characteristics I was interested in observing and analysing.

3.12 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a detailed explanation of the methodology that was used to conduct this study. The chapter provides the sociocultural context of the study and research questions were formulated. In this chapter also, information has been provided about the efforts that were taken to reduce research bias and ensure that the findings of this study had the highest levels of validity and reliability possible. Concerted effort was made to ensure that the data that were collected for this study would be valid in terms of allowing for the research questions that were formulated to be answered, while also reducing any negative impact from the use of a convenience sample as well as the researcher's past involvement in the media industry in Nigeria.

The limitations that were present in this study were properly addressed to ensure that the findings of this study are valid. The use of three different types of data collection method was to enhance and make for robust data for the study: survey tested the interview schedule and improved on it; semi-structured interviews elicited journalists' perceptions; while observations provided detailed inspection of newsroom routines. Once collated, they provide empirical data, and juxtaposing it with existing literature on the media industry in Nigeria makes the findings of study highly valid. Furthermore, by discussing the findings of this study in relation to other information

and studies about the media industry, it is possible to place this study within the larger body of knowledge that exists on the topic. In the coming chapters, the findings of this study are presented with detailed discussions about the data that were collected through the semi-structured interviews, the observations, and the survey.

4 Chapter Four Socio-economic Influences

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters' explorations of the Nigerian media landscape reveals that the industry is experiencing the impact of technological advancement. As new apps and platforms appear, journalists and news organisations are quickly making use of them. This chapter looks at the socio-economic aspects of the rise of digital media and its impact on the media industry in Nigeria, specifically examining issues surrounding newspaper production and circulation, the decrease of revenue resulting from a decline in production and the possibility of new revenue generation.

This chapter is divided as follows: first, drawing on the theoretical framework outlined in chapter 2, section 4.2 outlines the framework of evolutionary and revolutionary technologies as applied to digital media. Section 4.3 discusses newspaper production and its decline in the age of print media, while section 4.4 explores the causes and consequences of this decline. Section 4.5 looks specifically at the issue of declining revenue for media houses, and in section 4.6, possibilities for new revenue generation are explored. This is followed by a conclusion which examines whether, based on the evidence presented in this chapter and others, we should understand digital media as an evolutionary or as a revolutionary technology.

4.2 Digital media: an evolutionary or revolutionary technology?

Practitioners and scholars alike are ambivalent when it comes to assessing the net impact of new media on print newspapers, especially when considering the in some ways comparable development of radio and television in the not too distant past. Salman et al. posit that “the presence of the Internet will not replace newspapers, just as radio did not replace newspapers and television” (2011: 2). Talabi likewise asserts that “no new medium can send an old one to oblivion, it will be an extension of the old medium” (2011: 15). In the same vein, an editor states:

No, they can't take over journalism profession. Because no matter [what] they do in the internet some people can never go for it; you can't force it. The hard copy must be there; it is like a book. You can't say you go to the university read online [and] that you don't need a textbook; it is a lie, it cannot work. Hard copy will remain to cater for those who cannot afford to access the internet, while those who can will go for the online version. The traditional hard copy production must be there, the only thing is there are challenges but those who are resilient will survive (Editor 5, Abuja).

Furthermore, insisting that the print newspapers have all it takes to adjust to and survive the rage of digital media, Salman et al. state:

The presence of online newspapers did not destroy the print newspaper. They are reinforcing each other. We argue that the presence of the Internet will not replace newspaper. Radio did not replace newspaper, and neither did television replace radio. The form of newspaper may change, but not the newspaper *per se*. The layout may change, but the content will still be in the form of news. Even if there is a drop in circulation, it is perhaps due to the youngsters shunning the mainstream or conventional media (2011: 7).

The authors further note that changes will occur, and this is normal, but these changes should not be mistaken for displacement. It is in the context of this relationship that Talabi (2011) has asserted that a new medium cannot send an old one to oblivion and this assertion becomes instructive to understanding the presence of digital media in the media landscape. This position is shared by several reporters and editors who believe that digital media, at least for now, functions as a compliment to traditional media. In order to better understand the relationship between the two, it is instructive to examine the nature of new technologies and how they relate with each other.

Christensen (1997) identifies two forms of new technologies: 'sustaining technologies' and 'disruptive technologies'. Christensen's categorisation corresponds to evolutionary and revolutionary technologies. Evolutionary technologies increase productivity or improve performance of existing technologies within the context of existing market data. Thus, television improved the performance of the radio signal. Revolutionary technologies, on the other hand, bring different value propositions to the market that radically distance these technologies from what was previously obtainable. This way, the transistor radio was as disruptive to the vacuum tube as integrated circuits (ICs) were disruptive to transistors. Porter (1985) states that a technology,

regardless of its complementary role, that threatens the subsistence of or signals a discontinuity through product substitution is a disruptive technology. Porter's model of competitive forces in technology suggests that the determinants of substitution threats are "relative price performance of substitute, switching costs, and buyer's propensity to substitute".(Porter 1985)

While evolutionary technologies may give rise to specific advantages to firms at the forefront of innovation, whence they might begin to spread within an industry to create relative competition or even parity, revolutionary technologies completely change the value chain within an industry and often render parts of it obsolete. Porter makes the distinction between evolutionary and revolutionary technologies clearer when he notes that:

Technological discontinuity creates the maximum opportunity for shifts in relative competitive position. It tends to nullify many first-mover advantages and mobility barriers built on the old technology. Discontinuity also may require wholesale changes in the value chain rather than changes in one activity. Hence a period of technological discontinuity makes market positions more fluid, and is a time during which market shares can fluctuate greatly (Porter 1985, cited in Ahlers 2006: 32).

The influence of any technology however, depends not only on its technological distinction, the discontinuities it may create, but on the social and economic forces through which its adoption is mediated. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin define technology as a medium, where a medium is "...that which remediates. That is, a new medium appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them in the name of the real" (1999: 65). The complex interaction between technologists/technicians, inventors, users as well as economic sponsors/backers defines and redefines technological media in line with what is perceived as lacking or needed at any particular point in time. Technologies are no more important than the social, economic and structural forces that impel them to form a complex field of cultural production. As discussed by Bourdieu in his field theory (discussed in chapter 2), competition within fields occurs based on the interaction between social, economic and cultural capital. Bourdieu states that a field cannot be understood by solely examining external forces as there are unique internal forces related to issues revolving around economic and cultural capital that impact the actions of the players within the field. This emphasises the importance of the socioeconomic dynamics of individual journalists in the overall production of news.

In order to assess the extent to which digital media in Nigeria should be considered an evolutionary or a revolutionary technology, it is necessary to understand the ways in which it is bringing change to the field of journalism from multiple aspects. While changes in terms of journalistic work and identity have been discussed in previous chapters, this final chapter will look at a crucial aspect of change: the economic aspects of the changes wrought by the coming of digital media.

4.3 Newspaper Production in the Age of New Media

4.3.1 The ‘death’ of print news?

Whenever the question of digital media arises within the field of journalism, one of the main issues is usually the decline or even death of print newspapers. The impact of digital media on print newspapers is still ambiguous, yet some practitioners and scholars are quick to predict the death of print newspapers. For instance, Terry Eastland of the American Weekly Standard asserts that, “...it’s time to write, if not an obituary, then an account of their rise and decline and delicate prospects amid the ‘new media’ of cable television, the radio, and the blogosphere” (2005: 40). This sentiment is shared by an editor who notes:

The prediction I will give you is what I have told some of my friends: that five years down the line, so many of them are going to be unemployed. I have said so, this is 2015 right, by 2020 at the most newspapers in Nigeria will shut down their print editions or will scale down substantially their print operations, already the news has done that two months ago, or about a month ago. They used to be weekly, but they are now monthly, they have channeled their resources to their online platform... [O]nline will drive away prints, am not too sure. Africa may be the last place, because people want to see obituary announcements, it must be in hard copy, birthday wishes, chieftaincy coronation, congratulatory messages, but over time, when values begin to change, when people no longer bother about whether you congratulate them or not, it will affect all these things. (Editor 6, Abuja)

On the debate about the impact of digital media on traditional media, several themes have been consistent: the immediacy of news and who ‘breaks’ it, the decline in newspaper production, decline in newspaper readership, and the decrease in advertising, which in turn leads to a decline in the revenue-generating capacity of newspapers. Obijiofor and Green 2001, discussing Thottam 1999 argues that, there are three ways the internet threatens the newspaper industry: the “loss of

breaking-news function, declining newspaper readership owing to new technology-based leisure activities and the decline in advertising revenue”. They also state that “drawing on data from a study conducted in the US, states that over a period of 20 years there was over 20 per cent fall in adults who read newspapers; from 77.6% in 1970 to 58.7% in 1999” (Obijiofor and Green 2001: 95). Idiong (2012) and Sambe (2014) argue that while the impact of ICTs has spread across all facets of modern life, no industry has been harder hit than the media industry. Idiong argues that in Nigeria, the profession of journalism feels the effects of changing times much more keenly than any other profession, as journalists depend on the latest media technologies for their day-to-day tasks. Idiong further argues that these new technologies have not only complemented the traditional reporting tools and tasks of the would-be-journalist but have also made them complicated.

It seems this position is widely shared amongst practitioners in the field. A reporter notes that “It is helping the profession. Some of the materials published in newspaper, radio and television is gotten from the social media. It has no serious negative influence; it complements the journalism profession” (Reporter 14, Lagos). Another editor shares this view: “I think it has impacted both the economics and the practice of journalism some in good and bad ways. But that is just the reality of the times” (Editor 7, Abuja).

However, one editor suggests that there are clear, factual reasons for us to be concerned for the future of print newspapers:

So it has brought a number of challenges, particularly with respect to the print run of newspapers. The economic situation in Nigeria has become very dire and the papers are not circulating [or] making much. When I was doing my doctoral thesis, I came here and tried to talk to them to find out the circulation figures and nobody can give you any concrete figures. The truth is that what they tell you often exaggerated. I have it on good note that all the papers in Nigeria put together now don't circulate more than 300,000 copies a day. Unfortunately, that is a reality, contrast that with the early 1980s and even early 1990s when weekend *Concord* alone circulated up to 700,000, and in the early 80s and 70s when the *Daily Times* alone circulated over 700,000 to 800,000. But today to think that the papers in Nigeria, some of them who have print run as small as 25,000. They are supposed to be major leading national newspaper. The economic power, with respect to the downturn, peoples'

purchasing power being diminished to the point that they can't buy newspapers again, what you have are like government agencies and corporation who buy the little they will buy. Today you see people congregating around newsstands, picking pieces of the news (Editor 10, Abuja).

As the above statement suggests, there has been a sharp cut in the rate of newspaper circulation over the years. This development is not peculiar to Nigeria. Rajendran and Thesinghraja observe that with the emergence of new media, the newspaper has been undergoing some changes, although variations still exist nationally, "the average of print media circulation is declining globally" (2014: 610).

4.3.2 Declining newspaper production: facts and figures

The Pew research centre (2013) conducted a study on the circulation of newspapers and the number of newspaper titles in United States. The study shows that the decline in newspaper circulation and decrease of newspapers titles has been going on since the 1990s, well before major online newspapers were introduced in 1995. Since 1995 there has been a decrease of 21.4% and 9.5% in the circulation of newspapers and the number of newspaper titles respectively. This gives rise to the question how much of this decline is down to the introduction of the internet, or whether newspapers are just following pre-existing trends. Cho et al (2016) have discussed the adoption of the internet and its effect on newspapers in a comprehensive study conducted on newspaper data from 21 countries over the period of 2000 to 2009. The total newspaper circulation decreased from 212.91 per thousand individuals in 2000 to 175.64 per thousand individuals in 2009, which is a 17.5% decrease. The decrease in newspaper titles per million was from 4.4 per million in 2000 to 3.86 per million in 2009. The Joint National Readership Survey (JNRS) found a clear generational gap on accessing online newspapers: the survey results show that only 8 percent of the sample aged 45 and above read news online while 17 percent aged 45 and below read newspapers online (JNRS as quoted by Slattery, 2013). Another study conducted on the preference of users on reading in print or on a screen shows that there is a significant preference towards reading in print: 84% of people believe that they can understand and retain the information much better when read from paper, while 79% also described reading from paper as a more relaxing experience than from screens (Two sides, 2015). But one reporter wonders whether this will still be the case some years from now:

There's a lag here: a lot of people still believe in newspapers, so you see more papers are coming out. But if you take into account the demographics and project into, say the next fifty years, how many of those people will still be around? They won't be in the active population. The active population then will be the millennial - people who are used to electronic modes of reading. So they may not care too much about those by then and those left, who are not looking forward, may be cut out (Reporter 5, Lagos).

Declining patronage, readership and circulation of newspapers is not peculiar to Nigeria. Rather, it is a global phenomenon, owing to the immediate and near zero cost of the Internet (Fordham 2010; Salman et al. 2011). The changes taking place are global, however the pace and extent of change is locally specific, owing to several factors unique to Nigeria's landscape. The state of the economy, accessibility to internet and availability of electricity are important factors that affect the volume and the pace of changes taking place in Nigeria by acting as barriers to the quick takeover of the internet. The challenge coming from the digital media is compounded by "the crashing local economy, which has greatly reduced the purchasing power of most Nigerians" (Ekeng 2010, as cited in Auwal 2015a: 64). At the same time, though the spread of new communication technologies continues unhampered, its use is greatly impaired by poor economy and the dearth of enabling facilities in the rural areas (Sambe 2014). Compared with the US and the UK, change in Nigeria is still gradual (Hujanen et al. 2008; Lundén 2009). According to Lundén, the most significant aspects of the changes manifest in the form of "diminishing newspaper circulation, the convergence of the new media, the redistribution of advertising revenue to the internet and fragmentation" (2009: 17), which will be discussed in detail below. One editor notes that:

People can now have access these papers on their phones, on their laptops on the internet to the point that, who needs tomorrow's newspaper when you can read that today online, when you can wake up and first thing you do is go to *The Sun*, *Vanguard* and pick up whatever news instrument you want, and also even some clearing house there are portals where you can go to where, they aggregate all this news for you, you just got ahead and pick up the news. It has in a lot of ways impacted on the circulation figures. If you talk to many editors; they complain very bitterly about that (Editor 7, Abuja).

One journalist (Reporter 7, Abuja) identified three factors affecting newspaper readership today: a bad economy, a poor reading culture amongst young people, and distractions created by large amounts of music and videos online. The country's economic condition, he argues, doesn't just affect the journalist and their work; it also affects the readers, especially in terms of purchasing power. And this, in turn, impacts the work of the journalist. In the following section, the causes and consequences of the decline in newspaper readership will be explored.

4.4 The decline of the newspaper: causes and implications

4.4.1 How new media affects the journalist

Noting the 'triumph' of online media over its print counterpart, Philip Meyer writes that "the newest of the disruptive technologies, online information services, may offer the most dangerous product substitution yet" (Meyer, 2004). Meyer argues that new media technologies have come to replace print newspapers, and are already disrupting print journalism. This 'disruptive' tendency of technologies will become clearer as we examine the nature of these technological innovations. These disruptions have already been discussed in some detail in the preceding chapters, which outlined how the work of the traditional journalist is being altered by new technologies.

However, aside from the implications of these technological advances for journalists, others argue that the decline is attributable to other factors:

I remember when we were growing up. From secondary school up to university level, as a student, there is no weekend I don't buy a paper, and there is no day I don't read a paper. You go to the school library and there were so many newspapers available for me to read. I would doubt if students in Nigeria still have such opportunities. The awareness is not there. Then you look at some of the other things that have diverted the attention of those who may have otherwise read the newspaper. For example, so many people would prefer to go to the music channel and watch music videos. When we were writing out school certificate exams in those days, there's one magazine called *Newswatch* [...] Those days they told us, if you want to pass English, you must be reading *The Guardian*, reading *Newswatch*, and that made us to be reading magazines, reading newspapers and our fathers would buy *The Guardian* newspaper for us, because back then *The Guardian* was very academic, very voluminous and you must read them to pass your exams, but I don't think students these days read

as much. Instead of picking up a copy of a magazine, they would go to the new media you are talking about: Facebook, Twitter, etc., so I don't think the awareness is still there. So that has caused a lot of harm to the readership of newspapers (Reporter 7, Abuja).

One of the participants provided a detailed response about how the decline in newspaper readership is not the sole responsibility digital media, but is instead due to larger issues facing the nation's economy and the lack of awareness among readers:

I would say that yes, there is a decline in the sale of newspapers. But in my opinion, this is not attributable to the advance of new media. Because most people still believe in reading it in hardcopy. The reduction in the sale of the hardcopy is caused by: (1) the economy is bad; people would rather use the N150 they may spend on newspaper on some other things. (2) the readership awareness is no longer there. (Reporter 7, Abuja).

Today, the journalist argued, reading is not among the hobbies of the younger generation, and moreover, people generally appear not to have much time to read anything. For him this is evident in the way and manner today's stories are written: short and in brief. Indeed, with digital media a new writing style has evolved making story content witty and short. For instance, social application such as Twitter literally limits the number of words per post to a hundred and forty characters²; this speaks to growing decline in reading and the need to accommodate attention span.

Another reporter explained that the proliferation of new media means that print journalists need to learn new skills in order for newspaper to remain relevant:

Secondly, another impact of new media on print media is that we print media journalists need to develop new strategies to respond. Because you cannot reprint what has been online for hours. So you change your story, you go deeper. So as a strategy in your newsroom, you have to put a fresh spin on news to remain relevant; because online media published instantly, without that fresh angle approach, you will quickly become obsolete (Editor 4, Abuja).

A newspaper columnist also argued that newspapers are adapting to the proliferation of social media by focusing more effort on analysis of events, and being a source of historical analysis over time rather than focusing on the moment, which is the case for social media:

If you don't adapt, it is a threat. If you don't adapt, the newspaper will not sell. But we are now adapting. There is something the social media can to bring such as analysis, opinion; your own opinion. We call it informed commentary which is from vast experience of what is happening.

² At the time of writing, the characters had just been increased in 2017 from 140 to 280.

Social media is just for the moment. It does not bring history into it or analysis (Columnist 1, Lagos).

Moving from merely reporting or breaking of news to detailed and informed analysis is not something new journalists do, but today's news environment tends to predispose journalists to focus more on in-depth analysis as a way of leveraging on their social media counterparts. This is akin to Nielsen's (2015) position that the changing landscape of news production is forcing journalists and traditional media to pay more attention to areas where digital media is yet to lay foothold such as deep and focused analysis.

Obijiofor and Green (2001) suggest that the decline in adult newspaper readership cannot be only attributed to the emergence of the Internet age, as it has long been on the decline. Rather than resulting from the rise of the digital media, the decline in newspaper readership might be a function of a general decline in reading culture.

This can also be attributed to a different reading culture in Africa as compared to the West. Molosiwa (as quoted in Commeyras & Mazile, 2011: 418) illustrates this by a comment from a secondary school teacher in Botswana:

We Botswana do not have a culture of reading like people in other countries, especially those in the west. Whereas people in the west would prefer to read a book than to talk to the person sitting next to them in a bus seat or talking to the person they meet at a bus stop, we wouldn't do that. I realized this in England when I visited my husband who was studying there. We are not like that. We talk to each other even if it's the first time you meet a person. When we are on a journey together, we converse all the way and learn a lot from each other, and not only that, we might end up being friends. We are more sociable than people in the western countries. We believe in talking to each other not so much in reading books. (Molosiwa, 2007: 123)

Indeed, Rajendran and Thesinghraj observe that "readership habits seem to be changing as users turn to the internet for free news and information. The alternate source of news and information is not only free but also acts fast. The 'instant' feature of the social media and the online news were one of the smart options for the consumers to accept it globally" (2014: 609). Auwal (2015b) argues that on the whole, over the years, advancements in digital technology have revolutionised

the ways in which people communicate and share information, and that these technological changes “have affected the socio-cultural, political and economic structures of the contemporary society” (Auwal 2015b: 29). It is argued that the declining attitude towards reading is a major factor affecting print newspapers.

However, it is difficult to entirely separate the decline in reading culture from the coming of the new media. In a longitudinal study conducted between 1998 and 2006, Willnat (2009) observes that the time people spend reading online news has more than doubled, while reading offline has decreased significantly over the same period. Auwal (2015) agrees with Willnat, noting that the emergence of digital media is accompanied by a decline in newspaper patronage and circulation, and this has exacerbated the already declining readership habits of most Nigerians. He further notes that, though there is a general decline in reading culture, the "ratio of readers who patronise online publications is greater than those who buy and read printed newspapers and magazines" (Auwal 2015a: 63). In the same vein, Murdoch, cited in Abdulraheem, Adisa and La'aro (2012: 6), notes that "the dynamic revolution taking place in the news industry today revolves around the fact that the technology-savvy young people are becoming increasingly likely to turn to the web as their news medium of choice."

In part, the difficulty in separating the question of reading culture and digital media is related to the fact that the decline in print readership is often seen as a ‘generational issue’:

There is a generational issue: older people are still used to the texts, the hard copies of materials, then when you talk about online journals, newspapers the kindles etc they get lost. I am a bit of a hybrid - if I have an online option and a hard copy option, I'll probably go for the hard copy option, but I am a child of two worlds. I was also brought up in the library in Canada where most of the books in the library were online, you don't have any options, you can't print out all the journals, you can download on your computers, but when you start printing you will spend a lot of money and you have to also be environmentally sensitive, so I try as much as possible to also read the materials online. I think there is a generational issue, we can't be categorical unless we conduct scientific survey[s] to find out the number of people and to what extent traditional media has ceded the ground to the online media. I believe that the older generation are still stuck with the hard copies and the younger generation, the cell phone generation in Nigeria are more used to the online materials. That

may be a study that someone has to conduct, at least find out to what extent either one is affecting the other. My own take is that the older generations still love their hard copies, they have to hold it, the younger ones probably are much more inclined to [go] online, they [are] the Facebook generation, you could see the dexterity with them compared to the older people (Editor 7, Abuja).

This position is in line with Stevenson's (2004) study on the behavioural attitudes of newspaper readers across different age grades in the US. Stevenson found that:

Demographically, older audiences tend to do less media multitasking because this generation was raised in a linear environment that placed greater emphasis on print material. Younger consumers brought up in a nonlinear atmosphere use more visual media, such as the internet and videogames (2004: 59).

4.4.2 Complementarity

This is not the first time the death of newspaper has been proclaimed. Its death has been predicted several times in the past: first radio and then television were to herald its demise, which never came (Ahlers 2006; Lundén 2009). Ahlers (2006) notes that, far from being a disruptive substitute, new media serves as more of a compliment to traditional media. This position has been further corroborated by editors of several newspapers, who see both online and print newspapers as complimenting each other.

A study conducted by the Online Publishers Association (2004) and quoted by Ahlers (2006) reveals there is a fundamental flaw in assuming that the use of new media amounts to a decrease in the use of traditional media. It was observed that consumers make no notable distinction between online and offline news: most users see the online/offline dichotomy as complimentary rather than competitive. According to the study, 64 per cent of online users also use offline media frequently (40 per cent) or occasionally (24 per cent). This may suggest that the fear of new media displacing traditional print media is unfounded, and that what is in fact observable is that both types of media complement one another. Respondents indicate that they make use of different media in search of and in order to verify information, and most offline users frequently visit online platforms as a follow-up of what they have read in print (Ahlers 2006). In the same vein, Lundén's (2009) study on internet usage collected and analysed online traffic and patterns, finding that web users are less

likely to rely on a single source. The author further states that “the digital generation of youths is less willing to rely on one source alone, like one regional or national newspaper and its web pages” (Lundén 2009: 19). People will rather navigate from one website to another as well as moving online and offline to authentic the information they seek. However, one potential problem with this is the fact that people use multiple sources and go online to follow up what they read in print may still indicate a migration online – do they also follow up what they read online in print? Are the multiple sources used also print, or mainly various online sources?

4.4.3 Advantages of the old and disadvantages of the new media

Another argument against the inevitable death of print media draws out the advantages of print media as against the disadvantages of online media:

That is the age-old question: whether social media has destroyed print media? When it comes to the placing of adverts, newspapers still have an edge. Because it is not everyone that will go online to look for an ad or come by ad accidentally online; but an ad that is in a newspaper can come across anyone. Also, it is better for me to hold a newspaper and read it; because what you read online, you are more likely to quickly forget. But when you hold a newspaper, it's more tangible, you better retain whatever information you are taking in. How will I put it? Okay, let me use this analogy: like when you eat at a restaurant or when you eat at home; even if it's the same food, you feel more satisfied when you eat at home than when you eat out. Even in this era when there is a society elevation to eating out, one still doesn't feel as satisfied. You feel satisfied when you read it in a newspaper. And besides, sometimes when you want to mark and edit; that's easy to do with a newspaper than online (Reporter 6, Lagos).

It has also been argued that the constant updating of news in new media gives it a fleeting nature, akin to that of radio and television, which means it is not readily available to lay hands on when the need arises. This fleeting nature does not apply to the traditional newspaper which by its very nature can be picked up any time. This resort to hard copy, Obijiofor and Green (2001) argue, gives the traditional newspaper an edge over new media. This is especially true in developing countries, where the cost of and access to Internet, as well as the problem of irregular electric power supply are a significant impediment to relying on computer-based technologies. The cost of internet, its unavailability in rural areas, and the erratic nature of the electric power supply means

that there is still an advantage in having printed copies of newspapers, which one can easily refer to when the need arises (Obijiofor et al. 2000; Obijiofor and Green 2001). A columnist makes his case as follows:

The newspaper is there in your face they don't depend on whether there is NEPA [electricity], whether you have a phone, or whether you have a laptop, they don't depend on whether your phone battery is down. The newspaper is a physical form. The other one is virtual. You will not eliminate the physical form (Columnist 2, Abuja).

Corroborating this view, another journalist asserts: "I don't know about other places, but to us Nigerians, we still prefer hardcopy newspapers" (Reporter 6, Abuja). In Nigeria, all indications show that the relative cost of obtaining news from offline and online platforms appears to favour the latter, at least, at surface level. But it must be borne in mind that accessing the internet in order to get news online does not come without its own costs, as discussed above – the aggregate cost of owning a mobile device that is internet-enabled, purchasing data required for the connection and the relative cost of powering the device in a society where electricity is still a luxurious commodity. Based on these realities, one newspaper reporter argues that even though new media constitutes a threat to traditional media, it cannot send it to oblivion:

It's already happening, but there are people like me who do not generally trust the online media as [a] news source. I would say in the next ten years, we will have 90% people moving to online media. The new media will only reduce the influence of newspaper but it will never make it obsolete because the cost of data subscription is very expensive. Not everybody can afford it. So, that is a factor that will not allow the newspaper to become obsolete (Reporter 4, Lagos).

When all the associated costs are aggregated, it might be difficult to claim that online news is a 'free' or 'zero cost' alternative. While the cost of switching from the old newspaper to the newer digital media has remained a serious concern for operators working in the media industry, switching itself does not have any immediate benefit unless it is accompanied by a 'network effect'. A network effect is an increase in returns resulting from the increasing adoption of a technology: "increasing returns to adoption are said to exist when the net benefit to the user of a technology increases as the degree of adoption of that technology increases" (Cowan 1991, cited in Ahlers 2006: 33). This 'increase' in returns works in two directions, both for the producers and the consumers. But in the case of Nigeria, the rate of adoption is not yet large enough to create a network effect. An online survey in the USA of consumer opinion regarding online news revealed

that no network effect exists yet, as forty-nine percent of the respondents reported that it doesn't affect them if they get information from online or offline property of the same brand (Online Publishers Association 2004). The findings of the survey indicate that respondents consider that the major advantage of online news over offline is the ability to find information faster. Thus the propensity of the audience to switch from offline to online media might not necessarily indicate that online media will render offline media completely obsolete, since the use of offline and online properties could be seen as complementary rather than competitive (Ahlers 2006: 33).

Moreover, it has been argued that while the internet serves as a hub for readers to get hold of breaking news and snippets, the traditional newspaper continues to be relied upon for detailed and background analysis. Picard, however, observes that “[T]hings will never be the way they were. So get over it. Move on. Discover and embrace new ways of operating and new opportunities to prosper and grow” (2008, cited in Lundén 2009: 75). Despite the growing trend of online news, the need and demand for information with detailed investigation and in-depth analysis that favours professional print journalism is yet to completely vanish. As a study on the interests of online users reveals: “online journalists were less likely to analyse complex problems, investigate government claims or discuss national policy, were equally likely to want to get information to the public and to avoid unverified facts, but were more likely to let members of the public express views and to want to entertain their audience members” (Brill 2000: 35). The premium placed on value in the face of a surge of unpredictable and unreliable data, which has been extensively discussed in the later chapters, has never been more critical than it is today.

4.4.4 A positive challenge?

Concurring with the above observations, an editor argues that the ability to create new angles and twists to existing stories is an advantage the print media enjoys over its new media counterparts. An editor provides an elaborate explanation worthy of quoting at length:

There has been an ongoing debate on the future of the print media, because of the new media. The debate is: how long are we going to print newspapers before people entirely switch over to new media? The debate is still on; it has not been concluded yet. Secondly, another impact of new media on print media is that we print media journalists need to develop new strategies to respond. If an aircraft crashes today, by say 2 pm, there is a harvest of stories online immediately. They do so much.

If I in print media am going to put out a lead story what will now be a day late, I cannot just say “so and so plane crashed”, because everyone already knows that and you don’t want to be printing ancient news. So you will now say “why so and so plane crashed” and give a different spin so as to be relevant. Because you cannot reprint what has been online for hours. So you change your story, you go deeper. So, as a strategy in your newsroom, you have to put a fresh spin on news to remain relevant because online media publishes instantly; without that fresh angle approach, you will quickly become obsolete, that’s the path to being a dinosaur. (Editor 4, Lagos)

The editor contends that, though it is not possible to say with certainty when print media will fade away, one cannot deny the fact that it is being challenged. This challenge, she argues, is a good one, a positive challenge that calls for print journalists to reinvent and recreate themselves in order to meet the demands of the changing landscape. This call for the ‘reinvention’ of the self has been emphasised by several scholars as imperative to upgrade and acquire professional skills. Similarly, as has been discussed in the later chapters, among practitioners, the emphasis has been on training and re-training as a necessary condition to survive the fast-paced news environment of digital media. This need to recreate oneself is a means of ‘living’ or navigating both worlds. As Martin (2014) notes, even if journalists choose to remain conservative, they still have to learn the ‘new ways’ to survive in the present. In the same vein, Gentry (1996) had earlier hinted at the need for what he terms “the nervous traditionalist” journalist to uphold traditional news values, while at the same time embracing the new values of the modern newsroom and learning new ways of doing ‘old things’ better. An editor suggests how such a ‘dialogue’ might look like in practice:

A lot of my colleagues have quit print media and gone online to set up their own blogs, etc., but then they don’t have the financial capacity to sustain a formidable online newsroom, for example, deploying staff to source the news. So, they penetrate newsrooms, checking for leads. Some of them are not paid, so they become informants, getting stipends for snippets of information to use to sustain their families. I can talk of Premium Times, Sahara Reporter, ninety per cent of all these new media houses depend on old media to generate news. The “old media”, so to speak, also have their own tricks: because most of them have doubled up and [they] both print newspapers as well as publish online. I covered the National Conference in Nigeria, that was last year. You sit there and people are making presentations: one general [for example] said civilians were behind all the major coups in Nigeria. You type out one or two paragraphs, send to your editor, and it goes online. Within hours, it’s there and then responses and counter-responses start coming in. Later, you make a bigger story

of it. The other response of the old media is a double-barrelled approach... So, the responses we are making to the advancement of new media, is to have our own online presence, where news is presented quickly in its raw form and then later dissected and more thoroughly examined in the print media, often from a new angle so as to make it fresh. So this is our response to invasion of the new media into journalism (Editor 4, Abuja).

On the other hand, a reporter berates what he describes as the apparent inertia of print media practitioners in Nigeria, arguing that they have been too slow to adapt and need to wake up to the reality of the times:

Carrying around paper doesn't work; let's go online... That's the nature of the situation. Convergence of previously disparate media, they are all coming together in one format and it's upsetting the economics and the equations and people can't quite compute what to do (Reporter 5, Lagos).

What is obvious is that print media practitioners are conscious of the presence of a rival force, but do not necessarily see it as a threat. There seems to be some sort of consensus from respondents that digital media does not in itself pose a threat to print media, nor is it solely responsible for decline in newspaper readership and circulation. Even when a decline in newspaper production is acknowledged, it is attributed to factors other than digital media, such as poor readership, a lack of awareness or orientation, and a declining economy.

Nevertheless, a common thread running throughout is that, while digital media might not constitute a threat in the strict sense, print media has to invent new ways to cope with the coming of new media. New angles on stories and well-researched and examined write-ups are a burden to the amateur online blogger, Leadbearer (2008) argues:

[n]o amount of amateur blogging will make up for well-trained and well-funded investigative journalism that makes politicians quake, probing the depths of the scandals that the powerful want to keep quiet (2008: 3).

In the same vein, *The New Yorker* underscores the irreplaceability of newspaper, at least, it cannot be replaced by the non-professional online journalism that dominates the digital media landscape.

Thus, it asserts that “there is no substitute for the professional, civil-service-style, relentless independent thinking, reporting and observation that developed in big newsrooms between Second World War and whenever it was that the end began – about 2005 or so” (28 January, 2009).

4.5 Decrease in Revenue for Media Houses

4.5.1 Decreasing advertising spending on print media

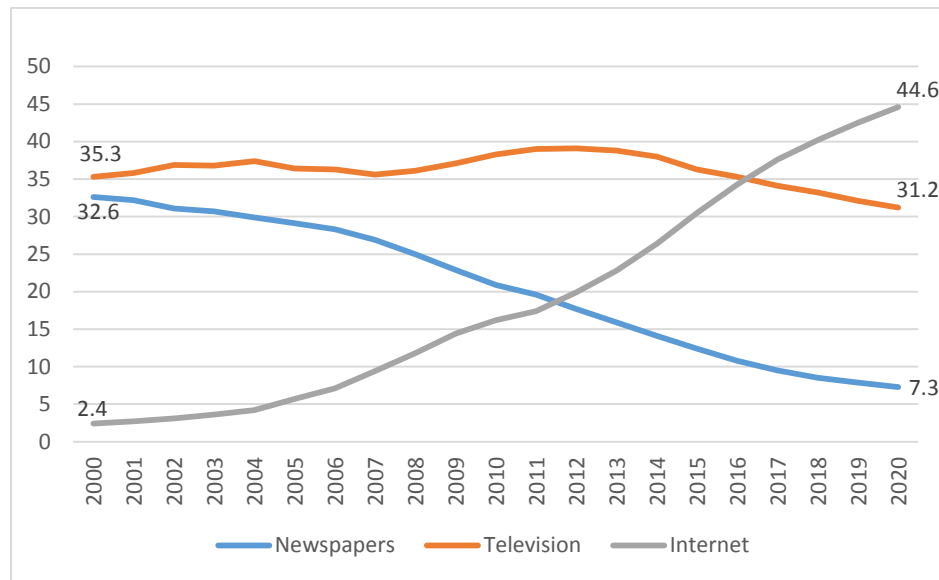
Global trends

Despite the still relatively slow pace of the changes due to the local factors discussed above, there are already serious economic challenges facing the media industry cutting across the readers, the publisher and the journalist.

