

# Impact of ICT on Information Gathering and Dissemination of Television Reporters

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## Abstract

One of the identified agents through which the world will constantly experience change is technology. In the business of trying to make information available in the right form to the right users, both at the personal and organizational levels and at the right time; the bid to cope with great flood of information has led to the need for a more sophisticated way of handling information faster and better. The ever-changing field of technology has made the world a smaller place, as information is easily and rapidly exchanged through devices of telecommunications. The internet has provided a huge advancement in the Information Communication and Technology community. It also includes the quest to improve communication throughout the world especially to more underserved areas of the globe. This paper investigates the impact of Information Communication and Technology in information gathering and dissemination of Ebonyi Broadcasting Corporation EBBC television reporters.

**Keywords:** ICT, Television, Reporters.

## IMPACT OF ICT ON INFORMATION GATHERING AND DISSEMINATION OF TELEVISION REPORTERS

Information Communication and Technologies have transformed the world in all aspects of life, its potential for reducing manual operations in fostering the growth in the media has increased rapidly Dugo (2008). Therefore Information Communication and Technologies have made it easier for reporters to gather and disseminate information with sophisticated equipment, which enables information to go viral immediately they are reported.

In the past few decades, Information and Communication Technologies have provided the society with a vast array of new communication capabilities. For instance people can communicate in real time with others in different countries using technologies such as instant messaging voice over IP (VOIP and video conferencing. Social networking websites like Facebook allow users from all over the world to remain in contact and communicate on regular basis.

Modern Information and Communication Technologies have created a global village through which people can communicate with others across the world as if they were living next door.

Information and Communication Technology is an umbrella that includes any communication device or application encompassing radio, television, cellular phones computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems etc as well as the various services and applications associated with them such as video conferencing and distance learning. Information Communication and Technologies are spoken of in a particular context such as Information and Communication Technology in education health care or libraries mass media etc.

In this context, we try to determine the usefulness of Information and Communication Technology to the mass media especially in the field of television, news gathering and dissemination, of Ebonyi Broadcasting Corporation

Television news reporting demands that the reporter uses all of his or her abilities in the gathering of the news facts and story backgrounds, organizing them in a coherent fashion and then telling the viewers these stories in a clear and to logical manner that they would understand. The aim of the television broadcast is to tell its viewers what is happening in a manner that is as complete as possible.

Information Communication and Technology in particular, are reshaping many aspects of the world's economies, governments and societies. In developing countries, governments, business and people are harnessing the transformative power of Information Communication and Technologies to make public services more efficient, to grow businesses and to strengthen and expand social networks More than 75% of the world's inhabitants now have access to a cell phone, with the number of mobile-cellular subscriptions approaching 7 billion globally. While information Technologies is concerned with the storage, retrieval and manipulation of digital data. Information Communication and Technologies is concerned with both information technology and the transmission or receipt of digital data.

Technology is behind nearly everything we do from the computer animation in movies to the research we carry out. Our dependence on Information Communication and Technologies matches its growth, as technology steadily revolutionizes, our way of life. Information Communication and Technologies and its uses

are limited only by the extent of our imagination.

### **Brief Background of EBBC**

The Ebonyi broadcasting service (EBBS) is a state owned media establishment being controlled by the state government. The organisation was established on Feb 1997, following the state creation in 1996, but the television medium was established in 2001 by the then Governor of the state, Dr. Sam Ominyi Egwu, with the name Ebonyi Cable Television (ECTV).

Then the major function of ECTV was more of entertainment with little information, due to lack of experienced personnel to handle the affair of the state broadcast organisation.

But in March 2010, Under the governorship of Chief Martin Nwanchor Elechi, the broadcast organisation, received transformation.

The broadcast organisation was transformed into a digital media organisation with total installation of Information Communication and Technologies equipment in every area of that concerns information gathering and dissemination process.

With the transformation, the Ebonyi Broadcasting Service (EBBS) and Ebonyi Cable Television (ECTV) were merged into one, now Ebonyi Broadcasting Corporation, headed by Mr. Destiny Onwuanibe. Presently the media organization depends on these Information Communication and Technologies equipment in carrying out their reportorial functions ranging from news gathering, processing and dissemination of such gathered and processed information.

### **Statement of problem**

This study tends to investigate the challenges facing media organizations, with a view to finding out the effect of the use of ICT in information gathering and dissemination.

### **Study Objectives**

Information Communication and Technologies has transformed the world in all spheres of life. It's potential for reducing manual operations and fostering growth in the media has grown rapidly.