On the global scene, the internet has emerged as a dominant medium and is expected to lead global advertising spending, especially through mobile phones (Zenith media, 2018). Since its beginnings in the mid-1990s, internet advertising (both desktop and mobile) has principally risen at the expense of print. Globally, television has consistently remained the leading medium for advertisement-spending, accounting for about 40% of total industry spending from 2012 to 2015 (Zenith media, 2018). This figure is, however, projected to decline to 32.5% by 2019 as the internet gains more ground. Internet advertising has significantly increased over the years, to the detriment of the print media, as advertisers have shifted to online news sites. The shift from newspaper advertising to internet advertising became more significant in recent years, with the share of advertising spending on print (newspapers and magazines) declining from 27% to 22% of total advertisement-spending, while at the same time spending on internet advertising increased from 18.3% to 24.6% between 2012 and 2015.

Zenith media, 2018 reports that print titles will continue to lose their market share as their readers move to online versions of the print brands or to other forms of entertainment entirely. This is reflected in the rising profile of internet advertising, which has overtaken traditional advertising. According to Zenith Optimedia, global internet advertisement-spending is projected to account for 42% of total spending, with TV at 33% and print 13% (newspaper and magazine) by 2019, with

internet spending is projected to account for 44.6% in 2020. The chart below created from the data of Zenith Media, 2018 shows the trends in percentages of the total ad spend globally from 2000 to 2018, with projected values for 2019 and 2020 .



Total advertising spend per medium (newspapers, television and internet) as percentage of the total ad spend

Nigerian developments

This evolution in media practice is also unequivocally evident in the developing countries of Africa such as Nigeria, where the onset of online journalism is gradually dampening the demand for print newspapers. The migration of newspapers and television outfits to the web has been consequently accompanied with that of its readership and viewership respectively. For instance, The Punch now runs an online press which offers its readers (both local and diaspora) the opportunity to access news stories, to connect with the press on social networks to access and to respond to news feeds through their mobile service. It also features opinion polls that aid in the reception of feedback from its readers. Some other news outfits go further, providing their readers with the possibility of uploading reports of current, newsworthy events in their vicinity. *Vanguard* offers its readers such a service, while the *Daily Sun* offers a search engine which enables its readers to rapidly retrieve information on trending events.

In addition, Nigeria has over 294 radio and television stations, most of which also post their transmissions on the internet. For example, Wazobia FM and Cool FM, which are both independent radio stations, have their audio programmes streamed live. Their audiences can click,

download and listen to these programmes. Television stations in Nigeria likewise offer their content online, with a large number of stations maintaining a web presence where they transmit live programmes. *Channels Television*, a predominantly news-oriented television station, produces original news videos and offers links to YouTube videos, in addition to its live transmissions. It also maintains Facebook and Twitter platforms that offer breaking news through email alerts to subscribers, conduct opinion polls and provide weather reports.

“Nigeria’s media is one of the most vibrant in Africa,” according to Tolu Ogunkoya, Managing Director/CEO of Media Reach OMD. “State radio and TV have near-national coverage and operate at federal and regional levels. All 36 states run at least one radio network and a TV station. there are hundreds of radio stations and terrestrial TV networks, as well as cable and direct-to-home satellite offerings. There are more than 100 national and local press titles.” (BBC news as quoted in Zweig 2016:154)

In Nigeria, television accounted for 40% of advertisement spending, as against 24%, 21% and 15% for print, outdoor and radio, respectively. Fewer advertisements (compared to global trends on the websites) are placed online, as official advert spend records still follows the traditional path of television, prints and the radio. This may, in part, be due to the fact that the industry was yet to recognise and establish online business models. For instance, the online publishers’ association (OPAN) was only launched in November 2015, hence significant advertisement-spending on blogs were not accounted for, despite the rise in advertising on blogs in form of sponsored posts and page advertisements.

4.5.2 Reasons for decreased spending on print and challenges for online

Today, commercial outfits maintaining an online presence appear to be the norm rather than the exception. This raises the question: ‘why the delay? Why not migrate online at once?’ An editor offers insight to the dilemma of the print media, explaining that publishing everything online is not an obvious solution, since the revenue from online advertising is very low. He argues that, while new media and digital technologies offer reasons for optimism, the Nigerian media industry is not yet at the point where much revenue can be derived from online sources:

I believe that it will be difficult (ok) but I don't doubt technology, because if we can get to the level we have gotten now [...] but the thing is that if you are not making an income you will be discouraged. So we still refer to the traditional hard copy newspaper (Editor 9, Lagos).

One editor argues that, when publishing houses create online platforms in addition to their print work, this can sometimes create challenges for both the online and the offline output:

You don't have the luxury of putting everything [online]; it will not work. To be able to do that [publish everything online] who will advertise in your paper? And then how much of money do you make online through advertisement, so is very low. [...] Well, if people upload those things and you read them free of charge online you don't pay a dime to read a newspaper, so it is a big challenge now. We produce this at a discounted rate of N150. So it costs almost N300 to produce and it is sold at the rate of N150, that is, less than a dollar. Because people are so poor they only have access to their discretionary income, so they are not buying (Editor 5, Lagos).

A sizeable portion of news content is withheld and published in hard copy with a view to drawing advertisers - a major source of revenue for the media houses and subsidy to the buyers or readers of newspapers. But at the same time, this limits the possibilities of a print publisher's online platform, which already struggle to draw sufficient amounts of advertising funding.

4.5.3 A struggling economy means splitting advertising budgets

Mahmud (2009), Salman et. al. (2011) and Auwal (2015) concur that the impact of digital media on print media is exacerbated by bad economic conditions, compelling individuals to see newspapers as a seemingly lost cause. At the same time, the economic situation causes firms to cut down on their advertising budgets, or to split their budget between online and offline media. Budgetary allocations for advertising therefore appear not to be increasing at the same rate as the demand for advertisers, which is growing due to the new space provided by new media. This view is corroborated by several journalists, one of whom describes the situation thus:

Well, we're taking from the same basket. That is why they are also being affected, because that basket that was just for broadcasting and prints is now for broadcasting, print and online [advertising]. That basket has not increased; it is still the same basket. But now more sectors are now sharing from it (Editor 11, Abuja).

The implication is clear: the supply of revenue from advertising has remained inelastic even as the demand for advertising spending is expanded due to the diversification and extension of the media. An editor puts the situation this way:

[W]hat is making the traditional media so uncomfortable [is that] the advert base is not increasing so much, it is still the same people that have been advertising that are still advertising, now more people are asking for the same advert, the online people are there now. It used to be just broadcasting and prints that will go to Zenith, GTB, Nigerian Breweries, MTN, and Glo. I have called Fidelity they have given me advert for one month, I have called Zenith, they have given me, [I] am making efforts at Access Bank. *Thisday*, *Punch* and *The Nation*, all of them are also going to Zenith Bank, at the end of the day Zenith Bank will not increase their advert budget, what they will do is that whatever basket they have, they will share it (Editor 6, Abuja).

On a similar note, Auwal points to a trend that further exacerbates the effects of digital media on advertisement spending in newspapers. He notes that many organisations now subscribe to online advertising:

Today, many advertisers prefer using social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google, among others to advertise their products and services because of the peculiar assumption and belief that the Internet has wider reach than printed newspapers and magazines. For this reason, a considerable number of publications (newspapers and magazines) have been forced to migrate or create online platforms where they provide information and advertisements on products and services. This has caused serious drop in the revenue generated through advertising and promotion by the print media, as advertisers now have the leverage of placing advertisements on social media platforms at low or no cost (Auwal 2015a: 65).

4.5.4 Consequences: Downsizing, Retrenchment and Job Loss

Responding to the economic downturn exacerbated by the rise of digital media, Nigerian newspapers, like elsewhere, are resorting to financial strategies to cut costs, at least to maintain equilibrium. One major route often taken is downsizing and laying-off ‘non-essential’ staff. Kirchhoff (2009) reported similar occurrences in the US, as major newspapers struggle to meet the

financial burden of huge workforce in the face of dwindling revenue. She notes that, as readership crumbles and advertising revenue tumbles,

Some major newspaper chains are burdened by heavy debt loads. As in the past, major newspapers have declared bankruptcy as several big city papers shut down, lay off reporters and editors, impose pay reductions, cut the size of the physical newspaper, or turn to web-only publication. (Kirchhoff 2009: i) ,

An editor offers a vivid picture of how this plays out in practice:

Like many other technologies, before we used to have photographers whose job is with the cameras, but today they are virtually non-existent in newspaper for the simple reason that you don't even need a camera, you need a very good cell phone to be able to capture the image. Any publisher now who still employs photographers, maybe is a Father Christmas [Santa Claus], he has a lot of money to spend. It is going impact it, that is the normal thing with technology in the banks today there has been a lot of layoffs, with all this money counting machines and other technologies, most of those jobs which were done manually have been lost. With the emergence of computers one of the very first people to go were the typists, ten years ago you'll still see professional typists whose jobs were full time typists, in fact one of my friends who is an editor in *The Sun*, it happened that when we were in Concord, there was a lady who was our typist then, I went to *The Sun* and I saw her there, the other day when he came I asked him about madam Julie and he said unfortunately she has been sacked. That is the fact of life. The challenge is to do a more scientific survey to find out to what extent it has displaced people. But definitely people have been displaced, that is one of the unfortunate things about [digital media] technology (Editor 7, Abuja).

The economic downturn combined with possibilities of technology discussed extensively in chapter (particularly section 7.3) lead to the predictable process of downsizing. But, as was discussed in the previous chapter, this does not simply affect people whose jobs have become completely obsolete, but anyone who is not absolutely essential, whose work can conceivably be replaced by a computer or can be offloaded onto a journalist. The media industry has been shaken by advances in technology and the working environment has consequently been transformed, but not without the unfortunate loss of jobs that this transformation has occasioned.

4.6 New Revenue Generation

Scholars are of the opinion that the print industry is not unaware of the challenges before it. As such, it recognises the need to accept temporary economic losses "while it is building online readers' trust, acceptance, and above all regular and frequent use" (Gapsiso 2008 as quoted in Auwal 2015a:63). In many cases, there appears to be a missing link between accepting the challenges of new media as fact and a conscious effort to manage these challenges. This is the position put forward by an editor:

The truth is that the traditional media are nonplussed; they don't know what to make of the new media situation. They are completely confused. And this is the same all over the world, not just in Nigeria. So, initially, newspapers didn't want to go online; *The Guardian* started at a point and then pulled out, asking how can they be giving their stuff free of charge that they are selling? They pulled out of the online game and stayed out for a while (Editor 8, Lagos).

However, some evidence suggests that, once charges are levied on online sources, their patronage is likely to decline and readers are more likely to return to traditional newspapers. This position is supported by instances where attempts to charge for news have led to low readership. A case in point is the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ), which had to rescind its decision to charge for news, when it became apparent readers were unwilling to pay cash for news online (Hansell 2001; cited in Obijiofor and Green 2001). Although the situation has changed in the more recent past: subscriptions seem to be working for certain newspapers (e.g. NYT, *The Times* (UK), the FT and, increasingly, *The Guardian* (UK)).

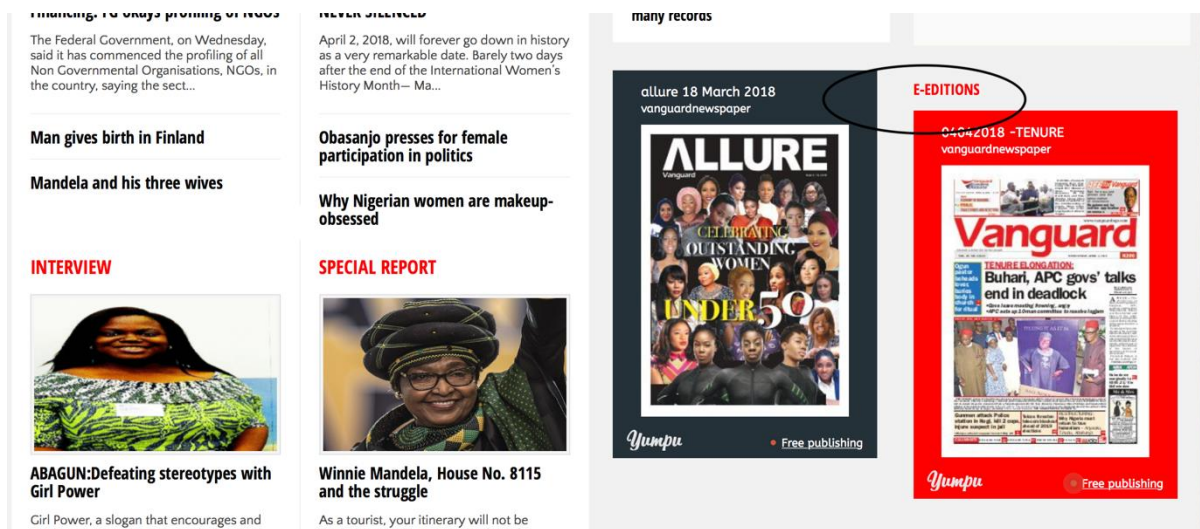


Figure 7: Screenshot from Vanguard Newspapers incorporating online editions of Newspapers.

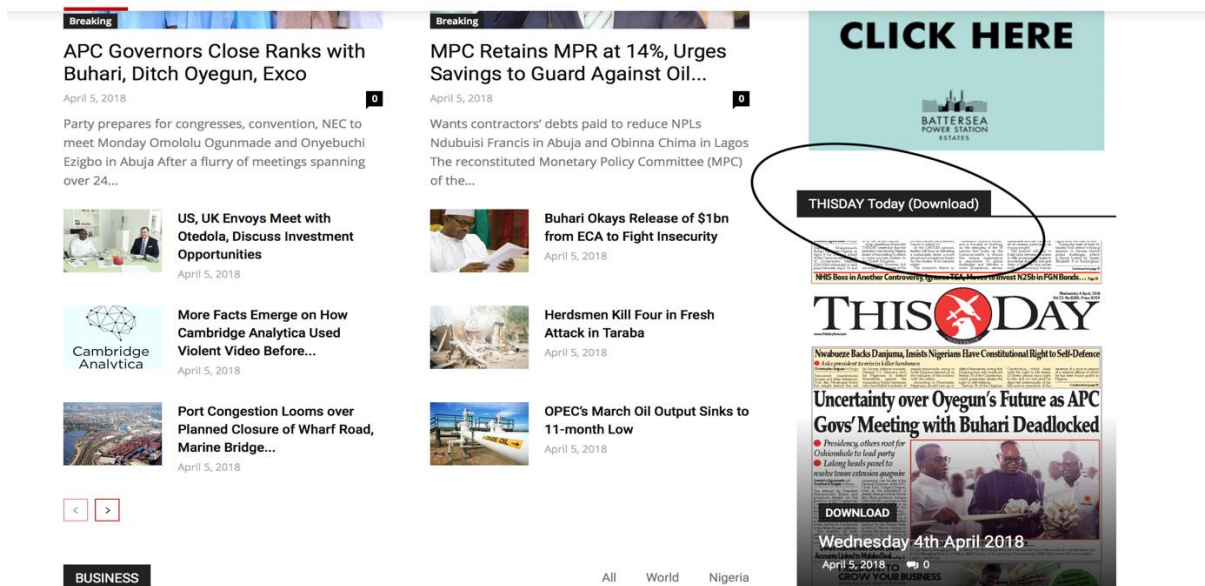


Figure 8 Screenshot from ThisDay Newspapers incorporating online editions of Newspapers.

4.6.1 Capturing revenue from online advertisements

However, the editor continues, some media have found ways to navigate these challenges and survive in changed circumstances. One way they do this is by making clever use of technology to leverage funding:

Papers like *ThisDay* found a new use by realising that there were Nigerians outside [the country], Nigerians who desperately wanted to learn about home, so they put their stuff online and pulled such heavy traffic, that advertisers came for them and they made so much money in Google Ads that it

offset whatever they lost in sale of traditional newspapers. Because even with the sale of newspapers, the aim is never to make lots of money, the aim is to get a reasonable circulation number, which is taken to advertisers, saying, I've got this reach, come and advertise with me and you will reach this many people. And that was the economics of the newspaper. You create some space, put up stories and pictures that will interest people and leave some space for advertising. That is the economics of how newspapers worked. And now you have a new format that can take text, audio, video and graphics and it costs less to do, so newspaper houses don't quite know what to do (Editor 8, Lagos).

The editor further notes that, should the print media overhaul itself, it could create a space for itself in the new media landscape. Ahlers (2006) alludes to this when he writes:

In a perfect market, one would expect a shift to the new distribution technology. Since costs would be lower for firms using the new technologies to produce and deliver a news product, they would be able to offer the product to consumers at a substantially lower price than their old technology competitors. The new, lower cost technology would reduce barriers to entry and new entrants would appear. The traditional media, with large capital investments in the older technology and higher cost structures, would be disadvantaged. The competitive response strategy of the traditional media would be to offer online versions of their own products at a substantially lower operating cost. Over time, they would push their customers to use the lower cost channel in the same way that banks pushed customers to use ATMs and online banking. Hence, we could hypothesize an abandoning of the traditional news media by both consumers and producers in favour of a lower cost/lower price substitute product (Ahlers 2006: 32).

On a similar note, Lundén (2009) argues that the migration from offline to online is a sort of new game which the players – the print newspapers – are still learning to play. Alan Rusbridger, editor-in-chief of *The Guardian* observes that, for now, the print newspapers “[have got] to go to audiences and wait later, where the money will come” (cited in Lundén 2009: 21). This way, the ‘forced’ migration of radio, television and newspapers to online platforms, as well as running Facebook and Twitter accounts, is not only a way to appear in real-time and foster intimate relationships with their audience. It is also as a survival technique to maintain relevance in the industry. With relevance and a wide reach newspapers can retain the confidence of advertisers, their greatest financiers. Abdulraheem, Adisa and La'aro corroborate that

...virtually all Nigerian newspapers have been adapting themselves to this new media age. The traditional medium for publishing content is paper, and now newspapers have tried certain new medium such as online newspaper edition and mobile phone newspapers. As at today, 60 Nigerian newspapers are online (Abdulraheem, Adisa and La'aro 2012: 6 as quoted in Auwal 2015a:63).

This is an area that is yet to be explored in Nigeria's media landscape. According to the Australia Communication and Media Authority's 2013 report, mobile devices and messaging apps now account for most online revenue generation in Australia. The Report states that "mobile advertisements accounted for around one-third of Facebook advertising revenue in the March 2013 quarter, up from around one-quarter in the December 2012 quarter" (ACMA 2013: 11-12).

Innovation appears to be at the heart of the difficulties between digital media and its traditional counterparts. The former appears to have come to stay, and what is expected of the latter is adjustment to accommodate this fact, though not without some resistance - but is that not what innovation is all about? After all, it has been argued that online advertising is an imperfect substitute for advertisers.

4.6.2 Making the most of the limits of online advertising

Online advertising has some disadvantages over traditional advertisements which will be discussed in the following lines. Online consumers tend to ignore advertisements, as they are in control of which advertising message they want to click on and respond to, and may even use advertisement-blocking software. Technical issues may occur such as lags in website download or video loading and other browser complications can reduce the amount of time a consumer sees an online advertisement or how well it can be seen, which may result in losing potential customers. Another drawback or limitation of online advertising is that consumers can get distracted as they have a lot of options to choose from on these websites which may take the attention away from the advertisement, so for small business owners it is very important to choose the correct audience and website for their online ads, otherwise expensive advertisement prices on popular websites may results in little to no return on investment (Miranda, 2018). Traditional media and advertisements can still be a part of the market by positioning themselves correctly.

4.6.3 New sources of revenue beyond advertisements

The Reuters Institute (2016) has carried out a comprehensive survey of 25 newspapers and broadcasters across Europe. The study shows that “80-90% of revenues in most newspapers still come from print” (Reuters Institute, 2016: 7). While some newspapers have gone digital and attract large audiences online, the advertising rates online are very low. Malcolm Coles, director of digital media at the Telegraph explains:

A newspaper reader on average tends to give more revenue to the company than a digital reader. Most news markets around the world have seen a sort of long-term decline in the sale of print products, and the rise in digital for most of them has yet to replace that revenue. So I guess the big opportunity is being able to get your brand in front of many more people, and the big challenge is how do you make money out of doing that? (Reuters institute, 2016: 17)

News organisations have now adopted strategies to diversify and explore other sectors outside their core market to generate alternative revenue streams. Some diversification strategies adopted by newspapers are e-commerce, marketing solutions and event organization. Telegraph media group in the UK has gone into diverse areas which are far away from the core business such as travel, events and financial services. Peter Lindsay explains this:

What we provide as a business is a perspective on the world. That perspective on the world isn't just about politics, it's about any topic, and it allows us to form loyal relationships and ties with certain types of individual who share that perspective. ... Therefore, we are expanding more dramatically into other business areas such as travel, events, and financial services, where we give customers ... [curated recommendations], a curated view on what they should be doing or buying or where they should be going on holiday. (Reuters institute, 2016: 31)

Every organisation has to experiment and forge its own path to generate alternative sources of revenue to invest in a future where newspapers and broadcasters are still important players in a digital media environment.

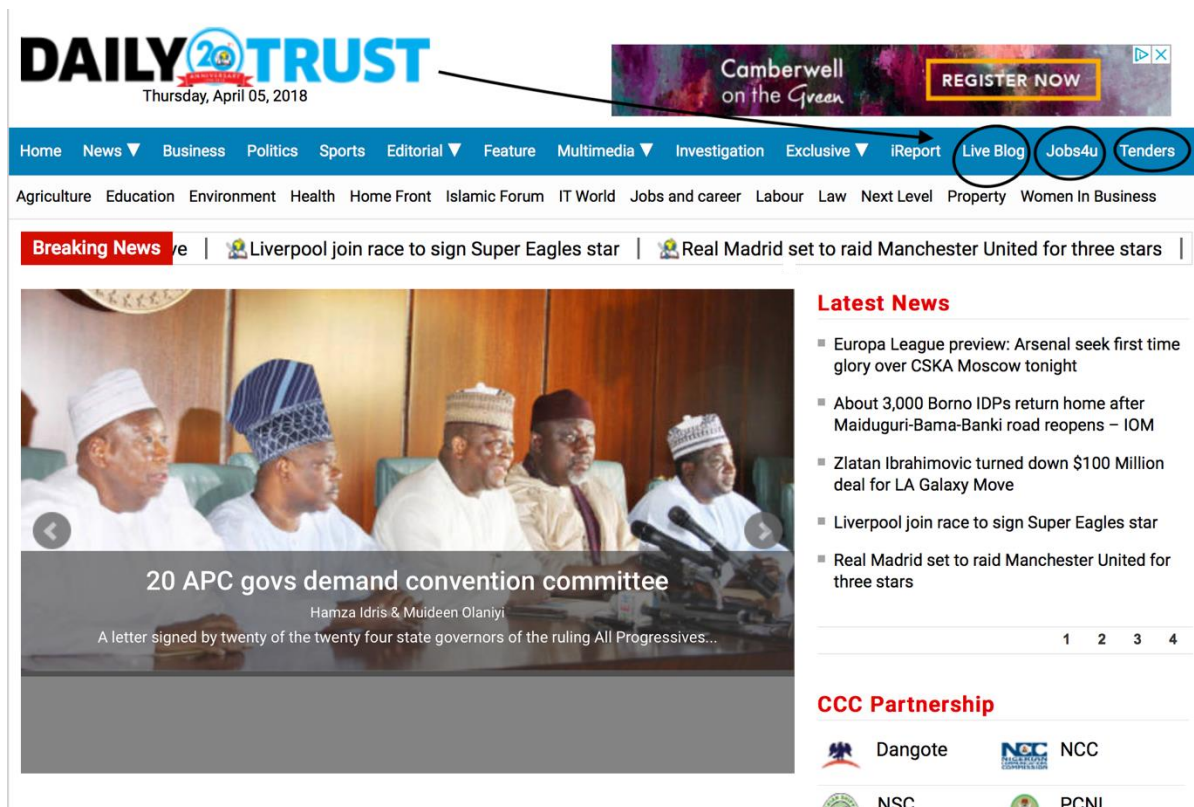


Figure: Screenshot of Daily Trust newspapers incorporating alternative sources of revenue in the online edition such as Jobs4U and Tenders. Companies use such sites to advertise job openings and tenders for bids.

4.7 Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, it is now possible to return to the question posed at the beginning of the chapter: should digital media in Nigeria be considered an evolutionary or revolutionary technology? If it is an evolution, how will print journalism and its journalists evolve with digital media? And if we are witnessing a revolution, how long will it be before the traditional print media is completely unrecognizable?

The impact of the digital media has been greeted with joy and despair, hope and suspicion. Despite the many misgivings, new media and the newspaper, at least for now, co-exist. The latter, aware of the challenges posed by the former, has managed to stay above water, though in the process, both print journalists and the profession as a whole have undergone substantial changes.. First,

they have also gone online, and since they enjoy more credibility than less-established names (Obijiofor and Green 2001; Teoh and Al-Hawamdeh, 2001), they stand a better chance of patronage and survival in an era where rumours and lies are easily and freely disseminated. Second, the current apparent dominance of online media is a result of its supposed free access at little or no cost, which in Nigeria is far from accurate. Then, there are still significant obstacles to overcome for digital media, which discourage or sometimes even reverse attempts made by print media to move their businesses online:

Daily Times went online... they say we are no longer printing - we are online. The advert didn't come, the impress didn't come; they have gone back to printing *Daily Times* now. So they have gone back to printing newspaper in physical form. I think in the next 30 years we will still have newspapers (Editor 9, Lagos).

However, considered over the longer-term, the discussions above and in other chapters to come show clearly that the circumscribed world of news production is no longer tenable and that print media will face serious challenges. Many of the factors that have been mentioned in favour of the continued survival of the print newspaper are, in all likelihood, temporary: the attachment of the older generation to print news, the costs associated with accessing digital media, even the generally low quality of digital media are likely to change over the next few decades, if not before. While the advantages of print media still remain – detailed, in-depth analysis, accessibility of the hard copy and professionalism – these can easily be co-opted by online media. As Nwabueze aptly asserts:

today, there is hardly any aspect of human activity that does not have an 'e' attached to it, as a result of the influence of ICTs on the activity. For instance, there is e-business, e-advertising, e-public relations, e-mails, e-medicine, and of course e-publishing... in the print media, newspapers, magazines and books are today produced through a process largely facilitated by ICTs (2011: 89 as quoted in Auwal 2015a: 67)

The newspapers can either, as they are already doing, strive to add or maintain an 'e' to their work, reinvent themselves in line with 'e' technology, or stand aside and watch 'e' technology wash them

aside. It is in this sense Abdulraheem, Adisa and La'aro insists that “unless the print media braced up to the challenges posed by the new media, it might go extinct in the near future” (2012: 2).

In light of the foregoing, I can say that the digital media technologies are revolutionary in the way they are used and presented. They are rapidly changing the news production processes and journalists are having to come up with innovative means of coping, harnessing change, negotiating space with citizen journalists and also generate revenue.

5 Chapter Five: Remuneration and the working conditions of journalists in Nigeria

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the remuneration and working conditions of journalists, two issues that were prominent in the responses of journalists I interviewed. It begins by giving a contextual background of the media ownership in Nigeria and how this contributes to working conditions of journalists in Nigeria. The chapter discusses media ownership and politics and x-rays the extent these affect journalists in carrying out their duties. It gives an account of the financial sustainability of the press and outlines and contrasts the differential impact of political pressure and financial constraints on government-run and privately-owned media corporations. To do this, the chapter is divided into eight sections: media ownership; the political context and the role of the state; financial sustainability of the Nigerian press; working conditions of Nigerian journalists; remuneration; Nigerian journalism: journalism or PR?; new and promising developments, and what journalists want?

The first section following this introduction examines media ownership in Nigeria as a way of general background. The second section discusses the political context of journalism in Nigeria and situates Nigeria's media system in the context of political parallelism. It takes a look at the political environment from which the journalist functions and examines the role of the state in the determination of the character of the media system obtainable in the country. The third section briefly looked at the viability of the press in Nigeria. Here, both privately-owned media and state-run organisation were examined with a view of calling into question the working condition of the journalist. Also, this section begins the analysis of responses from interview vis-à-vis existing literature. Section four offers a detailed examination of the socioeconomic conditions from where the journalists take on its specific character. The section looks at the working hour, expenses, leave and holidays, health, as well as retirement provisions available to the journalist. This is followed by section five which focuses on the remuneration of the journalist. It compares remuneration between media organisations and other non-media organisations. Section six interrogates the

outcome of media production in the face of the additional development while the seventh section explores prospects in the working condition of the journalist in the face of digital media. The chapter concludes with an examination of what the journalist needs in order to perform its role in society efficiently.

5.2 The Political Context

A large number of the media houses that are privately owned are owned by politicians or individuals who have formerly held power. This has fuelled the perception among the people that politicians use the media in Nigeria as a political tool to further their agenda or cast slur on the opposition. However, we can discern a promising trend in the emergence of newspapers operated by individuals that are independent and critical of the government. This has helped bring some measure of transparency into journalism in Nigeria. The establishment of private media houses can partially be credited to the struggle for representation and the people's need to be heard (Onoge 2000). However, Oyovbaire (2002) argues that privately-run media outfits emerged not merely because of the struggle between the ruling parties and their opposition but, more importantly, to take advantage of an opportunity to make a profit. He observes that the socio-political climate was conducive for business, with high prospects for gain, so that it is only natural - as in any capitalist society - that individuals and groups should seek to fill gaps in the market. Despite its significance, the quest for profit should not overshadow the distinct political import of media in Nigeria, where the struggle for political control continues to be central to the emergence of broadcasting stations. Lasode (1994) observes that there was an imbalance in news reporting in Nigeria's second and third republic. During these periods,

It was not uncommon for the broadcasting stations to refuse advertising time to political opponents. Manipulation of stations such as NTA by the NPN (ruling party at the centre then) resulted in non-NPN controlled states, as a means of combating their political rivals and consolidating their political bases, invested in building and re-equipping more state broadcasting stations (1994, p. 30).

Remarkably, the struggle for political control is central to the emergence of broadcasting stations in Nigeria. Those who feel their interests are being subverted and voice suppressed look for means of having them aired and presented. Oyovbaire (2002) argues that the boundary between

public/private ownership of media houses in Nigeria remains largely blurred. He contends that while states run by the non-ruling party are apt to establish state (public) media to challenge the centre and advance their image, those without the resourcefulness and backing of government resort to setting up private media houses to air their opinions post-1992 deregulation of the media industry, but even these private establishments have strong political links.

Those who feel their interests are being subverted and their voices are being suppressed look for a way to have them aired and presented. Even privately-owned media organisations are subject to substantial restrictions on what can be published or broadcast. As governments change hands - a process which is usually marred by violence - a lot of changes occur in the journalistic industry as well. For example, many media groups are replaced by other more government-friendly outfits. In his article, *Nigeria Press, Media, TV, Radio, Newspapers*, William Covington (2006) pointed out that this often occurred during the 1970's and 1980's. For instance, *The New Breed*, a defunct newspaper was shut down in 1977, *The Tribune* in 1984, and *Newswatch* barely four years later in 1988. Minera Amakiri, a reporter for *The Nigerian Observer*, was detained and had his hair shaved by government personnel in 1971. He was just one of many other journalists who was similarly assaulted during that period. Due to political instability, the relationship between the government and the press has seen substantial fluctuations. While during certain periods, a measure of consideration has been granted to the press, at other times, disagreement with the government has resulted in blatant and violent reprisals. Expressing its reservations about the Nigerian press and government in its article "Attacks on the Press 1999: Nigeria", the New York-based non-profit, non-partisan Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) stated: "although a new constitution was promulgated on May 5, 1999, it was modelled largely after the 1979 constitution and offered the media no protection" (2000). This committee also noted approximately 20 decrees that were hostile to media, among them, a law stipulating that newspapers and magazines must register with the government before commencing operation. Although this law was repealed, many professionals believe that the introduction of the Nigerian Press Council (Amendment) Decree Number 60 of 1999 constituted a surreptitious reintroduction of the repealed law.

Press attacks decreased significantly with the transition from military government to civilian rule. However, reports of abuse continued. For example, after the first handover from military to civilian rule, *The News*, an independent Lagos newspaper, was raided by the Nigerian police to arrest

several employees, on politically-inspired charges. For example, chairman of the Lagos Council of the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Lanre Arogundade, was arrested on charges that were said to be politically motivated. While such forms of harassment were more commonly used against journalists from privately-owned media organisations, employees of government-owned media also suffered harassment. For instance, two reporters for *The Observer*, a government-owned newspaper, were suspended because they published critical statements made by international observers on the concluded 2011 elections.

Until today, the safety of journalists is an issue in Nigeria, primarily if they are known to be critical of the government or the highly-placed friends of those in power. In the worst case, many risk being tortured or even assassinated when they write articles that expose corruption or other misdemeanours by politicians or business moguls. It isn't a rarity to hear of the disappearance of certain journalists who engage in investigative journalism, especially on sensitive issues. Others have been arrested and detained unjustly for days for daring to report on specific issues. Freedom House (2015) Report lists Nigeria as one of the most dangerous places to practice journalism. Some known examples of are:

Desmond Utomwen, a correspondent for *The News* magazine and the daily *PM News*, was in 2009 assaulted and detained by police as he attempted to cover a peaceful protest outside a private bank in Abuja in 2009.

Tony Amokeodo and political correspondent Chibuzor Ukuibe, who were charged in 2013 over the publication of a memo allegedly written by President Goodluck Jonathan on plans to increase fuel prices and disrupt the merger of opposition political parties. The two journalists and the paper's parent company faced 11 criminal counts, including forgery, conspiracy to commit a felony, and incitement of public disaffection against the president.

In January 2015, security officials attacked a journalist covering a high-profile church appointment for *Leadership*. For several days in June, soldiers impounded newspaper delivery vehicles, searched employees, blocked printing and distribution centres, and seized copies of at least ten newspapers. A military spokesman described the measures as a "routine security action" to search for alleged contraband, but they were widely interpreted as reprisals for coverage of the military's faltering efforts against Boko Haram. In August, soldiers stormed the headquarters of the *Daily Trust* and detained two of the newspaper's managers in response to a story on troops demanding better weapons. The military ordered that the story be retracted and the army be contacted regarding any article involving national security.

As a result of these threats, as well as a reluctance to displease media owners and sponsors, some journalists practice self-censorship and refrain from covering sensitive political, social, ethnic, or religious issues (Freedom House, 2015)

In less extreme cases, journalists are often denied access to specific events (press briefing, political gatherings etc.) to prevent their reporting negatively on them. In instances where journalists manage to gain access anyway, many are interrogated and threatened with imprisonment, grave bodily harm and even death, should they go to press with their stories. Nigerian authorities regularly harass, intimidate, and attack journalists in the field.

Not only individual journalists are subject to such attacks: historical records show many occasions of arson and even bombings of media facilities by disgruntled individuals or organisations in response to perceived unfavourable representations in the press. Many media outlets are at risk of closure or non-renewal of licenses (for broadcast media) and the seizure of copies of their publications deemed to be critical of the ruling government. Looking at Nigeria's history, therefore, we find that although the constitution guarantees freedom of the press, what occurs in practice is repression.

5.2.1 Political Parallelism

Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini (2004) identified four possible dimensions of the media system that can help to analyse the links between media organisations and predisposition to political tendencies. From these four dimensions: professionalisation of journalists, the development of a mass press, political parallelism, and state intervention. Hallin and Mancini describe the influence of politics in the media system as 'political parallelism', media systems can then be categorised into three models. The models are a democratic corporatist system, the liberal model, and the polarised pluralist model. They argue that many indicators that can help assess the presence of political parallelism in a media system: media content, organisational connections, the tendency for media personnel to be active in political life and for their career paths to be shaped by their political affiliations, journalistic roles/orientations and practices.

Sahara Reporters (a privately owned media house) is primarily alleged to be partisan to the extent that its political leaning and reporting style is demonstrably confrontational and akin to the

opposition were it to be registered as a political party. This form of reporting has become more evident in recent times with the security challenges facing the government. It is argued that some media outfits linked to opposition figures such as Atiku Abubakar (former vice president), Bola Tinubu (former governor of Lagos state) are habitually committed to ‘negative’ and ‘inciting’ reports aimed at demoralising government forces at the frontline fighting against insurgents and inciting the populace against the government for not being responsive to their safety and security respectively. This situation echoes Maduka’s (1997) observation of the political divide in the media in the run-up to election years:

In the campaign year, for instance, the press had more than ever before, been split along partisan lines. Newspapers, radio and television, were pledged editorially [to] the servicing of the political interest of the government in power or to individuals who own them. By implication, therefore, the media were not out to interpret developments [sic] but the actions of other public institutions in a partisan manner. Occasionally, the behaviour of such public institutions did not help matters (1997, p. 76).

This scenario vividly captures the media environment today in an election year. While the lines of division cannot be precisely drawn without carefully conducted empirical investigation, struggle for control of the public image is already evident between the TV/Radio stations owned by the ruling party-controlled federal government and non-ruling party controlled state governments on the one hand and the state-owned and privately owned stations as a third feature.

Whether the relationship between career progress and political affiliation of media practitioners exists, and the extent or degree of the existence of such association, is difficult to establish due to a shortage of literature on the subject matter. But anecdotal evidence suggests that media personnel who aspire to senior posts within and outside the media industry must eschew a confrontational posture to advance. In recent times, the surge of media personnel into politics has been linked to favours obtained within the ruling political elite and not unconnected to the fact that politics in Africa, and indeed Nigeria, is one of the most lucrative businesses, if not the most profitable (Onoge 2000).

For instance, Abike Dabiri-Erewa, a television broadcaster with the federal government-owned Nigerian Television Authority gradually progressed into political limelight in the fourth republic national legislature where she has remained till date:

Dabiri-Erewa fondly called "Mother Teresa of the tube" prides herself on her outstanding career as a broadcaster. She spent 15 years of distinguished and meritorious service at the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). While in the NTA she gained a keen understanding of the industry because of her dedication, inquisitiveness and professionalism. She anchored the weekly NTA Newline programme to the delight of millions of Nigerians, regardless of their tribe or religion. She warmed her way into the hearts of many with gallantry efforts of using television as a useful tool to draw attention to the millions of Nigerians suffering from the pains of poverty and injustice... [She] voluntarily retired from the services of the NTA to contest as a member of the House of Representative and swept the poll with a landslide victory in 2003 (The News, December 7, 2014).

It is important to note that NTA is government-owned television which suggests that its broadcast content must have been largely favourable to the government and ruling party (the ruling political elite/party) as we have established elsewhere to procure/secure some ties regardless of overt political affiliation. Unlike Dabiri-Erewa who had a smooth transition from the media to politics, Raymond Dokpesi - the proprietor of privately-run Africa Independent Television - AIT/Ray Power radio consortium- has suffered several political defeats. The AIT/Ray Power is not only known for critical broadcasts, but Dokpesi is also alleged to share ties with some opposition figures. Similarly, unlike the fate of his colleague in the NTA, Nduka Obaigbena who owns a privately-run newspaper, This Day Newspapers – a national daily deeply immersed in politics and characteristically known for publishing investigative reports on government's activities had its headquarter set ablaze under questionable circumstances.

5.2.2 *Role of the State*

The extent of independence and level of professionalism exhibited in journalism cannot be considered in isolation to the socio-cultural and political environment within which media practitioner functions. Bosah (1994) argues that context matters, and it is misleading to assume a universal standard of 'professionalism'. The level of media independence from the government that is obtainable in the US and Western Europe is not necessarily the same for all societies. Bosah contends that the libertarian philosophy which ensures the independence of the media in the West

cannot be wholly applied to developing societies where governments can be seen to have a close working relationship with news organisations and journalists. Similarly, Starck (1983) observes that the transference of a universal system or tradition of media across all societies without recourse to context and circumstances poses a severe dilemma for practitioners who might struggle to balance western professional ethics on the one hand and local African societal responsibilities on the other hand. He notes that "the social system in which professional mass communicators function sets standards and values of performance and determines how they fulfil their responsibility (and as a result) the characteristics that identify professional mass communicators are unique to specific social systems" (1983, p. 1). This relativist position argues that the ontological disposition of society dictates understandings of professionalism. Since ontology differs from one society to another, what constitutes professionalism is equally context valid (Oyovbaire 2002). It is in this regard that Bosah (1994) argues that unlike the libertarian philosophy governing media-state relationship in the west, in Africa, it is "development journalism philosophy [which] calls for a close working relationship between the news media and government because of political instability and national development objectives" (1994, p 84).

This philosophy underlies media laws on the continent and underscores media licensing and franchise. This highlights the nature of intervention and censorship the political state in Nigeria tries to assert, overtly and covertly, even after the deregulation of the media industry to private individuals. The consequence is that the freedom of the media is 'free' to the extent that the government decides. What this suggests is that professionalism in mass media communication is defined regarding the limits set by the government and to the extent that the exercise of such freedom does not bring to disrepute the name of government (Maduka 1997; Onoge 2000; Oyovbaire 2002).

5.3 Viability of the Nigerian press

Political instability and personal harassment aside, the practice of journalism in Nigeria is also marred by other more mundane factors, such as insufficient infrastructure and essential services. Many attribute this to the crisis that has plagued the Nigerian economy for a long time, while others argue that the struggles of media houses are due to the mismanagement of funds by the proprietors

of media organisations (Onoge, 2000; Oyovbaire, 2002). Without going into a detailed account of these arguments, it is evident that the Nigerian press is faced with financial challenges, which in turn are significant factors influencing the working conditions and remuneration rates of journalists.

At the Media Roundtable on the “Working and Welfare Situation of Journalists in Nigeria”, held by the Nigeria Union of Journalists in Calabar in 2008, Edetaen Ojo explained that the challenge of financial sustainability is a general one, as only very few media outfits in Nigeria are economically viable. Besides putting the future of these media outlets in jeopardy, financial difficulties also make these organisations vulnerable to all kinds of political and economic pressures. One of the primary reasons these media organisations suffer business challenges is the difficulty they face in accessing capital to expand and grow. This has an impact on working conditions within the company and on the remuneration of employees, who are sometimes owed nine months, or more, in salaries. With these factors at play, it becomes easy for journalists and news houses to fall into the hands of selfish individuals and interest groups who use them to further their interests. A journalist captured the financial challenges they face thus:

We are now in an era where a journalist who has not been paid for nine months, will collect bribe easily, and I don't think it takes much imagination to understand why he should receive bribe. A journalist who lacks the necessary tools to do his work; he has to trek for an assignment and has a family to feed, he must look for other ways to be comfortable (Reporter 12, Lagos).

Another journalist described the working condition as pathetic:

The working condition is terrible. It is not something to write about... I know you want me to give you detail, but I can assure you it is nothing impressive. It is embarrassing. A situation where, at times, you have to borrow to get your job done, and no one is reimbursing you. It is your expenses to borne even though you don't have any such allowances to cover for it (reporter 14, Lagos).

A columnist, while sharing the same sentiment narrates how, previously, as a journalist, he could confidently and conveniently reject gratification from a then adviser to a serving president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He contends that the only reason he could do that then was because the working condition was comparable to those of the political class, if not better, as he recalled "do you know I earn more than you. You may be [a] presidential adviser, but my salary is higher than yours as an editor" (Columnist 2, Abuja). But the story today is the opposite. In fact, several

journalists find it difficult to communicate when it comes to delving into the working condition of a journalist as represented above.

5.3.1 Government-owned and privately-owned media organisations

This section discusses the differences in working conditions and quality of journalism that exist between government-owned and privately-owned media outlets in general terms. The subsequent section will then explain working conditions of journalists in greater detail. There are several government-owned media outfits in Nigeria, these government-owned stations are the primary carriers of all government-related news, from swearing-in ceremonies to the President's speeches, legislative sessions, political rallies, etc. Here the government is in charge of the funding of the media organisation or has greater control of the shares. The financing of the media could be direct funding, loans and overdrafts from banks. Where this is the situation, the editorial contents of such media are being influenced by the government. The effect is that government in one way or the other will make sure that it determines what may or may not be published and the medium will not want to fall out of favour with the government (Kanyiwedo, 2013). By their very nature, these stations are heavily dependent on the government for funding and are strictly guided funding regulations as compared with privately-owned media organisations as their funding is contingent upon it. This suggests that government-owned media organisations may be more likely to be biased in their reports concerning the government.

Private media outfits, on the other hand, are a relatively new development, having been in existence for barely 25 years. This is because, before the civilian rule was introduced, the military regime made it difficult (in fact, impossible) for private individuals to obtain a license to run a media organisation. However, when former President Babangida came to power in 1992, private individuals were permitted to obtain these licenses. Privately-owned media organisations operate in line with the pluralist principle that there should be diversity in the ownership of media organisations and that a variety of sources of information and range of content should be available to the public (Commission of the European Communities, 2007, p.5). These media organisations are expected by the people to keep public media-organisations in check since they bear no allegiance to the government in any way. They are, ideally, entirely sponsored by investments, sponsorships, and advertisements. This is not always so, seeing as most privately-owned news

houses barely get by. Often, they have to maintain certain ties with politicians and highly-placed aristocrats to get sponsorship to run their business.

When comparing the working conditions of journalists in government-owned (this includes both state and federal and state-owned organisations) and privately owned institutions, significant differences exist in general welfare of employees. Although journalists in government-owned media houses face some challenges, they can take succour in the fact that there is the assurance of a monthly salary and occasional training, depending on the funds allotted per period. The pension is also assured, defined, and paid almost immediately to the journalist upon retirement. One could, therefore, argue that the working environment in these cases are right. Journalists in privately-owned media outfits, on the other hand, are not quite as lucky. They are frequently owed salaries for several months and often lack essential tools that are supposed to help them do an excellent job. In some instances, politicians are appointed as Chief Executive Officers (for the sake of funding), rather than professionals. This often results in poor practices and unfavourable working conditions for journalists.

For the privately owned media, many are run primarily for commercial purposes. Oyovbaire (2002) believes that privately-run media outfits emerged not merely because of the struggle between the ruling parties and their opposition but, more importantly, to take advantage of an opportunity to make a profit. Therefore, working conditions are strongly dependent upon market forces. If enough revenue is generated from advertising, salaries are paid, working conditions are right, and benefits might accrue. However, if the reverse is the case, this is almost immediately reflected in the non-payment of salaries and deteriorating working conditions, since the owners who found these media outlets are primarily entrepreneurs seeking profit. Due to financial constraints, non-salary benefits are a rarity, and routine training for journalists almost never occur. A more extensive discussion of the working conditions of journalists can be found in the following section.

5.4 Working Conditions of Nigerian Journalists

The section offers a detailed account of the working conditions and remuneration of journalists in Nigeria. First, it discusses the working conditions of journalists in detail, from working hours and expenses to training, leave, insurance and retirement plans. It is argued that Nigerian journalists are under a substantial amount of pressure due to their poor working conditions. This reality contrasts starkly with public perceptions of journalists, who often, have ascribed unto them the status of celebrities. As discussed above, journalists working in Nigeria encounter hazards that can be life-threatening, but rarely do we discuss how they risk their comfort and personal safety to get first-hand information. Moreover, the more mundane aspects of journalists' struggle to work and make a living are frequently neglected entirely. This is followed by an analysis on the remuneration of the Nigerian journalist, arguing that journalists are not only poorly remunerated especially taking into cognisance the working conditions they encounter, but also, in comparison to other industries. The consequences, as will be discussed in the following subsections are disastrous for the state of journalism in Nigeria.

5.4.1 *Public perceptions of journalists' standard of living*

Since broadcast media personnel share the screen with widely-celebrated individuals, such as music and movies personalities, athletes, politicians, and other celebrities, broadcast journalists are often mistakenly grouped in with these individuals. Aside from the journalists themselves, only very few know the story of the average Nigerian journalist. However, the General Manager of the *Nigeria Television Authority* (Ilorin, Kwara state) publicly stated that Nigerian journalists experience the worst working conditions among all journalists in the world (www.vanguardngr.com, January 10, 2013). This is an important statement, especially considering that it comes from an employee of the federal service, which is said to be best of all media corporations in the country regarding working conditions.

The influence that certain journalists wield makes it difficult for people to see or understand the difficulties they face. In developed media societies, journalists are too famous to be known by anything other than their first names, even among children. However, this is not the case of disrespect, as it would usually be understood in the Nigerian community. Instead, journalists are

seen almost like celebrities: famous and influential, the role model of many. Their works are read all across the country, and even beyond, their voices and the very nuance of their speech are practised and mastered by fans everywhere, who want to be like the woman on the TV or the man that writes in the papers. Journalists are placed in a position of demigod, believed to hold all power and riches. It becomes difficult for the Nigerian people to imagine that their lives are anything but perfect.

5.4.2 Working conditions of journalists in Nigeria: the journalists' perspective

From the perspective of the journalists themselves, the working condition of journalists in Nigeria is appalling. Some of the journalists interviewed for this research gave a brief exposé on the working conditions at their respective places of employment:

The working condition of journalists is equally poor. In the places I have worked, there was no conducive working environment. Where it existed, it was a mere formality and never made available to the worker..." (Reporter 5, Lagos)

Working conditions of journalists in Nigeria are not favourable compared to many other sectors of the economy. Take for instance; many journalists are being owed salaries after months and years of work. Many organisations do not provide health insurance for their journalists and do not to speak of pension. The journalist is not supplied with the appropriate work tools and capacity-building needed for competence. Conditions can and should be better for productivity to be enhanced (Editor 7, Abuja).

The responses from most journalists, especially those in private organisations, are the same: journalists are underpaid and yet, they are not only expected to deliver on the job; they almost always work round the clock.

Working hours

The working hours of journalists are almost the same across different media organisations in the country. The average journalist works 5-6 days a week and 9-12 hours a day. This is a conservative estimate because almost all the journalists interviewed believed the exact working hours of a journalist could not be accurately measured, especially with the presence of digital media. "We cannot really calculate the hours a journalist puts in because of the peculiarity of our work; we work round the clock to meet production of news", asserts a journalist (Reporter 10, Abuja), while another observes that though, "I officially work five days per week; but as the nature of the job is,

you are always working even at home [and], even at odd hours" (Reporter 5, Lagos).

From my interactions with the journalists, I found that the working hours of a journalist in Nigeria, regardless of the medium (print, TV, etc.) and media house are practically the same. An average journalist puts in about nine to twelve hours a week, with an average 5-day working week. At least, that is what is stipulated in the contract. The very nature of the profession demands that you work almost continuously, to report on breaking news stories. For instance, a reporter cannot ignore a news-worthy story just because he is supposed to have some time off work. In fact, he might come to the next office the following Monday to be queried, because while he was having his day off, his organisation was outrun by the competition, which picked up the story that he ignored. Quite unlike other professions, it is impossible for a journalist to turn a blind eye to a lead even if he is on vacation. Call it the reporter's personality or the nature of the job, and the truth is that a journalist cannot look a good story in the eye and say no. This will invariably mean that a journalist works round the clock, all year, every year, even when he is not "working".

Expenses

With the nature of the work come the accompanying costs. An average Nigerian journalist transports himself to his place of assignment, recharges his phone and pays for internet out of his pocket. As noted above, such expenses are rarely paid for by his employer neither are they covered by the terms of the agreement. However, two journalists from different media streams finally agreed to run the numbers for me:

But to give a rough estimate when I have to take up these responsibilities, I would say transportation could take up to N20,000 at N1,000 per day for 20 working days. If I am to include weekends because you know journalists work round the clock, we are talking about N30,000. Data is N1500, and phone bills take up to N1500. This gives us a total of N33,000.00 (Reporter 9, Lagos).

I was also given an idea of the expenses of an average journalist working in print media in the course of his or her work: "I spend at least N8,000.00 monthly on internet data while I spend about N5,000.00 on airtime for my phone, and an average of N17,000 per month on transport." (Reporter 15, Abuja).

One of the journalists interviewed spends N30, 000.00 (from his income) which is a relatively large sum of money to get the job done. The few expenses mentioned by the journalists quoted above are merely the necessities needed to carry out the task efficiently, not including any miscellaneous or exigent expenses. The journalists did agree that a few media outfits help with transportation expenses once in a while, but on the whole, in the world of Nigerian journalism, transportation and other work-related costs must be paid for by the journalists themselves. One of the participants recounted how things have changed over the years saying:

Management used to pay leave allowances, inconvenience allowance, weekly stipends for reporters to hunt for news and carry out assignments but now, all that is history... You get paid your salary and get to do the job and [pay the] expenses yourself (Reporter 15, Abuja).

Training and equipment

Another critical aspect of working conditions that directly affect the quality of work is the availability of tools necessary to work as a journalist. Especially in privately-owned media organisations, journalists are rarely provided with work-related equipment by their employers. As a respondent disclosed, the situation is so dire that many journalists even have to buy their electric fan for their offices, along with personal computers and accessories, cameras and recording devices (Ahmed, 2017). Others are luckier and have employers that provide them with recorders, computers, writing pads and pens, etc. Though even these journalists do not often receive everything they need, as one "lucky" journalist put it: "Not everything is provided every time, but I have the major tools." (Reporter 15, Abuja)

Company-sponsored training is a rarity for most journalists, though journalists are nonetheless expected to obtain the highest standards of quality in their work. Any training will have to be self-sponsored, because the company neither sends them out nor offers them a loan. Speaking concerning what would motivate him to improve his work, a journalist states: "Money is not the motivating factor for me although that would help...But training (home and abroad) to build capacity..." (Reporter 4, Lagos).

Leave and holidays

The working hours of journalists have already been discussed above, where I have detailed how journalists must work round the clock - to report on news stories as they occur. For people who put in such extensive hours, a brief reprieve once or even twice in a year is appropriate. However, this does not always occur: "Annual leave is not granted, not to talk about leave allowances being paid. Journalists work every day of the year without a break or rest" and yet underpaid (Reporter 15, Abuja).

From the interview responses, it is clear that most Nigerian journalists work 365 days a year, every single year, without rest. And some of these journalists, among whom the journalist quoted above, have been in the profession for over thirty years. Many journalists have no time off on weekends or public holidays and have little or no possibility of being granted leave. While many journalists' contracts state that they are entitled to leave at some particular point in the year, it becomes apparent, after many denials and postponements, that in practice, they have no such right.

Health risks and insurance cover

As a result, many journalists suffer from stress and ill health. At a national conference held in Calabar in 2008, observations made by the Nigeria Union of Journalists indicate that the health of journalists is put at serious risk with the long hours they put in, the tight deadlines they are often tied to, and the long hours sitting behind computers. These factors combine to create unhealthy working environments that pose all manner of health risks to the Nigerian journalist. Many eventually come down with stress-induced illnesses, some of which include ulcers, hypertension and diabetes. Health risks aside, there are also physical risks posed to journalists too. Many are exposed to injuries and accidents while operating high-voltage equipment. The maltreatment of producers and journalists by disgruntled persons, political thugs, and overzealous security personnel is also commonplace in the practice of journalism in the country. However, media companies do not provide their journalists with health insurance schemes, leaving them to fend for themselves when the high risks lead to illness or physical harm.

Retirement provisions

There might have been some succour for the Nigerian journalist if, after all the years of selfless service, they would be able to retire and live out their last days enjoying the finer things in life. However, this is far from the case: "Your service as a journalist is neither pensionable nor does it have gratuity. The moment you stop working, there is nothing more for you" (Editor 7, Abuja); all payments cease. The only exception to this rule is journalists employed in state-owned media outlets. Journalists in state-owned media are public service employees and as such entitled to the pay package applicable to other civil servants.

For the average Nigerian journalist, there will be no pension available to him when he retires. The Nigerian government did institute a pension scheme for journalists, under which a certain percentage of their salaries is deducted before payment is made into individual accounts and saved for them in a pension account. However, these plans have failed to materialise into concrete benefits. As one journalist explained:

Even the contributory pension scheme that was later introduced by the government is not adequately managed; the employee contribution would be deducted from his salary by the employer but would not be remitted to the pension manager, who at the same time withholds his contribution to the scheme. (Reporter 3, Lagos)

It can be rewarding to do what you love, even when the situation is not ideal. Passion can be a dominant fuel that drives many on the journey to fulfilment. This is often the case for Nigerian journalists. But when is passion insufficient? Some of the journalists I interviewed revealed that they do not enjoy the support that they should get from their superiors and peers alike. Reporters are given little or no autonomy to do their job according to their judgement. Management decides what is newsworthy and what is not, and this not only decreases the morale of the journalist, it also stifles creativity.

5.5 Remuneration

Despite the difficulties mentioned above plaguing the Nigerian journalist, their remuneration rates are not just poor, but frightening. After deducting the expenses that journalists are forced to make for the sake of their jobs, they are left with shockingly little. Some might be tempted to advise the journalist to save and make some investments, seeing as their employer does not care enough about them to make a pension scheme available, but as is said in local parlance,

"*man must wak*", meaning that a man has to eat in order to stay alive before he can meet any other need. On a journalists' salary, it is nearly impossible to provide for basic life necessities - food, clothing, and shelter - not to mention other family responsibilities for those who are married or support aged parents and other dependents.

5.5.1 *Remuneration rates in media and among other non-media organisations*

Differences in remuneration rates between different media organisations

While the research conducted indicates that journalists do not have suitable working conditions and remuneration, some media outfits fare better than others. There isn't an industry-wide rule on the minimum to be paid any journalist, regardless of their position. For instance, in some news companies, a reporter might earn as little as N30, 000.00/month (61 GBP), while the same reporter might go to another company, *The Punch* for instance, and be paid as 'much' as N150,000 (308 GBP). Other media outlets, such as *The Guardian*, pay reporters about N100, 000.00 (205 GBP), which is relatively fair compared to other media outlets, which pay far less. These same journalists are working for a different outfit – *The Independent Newspapers*, for example - will be paid less than what some press organisations pay their entry-level reporters.

The journalists interviewed in the course of this research stated that government-owned media organisations fare much better than the privately-owned media. While they do not pay handsomely, the salaries are reasonably regular compared to privately-owned media organisations. Media houses funded by the government, receiving a steady source of income, are more buoyant financially than the privately-owned media. They depend on advertisements, investors, sponsorships (which are not much encouraged by the current economic and security situation of the country) and other - often unreliable - sources of income to keep afloat.

From the above, it becomes clear that a journalist in Nigeria must begin his career without any guarantees or even a reasonable chance of achieving a stable position. Instead, whether or not he lands a job with a media outlet that will pay him enough to get by is a matter of luck and connections rather than skill or dedication. With the nepotism that heavily characterises the Nigerian labour system (Uhara 2014), obtaining a position as a journalist is a lofty dream for those

who do not have the means and connections to further their career. While those with connections to politicians and other influential persons have their pick of positions, the others are left to fight for a place in the less than ideal, often substandard media organisations.

Remuneration in media compared with other fields

The difficulties plaguing journalism in Nigeria become even more evident in contrast to remuneration rates and working conditions in other industries. The highest paid reporter working in an organisation that pays well earns approximately N150,000.00 (308 GBP) per month (as we saw above, other editors earn N100,000.00 or 205 GBP per month). The salary paid to the highest-earning reporters Nigeria still pale in comparison to someone of a corresponding professional level working in a bank, in the famous oil and gas industry or even in the telecommunications industry, aside from telecommunications, it is possible to argue that these are unfair comparisons, since the other occupations are well known for high pay rates. Some of these professionals earn between N200,000.00 and N1,000,000.00 per month at entry level, in addition to which they often receive perks such as housing allowance, travel allowance and leave allowance.

Jobberman, a leading company that provides information on employment opportunities across almost all businesses in Nigeria, conducted a survey published online (www.thebusinessaim.ng.org) in May 2017 on the top 100 companies with the best working conditions and remuneration rates for employees in Nigeria. This ranking was made based on the responses of more than 10,000.00 employees in Nigeria. Respondents were asked to indicate their top-five companies concerning general working conditions and employee welfare, and then they were asked to list their top-five dream companies (places they would love to work in if given a chance). Two of the metrics with which the respondents selected these companies included the salary and other non-salary benefits from top 5 companies. Of the 100 companies, the first ten slots were occupied by five oil and gas companies, one Telecommunication Company, one food and Beverage Company and other companies from various industries. The first mention of a media company is at number 62, with *Africa Independent Television* (AIT). Going further down the list, we only have two other mentions of media houses: *Silver Bird* (65) and *Channels TV* (87): three broadcast stations and not one newspaper publishing firm. Of course, we cannot overlook the fact that this list was compiled from respondents' perceived notions of what companies are best to work

with, and they might not necessarily be well-informed. On the other hand, these respondents were drawn from a pool of full-time employees of over 5000 companies, which each have at least 100 employees in full-time employment, so, though we cannot take their responses at face value; we can assume that these employees have a relatively good idea of the work conditions in various industries. Moreover, the salaries paid to employees across multiple industries are not correctly classified. Employees have siblings, relations, and friends, and are therefore familiar with remuneration rates in various sectors. The list can, thus, serve as a helpful indication of the working conditions in multiple companies.

5.6 Nigerian journalism: Journalism or PR?

5.6.1 The threat of corruption

As has been argued above, the average journalist in Nigeria may not earn enough to pay for his or her basic needs. This has led to the phenomenon of the “brown envelope”, a term that refers to journalists in Africa getting paid by their news sources, particularly politicians, who want to influence how they “report” the news. According to the report on Freedom of the Press on Nigeria in 2015, “a 2009 survey of 184 media professionals in Lagos found that 61 percent of them habitually received brown envelopes while on reporting assignments. However, 74 percent of the respondents disagreed that the gifts led to biased coverage, perhaps because the practice is so common” (Freedom House, 2015). Bribery and corruption remain an issue for the media in Nigeria, and it is believed to comprise the integrity of the reporters and the reports thereby undermining the independence of the media and betraying the trust of the people in the reportage of news. Some journalists defend the practice because media owners exploit them by offering meagre salaries and poor working conditions, claiming that it covers some of the costs incurred from work-related expenses. But media ethicists and watchdog organisations strongly denounce the brown envelope practice as a form of corruption, arguing that accepting gifts is likely to influence journalists and impair their ability to cover the news. This economic issue subsequently raises questions of objectivity and fairness in reporting.

The issue of corruption has been widely researched as one of the factors influencing political economies in African countries (Schiffrin 2011; Loudon 2013; Atton 2011). This brings up issues of ethics and the need for strong media policy implementation to protect journalists from such

economic pressures. The political intimidation, harassment and threat of violence to journalists are political issues that challenge journalists in carrying out their duties (Paterson, 2013 Wasserman, 2012; Frere, 2014). For example, a journalist was recently threatened for filing a story on the health of a serving governor in a major city in Nigeria who had not been seen for several months (Sahara Reporters, 22nd August 2017). Another journalist, while covering Boko Haram activities, received phone calls allegedly from members threatening to kill his family (CPJ, 2015).

Suffice to note that with journalists bereft of the necessities to enable them to efficiently work and provide for their basic needs, and high levels of pressure to produce specific types of stories, the standards of journalistic practice in Nigeria have been lowered in a way that is almost impossible to reverse. It is increasingly difficult to differentiate between journalism and mere PR: no one knows what to believe anymore. The news, as delivered by a country's press system, is a central source from which citizens access information to form their worldviews and make decisions. But the scepticism with which the Nigerian community responds to the news makes this impossible. It is therefore not unjustified to pose the question: has journalism in Nigeria become devalued to the point where it is no more than PR?

Some journalists are of the view that most news today is just PR. This is because of the trade-by-barter journalism that is commonplace today. Someone needs a good story; the reporter needs some money because he hasn't been paid for months and bills are mounting. A journalist paints the situation most journalists in Nigeria find themselves:

The poor pay/working conditions of journalists have dire implication on professional practice. Since the job must be done, journalists take to unprofessional and unethical means to survive. This led to what has become known as 'brown envelope syndrome,' a situation where journalists wait after an event or coverage to collect cash or gifts for a story to be 'done well.' The organisers of an event or an interviewee give the envelope in anticipation of getting a favourable report in the news medium. The effect is that what eventually comes out as news is nothing but biased, unbalanced and not factual report. It is a dent on professionalism in that it creates credibility problem both to the professional and media organisation. It impinges on editorial independence. Many people now believe that journalists do not tell the truth (Reporter 2, Abuja)

What this suggests is that media is now becoming a personal PR-tool for the highest bidder, which defeats the fundamental purpose of journalism. Society is left at the mercy of a few oligarchs who determine the kind of information that reaches the public and consequently, the mood, opinion,

and point of view of the general population. Scholars have highlighted the profound impact of the dwindling economic condition in Africa in general, and working conditions of journalists, in particular, will have on news production (Wasserman, 2012; Nassanga, 2013; Mudhai, 2014). Nassanga (2013) argues that there is a definite relationship between the social pressure on journalists owing to meagre wage, societal expectations, and social/family responsibility, on the one hand, and increasing phenomenon of bribery (or brown envelope syndrome) and declining quality of news on the other hand. Like Nassanga (2013), Mudhai (2014) observes that the underlying factor undermining the quality of news and skewing its production process is the socioeconomic foundation from which the journalist operates. The contention is that, just as elementary political economy espouses, the human need to eat to live. Here, the understanding is that without improvement in the working condition of journalists, it is difficult to imagine journalists doing their job well, talk less of doing it objectively. Thus by locating the journalist within these myriads of challenges, or what Dickinson et al. (2013) have dubbed "situated experience", it becomes less cumbersome to begin to understand how the journalist is negotiating with digital media in the course of news production.

5.6.2 *Journalism without resources*

The poor remuneration of Nigerian journalists not only leads them to compromise on their professional ethics, as described above, their economic situation also places severe limits on their ability to perform. When the journalist is not equipped with all that he or she needs to investigate and deliver news - a smartphone, a data-plan and other relevant accessories - and he or she cannot afford to purchase these from monthly salary, limitations on the work is bound to set in. As a result, journalists will struggle to publish stories without the support of self-interested patrons. This means that newsworthy stories will rarely be released, and 'sponsored' PR articles will face less competition in getting published. The news will be dominated by stories supported by those with the means and power to buy news, resulting in a decrease in the quality and trustworthiness of the news. As the public is shielded from crucial information, societal transformation and the very core of democracy are threatened greatly. The news, which should act as the citizenry's window on the actions of the leadership it has elected, cannot perform its role, thus making it impossible to build a free and developing society.

5.7 New and promising developments? Digital media and working conditions

With the influx of innovation in the digital-sphere, the financial plight of the journalist has been somewhat alleviated. Not only does the internet decrease the cost of production, but it also has a significant impact on the general health and well-being of the journalist. Stress and fatigue have been cut down drastically for many reasons. First, there is the obvious fact that time and inconveniences are significantly reduced since reporters now travel less to a news source to get information. For many stories, all that is needed is a simple phone call, the costs of which continue to decrease. And with personal computers becoming more and more commonplace, and telecommunication companies trampling on one other to woo the public with cheap data plans, journalists no longer have to be at the head office to send in their stories to the editor. With a personal computer and a data connection, the journalist can carry out his or her work. He can send in stories from anywhere in the world, and the editor can receive it quickly. The use of the internet also brings some specific benefits to media and journalism. A journalist cites an example:

For instance, the Lithographic department has been phased out. Instead of lithographic processing of films from which plates are made for printing, the newspaper artwork could be transferred electronically to the press for plate making, what is called CTP meaning computer to plate (Editor 8, Lagos).

Also, we see that media houses save on transport expenses since they no longer have to send papers from the head office all the way to far-off locations like Aba, Kaduna, Abuja, etc. With the internet, artwork can be sent to the press wherever it is, and it's merely downloaded and printed. Information can be accessed much more easily and quickly and, with some exceptions where travelling to a news source is necessary, can be used as the primary source of information for news articles and reports. It might also be that this also drastically reduces the quality of reporting, with reporters relying on the same information which may contain mistakes, to begin with. However, by reducing expenses usually paid for by the journalists themselves and by decreasing the hours spent on administrative and research tasks, the internet is playing a significant role in improving the working conditions of journalists.

Nigerian print and broadcast media have been quick to embrace the digital age, moving their platforms online to create a hugely popular internet presence. Some of the pioneers of internet

journalism in Nigeria include *The Guardian*, *This Day* Newspaper group, *The Independent* Newspaper group, and *New Age*. Broadcast stations such as Channels Television, Television Continental, Silver Bird Television, and the federal station, Nigeria Television Authority, have an internet presence where it is followed by large numbers (499,900 followers on Twitter) of Nigerians, both at home and in the Diaspora. Many of these media houses also have mobile apps, which helps their audience stay connected to them on the go.

One significant advantage that the internet has brought to Nigerian journalism has been aiding the export of Nigerian news told by bona fide Nigerians to the western world. From the farthest areas, the writing style and professionalism of Nigerian journalism can be exposed to international audiences for scrutiny. However, this also requires the Nigerian journalist to commit to professional development courses. These courses incur costs, but it is difficult to assess to what extent this need can be met in the field of Nigerian journalism. Moreover, many graduates of Mass Communication and other related courses from Nigerian universities are not in fact adequately trained as professional journalists, seeing as their universities lack the facilities and equipment to train them. However, a hopeful development can be found in the increasing exposure to international audiences: as Nigerian journalists are becoming exposed to work by western journalists, they can imitate better practices and are inspired to work harder.

Many argue that the internet has reduced the quality of Nigerian journalism. They attribute this to the plethora of internet bloggers and pundits who readily make their content available to the media houses for a small fee: their "one minute of fame". Because of this readily available, cheap flow of content, many media employers do not see any urgent need to improve the salaries and working conditions of journalists (personal interview 2016). This trend of internet journalism takes its heaviest toll freelance writers and journalists. Formerly, these people were paid for their stories, with pay differing according to organisations by which they were published. However, with dwindling resources, it has become more and more unlikely that a media employer will pay for the services of a freelance journalist when internet pundits are willing to give these news companies their articles for free. This adversely affects the freelancers, who face difficulty finding work but is also argued to have a negative impact on the quality of journalism. As argued by one freelancer, Jimoh Odutola, "people without any formal journalistic training and skills now dominate the pages of most newspapers, with bolts-and-screws type articles" (Nworah, 2005).

5.8 Conclusion: what do journalists want?

In his book *Manager's Handbook*, Collin Barrow states that: “to evaluate a job, look at each position and assess it against a range of factors such as complexity, qualifications, skills, experience required, any danger or hazard involved and the value of the job’s contribution to your business” (2002, p. 482). He continues, "Inevitably, not all jobs are identical, and certain aspects will involve differences in employment conditions that affect the going rate. Working hours, employment conditions, security of tenure, pension rights and so on [and will] vary from firm to firm..." (2002, p. 485).

Drawing from Barrow's proposition, remuneration ought to be dependent on many factors. And given the complexity of the job and the environment within which journalists in Nigeria function, her compensation ought to be better than what is currently obtainable. Working hours for the journalist are round the clock, with many hazards involved, whether the journalist is in a fragile war area, reporting on an area in crisis, reporting on or digging into specific corrupt practices within government, or even reporting on the outbreak of a disease. A journalist contends that if journalists are well paid, it would be almost impossible for them to be bribed because they would take pride in their work. He also spoke for more regulatory action against media owners that default in paying salaries.