The internet has fast become one of the most used means of gathering of information. This study has some objectives which it sets out to investigate and they are:

- To investigate the impact of Information Communication and Technologies on information gathering and dissemination by television reporters.
- To ascertain the impact of Information Communication and Technologies in news gathering research questions.

It is used in different methods of news gathering such as interview, investigation, provision of background information and monitoring of news from other media organizations. News sources in most cases get in touch with journalists through internet phone calls etc.

### **Significance of Study**

Information Communication and Technologies in news gathering and information in order to achieve better efficiency, accuracy and speed up operations of news gathering.

This study tries to investigate the challenges facing media organisation with a view to finding out the effect of the use of Information Communication and Technologies in news gathering and dissemination.

Also, this study will identify the constraints to the use of Information and Communication Technologies in news disseminating & gathering

### **Method**

For the purpose of this study, the survey research method was used, this is because, this method is the most appropriate for a study of this nature that studies variables in their natural habitat. Baran(1999) cited by Nwodu,(2006) survey allow mass communication researchers to measure characteristics, opinions or behaviours of population by studying a small sample from that group, then generalizing back to the population, which is of the group.

Simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study. And a total number of 40 questionnaire were distributed to 40 persons out of 215 staff members of EBBC.

Apart from their demographic data, a total number of 10 questions were formulated, to enable the researcher determine the impact of ICT on information gathering and dissemination by EBBC television reporters.

### **Scope of study**

This study which is limited to Ebonyi Broadcasting corporation investigate the activities of Ebonyi Broadcast corporation television reporters in Information gathering and dissemination and with regards to Information and

Communication Technologies usage in bringing such activities to success.

## Literature Review

ICT is an acronym that stands for Information communication and Technology. It refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunication. It is similar to information technology but focuses primarily a communication technology, Information and Communication Technologies can be defined as the set of activities which are facilitated by electronic means, the processing, transmission and distribution of information.

This concept also refers to technologies people use to share, distribute, and gather information and to communicate through computer networks. ESCAP (2000) perceive ICT as techniques people use in order to share, distribute and gather information for communicating through computers and computer network. Samadar(1995) submitted that ICT is a tool for facilitating the creation, storage, management and dissemination of information by electronic means. Meanwhile Marcelle(2000), did not see ICT as a complex entity, but an application and services used for the production, distribution, processing and transformation of information with the aid of ICT tools .

However, Oguniola and Aboiyade(2005) are of the view that "ICT came into being as a result of related technologies clearly stated by their functional usage in information access and communication is centralized through the internet. As far as the digital age is concerned, the benefits that accrue from ICT is enormous. One of the sectors that has benefited immensely from ICT is the broadcast industry. With the use of ICT, news gathering and reporting is immediate, timely and helps reduce the space constraints. The use of ICT has revolutionized news gathering and news dissemination through the use of ICTs.

There is no doubt that the employment of ICT in the broadcast industry has enhanced improved news delivery as timely as possible to buttress this, Adigwe (2010) cited Soforowa(2009), when he noted that ICT is seen as the integration and utilization of computer technologies for the purpose of dissemination information to a target destination. Consumer without the constraint of time and space. Information and Communication Technology in broadcast news gathering is on the increase by reporters and editors because of its benefits being recognized at every point of the entire supply chain of news. Technology development and the use of ICTs in broadcast industry have improved news reportage. ICT can be used to not only to communication also to convey messages. To this end ICT is referred to as tools that are used to convey, distribute and manipulate information in order to improve its value.

Samah et al(2009) cited Noor (2006), when he said ICTs are those components of that aid the accessing, recording, arranging, manipulating and presenting data or information, using tools and software. In terms of cost production Adigwe(2010), pointed out that ICT facilitates news processing and reporting thereby ensuring immediacy and timeliness of news content to its audience.

ICT has indeed transformed the world in all spheres of life. It's potential for reducing manual operations and fostering growth has increased rapidly.

## Information gathering

Information gathering is the act of conveying or relaying or communicating the message to the audience, it refers to the activity of researching news items for the purpose of broadcast or publication, this activity is commonly done by journalists/reporter. ICT is a useful tool in information gathering. A news media that is using the ICTs in news gathering may not survive the current revolutionary trend in the mass media industry. It is used in different aspects of news gathering such as interview, investigation, provision of background information and monitoring of news from other media houses, news agencies and social media sites. These could be through e-mail or internet phone etc.

News sources also tip television reporters on news stories through e-mail, internet phone calls and the social media. The social media also serve as good source of breaking news stories to the news media. Eye witnesses immediately post news stories and pictures of events on their pages such as twitter, Facebook, Youtube etc.