If journalists are well paid, it will be to take some doing for a politician to bribe them. So I won't be fair to today's journalist if I blame them for everything that is happening, but journalism has gone to the dust. So you will find that when you objectively look at it, the regulatory body, the Nigeria Press Council, on the one hand - that's the professional angle or the peer review group. You have Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria, for example; they are unable to prevail on their members that owe salaries of 10 months. In the broadcast media, some media are owing 15 months salaries, ten months salaries, and their proprietors are wearing big Agbada shamelessly portraying themselves as media tycoon. It doesn't happen in other countries. There should be sanctions on such owners (Columnist 2, Abuja).

What most journalists crave for are not something extraordinary, instead they are merely basics: better working conditions, better salaries, increased consideration for their welfare from their employers and routine training to improve skill and technical know-how. When asked, journalists admitted that an increased pay, around N350,000.00 (719 GBP/monthly), would help to increase

their motivation, but their concern is not simply the money. When asked, most explained that they would sincerely appreciate a rewards system with bonuses, perks and promotions to encourage the hard work they put in. Just as Muhadi (2014) and Nassanga (2013) have noted earlier, motivation is something that is lacking from the journalist in Africa, and this finds manifestation in the poor working conditions the journalist has to deal with.

As any employee deserves, there should be a pension scheme put in place for those working in the press. Some of the editors are of the opinion that when journalists get the required support, they deserve from management, not necessarily monetary support or reward, they tend to perform better. As an editor puts it, "you would be surprised at how differently journalists would take their jobs if they knew that there is a plan for them to retire well" (Reporter 8, Lagos). Having a stable retirement plan in place would give their jobs a whole new meaning: aside from their passion for the work, journalists also hope for a good life for themselves and their loved ones through honest means. Trustworthy pension managers should manage the pension plans based on salary deductions and handed to the journalist upon retirement. And if this proves to be an impossible task, the journalist should be paid well and allowed to work out a pension plan on an individual basis with their bank. Many financial institutions offer such services these days, and many journalists would take the chance, if only they could earn enough to stay above the poverty line.

Finally, journalists need to be well-equipped, or paid wages, high enough to enable them to purchase the necessary equipment for efficient functioning. Understandably, the recession hit Nigeria hard, but a personal computer, some accessories and an allowance to pay for an internet connection are basics that any working journalist cannot do without. As has been previously explained, the media business can be a profitable one, especially when properly managed. When the journalists are equipped to chase the news, management is handled by trained professionals and the firm runs purely on business principles, media outlets can earn enough to take care of their employees and consequently improve the quality of news provided to the public.

I think what has happened is that people haven't realised the responsibility of being able to publish. They haven't realised the responsibilities and the liabilities. There is a case currently going on. I see people campaigning for Free Blogger, Christy Edewando; he wrote something about a bank manager having an affair with a married woman in the bank, and the bank manager in question was so incensed that he filed a complaint with the Police and the blogger Christy was arrested and now

human rights people are campaigning for the blogger's release. And I'm asking, what he wrote, was it true? Did he publish the truth or did he publish fiction (Editor 8, Lagos)?

A former journalist and current columnist also held a negative view of the people who use social media because of the ability of social media to allow people to express their opinions with no editor and with nobody to tell the individual that his or her views are not based on facts, and to create what he calls a celebration of ignorance:

social media has demystified journalism, every idiot is now a journalist, oh somebody sees something, and then he writes his opinion and inflicts it on the public is either through a blog or other channel and the guy, and you see a celebration of ignorance that's the danger in eh there no editor, there is nobody to say no, no, no this is wrong (Columnist 2, Abuja).

The views expressed about social media from these reporters and editors were not about how they used social media, or how social media can be used in journalism. Instead, their views were about how people who use social media to report information are different from professional journalists and how this affects the news. The underlying attitude seemed to be that bloggers and others on social media can put forth ideas and opinions without any oversight of whether the ideas and information are accurate or based on fact. In this way, the underlying argument that was made remains that journalists are, indeed, different from bloggers and other social media personalities because journalists adhere to certain standards of practice, while bloggers and social media personalities do not subscribe to those standards.

It is important to understand that many of the participants had positive comments about social media and their use of social media. However, it is clear that some of the reporters and editors who took part in the study viewed social media negatively because of what they perceived as the dissemination of inaccurate information. Thus, not denying the impact of digital media in accelerating news production processes, the concern of several respondents is that digital media made people less informed because it has made the spread of misinformation easier.

5.9 Relationship with Sources

The relationship between journalists and their sources is one that is changing as a result of digital media. This link stems from one of the core tenets of professional journalistic ideology that requires journalists to follow a prescribed order to achieve results (Deuze 2005; Hackett, 1984;

Schudson 2002). The prescribed order usually involves a focus on the balance of power where the journalist is expected to balance authoritative data alongside fact without taking sides in a discourse. Here, the sources are the "experts" and officials who provide the raw materials for the journalist to use in the news. Herman & Chomsky (1998) pointed out that these news sources are seen as authority figures and usually "have a vested interest in the journalist's report, linking news content to public opinion and ultimately, their success" (Griffin & Dunwoody, 1999; Herman & Chomsky 1988). Here, these ideas are important in considering how journalists manage this practice in Nigeria, where elected public officials require the public opinion to remain in power and where news organisations and party affiliations are drawn along ethnic lines or owned by private individuals. The relationship is constantly negotiating a balance as each side hopes to achieve its aim; for the journalist, news, credibility and objectivity, and for the sources, the maintenance of power (Berkowitz 2009), news, therefore, becomes a construction (Tuchman, 1973; Ericson, 1999). Sigal states that "news is, after all, not what the journalists think, but what their sources say, and is mediated by news organisations, journalistic routines and conventions, which screen out many of the personal predilections of individual journalists" (1986, p. 29). Thus in the face of digital media news is the outcome of the interaction between many different forces with varying degree of influence on the actions and decision of journalists. Digital media has no doubt exposed journalists in Nigeria to a wider range of influence and sources for news stories. There has been significant debate over whether access to these new sources of information has broadened the scope of people that journalists speak to and incorporate into the news production process (Gillmor 2006; Fenton 2010), yet journalists are careful to admit that the rise of digital media is quintessential in this regard. Sources are invaluable in news gathering, and the relationship with sources is also one of growing trust according to a journalist:

People feel safer on the internet. They think they can voice their opinions and be heard. If you are looking to feel the pulse of the people, you need to know what they are saying. Of course, you need to verify stories and sources, but for me, it is a win-win (Reporter 10, Abuja).

The journalist explained that this was not the case in the past as there was a general distrust for journalists because of political interest or interference but that digital media has opened up that space for interaction. It is a sort of two-way channel that has been opened up, and journalists are engaging more and more with sources via digital platforms, i.e. the newspaper comments sections, Facebook comments, Twitter mentions and re-tweets and emails. When asked if the use of digital media is discussed in editorial meetings, some of them acknowledged that they had received

valuable insights from the feedback sections and often have been informed of breaking news via Twitter and Facebook. They also mentioned that these interactions are not only limited to news sources and readers but to even colleagues in different parts of the country and the diaspora.

A Television broadcaster says he gets eye-witness account from the users of the mobile app of the organisation. He confirmed that the users of their News mobile apps can report any eye-witness incidents on their News app. They can also upload video shots and pictures to prove what they saw. He affirmed that he had investigated many eye-witness accounts and they all proved to be true. He added that through the eye-witness account, they have been able to rely on their audience to give them latest odd events around their communities. Another journalist within the same organisation, however, insists they don't use social media for news even though it was acknowledged an eyewitness account has, in some cases, lead to some startling 'discoveries'.

No, we don't use social media as a news source. We have our reporters out there. We only use Facebook to get our audience requests, opinion and other feedbacks on our programmes (Reporter 1, Lagos).

It is pertinent to note that while it might be true social media does not count as an official source of new, the lead they provide for journalists is something that has been acknowledged, wittingly or unwittingly, and studies have also shown there is growing acceptability amongst journalists (Alejandro 2010). However, a newspapers correspondent noted that social media was used in his news organisation for requests from the audience about stories, and to obtain their opinions.

On the whole, the opinions and perceptions of how digital media is used in Nigerian news organisations seem to be a somewhat complicated issue. Many of the reporters and editors who were interviewed for this study were concerned that digital media was a way to disseminate false and misleading information to the general public. However, an opinion columnist viewed digital media quite differently. He perceived it as a source of unbiased information, while journalists were influenced in the way in which they presented information in their stories. It was also interesting that most of the participants did not provide information about using social media in their news organisations to interact with readers and viewers. Instead, the participants talked more about their concerns and issues surrounding social media concerning the work they performed as journalists rather than how their news organisations used social media as an interaction tool. I think it stems from the concern journalists who view as social media as a threat to the profession and news values. It also highlights the precarious relationship of journalists with sources and the nagging distrust that persists in their negotiation of use.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter sets out to analyse data collected from the research participants regarding various aspects of news production as it relates to the use of digital media in Nigerian newsrooms. Several themes were identified from the interviews that were conducted, including how digital media has changed the organisation of newsrooms, changes in the newsgathering and news production processes, the impact and use of digital media and professional values. The information provided by the participants showed that they are operating more efficiently than before because of digital media albeit challenges.

From the preceding, we can conveniently speak of the journalistic field with its own rules, external boundaries setting it apart from other fields (or sub-fields), and within which internal struggle persists even as external pressure and response to other fields exist. However, while this is insightful of how journalists do what they do, the rapidly changing environment triggered by digital media has rendered the circumscribed field of journalism conceptually inadequate standing alone. Now, people not only 'do things' (i.e. breaking of news), previously done by professionals (i.e. journalists) of specific field, they 'do many things' (i.e. follow beats, furnish detailed and expert specialised piece in the form of specialist blogs) which, indeed, are common to and in fact interact with people and activities of social worlds other than their fields so that, whereas they might be conceived as belonging to or operating from different fields (or sub-fields), they are self-aware of each other and yet operate in different fields that are more or less inextricably linked together thus rendering field boundaries blur. Beyond the boundaries of journalistic field exists a sparse distribution of people belonging to other social worlds, whose action and interactions not only invariably contribute to what journalists do, but also 'compel' journalists to take into cognisance what they do and in so doing adjust and accommodate them as 'distant' partners in the business of news production.

However, this has plummeted the issue of accuracy and standards for factual reporting are also changing as new technologies have evolved. It is argued that standards are lowering because of the speed involved in the reporting process with modern information technologies which places extra pressures on journalists as they enter into a race to get to their audience first (Moats, 2013,

Walther, 2012, Hujanen and Pietikainen, 2004). This, however, is an admission of the presence and growing importance of digital media in the newsroom which carries along other factors. The timely delivery of news also changes journalistic practices, as competition among other news agencies gets fiercer. Accuracy of reports however still needs to be maintained, which often lead to increased pressure on the journalists. The consequence is that the use of social media, in many cases, has led to a lack of independent fact-checking. This has meant that in many cases, inaccurate or hoax reports start to circulate, which can lead to a spiral of erroneous reporting (Kluver et al., 2013, Blackall et al., 2011).

6 CHAPTER Six: Journalistic identity in a changing world

6.1 Introduction

Historical background: the weak underpinnings of journalistic identity in Nigeria

Journalistic training in Nigeria began in 1963 as one of the experimental schools of journalism in Africa. Prior to this, there was no formal training for journalists in the country. Journalists received on-the-job training and had limited formal education. The experimental school, which later became the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, was established by the Zurich-based International Press Institute (IPI). The absence of formal training for journalists in Africa was seen as a huge barrier to the development of the journalism profession. The schools were established in Lagos and Nairobi as part of the IPI's objectives in advancing press freedom and professionalism on the continent. The closure of the school during the civil war in Nigeria was a huge setback. It was reopened in 1971 and named the Nigerian Institute of Journalism.

Talabi et al. (2012) note that journalism's late introduction to tertiary education and the lack of ethical codes and principles guiding the profession in Nigeria affect the way that journalists are perceived. This lack of legitimacy, they argue, prevents journalists from exercising exclusive rights to the profession and allows 'outsiders' participate at will. Beyond the difficulty of obtaining the basic skills and qualifications needed to function as a journalist in Nigeria, the colonial era, civil war and years of military regime have had a profound influence on journalists' ideology and frame of mind. The government restrictions seem to have heavily influenced the practice of journalism and still does as can be seen in the press laws which have been discussed previously in the *Working conditions chapter*.

6.1.1 The challenge from the modern world

From this none too steady background, journalism has been launched head-first into the age of digital media. In Nigeria, the 2015 General Election was witnessed and recorded not only by professional journalists, but also by ordinary citizens across the country. They sent in pictures and

videos as eyewitness accounts of election proceedings to mainstream media, as well as posting on personal Facebook and Twitter accounts, uploading their images to blogs and websites and sharing same with family, colleagues and friends all over the world. Some reporters and even certain mainstream media outlets acknowledged how cases of electoral malpractice and irregularities surrounding polling units were shared and posted on social media. This phenomenon, whereby hitherto secluded space is increasingly invaded by an army of 'self-reporting' citizens utilising the powers of digital media, is what Manuel Castells refers to as the rise of 'mass self-communication' (2007).

These developments demonstrate how fluid journalistic boundaries have become. Connected by a common concern to ensure smooth and credible elections, people across the country collaborated to produce what we have come to accept as news, hitherto the exclusive preserve of the professional journalist. What this means is that, with digital media, the newsroom environment is changing, and changing alongside it is the work of its traditional occupants, journalists, as well as their professional identity. With digital media in journalism, it is increasingly difficult to imagine a closed field, one restricted by professional identity, because, as Dickinson notes, "[a]nyone contributing to what gets done in a given social world becomes a part of it" (2008: 20). Accordingly, the 'news' world is becoming increasingly unbounded as digital media continues to breach the boundaries of the journalistic field.

This destabilising of the boundaries between the journalistic field and the world outside it has triggered heated debates over the identity of the journalist in the modern world. Far from merely being a question of personal feeling, these debates over identity have real and significant impacts on the practice of journalism. This chapter will therefore examine two questions in detail: first, who is this group of new, 'online journalists' and in what ways can they be distinguished from the traditional 'professional' journalist? As shall be seen, this is more complex than it may appear: what is at stake is much more than a distinction between 'online' and 'offline' journalists, or 'professionals' versus 'amateurs'. Instead, as will be outlined below, what is at stake is the question of who can be considered as a legitimate journalist, at a moment when the usual markers for such legitimacy – steady employment with a reputable company, professional training and adherence to specific codes and regulations – are becoming less common among many of those involved in news production. The second question that must be asked is therefore: 'what do the recent

developments in journalistic practice, heralded by the online journalist, mean for journalistic practice as a whole?’

6.1.3 Outline of the chapter

In order to untangle the various threads of these arguments, this chapter will proceed as follows: section 6.2 will discuss the notion of journalistic identity. First, a theoretical discussion offers a framework through which to understand the ways in which these identities are formed and altered. Then, an overview of the debate occurring in Nigerian journalistic circles will outline the main perspectives on the changes occurring, and finally, the significance of these debates for journalistic practice will be briefly addressed. Section 6.3 discusses the emergence of the ‘citizen journalist’ as exemplary of the new non-professional, online journalist. The following section 6.4 will then discuss the differences between these new journalists and the old professionals in terms of the three connected elements: nature of the work, quality of output and ethics. Finally, section 6.5 draws out the implications of the discussed developments, not simply in terms of the entry of a new type of actors into the field of journalism, but as having an impact on journalist practitioners, regardless of whether they are ‘online’ or ‘offline’, connected to a reputable media outlet or independent, professionally trained or not. It is concluded that the discussed developments are not simply creating struggle over inclusion/exclusion in the journalistic profession, but that all journalists and their professional practices are affected by technological changes and the policy responses to this new setup of the professional field.

6.2 Journalistic ‘Identity’

Identity as Social capital

According to Bourdieu, social capital "is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships or mutual acquaintance and recognition - in other words, membership in a group - which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital" (1986: 51). Journalism as

a profession - a collection of individuals habituated by a professional desire to break news to the public - entitles its members to this social capital. Bourdieu notes however that "the volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent... depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilise and the volume of the capital... possessed in his [or her] own right by each of those to whom he is connected" (1986: 51).

Contacts and networks are an invaluable possession of journalists worldwide and journalists in Africa are no exception. Through contacts, journalists stay on top of situations and can monitor both 'bites' and 'non-bite' items of news. These contacts and networks, when effectively managed, furnish journalists with 'classified' information and other details not readily available in the public domain, as such, journalists are projected as members of a distinct class with special 'access' and certain privileges. It is important to note that central to social capital is 'connectivity'. Connectivity here implies access both in real life and online.

These fields, (online and offline) though distinct, are also interconnected and not necessarily reinforcing but mutually influential spheres in their own right. However, the symbolic influence of the capital of a field is proportional to the meaning ascribed to it by those who share in that capital. Thus, the use of digital media, as a function of capital, acquires a 'dual nature'. On the one hand, this means it is personal and subjective to the agent, acquiring its meaning/form from the specificity of capital (symbolic) at the agent's disposal. On the other hand, it is an impersonal and objective reflection of fundamental social structuration, and this structure exists as a continuing process of technological advancement and adjustment, catering to the ever-fluctuating needs of society. As a result, the meaning we attach to, and the use we make of, technology, is but a reflection of our own specific place or position relative to other positions in the broader structure. As Benson writes, "the real locus of struggle over meaning lies not in the relation between any particular set of cultural producers and their audiences, but among fields of cultural production (both producers and homologous audiences) that vie among themselves over power to produce legitimate knowledge about the social world" (1999: 487).

The following suggests that, in the field of journalism, the 'real struggle' is not to be sought in how journalists respond to changes in the newsroom environment occasioned by digital media or even how the availability and affordability of new media technologies is propelling the surge of 'citizen-journalism' and/or 'amateur journalists' to flood a hitherto exclusively preserved domain

of professional journalists; indeed, it is not about what the net impact of digital media is or could be on the profession. Instead, the core of the struggle for meaning lies within the field, and among the constellation of agents that makes up the specific field of production. More specifically, journalists become not only structuring agents with the capacity and autonomy to act, insofar as the doxa of the field permits and, of course, within its limits, but also the structured recipients of communal practices of journalism. In other words, it is about the meaning that journalists (and the news organisations they work for) place on digital media, as well as the feedback it generates from stakeholders in the field: the consumers of news, users of news, news editors, policy makers and politicians, as well as software designers (designing increasing interactive capabilities), etc., all making up an invaluable component of the meaning-making process.

Valuable insights in the work of Becker help to expatiate on field production as ‘collective action’ and a ‘meaning-making process’, with particular reference to the literary and artistic field. Here, Becker points to artistic production as a collective action, breaking with the notion of the individual creator without external influence.

6.2.1 Identity and journalistic identity

As a concept, ‘identity’ is inarguably both complex and ambiguous, and plays a pivotal role in a broad range of ongoing discussions in many different disciplines and sub disciplines. According to Fearon (1999), in general terms, ‘identity’ can refer to one of several things: first, being a member of a group or community, following its rules, and conforming to related conduct or characteristics; second, characteristics from which an individual derives particular pleasure or which he perceives as unchangeable; third, a combination of both. In what follows, the first conception of identity will serve to better understand the journalistic identity. Identities cannot be fixed and have no intrinsic nature. Rather, they exist because they are created in the process of debating them, and through this process – both conscious and unconscious – an individual comes to associate him or herself with a particular community and the rules and conduct belonging to it. (Hanitzsch and Vos, 2017)

Grubenmann and Meckel (2015) state that some individuals identify themselves as journalists by way of their employment in the profession. In other words, being a journalist is part of their professional identity, Fearon's community in a clearly defined form. However, those who are commonly referred to as 'citizen journalists and bloggers', they argue, have begun to blur the once highly defined lines between the journalistic profession and those who used to be the audience. According to Kreiner et al. (2006), at the individual level, identity comprises two distinct parts – professional identity and personal identity (or identities) – the second of which often manifests in professional activity. Grubenmann and Meckel (2015) likewise argue that an individual's profession is an important part of their personal identity, which suggests that they are not wholly distinct. Many contemporary theorists, such as Hotho (2008), posit that evidence exists to suggest that stronger bridges between professional and personal identities can be built by those who engage in certain activities associated with a profession without actually being a member of the profession. In other words, what others perceive as their professional identity becomes part of their personal identity (or at least one of their personal identities). Reflecting this much more flexible interpretation of identity and the liquidity of journalistic ideals that accompanies the 21st century (Koljones 2013), these new 'online' journalists identify themselves as journalists by way of activities that they class as being journalistic in nature. They claim belonging to the category 'journalist' not through adherence to rigorous strictures of professional codes, but rather through their participation in a set of similar practices. Thus, there exists a clear tension between these two categories of individuals: on one hand, the former category argues that their identity as journalists is confirmed by the evidenced fact that they are subject to an extensive framework of rules, regulations, and laws, as well as a broad range of basic journalistic principles and ethics, both of which work in conjunction to guide their work and conduct. On the other hand, those in the latter category claim belonging based on a much more flexible conception of identity, perceiving themselves as journalists due to their involvement with journalism, though it occurs outside of the boundaries of the profession in institutional terms.

6.2.2 *The debate: who is a "real" journalist*

Koljonen (2013) suggests that journalism has been 'existentially shaken' in the 21st century. This fundamental shake-up has in turn affected perceptions of what a journalist is. This is true both in terms of those who class themselves as journalists, but also in terms of the perceptions of society

at large. In modern times, answers to questions about what journalists are and what their role is are now different, depending on who is providing the answer.

Within this debate – examples of which can be found on every media platform, online or otherwise – disparate perspectives on journalistic identity are articulated, in a process whereby the two groups outlined above struggle against each other, advocating their respective opposing positions and sharing their thoughts on the meaning and role of journalism in society. Hanitzsch (2017) offers some thoughts as to why such a struggle persists, and as to what it means for the identity formation of these individuals. He proposes that, in general, those who associate journalistic identity with the more traditional journalistic role, in institutional terms, that prevailed before the technological developments of the past few decades, seek to protect the profession from the inevitable transformation that it has undergone and continues to undergo. They do so, founded on the arguably erroneous belief that, by permitting those who do not have an institutional connection with the profession to call themselves journalists, they are putting their identities as journalists at risk. In this way, Singer (1998) argues that such individuals perceive themselves as ‘gate-keepers’ of the profession.

The framing of traditional and newer journalists presents the dichotomy in such discourses, as there seems to be a general consensus that: on one hand, such individuals depend, to an excessive extent, on journalistic status and the traditional values that are associated with such a status, that they are consequently it may appear stuck in a bygone journalistic era, and that they have failed to accept the interactivity of digital media; while, on the other hand, those who defend the opposing position have moved on with the times, accepting the breakdown of the barrier that used to exist between journalism and usership (Grubenmann and Meckel, 2015). However, those who inhabit non traditional journalistic identities argue that they provide a form of journalism that better reflects the values and needs of those accessing the content, and that they are better able to provide quality content within the new media forms that are more relevant than traditional journalistic formats (Grubenmann and Meckel, 2015).

6.2.3 The journalist role in society: consequences of identity for practice

These debates over who is a journalist are not simply questions of individual identity, however. There is much more at stake than any individual journalist's sense of belonging or self-worth. Hanitzsch (2017) argues that journalistic roles act as a source of institutional legitimacy relative to the broader society. The normative roles of journalists are derived from a view that emphasizes journalism's potential contribution to the proper workings of democracy. The journalistic role therefore needs to be understood within the constraints of the relevant political, economic and sociocultural contexts: "[t]he press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates" (Siebert et al. 1956: 1).

However, the traditional, western accounts of journalistic roles, Hanitzsch argues, were articulated within western perspectives and western notions of democracy and do not sufficiently account for the variation in political culture and socio-cultural values. Romano (2005) argues that the unique challenges facing developing societies may often cause journalists to act in capacities of nation builders, partners of the government and agents of empowerment. The social responsibility role of journalism is premised on the preservation of "social harmony and respect for leadership which urges journalists to refrain from coverage that could potentially disrupt social order" (Berkowitz 2010: 39). Traditional journalists have tied freedom of speech and objectivity to the preservation of social harmony through neutral reporting, modern journalists are able to present information through specific perspectives. Some worry that this will lead to greater polarizing of viewpoints and the presentation of opinion as fact. The "new" journalists present a threat to the duty of the traditional journalist to remain objective as a part of his or her role. However, within this debate, journalistic identities have no intrinsic essence, but rather merely exist because they are spoken about by all of these individuals.

Journalistic identities are deeply connected to the ways in which the role of journalists in relation to society is understood and therefore exercised. As such, journalistic identities not only reflect on individuals, they serve to set the boundaries of what journalists should be, what they should do, how they should act, under what rules they should operate, and so on. Changes to the identity of the journalist, and consequently, changes to the role of the journalist as understood both by journalists themselves and by society at large, are therefore essential to understanding the way in

which journalism is carried out. This is especially the case in the aforementioned 21st century context, in which technological advancements have altered almost every aspect of the journalistic process (Bakker 2014) as we know it.

6.3 The rise of the citizen-journalist: a new era of collaborative work, or a challenge?

Citizen journalism, Rob O'Neill argues, is "one of the most amazing developments in the history of media", applauding the phenomenal manner in which eyewitnesses' accounts were integrated with mainstream media to create a whole new level of mass participation in the news production process (cited in Allan 2006: 167). This is echoed by Stuart Allan, who notes that "[t]he significance of participatory journalism, where 'everyday people' are able to take charge of their stories, is only now being properly acknowledged" (2006: 166).

Commenting on its impact on news production, in the aftermath of London 2005 attack, the BBC's Helen Boaden observes that citizen journalism is "creating a more intimate relationship than in the past. It shows a new closeness forming between BBC news and the public" (cited in Allan 2006: 166). For his part, acknowledging the role and effectiveness of 'citizen journalism', Rob O'Neill observes that before the London incidents of 2005, "'citizen journalism' was an idea. It was the future, some people said. After London, it had arrived" (*The Age*, July 12, 2005). A reporter who works with a media outlet, with a dedicated eyewitness account section where stories are received in real time from the public, stated:

During the election, we received numerous pictures and videos from our audience desperate to have their experience shared. Some of them we were able to verify and [a] few we couldn't. Pictures and videos kept coming in from all around the places. We have to carefully sieve through in order to get the best [quality] and most enlightening among them, but as we do that, it began to dawn on me more and more that, at times like this, the journalist just cannot do it alone. It becomes clear that with the help of the citizens the media can do more and achieve greater feats than we had thought (Reporter 1, Lagos).

The reporter further notes that the impact of the people during the election was massive, as the eyewitness feature offered insight into events occurring outside the reach of the journalist. This acknowledgment of the massive impact of 'mass self-communication' suggests that, as O'Neill puts it, citizen journalism has arrived. It has come to stay and, as Alejandro (2015) noted elsewhere, the earlier the professional journalist accepts it as a fact and adjusts to living with it, the better it will be for them and for the profession as a whole.

This illustrates a gradual shift in the newsroom organisation around the news and recognises the rise of 'partners' or 'allies' of some sort in the course of news production. In this case, acknowledging the role of 'citizen journalists' in the making of news and emphasizing the emerging bond between mainstream media and the public does not appear as a matter of competition and 'boundary-making'. Rather than competing for news sources, citizen journalism shows the potential for collaboration, through digital media, with multiple sources outside its initial locus to not only enrich the news experience but also add new dimensions to it, the perspectives of those who live and experience the news (Allan 2006). One editor argues:

Social media has actually simplified journalism. And it has made reporting more instantaneous and it has broadened the scope of journalism. It has made what we now call citizen journalists from the ordinary man on the street. Because platforms like Facebook or Twitter for instance make it possible for people to post photographs from the point of an incident right there on the spot [so] and this also sets up an alert for journalist because if somebody is my friend and he posts to people a picture of an event in which I didn't plan a coverage for that day. As a news editor, it puts me on an alert to want to go to the scene of an incident because of social media [...] You have a reporter in state house in Lagos in a big country like Nigeria, in Sokoto, in Maiduguri and they can give you information of an event through text messages, phone alert whatever you [need to] know at the spot of the moment (Editor 9, Lagos).

However, while in some ways these developments can be categorized as positive, the advent of the citizen journalist and digital media have also generated substantial debates among journalists about their validity and the right of the output shared through these new platforms, often by people with no training, to be considered as journalistic work. The upsurge of digital media and the rise

in citizens' journalism place the identity of the professional journalist in question. It is important to note the obvious attempt to establish a distinction between professionals and non-professionals in the choice of words/phrases: 'actual journalists' and 'amateur journalists'. The former is used to designate professionals, those with specialised training whose day-to-day activities revolve around the making of news. The latter designates those, who by reason of the upsurge in and availability of digital media, have seized the opportunity to do what journalists do, even though they lack the specialised training to effectively perform those functions. This role, no doubt, intersects with the traditional function of the journalists; however, whether these newcomers will be added to the army of journalists is still a matter of contention among media practitioners and scholars alike.

6.4 Challenges to the traditional journalist: the debate

Obijiofor and Green (2001) propose one way to draw a line between these two groups, which has above been characterized as the distinction between those that are considered legitimate journalists and those that are not. They argue that in most countries, to be qualified as a professional journalist, one needs to be employed as a journalist by a recognised publisher, while for the online journalist, all that is required is the possession of digital media and access to the Internet. But this is problematic as it does not account for independent or freelance journalists. These latter groups, in most cases, are professionally trained individuals who choose to operate outside the traditional boundaries of media organisations, and can therefore not simply be classed as amateurs holding no professional legitimacy. The authors, however, observe that a recent study shows that:

[O]nline journalists are splitting into two disparate groups - one group that is essentially production-oriented and defines its work as quantitatively different from that of the 'traditional' journalist; and a second group that is largely concerned with reporting and defines its work as similar to that produced by 'traditional' journalists" (2001: 93).

This categorisation appears more inclusive and, as such, would allow for the inclusion of freelancers and 'citizen journalists' with the traditional journalists. However, a reporter disagrees, arguing that simply sharing information does not make one a journalist and as such they (the latter category) are not qualified to be addressed as journalists:

It is not just enough to disseminate information online and call yourself a reporter. The fact that you share information through the social media does not make you a reporter. Every information put online by any Tom, Dick and Harry may lack credibility. That is what we offer to the people. People call to find out whether the information they see online is true or false. So, if we [are] talking about information dissemination, think about credibility which the social media do not always offer (Reporter 1, Lagos).

In a similar vein, a columnist, while not disagreeing with the reporter above, believes that a distinction can be made by reason of the works produced. Echoing the dichotomy Obijiofor and Green made above, he refers to ‘would-be-journalists’ as ‘invaders’ of the field of journalism. He states:

I think we can differentiate them by their works. There are those who try to write like professionals, whose write-ups you can tell they must have had some journalistic training. And there are those who write amateurish, whose stories are full of sensationalism. Perhaps, the first category of writers might be those journalists that have migrated from the traditional media to online platforms, usually to set up themselves or function outside establishments. And, the second are the ‘invaders’ who think [that] to write anything and publish [it] online equals journalism (Columnist 2, Abuja).

Other journalists argue that there are individuals who have become reporters through the seamlessness that digital media offers. A reporter asserts that: “in this era of journalism-made-easy...apart from me who is even a journalist, you could find people outside who are not journalists, practising journalism unknowingly”. How? Through digital media, he submits (Reporter 6, Abuja). He further elaborates that, to him, journalism is a practice and as such anyone can learn in the process, inasmuch as they can observe and respect the basic values dear to the profession. In a similar sense, Asough (2012) observed that social media has transformed journalism to the extent that digital media have become an ‘essential tool’ for journalists. So that mastery of these ‘tools’ could put one on the path toward becoming a journalist, regardless of professional training. More importantly, she notes that, “the web has changed everything, anyone with a blog can be a reporter, anyone with a cell phone can be a videographer, and anyone on Facebook, Twitter or a thousand other platforms can be a news reporter” (Asough, 2012: 7). This way, understanding the basic tenets of journalism and adhering to these strictly could be seen as the defining characteristic of a journalist.

The discussion above highlights that the boundaries between the journalists and the ‘invaders’, between those considered to be legitimate journalists and those considered illegitimate, can be

drawn according to different criteria: *employment* by a media outlet, the production of high *quality* work, the *training* received by those producing the work, the production of a *type* of work similar to that of the traditional journalist, or adherence to the basic tenets, or *ethics*, of journalism. In what follows, three of these elements that came up frequently in discussions with journalist respondents will be discussed: the nature of the work process, the quality of the output, and the question of ethics. Together, these elements shed light not only on changes brought about by the arrival of this new cohort of non-traditional journalists, but also highlight changes occurring even to the practices of ‘traditional’ journalists.

6.4.1 Nature of journalistic work

The nature of work for the journalist is changing with the dawn of digital media. Every aspect of the journalistic profession is undergoing a huge transformation. In what follows, several elements of this transformation will be discussed, in order to highlight the radical shifts taking place through the introduction of new technologies and new newsroom practices.

Round-the-clock hours

As noted earlier, unlike in the past when the journalist works nine to five and then shuts down for the day, today journalists work round the clock. It is imperative to be in the know and remain connected to latest updates and developing stories. Commenting on the changes in journalism and news production resulting from the advent of digital media, an editor states:

In 1992 or so, there was an air crash involving the Nigerian Air Force officers, the Air Force plane crashed at Ejigbo in Lagos State, it was a weekend, maybe a Friday, the first mention of this incidence was by *Champion Newspaper*, on a Sunday in a brief story, for something that happened on a Friday. These were middle level officers of the Nigerian Air Force that died. In fact, a colleague of mine won an award based on his report about the incident. As I said it happened on Friday and the first mention of it was on a Sunday. Other papers wouldn’t have done better anyway, there was no internet, and there was not much gain in terms of reporting of news. The competition wasn’t very keen then.

Ten years later, in 2002, there was a bomb blast in Ikeja, Lagos. I was in *Thisday*, I had just been made feature editor. *Thisday* did not just report about the incidence on Monday for something that happened on Sunday, of

course it was assumed that it would be the lead story, we went beyond that, as we heard the report of the bomb blast; we got analysis of it, we had interviews, people's opinions and we had a flashback of similar occurrences in other countries. Readers got bumper package. *Thisday* did that because it knew that other papers would do something similar, everybody wanted to hold their own share of the market. This thing happened on Sunday by Monday and all through the week papers kept talking about the bomb blast. People were asked to go and identify people who lost family members to the bomb blast, talk to them and interview them. The coverage was massive (Editor 6, Abuja).

With digital media, the task of the journalist, even the traditional print journalist, is no longer limited to 'office hours', since delay could mean losing the lead of a story. This is a significant change in the production process, where 'news' can be generated anywhere and anytime.

Another reporter states that, today, with digital media, the journalist has to be swift in gathering and disseminating information, because what counts as news now might not be news the next hour:

Digital media is kind of 'on the spot' media. You post things right now on Facebook or Twitter and it gets to the reader at the moment you post it. It has shaped the way we practice journalism. If you have content you must not hold on to it for so long, or else it will become stale. Newness in reportage is no longer about 24 hours. It is about five minutes or two minutes or three seconds. If I gather my news story and wait till when it will be published on the newspaper, it becomes stale to the readers because they had already read it on social media. Digital media makes us to be cautious of timeliness. You need to put the information there immediately. That is why our online platform is very vibrant. Our online has different faces like Facebook and twitter. Whatever we post on these platforms can easily be shared by our visitors. That is why we referred to contents we post on these platforms as 'shareable contents' in journalism. So, new media has made it compulsory for us to put our contents online immediately we get them. And then expand the news stories on newspaper (Reporter 3, Lagos).

Mobility

With digital media, journalism is now a mobile practice. Unlike in the past, journalists and editors no longer need to be circumscribed to particular location, office or independent newsroom in order to bring together and work on news bits; journalists can now submit their stories, including photos and videos, over the internet to editors and newsrooms (Chukwu 2014). Digital media affords the journalist the possibility of being 'telephonically present' in one place while communicating and interacting with people and events in another place (Palen 2002: 79). In fact, they now collaborate to develop and produce content while apart from each other geographically:

Now reporter[s] don't need to come to the offices, so you can run an office on a very small scale, like this newspaper is very small because we are not expecting too many reporters to come around. What do they do? They use their iPad [and] handset to send stories online, you can pick it and read; that is how we have been able to do some of those things (Editor 8, Lagos).

For Nyamnjoh (2013), the relationship occasioned by digital media is convivial, because every user/actor in this broad relationship affects, to a greater or lesser extent, the lives of other users/actors and is equally affected by others. When news breaks, whether coming from a professional journalist or a citizen journalist, people far and wide respond to it. This emphasises the shift from a competitive field to a collaborative news world where different people, even outside the field of journalism, do what they do and, in so doing, affect what journalists do (Dickinson 2008; Dickinson et al. 2013).

'Journalism made easy'

For many reporters, digital media has made journalism less burdensome, by bringing everything closer and making it easier to access:

Like before, if you don't know/have something, you will be asked to go to the library to conduct research. Back then, the library may not even be in your office and you would have to go elsewhere to carry out the research. But now, if you need to do research, from wherever you are, all you need to do is Google it. New media has made journalism so easy, that one barely feels the impact of the volume of work. Or if you needed to interview someone, before, you would need to find their address and travel out to wherever they are, now, you can just call them on the phone; because phone is part of the social media you are talking about and as you are calling, you are writing and it's not as burdensome as it was before (Reporter 12, Lagos).

However, a journalist noted that because of digital media "journalism now is more exciting because you have a lot of tools". Another reporter seemed to expand upon the idea of digital media making the newsgathering process easier due to the tools that are available to journalists:

Now I can sit down in my office and press couple of buttons, and gather information. Digital media helps me building my report, especially reports that have to do with statistics and information on certain organizations which is not within my reach. I can just log on to internet and gather the information (Reporter 2, Abuja).

The sentiment from some of the participants seemed to be that digital media has reduced the effort that is required to engage in newsgathering and production. Rather than needing to search out information contained in different physical locations, such as libraries, journalists can now sit in front of a computer and have access to most of the information that they might need for their stories. In this way, the newsgathering process has become more efficient because reporters are spending less time attempting to obtain information for their stories, which reduces the overall amount of time required to complete a story.

From the standpoint of this particular reporter, new media has made journalism in Nigeria easier, but has also made it easier for journalists to avoid putting in as much effort on their stories. Several respondents share the view that digital media has made the work of newsgathering easier. One editor stated that:

The impact will be both positive and negative for those who are very dynamic and serious, it has help them researched, get better information, well researched information, well back grounded stories. You know, with the new technology at a click of the finger you can get somebody's photograph (Editor 5, Lagos).

Digital media, it is argued, has helped reduced obstacles in the practice of journalism. A reporter notes to that effect:

But I have colleagues who experienced the old world order. They said it was very, very difficult. They tell stories of when to send fax was a problem and one would have to wait for an order or finally send the fax, but it may be stolen or not received and the journalist would be called back to send it again. You can call this era journalism-made-easy, because now I sit down in the comfort of my house and I can research and send a story. The editor will not ask me, "where are you?" or "how did you send this story?" All he cares about is that the story is already in his inbox. I can be driving down the road, get information, one, I can now make a phone call from anywhere, two, some phones, as you are calling, they are already recording, I can still transcribe with that same phone, I can still use that same phone to send the story to my editor. That's why I call this new era, the era of journalism-made-easy (Reporter 6, Abuja).

One significant change that many respondents mention is the way in which technological advances have cut out hours of repetitive and useless labour:

When I was writing for *Afri-Asia*, it was a monthly, so I'd have to write them a letter, saying I have so-so-so article I'm working on and then they would give me like a two-week period to allow for postage travel from

here to Paris; but if there was an emergency and a big story emerged and I needed to send that in urgently, I would have to go to Nitel Exchange at Nsukka and send them not a telegram, but a telegraph. It wasn't expensive, but one had to write in abbreviations, so it was quite difficult. I then worked in several local newspapers and how we used to work then was, at [the] *Guardian* we had two phone lines into the newsroom and news correspondents spread all over the country, so when they had a story, they had to call it in and there were news editors who had to go to the telephone and take the dictation. After taking the dictation, then they would start typing a clean copy, which the editor would work on and copy editor would work on and then the type setting process (Editor 8, Lagos).

Some 10 years back you have to wait for the reporter to do his bits, come back to his newsroom and then file his story and all of this could take probably a whole day, and if you have an enterprising reporter maybe 3 hours sitting down transcribing it. But today, they can give you [a] snippet, as an active editor you can collaborate with them and write the story as details unfold. So you don't have to wait till the end of the day (Editor 9, Lagos).

[...] so you can imagine somebody like me that has terrible writing, what they will be going through. There are some people that write [a] maximum of 2 paragraphs in a page so before you finish faxing you have consumed more than 40 sheets of paper as you are consuming here, you are consuming there [at the receiving end] so it takes a lot of money to run. So you can imagine the story they will receive to fill a newspaper, the size, those are some of the things that it was from there [the days of old technology] we graduate to the modern day computers. The computers came in as a big relief where you can type your stories, you can upload your images...everything (Editor 11, Abuja).

We were using Telex machines, now the Telex machines was like an old Bridgette type writer so you type in your story, you enter one code, then the NIPOST will assist you to transfer the things. So it will print out at the other end then it prints your story with lots of errors, some of these alphabets will convert to number, but you need some other person to decode what these codes mean. So then it was full of errors, the proof readers were working so hard to be able to produce... (Editor 4, Abuja).

Multi-skilling

With digital media offering journalists the opportunity of improvement on many fronts (Auwal, 2015; Alejandro, 2010), they must learn to utilize these tools. Alejandro contends that, with the current pace of digitalisation in media, the classification of journalists into print, broadcast or online will soon be a thing of the past, since most media outlets, especially those with capacity to run all three, usually use a single reporter for all platforms. For her, digital media is leading to the emergence of the 'one-man band', a journalist "who carries a video camera that also allows for still photos, a voice recorder for audio clips, notebook for taking notes and sometimes even

portable lights just in case the setting is a bit too dark for the cameras” (2010: 34). Thus, media technology, multi-tasking and the increasing demand for real-time news challenge the journalist to evolve in a fast-paced environment with many actors (agents/competitors producing news-worthy events) to keep eyes on, and an audience to catch up with.

The idea that news organisations cross over to other types of media because of the use of digital media was expressed by a television reporter. He explained that he is expected to not only produce content for television, but also for YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter:

Digital media does encourage multi-tasking, because while you [are] producing content for the TV, you may have to know how to produce content for YouTube. And you can use the YouTube/Facebook to direct your audience to other social media platforms. All media use [the] Facebook and Twitter to promote their program. You can also use Twitter to direct traffic to [your] YouTube page. YouTube is also a good online resource for storing your videos and download[ing] them on a DVD for later use. It is an online library for recorded TV programmes (Reporter 1, Lagos).

Lack of specialisation / amateurism

However, not everyone sees these developments as exclusively positive. One of the participants explained that, in the modern newsroom, it is no longer possible for a person to call himself or herself a reporter. Instead, the reporter must also have the skills of a photographer, video editor, and other aspects of the news production process. He also explained that it is not only TV and radio stations that are using visual or audio media, but also newspapers:

Now, it is not just enough to say, “I am a reporter and I am just going to report”. You have to be a video editor, a photographer at all prospects. It is like a convergence of all the media. A newspaper is not just a newspaper company. It is now a media company because we now gather stories on video, audio, photos and texts. So, the TV station or the radio station cannot just lay claim to be the only ones doing visuals and audio anymore. Newspapers are doing that as well (Columnist 1, Lagos).

A senior editor argues that this merger of roles is the most disturbing aspect of digital media. He explains how the portfolio of photo-journalist has almost disappeared and is being replaced by non-professionals, indeed, by anyone with a good phone and basic camera capability:

Before, for you to be a cameraman, you have to go for training in photography and the rest of that, but with your cell phone now, some cell phones have better pixels that pick images as good as most cameras, if not better, basically everybody now can take pictures, the notion of citizen journalism [...]. The notion persists that everybody can be a journalist with their cell phones (Editor 7, Abuja).

For some journalists, this limits the development of journalists, by making them focus on too many things at a time. It not only deprives the journalist of specialised skills but also affects their professional development. An editor observes:

That is one of the problems we have in journalism. We have this attitude of jack of all trades, master of none. Like me, I am a sports reporter. I started reporting sports; there is no area of sports I cannot talk about and that is because I have devoted a good number of years to sports. [...] But when you go to sports and then hear there is another assignment in PDP, you go to PDP, then you hear there is another assignment in Labour party, you go to Labour Party, it wouldn't make you an authority in one beat (Editor 8, Lagos).

As is clear from the above discussion, the nature of journalistic work is rapidly changing, to the extent that it is becoming difficult to differentiate between the different groups of self-proclaimed journalists solely on the basis of the work they are doing. In particular, it is clear that the facile distinction between 'online' and 'offline' journalists heard so often is not very helpful, as most, if not all print journalists are forced or enticed to make use of various digital media. The question of how to distinguish between these groups can therefore only be explored through other, less tangible and more contentious aspects: the quality and ethics of journalistic work.

6.4.2 *Quality*

As can be seen in the previous section, most respondents agree that the technological advances discussed offer huge advantages to working journalists in terms of ease and access to information. A news reporter with the state-owned National Television Authority (NTA), points to the ease and speed with which job is done in the comfort of one's desk:

Now I can sit down in my office and press couple of buttons, and gather information. New media helps me building my report, especially reports that have to do with statistics and information on certain organisations which is not within my reach. I can just log on to internet and gather the information (Reporter 2, Abuja).

The reliance on social media has also been praised for the accessibility it creates and how, through social media, one can reach out to distant sources for information. According to a correspondent with Punch Newspaper, the reach of digital media is something that broadens the horizon of the journalist:

In recent times, we have been forced to accommodate the ‘intrusion’ of digital media in generating stories, in getting sources and in putting our content out there [...] Recently, some girls [were] kidnapped at Babmingtom Memorial School. Yesterday, I searched for one of the girls’ parent’s names on Facebook and got his contact. I called him and he gave me the information I needed. So, digital media has been our tool in generating sources [...] (Reporter 3, Lagos).

Sources that might have been impossible to gain access to are thus becoming accessible in the age of the digital media, arguably increasing the quality of journalistic output. However, the impact of these developments on the quality of journalistic output is heavily debated. While catching up to speed is invaluable in this age, the availability of information at every turn appears to be an invitation to laziness. A reporter with Channels TV observes:

I think that the influence is pervasive because journalists are largely dependent on the social media in their field of reporting, and that is what makes them to become intellectually lazy. These days, the traditional news media do not have originality in the stories. They source for stories from social media and other online news providers or other convention[al] media who [are] more enterprising, instead of going out there to report the events. In fact, some traditional media copy news from online sources and report it as news. They don’t even edit the stories before they report them. That’s how pervasive the influence has become (Reporter 5, Lagos).

This ‘laziness’ comes with serious ethical concerns, related to questions of copyright and non-admission of source(s). With new technology and information at one’s fingertips:

[Y]ou can get somebody’s photograph, bio data, you can get whatever is needed and piece them together, you don’t need to go anywhere depending on what you want to put down. For the lazy ones, what they do is ‘xerox’ - there is one photocopying machine called Xerox - their slogan was that “we taught the world to copy”. Because of networking in the sector they beg their colleagues to send stories to them. Some even slam it with their down lines [names/logos of the media house] forgetting that they have not removed the down lines that have sent it to them, so lazy editors too will slam it like that without even going through. So technology is good and bad....Now if you pick the papers most of the papers have related stories so creativity in writing has gone down abysmally (Editor 5, Lagos).

Whereas Meera Nair (2009) notes that the essence of copyright “is deemed to function as the means to encourage both creativity and respect for individuality” (quoted in Eid and Ward 2009: 2), the Internet seems to have turned this on its head. The possibility to copy and paste entire articles, instead of going out there to gather facts and speak to sources, or doing background research in archives and libraries, appears to tempt even the traditional journalist, lowering the standards and quality of journalistic output.

The above shows an emerging consensus that this new-found 'laziness' in journalism is paving the way for a generation of journalists who are not good researchers or writers. In a comparative study of journalists in Nigeria and Singapore, Obijiofor (2001) reveals that the presence of digital technologies promotes complacency and unethical practices through over-reliance on telephone, facsimile and the Internet, as against well-tested news gathering methods such as personal interviews and face-to-face contact with sources. The freedoms and possibilities offered by technological advances are thus enabling journalists to take the easy way out, using sources that are less reliable and giving up on time-consuming but time-honoured methods of journalistic research. One editor believes that this is unlikely to change: "because people have not come to look at it critically, it will continue until we have a body that will be able to take care of that" (Editor 3, Lagos).

Not only the possibilities of lazy work brought by the internet, but also the pressure of time can lead to compromises in terms of quality. The journalists, not unaware of the competition they face as they race through time to stay in the know, have to work twice as hard to strike a balance between speed and quality. This has not been without costs to the profession since, unlike their internet counterparts, they require enough time not only to investigate and check facts; they also need to check and be sure of the sources and then present such information in such a way that is not detrimental to society – in other words, they must still adhere to the standards of professionalism. It is in this sense Charlie Beckett (2008) writes that, for the mainstream journalist, there has always been a trade-off between deadline and quality. But now, with the unprecedented speed of new media technologies and a rival who thrives on new media to churn out information on the go, the journalist's situation is an impossible one. Consequently, "the lack of time has led to a reduction in checking sources, and the cutting of corners, as journalists having to write too many articles within a day - thus eroding the quality of the content" (Lunden 2009: 80-1).

6.4.3 Ethics

The cardinal role of the journalist is to inform and educate the public about the world around them, and this the journalist is supposed to do truthfully and objectively. Hence the need for ethics to help guide them (Nassanga 2008: 649). Ethical issues arise when it is perceived, or there is cause

to believe, that in the course of informing and or educating the public these values are not adhered to. These values of truth and objectivity have grown to command universal acceptance and are variously embodied in several national regulations as ethical codes. These codes, with national and organisational variations, are the guiding principles of journalism and a share common goal. These goals, according to the Poynter Institute of Media Studies, are: 1. seek the truth and report it as fully as possible; 2. act independently, and; 3. minimise harm (Black et al. 1993: 11). McQuail notes that “most codes concentrate on matters to do with the provision of reliable information and on avoiding distortion, suppression, bias, sensationalism and the invasion of privacy” (2010: 173). Some codes, he further notes, also include provisions to protect the independence of journalists from undue pressure and to protect the confidentiality of sources.

Ethical codes in Nigerian journalism

The Nigerian Constitution stipulates that part of the function and responsibility of the press is to serve as watchdogs and hold public officers accountable to the people (Ayedun-Aluma 2013; Nassanga 2008). The code of ethics for journalism is spelled out under the Nigerian Press Council Act, which mandates the Nigeria Union of Journalists to provide professional guidance to its members. The Act, established via Decree No. 85 in 1992 was amended in 1999 by Act No. 60 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. It was designed as a self regulatory body “to make the press more responsible and also to fend-off restrictive government regulations and interference” (Daramola, 2005, p.80).

Journalists are obliged to always adhere to the codes of the profession as part of their professional duty and service to the nation. This serves as the underlying basis of and underscores the ethical benchmark with which media content is judged. Along with the Press Act, the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) which serves a trade union for journalists of which it is expected that every practicing journalist be a part of, has its own code of ethics. The NUJ code adopted in 1998

Journalism entails a high degree of public trust. To earn and maintain this trust, it is morally imperative for every journalist and news medium to observe the highest professional and ethical standards. In the exercise of their duties, a journalist should always have a healthy regard for the public interest. (NUJ Code of Ethics).

However, this amounts to self-censorship on the part of individuals as journalists. These codes are “mandatory”, however there is no mechanism to ensure enforcement or punitive measures save for political oppression. As a result of the lack of enforcement, strident stance of media companies on ethics, once these codes are extended to the new generation of online journalists, it becomes clearer how problematic it is to put such provisions into effect. Online practitioners are not obligated to professional bodies or subjected to ethical codes like their offline counterparts, and this has raised concerns over the professional identity of the journalist (Stevenson 2004; Obijiofor and Green 2001): if one can be a journalist without being subjected to certain ethical codes, whether through voluntary association or through professional codes and regulations, then there won’t be order and no need for regulatory professional bodies. Journalists in Nigeria argue that anyone sitting anywhere with a mobile device can publish anything, without any ethical consideration of the possible effect of such actions on society:

In this era of digital media, one cannot always confirm the authenticity of reports. People now push things anyhow, without details, confirmations, without being factual. So it actually puts a question mark on some of the things that are presented via new media; because a journalist is supposed to have his facts, be sure of the reports they are pushing to the public. But in most cases, some of the operators of this new media, without regard to facts just push out stories, especially those with ulterior motives, which is not good to the image of journalism (Reporter 7, Abuja).

The absence of control and regulation has been noted as a huge problem for ethical concerns in the age of digital media. Without regulation, anyone can put any information out there without restriction. Tendai Chari’s (2013) study on journalism and ethics in practice indeed reveals that journalists tend to behave more responsibly, ethically speaking, when offline than when online. Nafada and Gudaku argue that the absence of gate-keeping in digital media is responsible for the invasion of journalism by non-professionals and in so doing, these non-professionals breach the ethics and professionalism of the profession:

By this [gate-keeping], the content of the conventional media is usually made to undergo internal and external scrutiny and control in terms of editing to ensure that ethics and professionalism are religiously adhered to. Thus, what comes from the conventional media is not the product of one’s figment of imagination that is simply unverifiable, but “content baked in the containers of ethics and

professionalism.” However, the concept of gate-keeping is completely absent when it comes to the social media. No one subjects whatever comes from the social media to any form of scrutiny. Hence what goes on in the social media could be the highest form of sensationalism, which the code of media ethics abhors. What calls for questioning is how easily people give in to sensationalism. The issue presented could even be from the figment of someone’s imagination and therefore, misleading and smack of mischief. Therefore such could sell and sell well, with amazing patronage from the unsuspecting public. Instead of serving the functions of information, the social media often turns out to serve the function of misinformation (2013: 14-5).

Sources and credibility

In the new world of online media, where the grip of journalistic ethical codes on those producing the news is loosening, sloppy work and a lack of ethical consideration can lead to bad journalism. When it comes to the use of sources, this is specifically disturbing when it comes to the use of sources. The disclosure, or otherwise, of sources is an important aspect of the ethics of journalism. Source attribution not only gives credibility to information but also helps to weigh the question of objectivity. Its absence, on the other hand, makes information appear more or less as an opinion of the journalist or a figment of their imagination. Elizabeth Weise discusses the wide range of issues confronting journalism:

For anyone trained in the tradition of investigative journalism, where tips come from sources, from research, from having an ear on the ground, from the relentlessly posed question, where facts are to be ferreted out and pieced together, it’s a brave new world indeed. The Net is a place of intrigue, rumour and fabrication (1997: 159-160).

In the past, the journalist had to cross-check their facts and, in most cases, this had to be double-checked by an editor, by way of gate-keeping, before they were made public. Today, with the aid of digital media, this is seldom the practice. Sources are not subject to any kind of scrutiny when it comes to online publications. Another respondent puts this ethical challenge as follows:

Before, if you were an individual that wants to publish, you would write an article and then look for a paper willing to publish you. If you find one, perhaps a hundred to one thousand people will read the article in the paper. But if you have five thousand followers on Facebook and published your article there, you are reaching more people than you would if you published in a paper. But the thing is, it raises other issues. Would we stop needing quality? No! Would we ever stop needing well written and well researched articles? No! Because for

instance, in print media, you can't quote an anonymous source unless the story overweighs the need to divulge the source. So then we can say, because of public interest let us protect the name, we know and trust the source, but that the story must come out and [is] published. But without such circumstances, they won't use it. Otherwise, any source you quote must be an authority. But you have people who will write stories, publish online, and say "sources" [said this and that]. Nobody is named and they keep churning out things. So who do you believe? There are the ones that can tell you how they got their story and the ones that can't and won't tell you how they got their story (Editor 8, Lagos).

The digital media has created a worrisome situation that has caused scholars to wonder about the future of journalism (Deuze 2005; Rottwilm 2014; Witschege and Nygren 2009). However, other scholars present research showing that that readers are more confident with news when they are sure of their sources (Weise 1997; Obijiofor 2001): "[s]tories with source attribution were rated highly by readers in terms of credibility and quality" (Sundar 1998: 64), while stories without source attribution are not taken seriously by readers. The authors further stress that 'source attribution' includes recognition of well-known names, which by implication means a recognition of the fact that professional journalists in media establishments might choose to shield the identity of a source in accordance with their ethical responsibility to society. Moreover, web-based news with established names enjoy more credibility than websites run and operated by lesser known entities (Teoh and Al-Hawamdeh 2001; Obijiofor and Green 2001). This position was confirmed in a study conducted by Teoh and Al-Hawamdeh (2001) where it was observed that websites belonging to renowned media outlets such as the BBC, CNN and the *New York Times* enjoy higher credibility than other news-providing websites such as Yahoo, Netscape and MSN.

Relationship with Sources

The relationship between journalists and their sources is one that is changing as a result of digital media. This relationship stems from one of the core tenets of professional journalistic ideology that requires journalists to follow a prescribed order to achieve results (Deuze 2005; Hackett, 1984; Schudson 2002). The prescribed order usually involves a focus on the balance of power where the journalist is expected to balance authoritative data alongside fact without taking sides in a discourse. Here, the sources are the "experts" and officials who provide the raw materials for the

journalist to use in the news. Herman & Chomsky (1998) pointed out that these news sources are seen as authority figures and usually “have a vested interest in the journalist’s report, linking news content to public opinion and ultimately, their own success” (Griffin & Dunwoody, 1999; Herman & Chomsky 1988). Here, these ideas are important in considering how journalists manage this practice in Nigeria, where elected public officials require public opinion to remain in power and where news organisations and party affiliations are drawn along ethnic lines or owned by private individuals. The relationship is constantly negotiating a balance as each side hopes to achieve its aim; for the journalist, news, credibility and objectivity, and for the sources, the maintenance of power (Berkowitz 2009), news therefore becomes a construction (Tuchman, 1973; Ericson, 1999). Sigal states that “news is, after all, not what the journalists think, but what their sources say, and is mediated by news organisations, journalistic routines and conventions, which screen out many of the personal predilections of individual journalists” (1986, p. 29). Thus digital media has no doubt exposed journalists in Nigeria to a wider range of influence and sources for news stories. There has been significant debate over whether access to these new sources of information has broadened the range of people that journalists speak to and incorporate into the news production process (Gillmor 2006; Fenton 2010), yet journalists are careful to admit that the rise of digital media is quintessential in this regard. Sources are invaluable in news gathering and the relationship with sources is also one of growing trust according to a journalist:

People feel safer on the internet, they feel they can voice their opinions and be heard. If you are looking to feel the pulse of the people, you need to know what they are saying. Of course you need to verify stories and sources but for me, it is a win-win (Reporter 10, Abuja).

The journalist explained that this was not the case in the past as there was a general distrust for journalists because of political interest or interference but that digital media has opened up that space for interaction. It is a sort of two-way channel that has been opened up and journalists are engaging more and more with sources via digital platforms i.e. the newspaper comments sections, Facebook comments, Twitter mentions and re-tweets and emails. When asked if the use of digital media is discussed in editorial meetings, some of them acknowledged that they have received valuable insights from the feedback sections and often times have been informed of breaking news via Twitter and Facebook. They also mentioned that these interactions are not only limited to news sources and readers but to also colleagues in different parts of the country and in the diaspora.

A Television broadcaster says he gets eye-witness account from the users of the mobile app of the organisation. He confirmed that the users of their News mobile apps are able to report any eye-witness incidents on their News app. They can also upload video shots and picture to proof what they actually saw. He affirmed that he had investigated many eye-witness account and they all proved to be true. He added that through the eye-witness account, they have been able to rely on their audience to give them latest odd events around their communities. Another journalist within the same organisation however insist they don't use social media for news even though it was acknowledged an eyewitness account has, in some cases, lead to some startling 'discoveries'.

No we don't use social media as news source. We have our reporters out there. We only use Facebook to get our audience requests, opinion and other feedbacks on our programmes (Reporter 1, Lagos).

It is pertinent to note that while it might be true social media does not count as an official source of news in some news organisations, the leads they provide for journalists is something that has been generally acknowledged, wittingly or unwittingly, and studies have also shown there is growing acceptability amongst journalists (Alejandro 2010). However, a newspapers correspondent noted that social media was used in his news organization for requests from the audience about stories, and to obtain their opinions.

Many of the reporters and editors who were interviewed for this study were concerned that digital media was a way to disseminate false and misleading information to the general public. However, an opinion columnist viewed digital media quite differently. He perceived it as a source of unbiased information, while journalists were influenced in the way in which they presented information in their stories. It was also interesting that most of the participants did not provide information about using social media in their news organisations to interact with readers and viewers. Instead, the participants talked more about their concerns and issues surrounding social media in relation to the work they performed as journalists rather than how their news organisations used social media as an interaction tool. I think it stems from the concern journalists who view as social media as a threat to the profession and news values. It also highlights the precarious relationship of journalists with sources and the nagging distrust that still persists in their negotiation of use.

Participation and regulation

Questions of ethics in the production and dissemination of news are no longer limited exclusively to those that are, one way or another, classed as journalists. The shift in the media landscape from ‘one-way traffic’, where journalists feed their audience as passive recipients, to a multi-nodal interactive system, where the audience and general public become active participants, requires something that moves beyond ethical codes for journalists, as it becomes increasingly obvious that, apart from journalists, there are other social actors and forces at play. Besides the need to be informed, people now want to debate and participate in the making of their world:

Journalism provides the independent facts and analysis to help people make informed choices. This is consumer journalism, but people want more than just consumer journalism. They seem to want opportunities to debate their world. As the conventional news media have been slow to recognise this shift in the interest of the public, these issues are now being generated by citizens. Google, Myspace and Facebook have built big empires on the basis of that proposition (Lundén 2009: 29).

This shift, however, comes with enormous responsibility on the part of regulators, as the domain for public information sharing, dissemination and consumption is enlarged. Opubor lists the various manifestations of news in the wake of new media’s invasion of journalism, identifying what he terms ‘new’ or ‘hyphenated’ journalism. These include: advocacy journalism, civic or community journalism, crusade journalism, development journalism, environment journalism, investigative journalism, issues journalism, peace journalism and radical journalism (2001: 28). There are now individuals and specialised interests that take advantage of and utilise digital media to advance their respective causes, far beyond the imagination of traditional journalism (Rajendran and Thesinghraj 2014). The implication is that with all these interests entering the realm that hitherto had been the preserve of the professional journalist, the possibility of breaches of ethical codes is rife.

Yet the prospect of regulating these spheres presents enormous difficulties. Attempts to regulate these spaces are mostly from the platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc.) regulating

themselves. Earlier attempts by the government to regulate social media by a bill³ from the Senate, threatens the free expression of opinion online.

This ties interestingly with earlier mention of the western vs local codes of ethics – the concern for Nigeria with stability and social harmony and tensions over the grounds of regulation in different areas, depending on who is attempting to regulate.

Commenting on the ‘user-friendly’ nature of new media and its recourse to ‘invisibility’ or ‘transparency’ in usage, Bolter and Gromala observe that:

When designers set out to define an interface for an application [...] they usually assume that the interface should serve as a transparent window, presenting the user with an information workspace without interference or distortion. They expect the user to focus on the task, not the interface itself...If the application calls attention to itself or intrudes into the user’s conscious consideration, this is usually considered a design flaw (2006: 375).

The skirmishes resulting from the use of Internet in media, though not necessarily an inherent part of the design, might be seen as a ‘design flaw’ in the sense that its use is raising serious privacy and ethical issues, not only within journalism as an industry but also in society at large, which consumes the ‘toxic’ and unverifiable information it provides. However, since extant regulations do not explicitly address what could be done with specific technological applications and interface besides what it is expressly meant for or claimed to be meant for, what would be required is improvements in jurisprudence to cater for the fast rising moral-ethical challenges and third party intrusion bedevilling the cyber world. The recent Facebook saga and Congress intervention is instructive in this regard.

Seen in this light, attempts to control or regulate digital media might ultimately impair its design goal – to allow for unfettered access to information – thus leading to a lose-lose situation. The response to sensationalist media discussed earlier can already be seen to have such effects:

There is [the] Cyber Crime Act, I learnt that [the previous administration] Jonathan signed it in May before he

³ The bill nicknamed “Social Media Bill” criminalizes speaking out against individuals or groups online, including expressing dissent against the government, with vague and disproportionate restrictions that do not strictly adhere to legitimate purposes

criminalizes speaking out against individuals or groups online, including expressing dissent against the government, with vague and disproportionate restrictions that do not strictly adhere to legitimate purposes. (Sesan and Olukotun 2016)

left. Two journalists are being tried now; well I don't see them as journalists, two online people in Lagos are being tried. In fact, they are in detention right now. They wrote a story about the Managing Director of Fidelity Bank, about his lifestyle with a female member of staff or something like that, I don't have the details (Editor 6, Abuja).

The implication is that where sensationalist media crosses professional codes of ethics, breaching privacy law, this might lead to calls for constricting the space of free expression and for media suppression, thus putting all journalists at risk.

It can be seen, therefore, that on one hand, some seek to draw a clear distinction between the 'real' journalists and the 'amateurs'. They claim that the 'real' journalists are steeped in the ethical codes of journalism, still do their own research and, unlike the new 'online' journalists, their use of new technologies does not compromise the quality of their work. On the other hand, some argue that this distinction is more fiction than fact, and that the print journalists (whose work is now done both online and offline) are being compromised in the same ways that the online journalists are. In other words, from this perspective, no clear distinction can be drawn between a group of legitimate, 'real' journalists, and a group of illegitimate intruders. Rather, the aspects of the journalistic profession discussed above represent a sliding scale of legitimacy – anyone, whether an online or an offline journalist, can meet or fail to meet standards of quality and ethics, as the traditional journalist's natural working environment, with its fixed rules and regulations, is increasingly eroded. The consequences of these developments will be reviewed in the following section.

6.5 Expanding and shifting the boundaries of journalism

The above discussion shows clearly that the new group of online journalists and others who produce and disseminate news online are breaking with many of the foundational aspects of the journalistic profession. They are not bound by any set of fixed journalistic practices or methods, but rather, use whatever method is most expedient to produce their story as quickly as possible and to make it appeal to their many thousands of online readers. They are not bound by set codes of ethics and conduct governing the journalistic profession. From this perspective, the alarm of the traditional, professional journalist at this 'invasion' of his or her profession does indeed seem

justified. Yet on the other hand, this chapter has demonstrated clearly that these developments are not limited to the newcomers in the field of journalism. Not only do print journalists depend on and make use of online media for research and breaking news, they are also migrating online themselves. The distinction between the ‘professional’ journalist and the ‘others’ is thereby blurring. On one hand, this had led to a substantial change in the nature of the work that even the traditional print journalist produces, providing him with different resources and methods to practice his trade. On the other hand, these developments have also been seen to seriously compromise the ethical and practical codes of journalism.

The new, hybrid journalist

Reporters and editors in Nigeria understand that even when working for a newspaper, the ability to record video and audio to be published online is just as important as writing the story that will appear in the print edition of a newspaper. In this way, it is not just that newspaper reporters, for example, are writing and even proof-reading their stories, and taking their own photographs. Instead, newspaper reporters are also serving as content creators in an entirely different medium that has become just as important to them as the print editions of the newspapers for which they work. The reporters understand that they are creating content that will be seen in print, on a website, and on social media.

At the same time, this new, multi-skilled journalist is losing his ability to be a specialist, and the long and rigorous editing and source-checking that used to be a staple of the way news is produced is fading. As discussed above, with their migration online, print journalists are taking full advantage of the possibilities offered by technological advances, forsaking the methods of research to which they were accustomed. As a result, questions were raised about a potential decline in the level of quality of journalistic work and the slackening of ethical standards. As an economic columnist with *The Guardian*, notes, it is unethical for newspapers to monitor social media for ‘breaking news’ with the aim of reproducing its content, because “every newspaper is independent of each other. So, it is wrong to get information from other newspaper[s]”, yet this is what is taking place:

Social media has definitely opened up the communication space and made it a lot easier to reach who and the news you need. One doesn't have to wait for official statements, if they are monitoring Twitter; that may be where the story originates from. In fact when Lamido Sanusi [former governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria] was sacked, we got it on Twitter first. The President's spokesman, Reuben Abati, put a statement on Twitter before the administration even put out an official formal statement! So if you are a news organisation, you ignore social media at your own peril. It gives a lot of leads. Even if they are not properly filtered for quality, accuracy and anything else you may consider pertinent. It is a thermometer. It tells you where the pressure is going or how the temperature is moving. So if you want to chase something, you can decide what to chase (Editor 8, Lagos).

The structural environment

However, these changes are not simply occurring as a result of 'laziness' enabled by technological advances. The accusation of complacency might just be one way of placing the blame on journalists, without examining the structures or lack thereof that might have contributed to such laxity. On one hand, the emergence of digital media and a generation of online journalists has led to a race against time, where journalists appear to be evolving survival techniques that involve cutting corners, sometimes with serious ethical implications for their profession. Stiff competition and the imperative to survive have compelled even professional journalists to take on a usually self-styled online presence, and this practice inadvertently has led to compromising of standards.

A reporter describes the issue:

You have your own online site and you have your print and therefore you have an advantage over the other guys who only have an online outfit. However, those other guys snoop on what you do. They actually upload material from your site, because they don't have the resources to send photographers/journalists, etc. to obtain these type of materials, which perhaps the digital media proponents in the West have. They seek to 'tap' from old media in a way that is not entirely legitimate (Reporter 6, Abuja).

Thus, the plethora of information on the Internet as well as the stifling nature of competition between the offline and online media on the one hand, and professional and non-professional journalists on the other hand, will lead to 'professional suicide' for those who cannot withstand the challenges of the time (Auwal 2015).

It is easy to end up in a debate in which technological change is either lauded as bringing “new opportunities for journalists, offering unlimited possibilities for enhancing journalistic enterprise” while its opponents hold “pessimistic views blaming digital media technologies [for] bringing about a breed of journalism practitioners with stunted creativity because of a new ‘copy and paste culture’” (Bastos et al. 2009: 2). While both sides have arguments to support them, as the chapter has shown, this emphasis has clouded the intricacies surrounding the transformation engendered by technological development, and the way in which these changes are negotiated and articulated through practice. As Castells notes:

We know that technology *per se* is not the cause of the work arrangements to be found in the workplace. Management decisions, systems of industrial relations, cultural and institutional environments, and government policies are such fundamental sources of labour practices and the production organisations that the impact of technology can only be understood in complex interaction within a social system comprising all these elements (2008: 2).

It is not simply a case of journalists attempting to respond to the changed circumstances. Not only do media outlets not appear to be doing much in terms of guiding these developments to minimise the threats they pose to the quality and ethical standards of journalistic work, in some cases, they actively set out policies that lead to a lowering of standards. A columnist averred thus: “[n]ewspaper companies want cheap reporting. They want cheap reporters they can get and cheap reporters who are not professionals. These reporters don’t know the implication of what they write. That is why there is a lot of litigation” (Columnist 1, Lagos).