It is a process whereby reporters go into the field with the aim of getting information, which would indeed be used to keep the society informed on the happenings around them, and these processes could be done through different means which includes interview, opinion polls etc.

Initially, reporters travel far and near with the aim of collecting information for their news stories. Then, a reporter is faced with several challenges and tasks in order to bring the duty of information/news gathering to perfection. But today, the emergence of Information Communication and Technologies has simplified the information/news gathering process, making reportorial duties easy for reporters and their organizations since Television news has to do with pictures and words of the newsmakers and of the places where the information were collected from, Information Communication and Technologies has given reporters of today flexibility. Television news reporting demands that the reporter uses all of his or her abilities in the gathering of the news facts and story backgrounds, and organizing them in a coherent fashion and than telling the viewers these stories in a clear and logical manner that they would understand. The aim of the television broadcast station which is to

tell its viewers what is happening in a way that the story would be as complete as possible.

The role of Information Communication and Technologies in television news gathering can not be overemphasized, since it is crystal clear that the emergence of has made the burden of news/information gathering for television reporters and news reporters in general.

### **Information Dissemination**

Information dissemination is the act of conveying or relaying or communicating the message to the audience. It is the distribution of information to the general public by a news reporter it is the process of making information available to the public, and these are made possible through television reporters and correspondences that gather and report back their account of the news stories back to their media organizations.

Before the emergence of Information Communication and Technologies, news/information dissemination was never an easy task for reporters who must get back to their media organizations before the day's deadline, and when such reporters got back, they would start battling with the information gathered, in order to put them together to enable him/her get his audience informed on the happenings in their surroundings at that particular periods of time.

But with the advent of Information Communication and Technologies reporters have been relieved of the stress of moving from one location to another, in order to submit their news stories because Information Communication and Technologies has aided them the ability to send their reports through technological means. The emergence of Information Communication and Technologies has as well made the dissemination of information and to a very large number of people scattered in so many places.

### **Impacts of ICT on Information Gathering and Dissemination**

Information Communication and Technologies have transformed the world in all aspects of life, its potential for reducing manual operations in fostering the growth in the media has increased rapidly Dugo (2008). Therefore Information Communication and Technologies have made it easier for reporters to gather and disseminate information with sophisticated equipment, which enables information to go viral immediately they are reported.

Information Communication and Technologies have so many impacts on the gathering and dissemination of information by television reporters.

One of the impacts of ICT on information gathering is that it has reduced cost of drastically. The cost of gathering news has reduced significantly, thanks to the emerging communication technologies, before now, reporters had to travel long distances together with other logistics to gather news, all these entail cost. But now with the Information Communication and Technologies on ground reporters can carry out their functions of reporting an event by sending messages through phone calls, fax, instant messaging, twitter, face book etc. therefore with this, one can comfortably say that Information Communication and Technologies have facilitated news gathering and reduced cost.

In electronic media, Information Communication and Technologies has ignited and provoked radical and drastic changes that have affected the broadcast industry especially in immediacy and timeliness of news. Telephone has shortened the time between the news reporter and the source, the news reporter and his editor. Now with the advent of mobile phones media organizations have ensured that reporters on ground, correspondents and stringers are only a call away, and with that editors can as well call writers and direct them on what to do through their mobile phones, there by shortening the time frame, that would have been used to travel across for that same purpose/for such clarifications.

The Information Communication and Technologies have impacted positively in the news process of television hence, the editing flexibility. With the new Information Communication and Technologies on ground, quick construction and reconstruction of a basic news story is enhanced. Audio and visual effects can be added for emphasis, because some models of the basic equipment have editing units attached to them, thereby making it easy for the news reporter to edit his news stories right there at locations even before getting to the studio. Before now, there was significant time-lag separating the point when an event took place and the time when the news may be publicly made available. But Information Communication and Technologies has helped to bridge the time-lag between when event is covered and when it is disseminated. The Information Communication and Technologies equipment as well, speeds up the news gathering process, helps in manipulation of information for improvement and distribution of such information, and with good speed Information Communication and Technologies enhances and aids the accessing recording, arranging, manipulating and presentation of data or information using technological tools and software

With the internet, the reporter can easily click, on relevant sites to source for foreign or local news for subsequent broadcast news. Such reporters can as well monitor events through other technological tools such as the satellite, to monitor information from other news organizations such as CNN, BBC world etc. Information Communication and Technologies have improved the quality and quantity of information in television broadcast

reporting; with the use of Information Communication and Technologies equipment, pictures and sounds have been improved while the quality of such stories are obtained

Information Communication and Technologies have helped to build professionalism among reporter. Reporters have developed professional habits of being mentally alert prepared and flexible for the through coverage of event on the spot even at the shortest notice, hence, the reason for striving to be the first to report an event.