Once again, it is also worth noting that the reporters and editors realise that their multiskilling also reduces costs for the organisation in which they work. A reporter who is performing multiple tasks is likely not receiving the pay that would have been provided to four people. Instead, he or she is earning the pay of a single person, thus saving his or her news organisation a great deal of money:

[..] to some extent it encourages it in an amateurish way. If you are not a professionally trained photographer there is a limit to what you can do but it’s a positive thing, it makes a reporter basically self-sufficient meaning that it cuts cost for the media organization you don’t need to send two three or four persons to one singular event. One person goes there and comes back with what he can use. And it also helps because if we have the news agencies who sell news it also helps them, because rather than sending multiple people to an event, you send one person who is self-sufficient, so it encourages multi-skilling on its own to the extent to which the reporters as individuals encourage this is a different ball game entirely (Reporter 9, Lagos).

Whether evolution, innovation, revolution or invasion, the presence of digital media in journalism landscape calls for an upgrade, in the form of skills acquisition and multi-tasking. Otherwise, the implications for the journalist are grave. An editor puts it more graphically when he notes that, “basically, the challenges are: update your skills, update your knowledge, move with the times or you become a dinosaur and you’re out.” (Editor 15, Abuja). The importance of training and skills acquisition is, no doubt, paramount in this era of digital media, as respondents are almost unanimous about it:

Yes, if one is running an operation and wants to be competitive, then one wouldn’t want to employ a dinosaur. Even if you are a messenger and you are computer literate, in today’s world, that gives you an advantage over someone that has a PhD, but is not computer literate. You run with the times. People have to have the competence. If you are patient, people who are behind the times in your organisation, you train them to update them, but if you are not patient, you throw them out and hire new people. [...] If a person won’t update themselves and their skills, they are endangering the future of their careers, because they can’t be relevant in the new trends (Editor 6, Abuja).

The emergence of technology making digital media and a new generation of ‘online journalists’ possible are not simply creating a debate on the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in the journalistic profession. While this debate is useful to highlight the areas of contention and point to significant changes underway in the ethics, quality and nature of journalistic work, what is at stake is something much more significant. All journalists, both the old guard of professional journalists, and the new ‘online’ arrivals, are being altered by technological changes and by the ways in which media outlets are responding to the new possibilities. As highlighted by respondents, even where this may lead to a lowering of standards, today there is simply no other option than to ‘go with the flow’, no matter what it means for the quality and ethical codes of journalistic practice.

7 Chapter Seven: News Production

7.1 Introduction

I had scheduled a meeting with a reporter for a print newspaper. The meeting was scheduled for 10:00 am at the office complex. I arrived early and sat down in the waiting room. It had been an eventful month of trying to get this interview after a series of cancellations because of work commitments. The meeting had been rescheduled a number of times, and finally took place in a quiet cafe overlooking the Zuma rock along the Abuja expressway. As we sat and enjoyed the pepper soup in the local café, our discussion turned to the perceptions of journalists, perceived notions about them and the profession, and the interplay of new media technology, politics and their economic implications for journalists in Nigeria.

In the course of this conversation, there were moments of interruption caused by the “beep” notification on the reporter’s phone from the mobile messaging application WhatsApp. These notifications were coming from sources on the ground in the different polling units where some national elections had been cancelled and were now being rerun. The local residents were providing audio clips, short videos and on the spot updates on events, long after the journalists had left. He explained that he belonged to several WhatsApp groups, which had proven instrumental in providing ground-breaking stories and monitoring reports.

In the hours that we spent conversing, he had followed up on a lead for a story, written a brief to the editor via WhatsApp, the editor had responded and sent some corrections. He then forwarded some videos to the studio manager for the online version along with his story and continued the conversation without leaving the spot. When I pointed it what I had observed about producing a news story in the time we had spent, he responded: “My phone is my office” (Field Note, Sept 2016).

One clear advantage of the shift in technological communication which cannot be denied is the increase in the speed of news gathering. This is noted by authors such as Houston (1999), who suggests that micro electronics, computer and telecommunications systems have created new

‘channels’ enabling rapid communication to make news gathering and the distribution of the final news product much faster, as well as supporting a low-cost method of delivery. Today’s society no longer needs to wait until the following day to read a print copy of the yesterday’s news: people can consume a digital version on the internet, via their tablet, smartphone and even from social networking sites where news spreads fast.

However, as the above discussion of my interview suggests, a more profound shift has taken place. The confined field Bourdieu explicated appears very blurred in practice (Becker and Pessin, 2006). Not only is the journalist not confined to the physical space of an office complex; the ‘team’ of players affecting his schedule are not the usual group of people he interacts with in his office. The journalist, at times situated far from the location of the newsgathering process, not only participates in this process, but is directly influenced by the activities of supposedly non-journalists, citizens reporting from the field and citizens reporting from the field directly to the journalist, or by posting updates on their blogs. This experience keys into arguments made in Dickinson (2008) and Dickinson et al. (2013) that, far from constituting a circumscribed field, digital media has occasioned a situation whereby people can participate in previously closed spheres that were exclusive to certain professions. (see Chapter 2).

This chapter examines the process of news production. The analysis is therefore framed by the recurring themes that emerged during my discussions with and narrations by the research participants. The themes identified included newsroom organisation, the process of news gathering, obtaining news leads and breaking news through social media, and the question of professional values in the digital age. Through these discussions, the chapter will trace the impact of digital media on the journalistic profession. From the data gathered during interviews, it will be argued that one of the primary effects of digital media on the practice of journalism has been the decentralisation of news production, from the physical and organisational structure of the newsroom to the very processes by which information is gathered and news stories are produced and disseminated.

The chapter is divided into five sections. Section 7.2 describes the physical and organisational structure of a typical newsroom in Nigeria and how the physical space is being disrupted due to the advent of digital media. Section 7.3 examines the impact of mobile phones and the messaging

application WhatsApp on news production in terms of the connections it enables between journalists and their sources as well as their audience. The following section, 7.4, then examines how digital media is altering the newsgathering routine of journalists and how journalists monitor and utilise digital media in the course of their daily routine. In section 7.5, the question of journalistic values in the digital era is discussed. Section 7.6 then discusses the process by which the interactivity engendered by social media is decentralising the process of news production. The chapter concludes that digital media are greatly impacting the way in which news production takes place. It is argued that the role of digital media in news production is eliminating the boundary between journalists and non-journalists, leading to a wider space of news production, a news world. The impact and consequences of this blurring of boundaries and the decentralisation of news production will then be discussed in detail in later chapters.

7.2 The Organisation of the Nigerian Newsroom

As in any industry, news production is a sequence of gathering raw material, processing it into the required product and distributing this product to its intended market. In order to achieve this, newsrooms have to operate in an effective and efficient manner with routines of working practices that others adhere to because “the news organisation cannot rely on a random search for news” (Cohen, 1984: 66). Therefore, rules have to be followed in order to produce a standard amount of news every day within the organisation’s parameters. The organisation of the newsroom is key to the way in which these routines of news production are created and maintained. Of interest here is how these rules within organisations involve the role of technology, given its importance in contemporary news production.

The typical Nigerian newsroom has gone through several changes in the last 20 years, with computers replacing typewriters and the Internet replacing teletype terminals. More graduates from different fields are working as reporters and editors, including many in managerial positions. Many newspapers have internet editions, and reporters are required to meet deadlines to have their stories posted on the newspaper’s website, even before the hard copy (print edition) is printed and

circulated. However, some things remained unchanged: many reporters still use reporter's notebooks and the telephone to gather information, although certain digital media technologies have become another essential tool for reporting. In modern newsrooms, a teamwork-integrated system has been applied to improve time management, in order to develop a story by incorporating photographs and graphic designs. From my observations and conversations with journalists, it appears that the way the newsroom is organized and working processes are shaped in Nigeria is changing and, it appears, this change is not predicated on a business model or structure, but unfolding and the journalists are adapting to these changes as they occur.

7.2.1 Changes in the Physical and Organisational Structure of the Newsroom

The print and TV media in Nigeria have similar structures in terms of physical layout and newsroom processes. In assessing editorial practices and newsroom structures, I describe some of the working processes observed, including interactions I had with journalists in the field. My analysis begins from my observations of the physical structure of the newsrooms visited. I observed how the space of the newsroom is organized, e.g. whether it is an open-space office or a number of smaller rooms, whether the journalists are mostly working together in the newsroom or sending their copy from other locations, and how digital media is used to negotiate these interactions.

How long this physical space or newsroom structure will continue to play a central role in journalistic work is yet to be determined. The question remains of change remains open for debate and subject to rethinking of the 'newsroom' or 'space', which refers to factors affecting/ contributing to fast, fluid and constantly changing landscape of interaction, just as culture, as a result of intensifying global exchange of ideas and information (Appadurai, 1996). As stated, this potential change of the role of the newsroom is subject to the reconceptualization of the newsroom is occurring. Why should the reconceptualization of the newsroom affect whether or not the organisation of the newsroom has an impact on news production? In this sense I mean the 'rethinking' occurring by those working in journalism, and that this 'rethinking' of what a newsroom is - i.e. a newsroom could be someone's phone, as it were - might lead their actual, physical office location to be less significant in terms of its effects on news production. This rethinking of what a

newsroom is (going back to the quote from the field, ‘my phone is my office’ – this is a very concrete process of changing perspectives by people in the field

From my observations in the two cities (Abuja and Lagos) visited, of the two TV houses visited (Channels and NTA), the state-sponsored TV media had a very traditional set-up with separate offices, while the private TV had a more modern layout, featuring an open-plan office. the private TV newsroom I visited, Channels TV, the journalists work in an open-plan room with separating screens, which makes communication easier and less intrusive. Editor 4 notes that “it is very useful for us to stay together and not be holed up in a room all alone. I think it helps the collaborative process” - everyone has this sense of belonging or working together, with a common goal. The Nigerian Television Authority, on the other hand, each individual has a separate office, with a large editorial room for staff meetings.

Upon my visit to the newspaper publishing houses, I noticed that those who worked on the online content and distribution were in a different section:

Vanguard newspaper had the demarcation of the newsroom. When I walked in to observe an everyday run at the mill, sub-editors, reporters and ancillary staff share a common non-demarcated area, while the editor enjoys the privacy of an office. This silently connotes hierarchy in the newsroom, which everyone seems to be comfortable with, perhaps respectfully too. However, the online department is housed in the IT department, not in the editorial room. So perhaps, even though they had embraced online news publishing, they didn’t seem to view them as mainstream journalists. Likely the online department is simply there for digital publishing and distribution of the news centrally generated and administered by the newsroom. There was a personal assistant to the editor, but she doubled as a news reporter. Everyone had a laptop or tablet – as a tool of work, so there were no desktop computers or typists and no one was idling around without being in the business of news production (Field Note, Sept 2016).

I observed the structure and organisation of newsrooms and also discussed any recent changes in organisational structure with editors and senior management. I found out that most of the changes had been subtle in nature and were driven by the influences of new technologies, and the decline in workforce. I compared the organisational and physical structure in TV stations and the

newspapers/online organisations I visited in Abuja and Lagos. In observing the organisational structure of the newsrooms, I also noted the organisation of news processes. The TV stations had more structured processes than newspaper organisations, whose organisational structures were more fluid. Most news organisations have an online editor who reports to the editor, who in turn sends approved content for publishing on the web. In some places, the IT department performs most of this function, while in others it is a rotating task:

I met an editor, who owns an online newspaper in Nigeria. He worked in the Nigerian print media for 15 years before starting his own. I had called him on the phone and he agreed to the meeting. There were five tables and chairs in total in his office; a TV mounted on the wall which had Channels TV on. I was introduced to the staff – a staff of four. It was an open plan office with five desks and chairs; his space was located at the right corner and had a slightly larger table. He had an editor, he was one as well, and he had a health reporter, a reporter who does graphics and IT, a sports reporter, politics reporter. I asked him on job descriptions and he explained that even though most of them had specific areas of interest, they often reported on other areas as well. The editorial meetings were held in the office at their seats. There is a formal meeting at 9:00 am but also a number of meetings occur later in the day as news breaks. I enquired about other positions like cameraman, etc., and he explained that there wasn't really a need for it because he sources pictures on the internet and properly credits the source (Field Note, Sept 2016).

What the latter part of the above excerpt suggests is that, besides the direct negative effect that media digitisation has on cameramen and -women in particular, there is a general loss of jobs as media digitisation continually condenses different functions into one (Pavlik, 2000). This equally raises the issue of source and attribution. Information and images from different parts of the world are now readily available at the other end of the world within minutes of release.

7.3 Mobile Phones and Messaging Applications

7.3.1 *Impact and Influence of Mobile Phones on Journalism*

One of the issues raised by some of the participants was the impact of mobile phones in terms of the speed at which events can be covered, as well the influence of phones on decisions regarding what to cover and how to cover major events. One of the print journalists described a situation in which the mobile phone can help to make an educated choice on what event to cover, when there are several options:

There are different types of breaking news, the unanticipated which is breaking news. For instance, the APC called for a meeting in the International Conference Centre where the President is expected to address them, while the majority of the APC members were there, Bukola Saraki⁴ takes the rank of the APC alliance alongside the PDP and is elected as the Senate president [at the National Assembly]; that's breaking news. Now you won't hear that breaking news if you went to the International Conference Centre and didn't have a network or somebody. Within minutes it was live on television because people posted to the National Assembly Media people to cover it so if you are wasting your time at the International Conference Centre waiting for the President to arrive and you see your smart phone that Saraki's election is going on for the President of the Senate you weigh on your scale which one is more important for you. If you are a journalist you should know you have to be at the National Assembly or you take your phone and call someone you know to cover it or you pick anything you want from the smartphone and claim that you were there. So that is how you monitor these things (Reporter 15, Abuja).

A newspaper editor also explained that the availability of smartphones has reduced the cost and effort of conducting phone interviews with people in other locations in order to obtain information for stories:

⁴ Bukola Saraki is the current Senate President of Nigeria. His election was a bit uncharacteristic as it took place whilst the President M. Buhari had called for a meeting at a different location (the International Conference Centre). He was elected by a minority of senators from both the ruling party and the opposition. The election was contested in court and seen as an act of insurgency. The news broke first on social media and created a great stir in the party.

For instance, [the] transport cost of meeting your source. If your source agrees to do [a] telephone interview, you can send the questions to him instead of transporting yourself physically to meet him one on one. You can send your question to your source online and he responds, if he has any issues with some questions, you can clarify that on phone and the story is done (Editor 2, Lagos).

This reflects a common belief among journalists that the smartphone is making the work of journalism a little less stressful, due to the possibility of being readily connected and having easy access to contacts who are important elements of a story. In the case of a journalist covering a breaking news, being in one location may not allow for direct access to officials who can provide useful information. However, by using a smartphone to stay connected to other news sources and group networks, the journalist may be able to gain access to these officials. Moreover, it might turn the journalist on to another breaking news story that is more important and which the journalist is in a position to cover more easily. The availability of mobile communication means that journalists can contact sources and experts in faraway locations at a moment's notice, rather than having to visit those individuals in person. In this way, conducting interviews with researchers or government experts, something that would have required several hours of travel some decades ago, can occur at any moment over the phone without the journalist having to leave a newsroom or the location of an important breaking news story.

Furthermore, Auwal (2015) explains that smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices are making it easier for journalists to write and file stories in real-time, so that editors can receive those stories and get them to publication as quickly as possible. One of the newspaper reporters who was interviewed explained that the ability to easily share information in real-time through smartphones, along with other online tools, has created what he calls a 'global village':

We use camera phones and online tools like the blogs, YouTube, Facebook histogram, etc. All these technologies facilitate news reporting because they made the world into a global village. A single media house can operate three platforms of media online. The online newspaper can report news through texts, video and radio online. In the past, the print media only used the text and pictures to convey news but the YouTube brought about a change in that. Since readers, especially the youth, are so eager to see what is happening before they can believe the story; YouTube is the online platform of the print media that enhances credibility in reporting (Reporter 4, Lagos).

Another important issue that was raised by this participant was the idea that young people in Nigeria expect to know what is happening the moment it occurs. Young people do not want to wait several hours or several days to know of important events; they want to be up-to-date, otherwise, they feel outdated. This perception poses a challenge for journalists who have to be quick to break the news, at times before scouting for sources or examining the details of an event. In most cases, this has an impact on the types of stories journalists cover as well as influencing the quality of the stories. One newspaper reporter actually argued that, because of the large percentage of young people in Nigeria who rely on smartphones to stay connected, it is young people who ultimately determine which stories are covered:

The digital media is generally changing the practice of journalism in Nigeria because the 70% of Nigerian population are youth. The youth determine what we ought to report. As a journalist, you have to report stories that appeal to the youth. The youth are 'phone freaks'. So, they have quick access to information from their phones. The newspaper media of today now publish the stories immediately so that they can beat their competitors. What most news organisations [that operate online news reporting] do is that they break the news, however small or even uncertain they are, and then try to ascertain the validity and add flesh to it where it is valid (Editor 4, Lagos).

To place the reporter's claim in context, recent population estimates show that of the 182 million people who live in Nigeria, about 50% are considered to be young people, that is people of 30 years of age or younger (Mbachu & Alake, 2016). Others have estimated that about 38% of the Nigerian population, or about 64 million people, is comprised of people who are between the ages of 15 and 35 years old (African Heritage Institute, 2015). The age bracket of 25 to 35 constitute the bulk of young people with mobile devices and are also the most tech-savvy age group (Mbachu & Alake, 2016). While the reporter's claim, that 70% of the Nigerian population are 'young people', therefore appears slightly exaggerated, the figures do indicate that a large segment of the Nigerian population is young. Of these young people, many will belong to the tech-savvy group that is accustomed to receiving news in real-time through mobile devices, rather than waiting for newspapers or television, which may not relay a story until hours after it has occurred.

A journalist, who has several years of experience working with different newspapers, magazines, and television stations as a reporter and editor, explained the importance of the smartphone in terms of being connected to the world and employers at all times. He contends that staying connected at all times not only gives competitive edge but also helps bridge time differences across countries. Prior to the emergence of smartphones and the availability of digital technology, news had its own deadline. Like humans, news slept and woke up. Whatever happened at night would most likely wait until the next morning, when it would receive full coverage. But these days the situation has changed. Events are announced the moment they occur, and what at night was breaking news may be an old story by morning. Indeed, digital media has bridged time in the newsroom whereby staying ahead of time has become the journalist's ultimate virtue:

I just heard that the editor of *The Guardian* just came back from suspension. Why was he suspended? The Oba of Ife died, the story broke out at night, and apparently he had gone home but it was all over the place, I carried the story. The [next] day the Oba's death was nowhere in *The Guardian*. Somebody told me that he said that he had gone home and there was no night editor, all those excuses. But in this day and age I don't see that as an excuse, what is night editor? We're no longer in those days where you have night editor; I have found that response funny actually. In those days, because of the tradition of keeping the death of monarch secret of course, they say Oba's doesn't die, he only joins his ancestors, we wouldn't have known for weeks. But now just one person hears and it was all over the place. So newspaper editors having seen it online must go and ensure they had it in their papers the next day. That is just an example of how the online [media] break stories (Editor 6, Abuja).

Based on these responses, it seems clear that journalists in Nigeria are aware of the importance of staying connected through their phones at all times, even when in previous years and decades they might have been considered to be off work and away from their work duties. At the present time, the use of smartphones, and the expectation that people are always connected to the internet, means that readers, employers, and others with whom journalists may have contact expect them to be available at any given moment. Interestingly, another reporter explained that smartphones and other technology have reduced the barriers for publication to the point that an entire media operation can be run from a person's home:

Oh yes. It didn't just reduce entry barriers; it took them all away. Before, you had to acquire and pay for an office, arrange to print the papers, arrange distribution, now one person can do all of that and all from the comfort of their own home (Editor 8, Lagos).

Researchers have noted a convergence of network, production, and distribution due to technology and the internet (Ostergaard, 1998; Flynn, 2001; Couldry, 2003). Based on the responses of the participants, smartphones and the ability to stay constantly connected to the internet have created a scenario in the journalism industry in Nigeria in which journalists single-handedly serve as reporters, editors, publishers, and distributors of news content. Moreover, readers and viewers have come to expect this constant distribution of content in real-time, regardless of whether a story breaks at 2:00 pm or 2:00 am. At the same time, it has become possible for an entire publication to be printed from a person's home, rather than requiring a separate office, printing facility, and distribution facility.

Overall, the conclusion that can be drawn from the responses provided by the participants is that mobile phones have created an immediacy that is expected, both by journalists and by news consumers in Nigeria. Journalists are expected to be available 24 hours a day to cover breaking news. There also appears to be a perceived expectation that, because such a large percentage of the population of Nigeria is comprised of young people, news events will be covered and reported in real-time. Furthermore, there was a recognition among those in the print industry that newspapers are competing to cover events in real-time through social media.

7.3.2 *WhatsApp*

Messaging applications constitute a technology that has become increasingly important for mobile phone users. Such applications have hundreds of millions of users. WhatsApp, a popular messaging application that allows users to make voice and video calls and send images and files to other users around the world over the internet, has about 500 million users (O'Donovan, 2014). Because of its large user base that regularly shares stories posted on the application with other users, WhatsApp has become popular with news organisations around the world. In fact, WhatsApp is responsible for about 50% of the total sharing of content that occurs on mobile devices (Benton, 2014).

While WhatsApp is popular with news organisations such as the BBC, it does not appear to be as widely used in Nigeria, at least it was not an issue that was widely raised among the participants of this study. Only a few of the participants mentioned WhatsApp in any context during the interviews. Nevertheless, the participants who did mention WhatsApp provide some insights into the potential importance and usefulness of the application for journalists. A television reporter explained that WhatsApp is more used than other social media platforms:

WhatsApp is predominately used in my TV house. Not just here, it is used in other news organisations. WhatsApp configuration is higher than other chat platforms and allows a lot more data than Twitter and maybe Facebook. When the story breaks, everybody on the WhatsApp group gets to know about it. Everybody in the group knows when a particular story is trending. And I think WhatsApp is becoming the strongest technology. Twitter in the other hand is on a personalized level but WhatsApp is more potent than every other social media (Reporter 5, Lagos).

Another television reporter explained how his news organisation uses WhatsApp as a means of gathering information from the organisation's correspondents in overseas locations during breaking news events:

We do have correspondents overseas, but they cannot cover all the events all over the world. But if there is trending news on the internet, we call our correspondents in overseas to get us video footage on that trending news. If he is far away from the location of the event, he or she can report the opinion and views of the people, package it on a 'vox populi' video and send it [to] us through the new media [WhatsApp] (Reporter 2, Abuja).

Both of these television news reporters indicated that WhatsApp is not only a tool for distributing stories and content to large numbers of people, but also a resource to be used to collect videos and stories from correspondents around the world. In this regard, for these two television reporters, and the organisations for which they work, WhatsApp is useful both in the workplace and outside working hours. It was not only television reporters who discussed the way WhatsApp was being used in their organisations. A newspaper editor explained how his news organisation created a WhatsApp platform that was shared by all reporters, and became a way for everybody to stay connected:

We created a WhatsApp platform for all reporters of *The Tribune* and that was massive. When the idea came, we never knew it was there all along. We could wake up in the morning and discuss all the story ideas even when we are on the move to our various beats. So, one WhatsApp group was done in Ibadan connecting all the reporters nationwide. It easy for the editor to tap on the WhatsApp platform and communicate with the reporter in Abakaliki instead of chasing him all over the place with phone calls. It is just an improvement with what has been on ground. The major operational branch in Lagos and Abuja also created their own WhatsApp platform. It has become imperative for all reporters to be connected to WhatsApp. So, we adapt to the new technology as it evolves (Editor 3, Lagos).

This newspaper editor also explained how, during a breaking news story, his organisation created a hashtag for the event on WhatsApp, which in turn resulted in the stories being published in the newspaper and selling large numbers of copies due to the initial interest generated on WhatsApp:

When the Ikorodu kidnap saga came up, a day after the kidnap, I sent my reporters to the place of incident. My reporters sent two paragraphs of story and a picture to me through WhatsApp. Then we created a hashtag for the story online. Before we knew it, the hashtag regenerated 2.4 million visitors and we were also updating it. The next thing was that the people wanted to know the latest story about the kidnap. So we gathered all the breaking news from our Twitter platform, packaged them, added the ransom demanded and published it on the newspaper. The paper sold like hot cakes (Editor 3, Lagos).

This editor demonstrated that WhatsApp does have the ability, at least in terms of major events, to actually bring people back to newspapers. Posting stories involving a breaking news event on WhatsApp, and directing people to site to find all the stories, actually created more interest in the print edition of the story. However, this is the only reporter or editor who noted that the use of WhatsApp actually served to generate such a large amount of attention for the online stories, as well as generating interest to the point that people wanted to purchase the hard copy of a newspaper to read and re-read the stories that had been published through the social media application.

One of the reasons that so few of the participants mentioned WhatsApp may be that WhatsApp is just one of many mobile phone applications that can be used to send stories to readers and viewers.

While WhatsApp may account for half of all shared content on mobile phones, news organisations in Nigeria are using a variety of social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter. Another participant explained:

You can type a story on your phone and at the click of a button, you can send it to someone on WhatsApp, someone on Twitter, on Facebook; from there they all converge back to your website. So that's distribution; to anyone anywhere in the world. So it's cheapened the cost of entry and made what costs there are completely irrelevant. There are some like *Bloomberg*, which started electronically and as they became more comfortable, starting committing stuff to paper, instead of the other way around. They selectively decide which stuff is good for paper and target specialised audiences with that. So that may be another effective way of deploying paper [rather] than the old media approach (Editor 8, Lagos).

Overall, it seems that different news organisations in Nigeria are using different social media platforms to stay connected with readers and viewers. Furthermore, as has already been examined in the previous chapter, many journalists choose to use a variety of social media apps to stay connected with colleagues and sources around the world.

7.3.3 The Speeding up of the News Cycle

Not only has the way in which reporters gather information and connect to sources changed, but the speed at which information can be accessed and therefore reported on has greatly increased. A reporter stated that monitoring Twitter was a way to receive immediate statements that might otherwise not be readily available. He explained that when a government official was fired from the Nigerian government, the news was available on Twitter from the President's spokesperson before an official statement was made:

When Sanusi was sacked, we got it on Twitter first. The President's spokesman Reuben Abati put a statement on Twitter before the Administration even put out an official, formal statement! So if you are a news organisation, you ignore social media at your own peril (Editor 8, Lagos).

Other reporters also explained that when a story breaks, details are immediately posted on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Then, as new information becomes available, the

information would be provided on a newspaper's website as a more detailed story. In this way, reporters and editors have to be prepared to go to where a story is occurring and report that story, even if it is the middle of the night or on a weekend when there may be fewer reporters and editors working. Another journalist explained that social media can be utilised as a tool to gather information as an event is unfolding, and use that information to write follow-up stories:

Through the social media, I can post stories quickly and I can get information quickly. Breaking news are easily seen due to what we called citizen journalism. Events can be happening somewhere and an eyewitness of the event can share the information on social media. It easy for me to get such stories from the social media, work on [them] and do a follow-up. It has really enhanced my doing things easily (Reporter 4, Lagos).

Thus, rather than considering bloggers and citizen journalists as interlopers, we can begin to appreciate their role in the news world, even though their non-affiliated status may render their conduct somewhat opaque and unpredictable, especially in light of the etiquette required by traditional journalism. They can, however, be understood as partnering journalists at different scales and with varying degrees of involvement in news production. A journalist however explained that an important difference between the people who use social media to disseminate information and journalists is the lack of follow-up:

No, they don't follow up. There had been a bomb blast, there were so many people there who were snapping it, videoing it, recording it and uploading it on Facebook. Whether the people were dying or not they didn't care. But as a journalist, we have to follow it up (Reporter 6, Abuja).

From the perception of the reporter, journalists provide a more complete picture of an event than people on social media. People reporting on events via social media, the reporter argues, are only concerned with the initial devastation or tragedy, and have little interest in following up to provide information in the aftermath of the event. In contrast, journalists, while certainly concerned about the initial event, must also be concerned about the aftermath.

7.4 Newsgathering Routines

7.4.1 *From ‘news gatherers’ to ‘news aggregators’?*

Newsgathering refers to the ways journalists collect the necessary information in order to produce a news story. This process is often divided among journalists as part of the newsroom organisation, where specialist topics such as politics or sport are covered by specific journalists. Most journalists interviewed discussed how digital media has changed the process of newsgathering for them. The function of newsgathering is shifting to ‘information processing’ (Jurgenson & Meyer, 1992) and reporters are now referred to as ‘gate-watchers’ as opposed to their traditional task of ‘gatekeeping’ (Bruns, 2005), and information ‘monitors’ (Deuze, 2003). The frequently used metaphor for journalists as ‘watchdogs’ or ‘detached watchdogs’ (Hanitzsch, 2011) is fast becoming oblivious, not because journalists are too busy romancing political elites, but because their role is changing with the changes occasioned by digital media (Nielsen, 2015) but because their role is changing with the changes occasioned by digital media. Journalists appear to do more aggregation than investigation or investigative journalism.

This view was expressed by several journalists interviewed. These journalists explained how digital media has made it possible to receive large amounts of information about stories that might need to be covered due to the option to automate the information gathering process. However, making use of such automated processes calls for diligent and painstaking efforts on the part of the journalist to ensure that the stories they present are valid and well-founded. A reporter explains how he utilises automated Google news alerts, as well as Twitter and Facebook to stay informed of events, and help him decide which stories to cover:

With the dawn of the internet age, one of the first things I did was set up Google alerts using favourite keywords that I want to monitor; so whenever there’s any news about something, it would quickly shoot an email into my inbox and I would receive in real-time. As time went on, we used newsfeeds; so instead of you going to the website to read an article, it brings it to your email and then from your email you can now go back to the website, if you feel it’s called for. But for me, in the last two to three years, there’s another change that came; my primary source of sourcing news now is Facebook and Twitter. I now go to Facebook and ‘like’ all the media organisations whose news I like, and usually follow for credibility. So anything they put up comes into my box (Reporter 8, Lagos).

Using the Twitter and Facebook feeds from other newspapers and news organisations for story ideas might seem appropriate to some, but one of the editors who was interviewed argued that the use of new media allows reporters to not only be lazy, but to use other reporters to do their jobs. This connects to the view expressed by some of the journalists interviewed, that lazy reporters have found ways to use new media to do as little of their own work as possible, and instead rely on others in the newsgathering and news production process. This position was corroborated by several editors. These days, they note, it is a common practice among journalists to join various social media groups. The editors do not consider belonging to groups a problem in itself. In fact, social media groups and networks are invaluable in today's world to stay abreast of news stories as they unfold. What they do, however, see as an issue, is when a journalist abandons their responsibility, sitting idly and waiting for social media to break the news. The implication, for them, is that whatever is not reported on social media platforms might easily escape the reach of the journalist who relies too heavily on social media for beats and updates.

It has been argued that one aspect of the changes taking place globally in newsroom practice is the growing acceptance of information emanating from new media sources among journalists, though with little or no inclination to always cross check or verify before going public with it (Alejandro, 2010; Nielsen, 2015). It is the responsibility of the journalist to double check whatever information is gathered from new media, as these sources are frequently unreliable and can contain lies or purposely sensationalized news stories intended to increase traffic on the website. Thus, there is a consensus among scholars and practitioners that new media places a burden on reporters to do extra work, double checking to ascertain whether these stories are true or not (Nielsen, 2015; Hanitzsch, 2011).

Overall, the responses from the participants regarding the impact of digital media on newsgathering and news production can be characterised as somewhat complicated. The participants acknowledged that digital media has made their jobs easier because they can obtain information for their stories without needing to physically visit libraries or other sources. In addition, the participants recognized that digital media makes it possible to easily monitor a variety

of sources for information, including competing news organisations. However, several of the participants also recognised that the use of digital media makes it possible for journalists to essentially utilise other people to gather the information that they should be gathering as reporters, and that they are thereby functioning as news aggregators rather than news gatherers. Journalists are therefore divided on the effect of digital media in this regard. On the one hand, some of the journalists interviewed believe that this practice leads to less reliable or less detailed reporting. On the other hand, some regard digital media as improving journalism, as the journalist is not only exposed to multiple sources for the same story, sometimes with conflicting details, but this also compels the journalist to research and reach out wide in order to harmonise the different sides of a story and fill in the missing elements. In other words, digital media has the potential to make journalists more efficient and effective in their work. Seen from this perspective, digital media and the plethora of information and sources increase the workload of the journalist, which can actually serve to improve the journalistic skills and output of those who do not shy from the possibilities and challenges these developments offer.

7.4.2 *Monitoring Social Media and Utilising Social Networks*

It appears that, when it comes to social media, the approach taken by conventional journalists is to publish first and then make corrections later if necessary, even though many journalists see social media as an unreliable source of news. Nonetheless, most of them rely on it as their main source of information, at least to uncover the basic facts of a story. A journalist narrates how he sources news stories:

I monitor breaking news on social media. In the past, a newsworthy event may happen, and I could keep it to myself till it gets published sometimes, never published; but now with new media, my source could be mutual friends on Facebook or other social media of a colleague, other journalists or even bloggers who might publish it first. In essence, social media is a rich source for 'diary ideas' in journalism today, as an event might seem a worthy story to follow-up for a journalist, while other viewers might just peruse the story and move on (Reporter 6, Abuja).

An editor, concurring with the above, puts it rather bluntly:

I can't see stories in the last couple of years that were broken by the traditional media. The traditional medium now looks to [the] online medium [for breaking news], even though they don't admit it (Editor 5, Lagos).

Several other reporters also indicate that checking social media for news updates has become a part of their daily routine:

I start with Twitter, Facebook and then if I want to be a bit more comprehensive, I search for certain keywords under Google news or Yahoo news or Bing as the case may be. Because sometimes, one algorithm might include something that the others are yet missing; I search various sites to make sure I'm not missing anything (Reporter 11, Abuja).

Reporter 6 describes the routine he follows to ensure he doesn't miss developments in his field:

When I am working, I follow leads on sports, via the websites of [the] British Broadcasting Corporation, Cable News Network, Entertainment and Sports Programming Networks (ESPN), Goal, and africanfootball.com. I monitor the stories trending on those websites, apart from what social media users put up on Facebook (Reporter 6, Abuja).

For Reporter 3, checking social media is an essential part of a journalist's routine, and failing to do so will create difficulties:

You have to [constantly check social media]; unless you want to be in trouble. Before I read my Bible in the morning, I check my Facebook and Twitter pages. It is not because I am addicted to it but because of the kind of job I do. When I wake up in the morning, social media gives me direction on where things are happening. A serious reporter does not wait for his editor to give him [or her] direction on what is happening at any location. One should be able to get the breaking news from the social media before your editor tells you about it (Reporter 3, Lagos).

One reporter explained that he had been slow to embrace new media in journalism and, at one time, ignored Facebook messages and treated them as spam. Now, however, he views social media as a source of information that he can examine and connect to in order to determine important stories:

On a personal level, I was slow towards embracing the new media in journalism. I used to see Facebook messages and I just put them on spam and they go to where they don't distract me. But subsequently I learnt that I could get breaking news from all of these platforms. I navigate between them, between looking at my email addresses where stories come from my report and following on from Twitter and Facebook and others instantly to see where stories are breaking, so to that extent if I want to be effective or any journalist or editor who wants to be effective on the job knows that he has to navigate between all of this. [It's] like the common saying, harmony lies in the middle, that is, having the ability to take a little from A and a little from B and use the different platforms the best way you can to maximize productivity at the end of the day (Reporter 9, Lagos).

Journalists appear to be losing out on their monopoly of breaking the news and instead simply respond to news once it has been broken online. This, however, is not to say that journalists just sit back and wait for the news. Rather it implies that, with the rise of digital media, journalists are responding to changes taking place in news gathering and dissemination, and by extension, to the overall changes in the media industry. The trend is to get news stories online and then follow these up offline, where possible.

Several other journalists describe how they “aggregate”, “analyse”, “scrutinise”, and then “synthesise” information from different sources before publishing. A television news reporter who took part in the study shared a similar sentiment about social media. He explained that he uses a variety of social media and online sources to stay abreast of news, and to be prepared to pitch stories before entering daily editorial meetings:

As far I am concerned, it helps me to know what is happening around me and globally. I like sources of news like the British Broadcasting Corporation, Cable News Network and Al Jazeera. As these sources report breaking news I get them instantly on my phone through Facebook and more importantly the videos are usually available too. So with this, I am already equipped before attending the editorial meeting in the newsroom (Reporter 2, Abuja).

Others also stated that they use social media as a means of quickly gathering information from multiple news sources, particularly large news organisations such as CNN and BBC. A columnist who took part in the study also noted how he uses social media as a means of not only gathering information for his columns more quickly, but also to add to his columns. However, he explained

that he writes opinion pieces, as opposed to the other participants in the study who were journalists that do not write opinion pieces. He believes that because he writes opinion pieces, it is less problematic for him to use information obtained in his work than for journalists who write strictly news.

I enjoy it. I use it to get information faster and direct. I even use it to embellish my column. It's what I write. I write opinion mostly. Every morning I first of all log on to my Facebook page to know what is happening before I start writing (Columnist 1, Lagos).

However, while new media are fast becoming indispensable to journalists to remain up to date on breaking news events, Editor 6, with vast working experience and academic training, notes that new media feeds are as distracting to modern day journalism as they can be invaluable: since there are large amounts of information on social media, the journalist sometimes prioritises wrongly, only to have to make amends when a particular story starts trending:

Most of the time I just get my news online, I get my mails online. Like today I have gone to British Broadcasting Corporation, I've checked Yahoo news. I haven't really checked anything about Nigerian news, occasionally I do; but at times I get carried away by global events only to find some national issues trending (Editor 6, Abuja).

It has been acknowledged that, regardless of whether digital media deliver news or merely a hint of news, this has changed the way that news is sourced and generated today. A journalist with *Vanguard* newspaper recounts the process of sourcing news before the advent of the Internet as tedious:

To source news then was very, very tedious and difficult because you have to be there and you are required to fill in so many pages. The technological components are not there. You have to be for instance in Kaduna, Suleja, Lokoja and many other locations to get news. You don't have the means of getting news there even if you have a reporter. We would usually use the radio codes and messages, and a translator on the other end, would translate it to long hand. This is after your beats have been screened and processed for transmission to [the] head office, for publishing (Reporter 11, Abuja).

7.4.3 *Social Media as a Bias-free Source of News*

Most of the participants who indicated that they had embraced the use of social media seemed to have some concerns about social media, because of the lack of oversight by editors or anybody to fact-check the information. Columnist 1, however, indicated that this lack of control means that social media is free of bias. For him, social media is a space where people speak their minds and share news without anyone telling them that certain information is not fit for public consumption or that their conduct is unprofessional. Furthermore, he explained that reporters are influenced in terms of the events and stories they report on, which is something that does not occur on social media. A similar view was echoed by another columnist:

Social media has no bias. When reporters go to the field or to any press conference, they are given a brown envelope purposely to [prevent] them from reporting the truth about the elections. But the users of social media who are not journalists were able to report what they saw in the street and what is/was happening during the elections. But the newspapers have constraints in reporting the election as it was, because a print journalist can be sued for telling the truth and that can lead to problem. But with social media, no one can be sued for posting any kind of information because it has no control. So the social media helps the people to know what is actually happening (Columnist 3, Lagos).

Professionalism places certain demands on journalists, to which non-journalists are not subject. For instance, Nassanga (2008) notes that while journalists, all across the world, are expected to inform and educate the masses, they are equally reminded to do so in such a manner that it does not constitute harm to society or a section of it. According to the Poynter Institute of Media Studies, this can be summarised into three principles: “seek the truth and report it as fully as possible; act independently; and; minimise harm” (Nassanga, 2008: 647). Nassanga, however, argues that these principles are variously domesticated and form the basis of broadcast regulation in most countries. Thus journalists, unlike their non-professional counterparts, are somewhat constrained, as anything contrary to these ‘guiding principles’ could mean legal action against the journalist. This, certainly, raises the question whether journalists in Nigeria are truly free to report events in an unbiased manner, or whether they operate with some concern about the political ramifications of their stories. However, it is possible that the columnist may perceive that journalists are too controlled simply because they are not openly expressing opinions in their stories, whereas columnists are expected to express opinions on certain issues.

7.5 News values

While some the journalists and editors interviewed lauded the freedom and lack of oversight over social media as stimulating freedom of expression and enabling the dispersion of unbiased information, all simultaneously raised serious doubts about the reliability and general lack of a clear set of norms and regulations guiding this new media. The question of journalistic values was raised repeatedly by respondents as a key issue in this new era of journalism.

According to Stuart Mill, ‘news values’ are one of the most defining structures of meaning in society (1973: 181). This phenomenon can be explained in terms of habitus – in this case, the journalistic habitus. It is the distinction in the field that produces and provides members of the field with privileges denied to ‘non-members’. In this case, it is the being classed as a journalist entitles you to to define and certify a story as news or not. This ‘vague’ rendering of this or that event as ‘news’, Schudson argues, reveals the cultural predisposition of the journalist that is both enduring and unconscious to its possessor, and from which it draws without conscious effort (1989: 276-7). Nevertheless, in the face of digital media and the challenges it poses to the newsroom, it has become difficult for journalists to claim a monopoly over what counts as news. The news world has proven to be, as journalists themselves recognise, comprised of many actors not bound by specific field features, but freely interacting and actively involved in news production.

With these changes, the work of journalism has taken on a new form. One reporter contends that digital media has transformed the work of the journalist from simply breaking the news to substantiating it. In other words, digital media flashes the news and journalist ‘adds depth’ to it. Digital media makes an issue topical, but it is the role of the journalist to follow it up and elaborate on it. A political correspondent observes that:

As a journalist, digital media has made me brace up to the fact that there is competition between the online and the conventional hardcopy journalism; especially in Nigeria, because in print media, if you get a news report today, it cannot be printed/read until the next day; whereas, with online, as soon as the news breaks, it is [out] there. So as a print journalist, you now have to go and look for

the news behind the news because digital media has already broken the news. As a print journalist who is competing with online journalists, you now have to go deep within the report, find the nitty gritty of the report, which may have already been flogged online, to make your [sequel to the online] report a bit fresh...What the new media does is to flesh it up and the conventional media will now follow it up and bring out details of the report (or flesh it up) (Reporter 7, Abuja).

With the intervention of digital media, most journalists claim to have become more careful with information they encounter online, since there is the possibility for news of doubtful veracity to creep in, a possibility further compounded by the absence control on citizen journalists. Asough (2012: 5) notes that, “Believe it or not, people tend to believe what they see on Twitter, and many people don’t remember to verify what they see on Twitter.” If a journalist, for instance, relies on Twitter as a source of news, she notes, and does his or her work without verifying their sources, such reliance could not only be misleading, but could amount to a journalistic “disaster”. A news reporter with the Nigerian Television Authority argues that the professional thing to do, since it has become obvious that the new media will maintain its lead in terms of breaking stories, is to double-check:

The impact of new media on my profession as a journalist is diverse. The coming of new media – social media generally has improved the way we gather information. Sourcing through new media is not much of a source; you can rely on in most cases because it is an open platform where anybody can just put any kind of information on it. Even with that, as professional, you would have to confirm the information which you can use in your reportage (Reporter 2, Abuja).

One of the participants explained that digital media has resulted in an inability to confirm the accuracy of news reports. In addition, he stated that people use social media to promote stories for their own motives:

Because in this era of digital media, one cannot always confirm the authenticity of reports. People now push things anyhow, without details, confirmations, without being factual. So, it actually puts a question mark over some of the things that are presented via new media; because a journalist is supposed to have his facts, be sure of the reports they are pushing to the public. (Reporter 7, Abuja).

However, the issue is not that people *cannot* verify what they see on social media; it seems that

often, they just don't remember to verify. It may be that reporters are less concerned to verify or follow-up on a news story, instead preferring to reproduce it, as Reporter 7 pointed out above. Indeed, as one of Asough's respondents puts it, "it doesn't take a lot to verify news!", but nonetheless, Asough concludes, "many other people wouldn't remember to make the calls" (2012: 6). An editor corroborates Asough's assertion with his personal experience. He recalls an encounter, although he refrained from giving details. He notes:

I've been beaten once; it takes a professional to retract a story. It is not something anybody [would] like to do. But when you do a retraction, you wouldn't want that to happen again. You wouldn't want any situation that will warrant that to happen again. There are so many pieces of information flying around, sometimes because people want traffic to their sites, although they eventually find out later that the stories are false and unverified (Editor 6, Abuja).

He continues with two examples worth quoting at length:

A while back in Abuja, a notification flashes on my phone: "former president Shehu Shagari dies". Ordinarily, Shagari is in his late eighties, so if you got the story that he's dead you will tend to believe it is true; because the octogenarian is already far spent in age. But I looked at that story, I looked at the source – that is the first thing you do. I didn't see a strong source that it was attributed to. I said ok, if Shagari dies, one of three people I know must know, so I called the first person, it rang and it was not picked [up]. I called the second number it wasn't going at all. I called the third number the person picked [up] and I asked, "This rumour about the death of former President Shagari, how true could it be?" He said, "I am not sure. I am yet to hear anything regards that story". For me, that was it. I left the story. Six hours later a lot of Facebook users started refuting the story, affirming that Shagari is alive. However, I did not see apologies from that platform which had reported that Shagari had died. The next day, Shagari said to the press, that he was in his farm when he heard reports of his death in the media. If my concern was to break news I could have taken the story.

The next one, was shortly after the handover, sometime around June I think. Goodluck Jonathan, the former President, went to London with his family and there was this news that his son had died in London, I even heard it from supposedly credible sources. Thankfully, I had two Ijaw friends who are up-to-date regards the events in the life of the former President. But, even before I could put a call through to him, he had put up a Facebook update, to refute the rumours. Ordinarily, if it was just

to break news, I would have just gone ahead, but the professional in me said ‘no’ (Editor 6, Abuja).

What is obvious is that the pressure to break the news as in most cases for journalists is harmful for the profession and for the journalists themselves. Less obvious, however, is that this could be read as an indictment on the part of journalists, because part of the dangers of digital media might not be of its own making, but rather the failure of journalists to adhere to their professional calling – to authenticate and verify information before going to press.

Alejandro’s (2010) study, which examines how journalists treat information emanating from digital media, demonstrates that digital media has come to be seen as an acceptable source, or partner, in the course of news production. Digital media, and its social media platforms, are becoming more integrated as a major component of news production, as “journalists are beginning to leverage on social media to receive, gather and distribute news” (2010: 34). Her study reveals that seventy percent of journalists hold information gathered from the digital media social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter as valid, especially when the information comes from a public figure (2010: 32). However, one of her reporter-interviewees notes that that “no true journalist would run with an un-checked story”. Checking has become necessary, especially with digital technology and its social media demands and distractions, which make it increasingly difficult for journalists to dig deeper into stories (2010: 33). Now more than ever, it is possible to sit in the convenience of the newsroom to research and gather information necessary for the news. Moreover, this is an indication of the shifting landscape within which journalists function, a shift from a circumscribed and competitive field to a fluid and cooperative news world where participants work together in the course of news production, though not necessarily harmoniously, to produce the news.

7.6 Disrupting physical space and boundaries

7.6.1 User Generated Content and Interactivity in Nigeria

Most of the major newspapers in Nigeria have websites whose content duplicates their print editions. *The Guardian*, an independent daily newspaper published in Lagos, Nigeria, provides interactive and user-generated content on its pages. The website provides space for readers to comment on every story, as well as to contribute content, while also making it accessible for

readers to read comments made by others. *The Guardian* is accessible to readers wishing to contact it through email as well as over all major social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram), as can be seen in figure 1. This figure likewise shows how the *Daily Trust*, *Vanguard* and *Channels Television* websites also provide users with access across all major social media platforms, as well as providing users with the ability to interact with each other using the comments section. The website of *The Guardian* also provides the tools to share its content through any social media platform. Figure 2, a screenshot from *The Guardian*'s online edition, shows the tool provided on the website to users which allows them to comment on stories and articles.

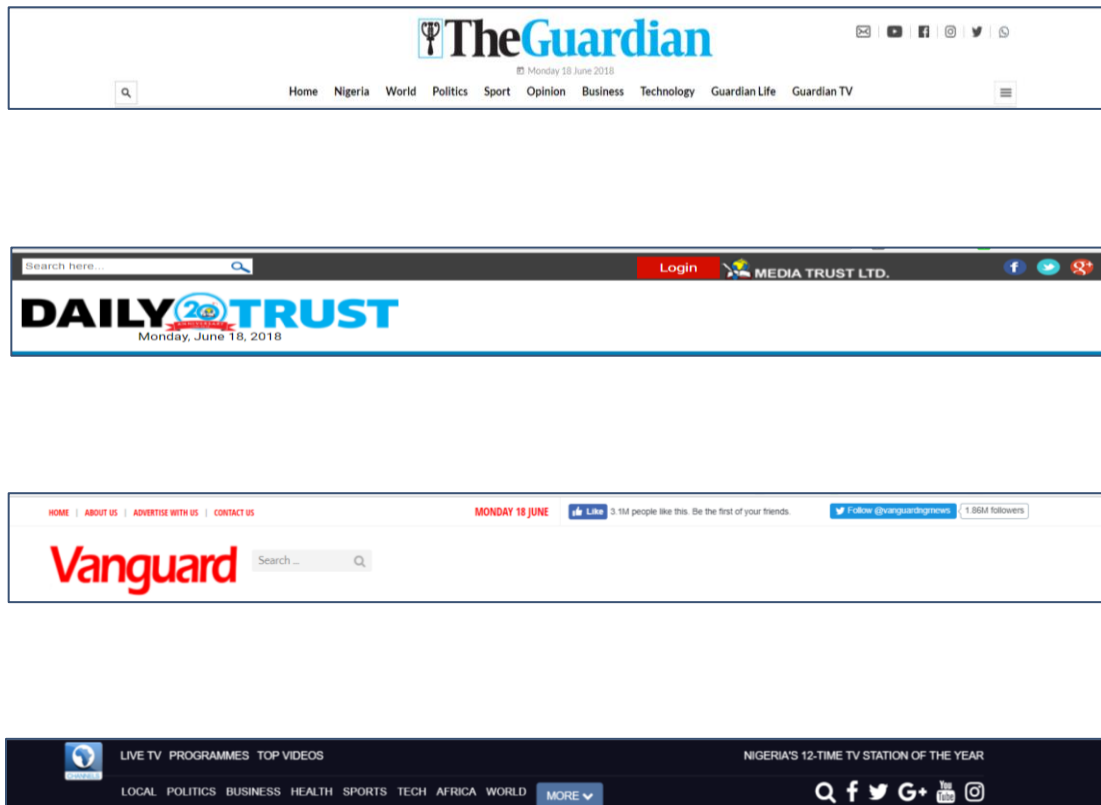


Figure 9. Social media interactivity on the major outlets websites in Nigeria (The Guardian, Daily Trust, Vanguard, Channels TV)

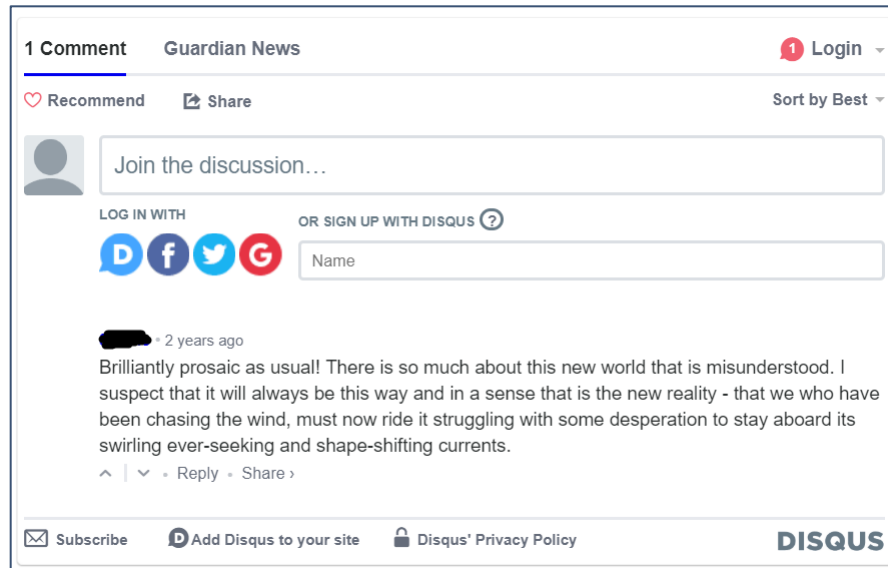


Figure 10. Comment section available on The Guardian, Daily Trust, Vanguard and Channels television

Although most newspaper organisations largely duplicate their print versions in terms of content, this interactive aspect of the websites, as well as the fact that news can be broadcasted live, is a major shift from the earlier trends. Figure 3 shows the live blog feature which the *Daily Trust* provides for any developing story.

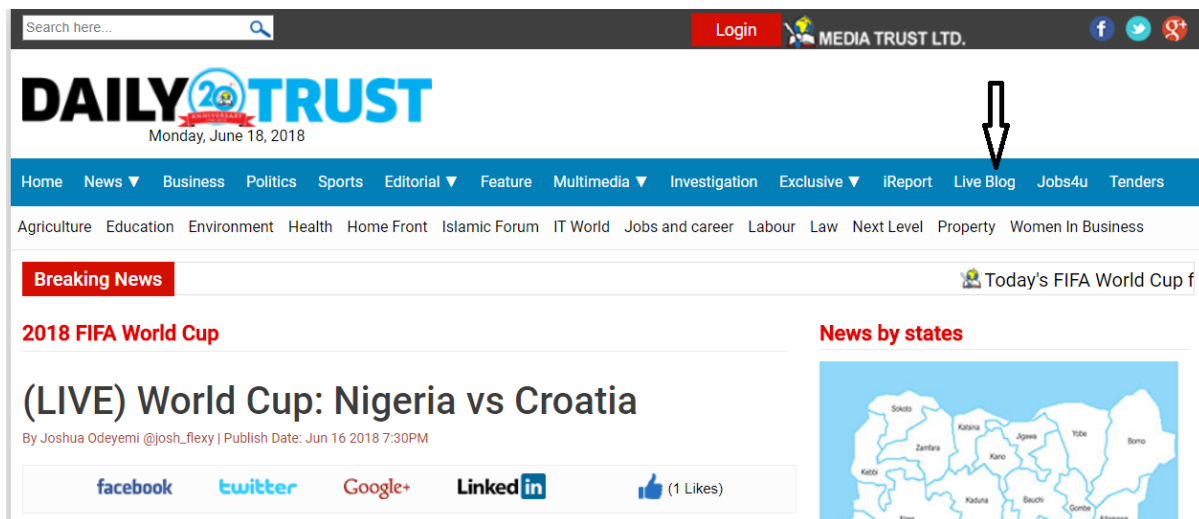


Figure 11. Live blog - *Daily Trust*

7.6.2 *User Input in News Production Processes*

As shown above in figure 2, readers use the interactive features offered by the websites to comment on stories of interest to them, with some readers even writing longer and more in-depth comments that suggest different angles to the original stories (Mabweazara et al, 2014). Most of the journalists interviewed agree that they have benefited from this in the process of news making. (Mabweazara et al., 2014) believes that interactive comments are of great importance in news production as they help the editors to correct any mistakes or factual inaccuracies. Moyo (2009) has likewise reported that this engagement of readers with the news is greatly influencing the material that is being covered in the newspapers, as well as helping journalists to access ideas and leads from the readers. This assertion was corroborated by my respondents in the field. They agree that some of the comments have helped in producing quality reports and led to follow-ups where necessary:

I had a reader comment on a story I made about the killings happening in the North and he provided historical accounts on the reasons for the killings as narrated by his father. I contacted him privately and requested for a meeting with his father. He gave me details I wasn't aware of which helped to bring international attention to the issue in the North (Editor 9, Abuja).

The statement suggests that this interactivity, provided by news organisations' online editions, has been redefining journalism by decentralising the process of news making. This process has opened up space for citizen journalists, but also for those who would not consider themselves journalists at all, to contribute to the final news product. In considering Bourdieu's field theory and Becker's social worlds approach, we can see this interactivity as expanding the boundaries of the journalistic field to accommodate these new entrants. This has created a 'dialogue' between journalists and the audience, as well as fostering mutual respect.

However, this interactivity presents challenges for journalists and their traditional role as gatekeepers. Akinfemisoye (2016) refers to the journalistic practice and the changes taking place as a result of new media as the transition from 'gate-keeping' to 'gate-watching'.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter set out to analyse data collected from the research participants which engages with various aspects of news production as these relate to the use of digital media in Nigerian newsrooms. Several themes were identified from the interviews that were conducted, including how digital media has changed the physical and organisational structure of newsrooms, changes in the newsgathering and news production processes, the impact and use of digital media and the question of professional values. The information provided by the participants showed that they are operating more efficiently than before because of digital media, despite the presence of significant challenges.

Based on the foregoing, it appears permissible to consider journalism as a field with its own rules and external boundaries setting it apart from other fields (or sub-fields), within which an internal struggle persists alongside external pressures and interaction with other fields. However, while this offers an insightful way to consider how journalists do what they do, the rapidly changing environment engendered by digital media has rendered the circumscribed field of journalism conceptually inadequate. Now, ordinary people not only ‘do things’ (i.e. breaking news) that were previously the preserve of the professionals (i.e. journalists) of this specific field, they ‘do many things’ (i.e. follow beats, furnish detailed and expert pieces in the form of specialist blogs). This contributes to the blurring of boundary lines for the profession and for citizen journalists. Beyond the boundaries of the journalistic field exists a sparse distribution of people belonging to other social worlds, whose actions and interactions not only contribute to what journalists do, but also ‘compel’ journalists to take into cognisance what they do and in so doing adjust and accommodate them as ‘distant partners’ in the business of news production.

However, this has created huge challenges in terms of accuracy, and standards of factual reporting are also changing as new technologies evolve. It is argued that standards are lowering because of the speed involved in the reporting process with modern information technologies, which places extra pressure on journalists as they enter the race to get to their audience first (Moats, 2013; Walther, 2012; Hujanen and Pietikainen, 2004). This, however, is an admission of the presence and growing importance of digital media in the newsroom, which carries along other factors. The timely delivery of news also changes journalistic practices, as competition among other news agencies becomes fiercer. Yet the accuracy of reports still needs to be maintained, which often

leads to increased pressure on the journalists. The consequence is that the use of social media, in a number of cases, has led to a lack of independent fact-checking. This has meant that in many cases, inaccurate or hoax reports start to circulate, which can lead to a spiral of inaccurate reporting (Kluver et al., 2013; Blackall et al., 2011).

This leads to an analysis of the working conditions of journalists which was a recurring theme amongst journalists interviewed and how they work and carry out their duties despite the poor conditions in Nigeria.

8 Chapter Eight: Discussion of Findings

8.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the thesis by giving an assessment of the research's findings in relation to the research questions it sought to investigate. It reiterates and evaluates the significance of the findings, limitations of the research, discusses wider implications and also suggests possible areas for further investigation.

The purpose was to investigate the experiences of journalists in Nigeria in navigating changes in journalistic practices and the factors that influence those changes especially in relation to the adoption of digital media and how these challenges impact news production. The research advocates a social shaping approach to digital media technologies rather than a deterministic one by arguing that the appropriation of digital media by journalists goes beyond the mere adoption of digital media in journalism but its embedding in social, economic and political practices. The embedding of digital media in journalistic practice is predicated on the peculiar needs of the people, the nuances of the environment and the means of appropriation. This presents new forms of practice which appear as tacit knowledge as they are acquired through practice.

The research also employed the proposed combination of the Field theory by Pierre Bourdieu and Social worlds by Howard Becker. This combination compliments the strengths of the two theories such as encouraging collaboration among journalists and the audience focuses on the micro level analysis of practice and the expanding boundaries of the journalistic profession. The application of this combined framework in the analysis presented an effective explanation for the importance of collaboration in news production between the journalists and sources/audience and how they have become an essential part of the news production process. It also presents empirical evidence of these changes to the field of journalism and the journalistic practices not only at a macro and meso-level but at the micro level of practice.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the results of this study based on the research questions. Then, an examination of the results, the importance of the findings of this study for both researchers studying the field of journalism and changes in Media in Nigeria and the journalists working in Nigeria are discussed. The limitations of this study and how those limitations may have impacted the findings of this study are examined, this is followed by the theoretical contribution of the study. Finally, ideas and recommendations for future research are discussed.

8.2 Findings

This research began by explaining the need for a re-focus on the situated experiences of journalists in Nigeria, to track the adoption of new media technologies, changes in practices and the consequence of these changes for news production and journalism in Nigeria. It identified the literature on this debate highlighting the dearth of social and cultural perspectives to these changes. Furthermore, the existing theoretical literature on news production and journalistic practice in Africa do not address these topics as social shaping but mostly as technologically determined. The research questions formulated for the study addressed issues on multiple levels which revealed the interconnectedness of macro- and micro-levels of analysis, such as media ownership, socio-economic considerations, government regulations, organisational practices, as well as subjective experiences and perceptions of journalists. The study sets itself four research questions.

- a. What are the economic and social factors influencing journalistic practice in relation to the adoption of new media in Nigeria?
- b. What are the challenges in the newsroom in relation to the adoption of the new media?
- c. How do these challenges affect news production?
- d. What are the challenges facing journalists in Nigeria in relation to the adoption of the new media?

The general findings were:

My findings offer understandings into these changes in news ecology and how changing journalistic practices affect news content from the position of the journalists. I found that news produced in Nigeria has changed a great deal. From the newsgathering process, news production and news dissemination are majorly influenced by digital media. I also found that local contextual factors (economic and political) shape and affect how these technologies are used in the newsrooms. I found that digital media is and has become an important news source for journalists and that news is no longer defined by the structures within the newsroom but by a number of factors which also exist outside the newsroom.

Nigerian journalists' practices changed significantly along the lines of the use of digital technology and the industry is facing particular challenges as a result of this. The hybrid Journalist (multi-skilled journalist) is losing his ability to be a specialist. The emergence of digital media and a generation of online journalists has led to a race against time, where journalists appear to be evolving survival techniques that involve cutting corners, sometimes with serious ethical implications for their profession. Stiff competition and the imperative to survive have compelled even professional journalists to take on a usually self-styled online presence which leads to compromising of standards.

The findings of each research question are presented below.

a. Economic and social factors influencing the adoption of new media

In response to the research question on the economic and social factors that influencing journalistic practice in relation to the adoption of new media in Nigeria, chapter four focused on the general decline in the economy and decline in reading culture as major factors influencing journalistic practices. The findings in this chapter signal the transformations taking place in the media industry in Nigeria. It discussed the impact the economy of the nation was having on the media industry. For example, the ability to receive news online (Twitter, Facebook, and other social media) for free or on mobile devices for a token is overriding the decision to purchase newspapers. The findings show that because the way people receive news has changed, the news organisations had to change in order to remain competitive and viable in Nigeria.

The findings also discussed new sources of revenue generation for media organisations and the increasing need for diversification. The drive for revenue generation has resulted in innovative means for survival. Some media organisations engage in online advertising as well as explore other sectors outside their core markets to generate alternative revenue streams. My findings show that it was imperative for the print media especially in Nigeria as they encountered a lot more downsizing, retrenchment and job loss than the television sector. One of the social factors discussed was the dearth of reading culture in the country. The respondents believe that the fleeting nature of the new media contributed to the poor reading culture thus affecting the drop in sales for newspapers.

b. Challenges in the adoption of digital media in the newsroom

Chapter 5 discusses the use of digital media in Nigerian newsrooms. The findings reveal that digital media has contributed to the physical and organisational structure of newsrooms. The architecture of the newsroom was discussed in relation to sitting arrangements for editors and organisational arrangements. The arrangement or re-arrangement has led to the rethinking of “space” in newsrooms. What is a newsroom really? Does a newsroom have to be a physical location? Digital media has enabled remote working and also digital processes such that correspondence can occur between editor and journalist: journalist and sources irrespective of space and location.

The study’s findings also include changes in the newsgathering and news production processes, the impact and use of digital media and the question of professional values. It can be said that it has provided efficiency irrespective of challenges. One of such challenges is the 24 hour news cycle. It is expected that the journalist is available round the clock to report and comment on breaking news events in order to remain competitive in a digital environment. The adoption of digital media has meant that professional journalists must try to make themselves available at all times in order to beat the competition from other news organizations, as well as the competition from citizens journalists.

Another challenge is the lack of accuracy and factual reporting which occurs as a result of the pressure on journalists. The timely delivery of news also changes journalistic practices, as competition among other news agencies becomes fiercer.

The study also found that the proliferation of the mobile phone has contributed to the changes in news production. The emergence of digital media encourages the journalist to be multi-skilled which increased responsibility and functions. While the increase in responsibility resulted in multi-skilling, it no longer supported specialisations in journalism which appeared worrisome for the journalists. This multi-skilled environment requires all journalists to adopt the digital media to remain relevant and competitive.

c. Challenges faced by journalists in the adoption of digital media

Chapter 6 examines the debate on boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in the journalistic profession occasioned by the emergence of digital media and a new generation of 'online journalists. While this debate is useful to highlight the areas of contention and point to significant changes underway in the ethics, quality and nature of journalistic work, what is at stake is something much more significant. All journalists, both the professional journalists and the citizen journalists, are being altered by technological changes and how media outlets are responding to the new possibilities.

The debate clearly shows that foundational tenets of professional journalism are being broken by the new group of online journalists and others who produce and disseminate news online. They are not bound by any set of fixed journalistic practices or methods, but instead, use whatever method is most expedient to produce their story as quickly as possible and to make it appeal to their many thousands of online readers. They are not bound by set codes of ethics and conduct governing the journalistic profession. From this perspective, the alarm of the traditional, professional journalist at this 'invasion' of his or her profession does indeed seem justified. Yet, on the other hand, my findings have demonstrated clearly that these developments are not limited to the newcomers in the field of journalism. Not only do print and TV journalists depend on and make use of online media for research and breaking news, but they are also migrating online themselves. The distinction between the 'professional' journalist and the 'others' is thereby blurring. On the one hand, this had led to a substantial change in the nature of the work that even the traditional print journalist produces, providing him with different resources and methods to practice his trade. On the other hand, these developments have also been seen to seriously compromise the ethical and practical codes of journalism.

8.3 Importance of the Findings

One significant aspect of the findings of this study is in the tension between professional journalists and non-professionals or citizen journalists and bloggers. In contrast with the dominant literature on the emergence of and potential for critical mass journalism, this study establishes that citizen journalists and bloggers are becoming invaluable as pioneers in breaking the news, but this is not without limitations: the why and how of the news is still predominantly dominated by professionals. Journalists in Nigeria have (un)wittingly accepted the fact that digital media is an integral part of journalism, and has impacted the way in which they engage in news production; they nonetheless insist on differentiating themselves from citizen journalists for the crucial role they play in getting to the root of news even when/where citizen journalists relay it. The thesis reveals that ethical standards and focus on covering stories over the long-term rather than ignoring them once the initial interest had waned, which, in most cases, describes the attitude of citizen journalists and bloggers towards news.

In addition, based on the analysis and preceding discussions, this study reveals that the supposed tension between the journalist as a professional and other members of society as non-professional is unfounded since both the professionals and non-professionals work in a complex network of interaction that brings them together as participants, participating to a more or lesser degree. This is self-evident in the submissions of journalists who attest to the fact that, at the least, the ‘intruders’ of the field of journalism (citizen journalists and bloggers) sometimes provides the flash while they flesh by substantiating it and furnishing more details. This unwitting submission is in tandem with the news world approach to understanding news as the outcome of the activities of different people working in collaboration in a more or less manner towards the actualisation of a common end, in this case, news. The point is that it is tenuous to continue to emphasise and complain about the citizen journalists who, regardless of whether their reports are factual or not, provide the professional with a *flash or spark* to follow in order to *discover* if there is *light* at the end of the tunnel. More so, it is commonplace that not everything ‘out there’ as news is news since it is largely unregulated and anybody can put out virtually anything. Yet it would appear uncanny to continue to belabour this since part of the traditional role of the traditional journalist is to

investigate, verify and authenticate what they hear or see, for to do otherwise is tantamount to journalistic suicide (Asough, 2012).

In alignment with social shaping theory of technology, I argue that the emergence of citizen journalism, made possible via digital media, is not an inevitable splash of ingenuity or technological propulsion; rather it springs from an existing vacuum, that vacuum being, the need to break the monopoly of news or power to determine news or the news worthiness of an event to which has previously been the exclusive reserve of the journalist. In addition, the struggle to preserve this monopoly or field resource, to speak in Bourdieusian language, that underscores the continuing contention among journalists on the identity of citizen journalists and bloggers as non-professionals or interlopers in the field of journalism. Just as Conboy pointed out; “technology, in isolation, has never made journalism better or worse ... [it] does not drive change. It has to adapt to the patterns of cultural expectation within particular society at specific moments in time” (2013, p. 149). That ‘cultural expectation’ is the need for alternative voice to mainstream media and the specific moment in time is now where, the potential for the democratisation of news is most imminent. In this sense, it matters less when journalists think the issue with citizen journalism is simply a coincidence of having the appropriate device (or technology) and being at ‘the right place at the right time’. What is at the core is the fact that the people want to bear witness to what is happening around them, take charge of their stories and how it is being told (Allan, 2007) and this, is the emergent product of the digital media, citizen journalism.

The findings of this study are also important because of the larger indication that media organisations in Nigeria, and particularly journalists, are facing the same problems as media organisations in other countries, which is how to provide new content at a time when people expect to receive it for free on their mobile devices. Interviewees explained that the decline in readership of newspapers, which also means a decline in advertising revenue, is occurring as people expect to receive the same quality of content online without any cost. Journalists and leaders of news organisations in Nigeria are still having troubles figuring out how to reduce costs and maintain standards of practice in order to remain viable at a time when people expect news to be delivered without cost to them online.

Finally, journalists are aware of the changes occurring in journalism, both in terms of how journalists are expected to engage in news gathering and the challenges faced by the media in

terms of revenues and readership. In this way, the most important aspect of this study may be the finding that journalists in Nigeria, for the most part, are integrating digital media into their professional practices, and are realistic about the fact that it seems that this new “wave” of media is not going away any time soon, and may become even more important as more people turn to various new and digital media forms in Nigeria to obtain news information over traditional newspapers and television.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

While the results of this study are important in understanding the impact that digital media is having on journalists in Nigeria, and how journalists in the country perceive their professional identities in relation to this, it is necessary to discuss the limitations of the study. The primary limitation of this study was the use of the snowballing technique to obtain the participants. The use of the snowballing technique potentially excluded participants that were not in the network of the person or persons doing the referral. This may have excluded certain people, but steps were taken to ensure this did not happen as research was conducted regarding the journalists in the organisations that were part of the study, and were looked up on social media as well. However, as has already been noted, this study could not have been carried out without the use of snowballing technique because gaining access to those journalists and to the news organisations for which they worked would not have been possible without these referrals. This was particularly important given the limited time frame and resources available to conduct the study. In this regard, the use of snowballing sampling was appropriate because of the conditions under which the study was conducted.