Information Communication and Technologies have provided job opportunities to news crew in diverse areas in the media organisation, since some of the Information Communication and Technologies equipment are handled by people with expertise, thereby creating job opportunities for such people.

The Information Communication and Technologies has opened up access to vast information resources available on the internet, and we are better empowered now because Information Communication and Technologies has given us better opportunity now than before, to get ourselves updated in various areas of endeavour, especially through the internet. Therefore, the ability of individuals or the society in general to acquire information and at the right time has made the people to be updated on the happenings around them.

Television news provides information and imparts knowledge to the people through the Information Communication and Technologies, reporters themselves are not left out since they groom and increase their knowledge daily through the use of Information Communication and Technologies equipment while gathering and disseminating information to the general public.

ICTs have a tremendous impact on how fast news content reaches the target audience. Before now audience mainly rely on broadcasters to present information for most recent happenings the following day through special editions and at the slotted news hour. ICTs have made it easier for information to get to the audience in real times since reporters now update breaking news and events as they occur. The audience members of television broadcast have been provided with abundant advantage by the internet by way of easier and cheaper reception of media contents. The audience could use just one gadget such as the mobile phone handset, communication tablet, laptop or desk top computer which is connected to the internet to watch television. They could do this in the comfort of his room; office etc. depending on the service provider, the online version becomes cheaper for them.

The audience and media houses enjoy the enormous advantage of instant feedback. The audience could send feedback immediately after consuming the content or while still consuming it. They do this through e-mail, live audio visual telephone conversation.

The audience members are able to comment on the stories or issues and even discuss among themselves. This can as well create an online community of media audience. Information Communication and Technologies perform several functions, which no analog tool could perform. It is a complete media in one medium.

Modern media technologies have facilitated reporters, before now reporters used note in wrote with pen and paper. But at present, many reporters use laptops, palm tops and desktop computers. The reporter simply sends his story through the net if he is connected. Okoye (2000) in Adgwe noted that computer technology has enhanced television information. With the internet

The use of Information Communication and Technologies in news gathering and reporting is faster, through their on the spot report, Information Communication and Technologies has made communication easier and more convenient, it has opened up a wide range of new communication methods allowing one reporter to make contacts with less money. No wonder Ibezimako (2006) sees Information Communication and Technologies as the set of technology used in accomplishing one or two-way communication without face to face meeting. The set of technology is what we see as electronic machines devices and their application. This shows that with Information Communication and Technologies in place information gathering and dissemination would be made easier.

With the positive impacts of Information Communication and Technologies on news gathering and dissemination however, there are still some negative impacts of the Information Communication and Technologies (Before write)

Professionally, our journalists loose their inventive ability: This is because most of our reporters now solely depend on the Information Communication and Technologies enhanced news products instead of going to the field to source for news, they relax and depend on the satellite equipment in the name of monitoring news for the day's news report.

Many people have been misinformed through the use of Information Communication and Technologies. Since information can be gathered processed, manipulated and disseminated through the internet so many false information have gone viral through this means. Because certain information may not be properly investigated before there are reported and since it is believed that picture tells a thousand words, it creates room for believability of false information.

Technical challenges since Information Communication and Technologies are all about technical



equipment, a reporter may experience a breakdown of such equipment, thereby hampering the reporter's information dissemination functions for that particular moment.

In his words, Wogu (2006) say that, Information Communication and Technologies as tremendous purvey or of vital development information that can in still in people realistic goals and increase a heightened sense of responsibility in the services of development and progress.

The numerous impacts of Information Communication and Technologies notwithstanding certain number of challenges confront the Information Communication and Technologies and information and disseminating sector and these challenges impair in the growth of Information Communication and Technologies in Nigeria. These challenges includes:-

Gbadamosi (2006), notes that inadequate funding is a major challenge because it has negatively affected many fields of learning the duties of reporters in the area of news gathering and reporting. Because where the reporter is not provided with sophisticated equipment for instance digital camera for quality audio-visual in pictures, such reporter's duty is affected.

Another challenge that faces journalist in the use of ICT gadgets in carrying out their functions of news dissemination is epileptic power supply because where there is inadequate power supply the journalists functions are hampered

There is lack of qualified personnel to manage available, Information Communication and Technologies equipment during information gathering, processing and dissemination.