From the standpoint of being able to generalize the findings of this study to the larger population of journalists in Nigeria, the effort was made to ensure that inferences and generalisations were discussed based on the fact that a snowballing technique was used, and that the participants came from a limited area. In addition, the findings of this study were compared to other studies and information that were available regarding the social, economic, and professional issues facing journalists in relation to the proliferation of digital media. This placed the findings of this study into the larger context of what is known about the impact of digital media and the media industry in general in Nigeria.

One other limitation of this study was that most of the participants were drawn from newspaper organisations. The fact that the perspectives in this study were primarily from people working for newspapers limits the ability to generalize the findings to the larger population of journalists in Nigeria because the issues discussed by the participants might have been of specific importance to those in the newspaper industry. However, the impact of this limitation was lessened in this study by comparing the responses of the journalists, and noting differences in responses between those who worked for newspapers and those who worked in television and for other types of organisations. In addition, comparing the responses to the larger body of research that was available further demonstrated similarities in the perceptions and opinions of the newspaper journalists to other types of journalists, which further reduce the impact of this limitation on the study.

8.5 Implications of the Findings

The results of this study have several implications related to the working conditions that journalists in Nigeria face, as well as about the future of journalists and journalism in Nigeria.

A broader implication of the findings of this study is the influence of digital media on traditional news organisations in Nigeria. As more professional journalists embrace digital media and rely on it to remain relevant as more people receive their news online, the distinction between online journalists and professional journalists working for traditional news organisations is likely to disappear.

Also, an implication for the media industry is that the continued proliferation of social media will cause more diversification and competition in the industry. This increased competition will mean that media organisations and journalists will continue to perform more work with fewer resources. This could pose accuracy and ethical challenges for organisations as will mean that journalists will have to become even more proficient at monitoring their own work and ensuring that the work that they publish is of the highest quality.

8.6 Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the deeper understanding of news production in non-western societies by presenting empirical data on changes in news production in Nigeria and Africa broadly.

It gives a more rounded understanding of practice focused research because practice focuses on the micro level of analysis which is interactionist and looks at what journalists are doing and how they are doing this. (Dickinson, 2008). This is particularly important in understanding the changes occurring in journalistic practices and news production.

By combining two “contrasting” frameworks, it is expected and hoped that interest can be restored in the occupational nature of journalism and what journalists do in practice as the nature of journalistic practice is changing. I also attempted to provide theoretical and empirical tools that may assist researchers in understanding and explaining the evolving nature of news production and journalists.

Thus, this research’s contribution to knowledge rests in its reinforcement to the debate that appropriation of digital technologies by journalists transcends merely technology determinism but highlights other contextual factors that affect practice and innovative ways journalists are engaging with digital media.

8.7 Future Research

For further research, I suggest that future empirical research focus on news production ie comparative empirical research among countries in the Global South and developing nations, with great emphasis on the differing stressing the contextual settings and how these may influence journalistic, news production and identity. Considerations for these contexts would create a de-generalised view of journalism and take into account these unique experiences or perceptions and help formulae new theories to address them. Also, these differences are present in the continent, as the various African regions have different histories and complexities. So, a comparative research focused within the continent will highlight these difference between the journalistic practices and contribute to the broader debates.

One other recommendation for future research is to investigate the opinions and perceptions of people who might be described as citizen journalists or independent journalists who

report news through their own social media sites and online blogs. It would be useful to understand how they might distinguish themselves from traditional journalists. More in-depth investigation is needed to understand how online journalists and bloggers perceive their abilities and capabilities as compared to traditional journalists. Research and investigation is also needed about the limitations and problems that online journalists and bloggers perceive in terms of access to news stories, access to sources and public officials, and the ability to be taken as serious sources of information by the public. This type of study might reveal interesting similarities about the news gathering and news production processes, as well as social and economic issues between online journalists and bloggers as compared to journalists working for traditional news organisations.

9 Appendix I

Survey Questions

How long have you worked as a journalist?

1. Under 5 years
 2. Under 10 years
 3. 10 years and above
 4. Other (please specify)
2. What is your area of expertise?
1. Print Media
 2. Radio
 3. Television
 4. Online news
 5. Other (please specify)
3. What social media tools do you use?
1. Facebook
 2. Twitter
 3. Whatsapp
 4. Instagram
 5. Blackberry Messenger
 6. Mobile Phone/Emails
 7. Other (please specify)
4. Can you rate the importance of these social media sites as employed by journalists in their profession?
1. Of great importance
 2. No so great importance
 3. It is a necessity
 4. Undecided
 6. Slight weary of using them
5. Do you think information received is credible or reliable?
1. Very reliable
 2. Not always reliable
 3. Never reliable
 4. Undecided
6. How often do you find stories on social media?
1. Daily
 2. Weekly
 3. Rarely
 4. Never
7. Do you belong to any Facebook group to gather information?
1. Yes
 2. No
8. If yes, please kindly specify the number.
1. More than ten
 2. Less than ten
 3. Less than five
9. Do you belong to any WhatsApp group for the purpose of gathering information or as news sources?
1. Yes
 2. No

10. Are you encouraged by your organisation to use social media as part of your job?
 1. Strongly encouraged
 2. No so encouraged
 3. Discouraged from using it
 4. Undecided
 5. Silent
11. Do you think social media is influencing the news gathering process in the newsroom?
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Impossible to determine
12. Apart from the news gathering process, what else do you use social media for?
 1. Research
 2. Establishing/maintaining contact with sources
 3. Follow-ups
13. Would you say social media has enhanced your profession or helped in discharging your duties?
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Impossible to say
 4. Undecided
14. Are new skills required in the newsrooms to incorporate these new technologies?
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. It depends
15. Do these new technologies pose a threat to traditional news organisations?
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Undecided
16. In your opinion, do you think blogs are gradually influencing news production in Nigeria?
 1. Yes, they are
 2. No, they are not
 3. I don't think they are
 4. Not sure
17. In a typical day, how likely are you to use Facebook to follow up ideas?
 1. Extremely likely
 2. Very likely
 3. Moderately likely
 4. Slightly likely
 5. Not at all likely
18. Do you think new media technologies encourage skill proficiency or multi-skilling?
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Not sure
19. Do you think these new media technologies would lead to downsizing in news organisations?
 1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Not really
20. What is your proficiency level in using new media technologies?
 1. High
 2. Mid-range
 3. Low

21. Is there sufficient training provided by your organisation in incorporating new media technologies into news production?
1. Yes, there is
 2. No, there isn't
 3. Self-taught
 4. Other (please specify)
22. Is there anything else you'd like to share about topic discussed?

Appendix II

Interview Questions

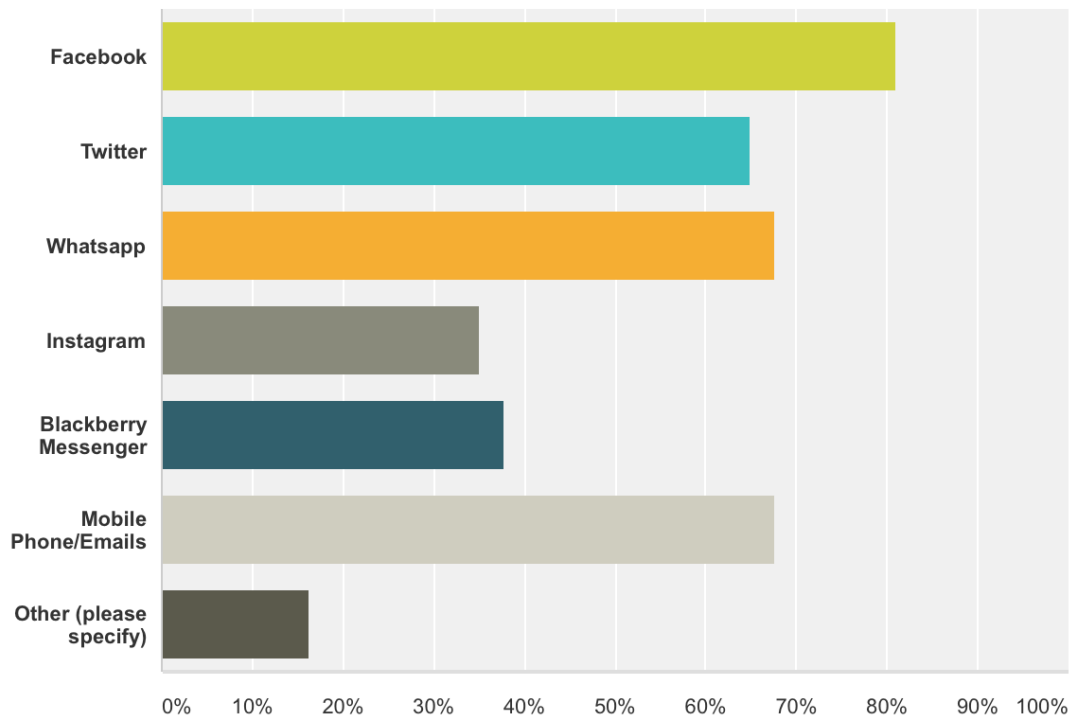
1. How do you interpret the influence of digital media on your profession as a journalist?
2. Do you think new media is largely impacting on journalism practices in Nigeria?
3. What kinds of technology are adopted in production in your newsroom?
4. Can you give me examples of what has changed (if any) in the way you carry out your professional duties?
5. Does the employment of new media technology encourage multi-skilling?
6. Have these impacts been felt in your reporting style?
7. What new skills are required in the newsrooms to incorporate these new technologies?
8. How would you describe the influence of digital media on the just concluded 2015 general elections? How did you determine the news sources you included in your coverage of the elections?
9. What is your experience in negotiating Facebook updates, tweets or blog posts, as opposed to other traditional means of news sources?
10. Do you see digital media as negotiating spaces or taking over spaces within your profession? How?
11. Do you monitor new media sources in search of 'breaking' news?
12. What are the implications for the quality news and the democratic process in Nigeria?
13. What are the implications on news work, practices and new production?
14. Do these new digital technologies pose a threat to traditional news organisations?
15. Is there anything else regarding this topic which you think I have not mentioned during this interview?

Appendix III

a. Survey response

What social media tools do you use?

Answered: 37 Skipped: 0



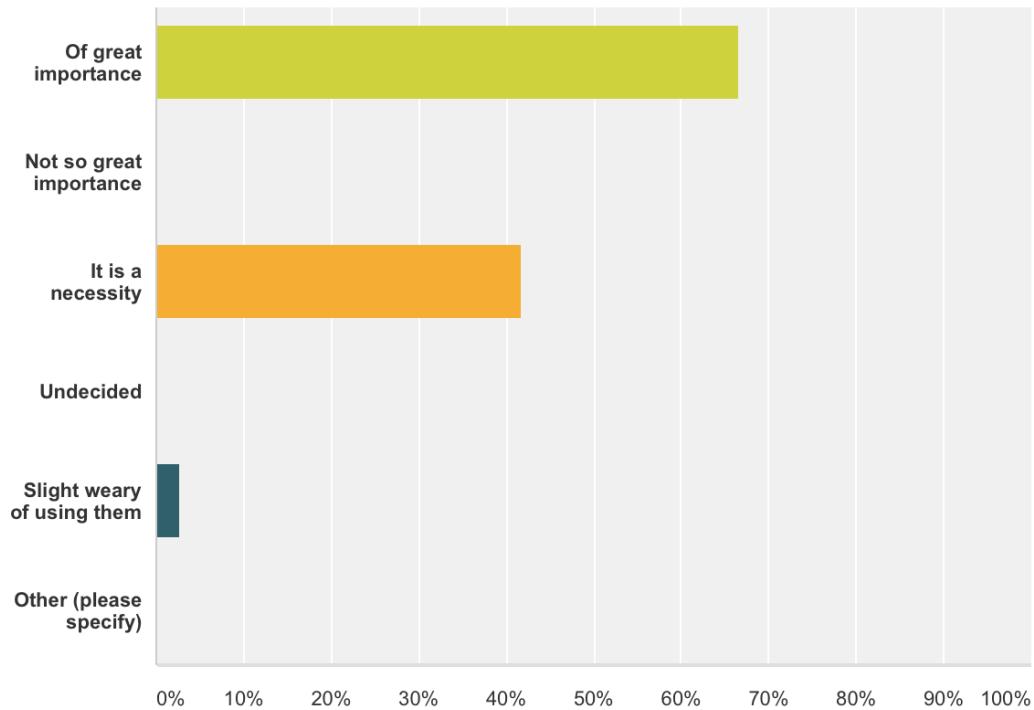
Answer Choices	Responses
Facebook (1)	81.08% 30
Twitter (2)	64.86% 24
Whatsapp (3)	67.57% 25
Instagram (4)	35.14% 13
Blackberry Messenger (5)	37.84% 14
Mobile Phone/Emails (6)	67.57% 25
Other (please specify) (7)	16.22% 6

Total Respondents: 37

b. Survey response

Can you rate the importance of these social media sites as employed by journalists in their profession?

Answered: 36 Skipped: 1

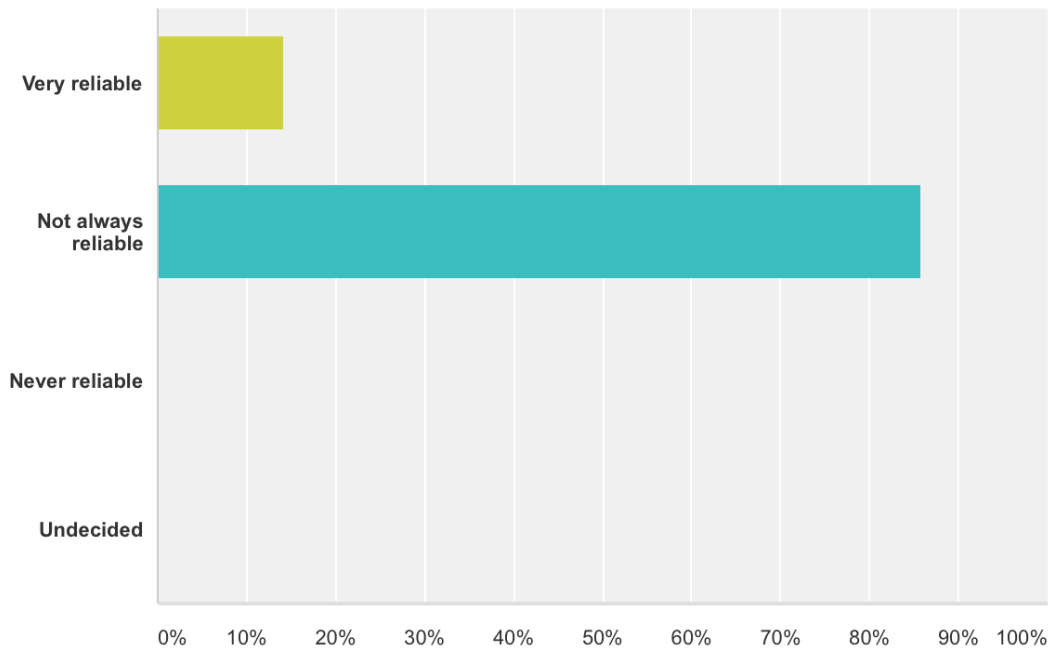


Answer Choices	Responses	
Of great importance (1)	66.67%	24
Not so great importance (2)	0.00%	0
It is a necessity (3)	41.67%	15
Undecided (4)	0.00%	0
Slight weary of using them (5)	2.78%	1

c. Survey response

Do you think information received is credible or reliable?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
▼ Very reliable (1)	14.29%	5
▼ Not always reliable (2)	85.71%	30
▼ Never reliable (3)	0.00%	0
▼ Undecided (4)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 35		

Basic Statistics



Minimum

Maximum

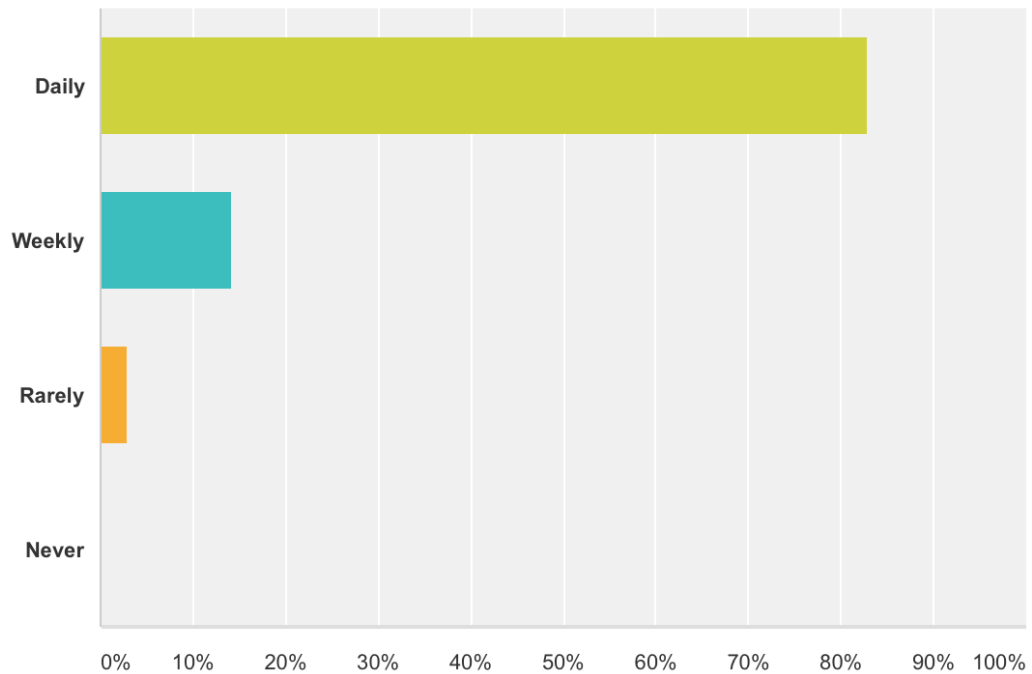
Median

Mean

Standard Deviation

How often do you find stories on social media?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 2



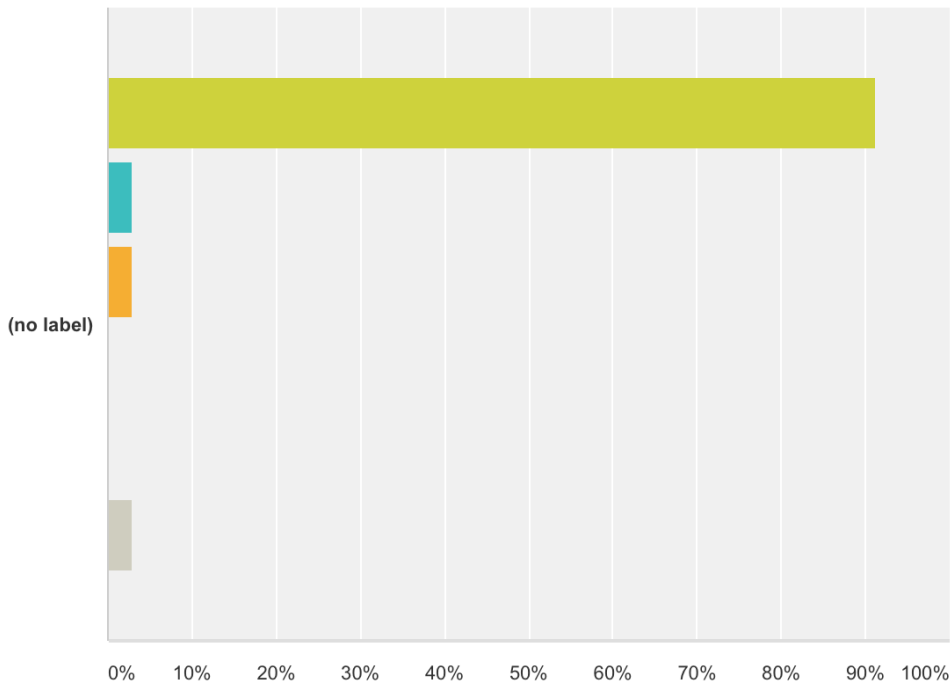
Answer Choices	Responses	
▼ Daily (1)	82.86%	29
▼ Weekly (2)	14.29%	5
▼ Rarely (3)	2.86%	1
▼ Never (4)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 35		

[Comments \(1\)](#)

d. Survey response

Do you think social media is influencing the news gathering process in the newsroom?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 3



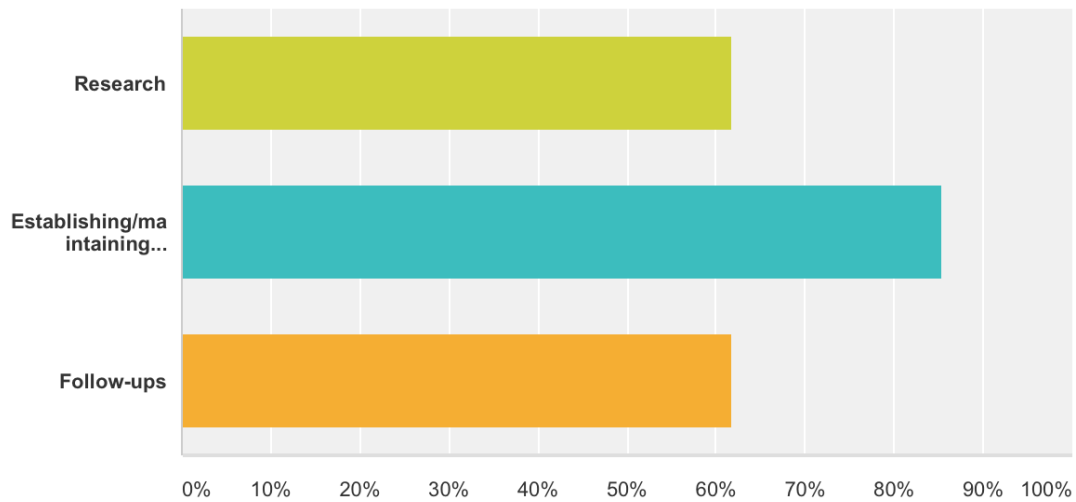
Yes No Impossible to determine (no label) (no label) N/A

	Yes (1)	No (2)	Impossible to determine (3)	(no label) (4)	(no label) (5)	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	91.18% 31	2.94% 1	2.94% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.94% 1	34	1.09

e. Survey response

Apart from the news gathering process, what else do you use social media for?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses
Research (1)	61.76% 21
Establishing/maintaining contact with sources (2)	85.29% 29
Follow-ups (3)	61.76% 21

Total Respondents: 34

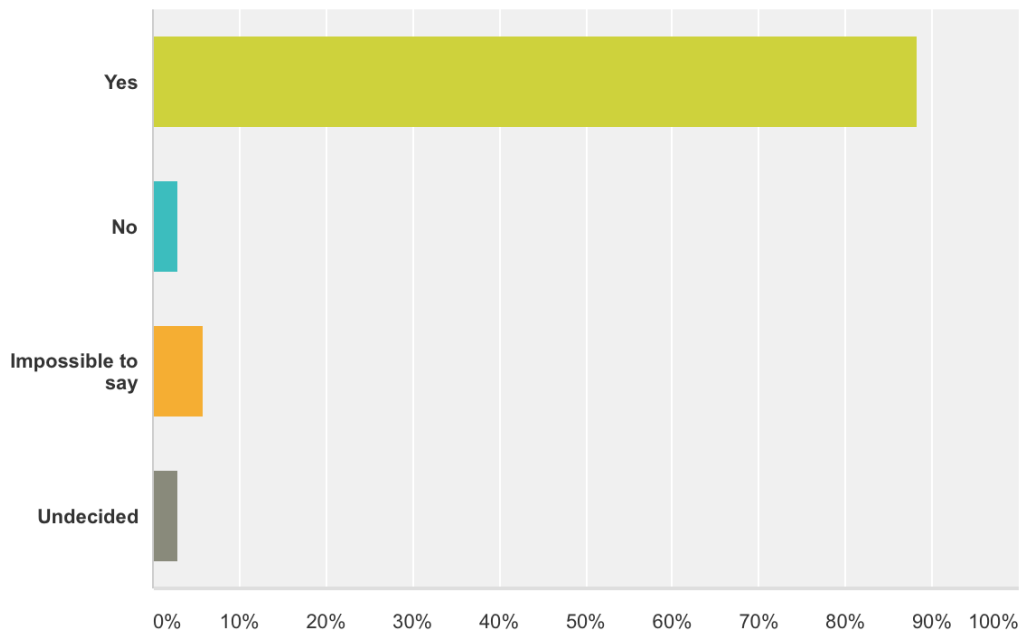
[Comments \(2\)](#)

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 1.00	Maximum 3.00	Median 2.00	Mean 2.00	Standard Deviation 0.77

f. Survey response

Would you say social media has enhanced your profession or helped in discharging your duties?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 3

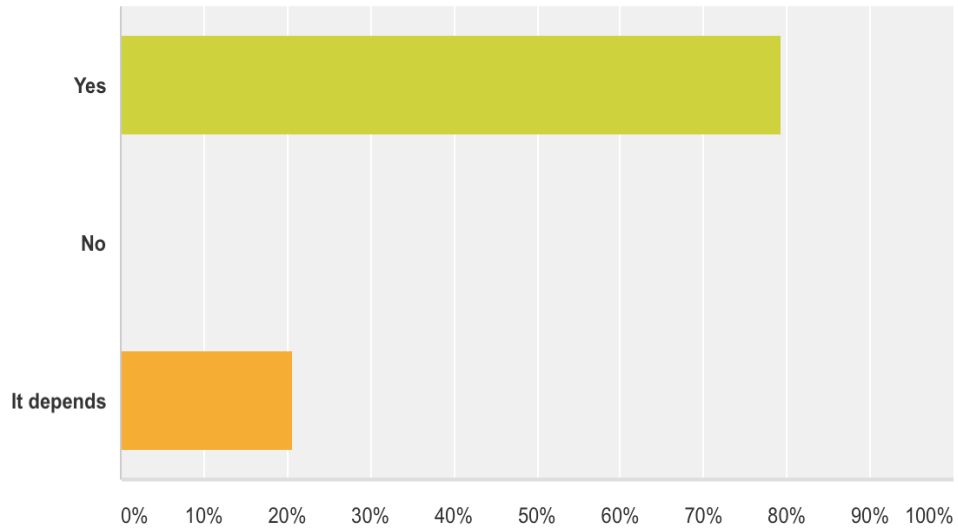


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes (1)	88.24%	30
No (2)	2.94%	1
Impossible to say (3)	5.88%	2
Undecided (4)	2.94%	1
Total Respondents: 34		

g. Survey response

Are new skills required in the newsrooms to incorporate these new technologies?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes (1)	79.41% 27
No (2)	0.00% 0
It depends (3)	20.59% 7

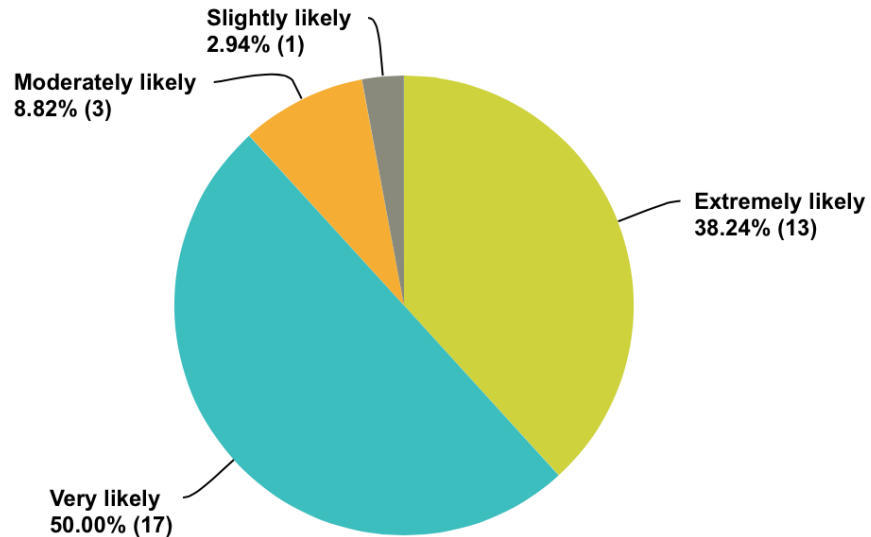
Total Respondents: 34

[Comments \(1\)](#)

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	3.00	1.00	1.41	0.81

In a typical day, how likely are you to use Facebook to follow up ideas

Answered: 34 Skipped: 3

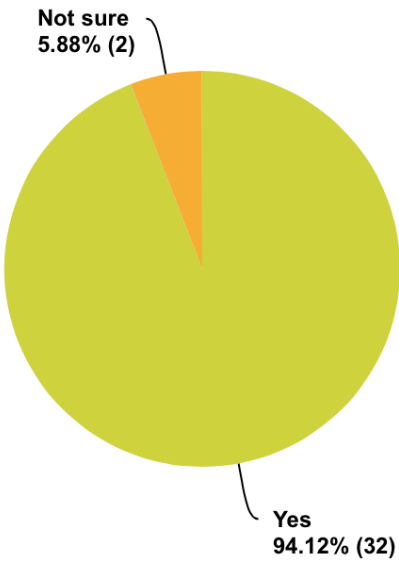


Answer Choices	Responses	
Extremely likely (1)	38.24%	13
Very likely (2)	50.00%	17
Moderately likely (3)	8.82%	3
Slightly likely (4)	2.94%	1
Not at all likely (5)	0.00%	0
Total		34

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	4.00	2.00	1.76	0.73

Do you think new media technologies encourage skill proficiency or multi-skilling?

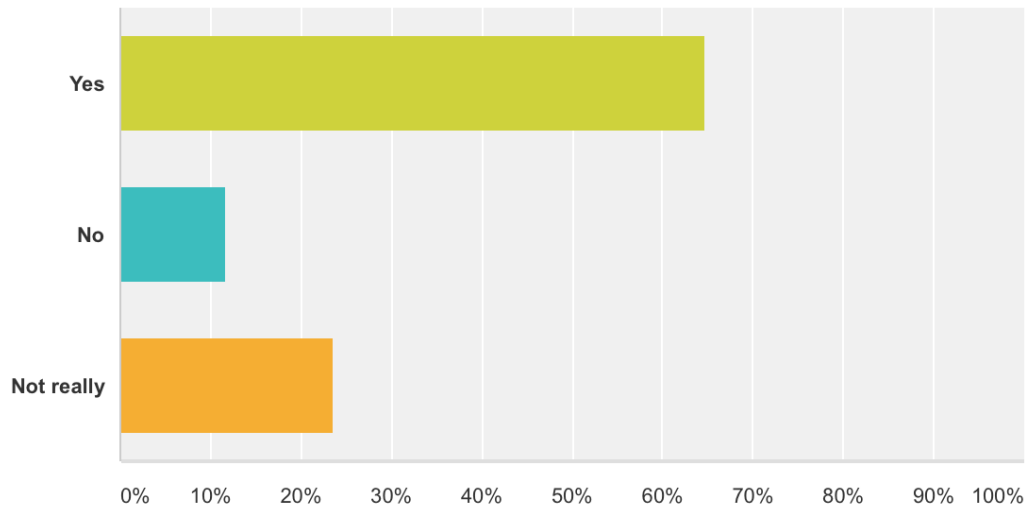
Answered: 34 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes (1)	94.12%	32
No (2)	0.00%	0
Not sure (3)	5.88%	2
Total		34
Comments (0)		
Basic Statistics ?		

Do you think these new media technologies would lead to downsizing in news organisations?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 3



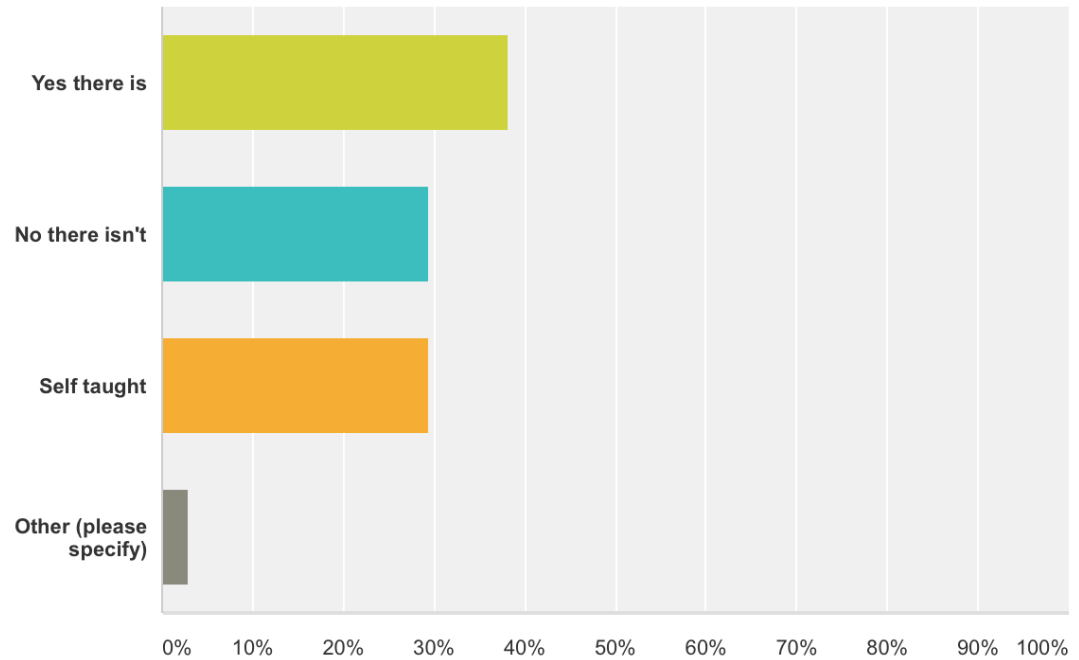
Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Yes (1)	64.71% 22
▼ No (2)	11.76% 4
▼ Not really (3)	23.53% 8
Total	34

[Comments \(2\)](#)

Basic Statistics ?				
Minimum 1.00	Maximum 3.00	Median 1.00	Mean 1.59	Standard Deviation 0.84

Is there sufficient training provided by your organisation in incorporating new media technologies into news production?

Answered: 34 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses
▼ Yes there is (1)	38.24% 13
▼ No there isn't (2)	29.41% 10
▼ Self taught (3)	29.41% 10
▼ Other (please specify) (4)	2.94% 1
Total	34

Is there anything else you'd like to share about topic discussed?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 22

Responses (15)

Text Analysis

My Categories

PRO FEATURE

Use text analysis to search and categorize responses; see frequently-used words and phrases. To use Text Analysis, upgrade to a GOLD or PLATINUM plan.

Upgrade

[Learn more »](#)

Categorize as...

Filter by Category

Search responses



Showing 15 responses

The new media should not pose a threat to traditional journalism if journalist begin to add value to the news already broken by social media to give customers want to get news behind the news and value for their money.

11/26/2015 9:34 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

Continuous refreshers courses on social media usage should be incorporated for reporters.

11/26/2015 7:14 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

The social media pose a great threat to the mainstream media as they undermine the statutory duties of traditional journalists. some bloggers don't edit d messages properly before publishing although they make the profession very interesting

11/24/2015 6:30 AM

[View respondent's answers](#)

with hindsight, for the new media to remain relevant, stakeholders and governments must find a way of regulating its operations.

11/23/2015 11:32 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

New media is the rave of the moment in the current phase of the media industry. It is not entirely competing with traditional media but it complements it by accommodating other levels of audiences. Any news gathering and dissemination today that does not incorporate new media in its process, risks extinction and low patronage.

11/20/2015 11:40 PM

[View respondent's answers](#)

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