There is therefore the need to train reporters on Information Communication and Technologies uses and management, to ensure that the reporters become conversant with these Information Communication and Technologies techniques and strategies.

Internet access is largely limited to the urban areas this therefore pose a great challenge to correspondences who are in the remote and rural areas, because they are forced to travel to the urban areas in order to send their news stories.

## Results

### **Table I: Do you employ ICTs in the discharge of your duties?**

From table I, it was discovered that 26-65% of the reporters use ICTs in the discharge of your duties, while 6-15% do not employ ICT; whereas 8-20% said they do not use ICT always.

### **Table II: How often do you employ ICTs in the discharge of your duties?**

In table II, above 32-80% make use of ICT gadgets in the discharge of their duties, 6, 15% use it often while 2, 5% do not make use of ICT at all.

### **Table III: Do you have challenges in handling ICT gadgets while performing your duties?**

From table III, above it can be deduced that 16, 40% of the respondents encounter challenges in handling ICT gadgets while performing their duties, 14 of the respondents i.e. 35% of them do not encounter challenges at all, whereas 10, 25% of the respondents do not encounter challenges always.

### **Table IV: Do you under to in service training and workshop on ICT?**

In table IV, a total number of 19 i.e. 47% of the respondents affirmed that they undergo in-service training, and 7,18% of them said they do not while 14, 35% of them cannot really say if they had gone for in-service training on ICT or not.

### **Table V: Does Training increase ICT knowledge?**

From table V; can be deduced that 28, 70% of the respondents strongly agree that in-service trainings would increase their ICT knowledge, 9,22% of them agree to this, while .3,5% of them disagree.

### **Table VI: ICT enhance information gathering do and dissemination.**

36, 90% of the respondents in table VI, above affirmed that ICTs enhance information gathering and dissemination and 1,3% of them said no, while 3, 7% of respondents could not really say if ICTs enhance information gathering and dissemination or not.

### **Table VII: Relevance of ICT in information gathering and dissemination.**

From table vii, 95% of the respondents accepted that ICT is very relevant to the discharge of their duties, and 3,5% of them said it was relevant while none of them doubted the relevance of ICT information gathering and dissemination.

### **Table VIII: Lack of ICT knowledge hinders news gathering and dissemination.**

From table VIII, it can be deduced that 31,77% of the respondents strongly agree that lack of IT knowledge among reporters could hinder information gathering and dissemination, while 5, 13% of the respondents agree to this, where as 4,10% of them disagree.

### **Table IX: Inadequacy of ICT's equipment hinders the information gathering and dissemination.**

From table IX, it can be deduced that 33, 82% of the respondents strongly agree that lack of

ICT could hinder information gathering and dissemination process, and 6, 15% of them agree to this, while 1,3% of them disagree.

**Table X: Extent ICTs enhance information gathering and dissemination.**

In table X, a total number of 39, and 97 respondents see ICT enhance information gathering and dissemination greatly, 1,3% believe that the extent of which ICTs enhance information gathering and dissemination process greatly while none of them said No to this question.

### Discussion

The impact of Information Communication and Technologies on information gathering and reporting cannot be over emphasized because it has been deduced that ICT forms the basis on which media practitioners rely on, in carrying out their duties of information gathering and dissemination.

In this study, it was discovered that more than 90% of all the activities being carried out in the media establishment are aided by Information Communication and Technologies equipment, ranging from information gathering to the dissemination of such gathered information.

During the study it was observed that, Information Communication and Technologies make information gathering cheaper faster and more efficient. It as well makes communication and reporters and their editors quicker and more convenient. With Information Communication and Technologies equipment on ground EBBC is now able to produced quality audio and visual,

While majority of the respondent affirmed that ICT training and workshops are necessary were as lack of these ICT gadget hinders information gathering and dissemination

### Conclusion /Recommendation

The use of Information Communication and Technologies in information gathering and dissemination by television reporters no doubt has brought about both benefits and problems in information gathering and reporting.

Interestingly, Information and Communication Technologies has enhanced information gathering and dissemination, this has caused television reporters to leave their traditional methods of operation. Because it is through Information Communication and Technologies that television broadcast station can broadcast their programmes live.

It is therefore imperative to note that Information and Communication Technologies have had a tremendous impact especially positively on information gathering and dissemination by television reporters, while media organizations are advised to carryout workshops and trainings for their reporters, in other to keep them up to date on the new media technologies.

Government should also provide journalist with sophisticated equipment and adequate provision supply to enable them carry out their duties smoothly.

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