

New Technologies ‘Challenges and Successes’: Implication on the Indigenous Mass Media

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Abstract

The media of communication as a result of Information and Communication Technology [ICTs] has liberalizing access to media products across the nations of the world. It is the process of internationalization of the mass media, such that media products of a nation are received by citizens of other nations on the globe even without the approval of or control by their governments. The satellite and the Internet have brought this to reality. These worrisome issues provoke the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] to inaugurate the McBride commission to study “the question of how to maintain national and cultural values [or sovereignty] in the face of rapid globalization of mass media. In spite of the merits associated with Information Technology [IT], it is disheartening to see that there is a widening gap and disparity of information flow between developed nations and developing countries of which Nigeria is among. Based on this, the study adopted survey design and employs qualitative and quantitative research method. Research instrument used were a structured questionnaire, [a five-point Likert scale] and an interview method. Purposive sampling technique was used based on specific characteristics and qualities peculiar to AIT station. The raw data were presented and analyzed using simple percentages. The data was collected through two procedures: the primary and secondary sources. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation [PPMC] at a value of 0.84.

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology [ICT] is now widely used in industries, educational institutions, mass media and a host of other fields. ICT has been the main focus of global interest since its adoption and the realization that it would change cultures, influence thoughts and usher mankind into the world of mass communication. The information technology has increasingly brought changes in the mass media specially as practiced in Nigeria.

The invention of movable type and high speed pressed was the first breakthrough in the communication industry. It made print technology an attractive enterprise and the dominant form of communication. Therefore, motion pictures, radio and television broadcasting emerged and became popular and the most patronized. The reason was that the audience soon realized that the message was instantaneous and perhaps, a product of the ancient hypodermic needle ideology or what is regarded as the magic bullet theory [Danaan, 2006].

Today, dynamic elements in the system have widened the media horizon. Both the print [which started with crude technology] and the electronic [which was an improvement on the former] are merging with new digital technologies, namely, the computer to create an age of new media. The media include television technologies as cable services and pay per view, and computer applications like electronic online services and various cyberspace home pages on the Internet and World Wide Web [Defleur and Dennis [1998].

This is a diversion from crude to modern technology in society where communication has been manifestly defective. He further to say that advancement now makes us an information society where more people are employed in various information and communication industries, including the media, than in all other sectors of the economy. The process entails merging television and computer technologies known as convergence that is the coming together of all forms of human communication in an electronic based [computer driven system]. Convergence allows for interactive communication whereby information sources get instant feedback from receivers. Messages can also be stored and retrieved in electronic form. Therefore, without convergence, the new media such as face-book and twitter would not be possible.

Okoro [2002], opines that the emergence of personal computer and improvements in telephone technology have pushed the computer into the world of mass communication media which has opened up the frontier of online communication services in what is today metamorphically called the ‘information super way’. This is a metaphor for a global network of interconnected electronic pathways that provide consumers with huge amounts of entertainment, information, data and personal communication. The existence of Internet and mobile telephone facilities make it easy for the media outfits to have access to news especially on international news.

Focus [2009], opines that whatever has a good side also has its bad side. Internet causes distractions, students most times divert to other bad site which exposes them to a lot of bad things such as: pornography, on-line fraud, on-line dating and so on. Many female students have been misled and some of them lost their focus

on their mission in school due to this on-line dating, while the male students will abandon their academic assignments and involve in viewing naked picture of women on-line.

George [2004] opines that the development of ICT has its pros and cons. Some of the side effect include; the use of computers to replace human labor, Internet scam, erosion of Nigeria cultural values as a result of exposure to modern foreign media. On the other hand, ICT has helped in the improvement of communication, trade, politics, health, education and socio-economic development, [Focus 2009]. Developing world countries, especially African countries, have accused the advanced countries of cultural imperialism through the ICTs. It means spending more to bring their communication systems up to American standards. This creates a bleak and hopeless scenario of perpetual dependence. The imposition of foreign culture on the indigenous Media against their will is known as Cultural imperialism, while an external culture that is welcomed and imitated by another culture in which the external eventually supersedes in an evolutionary fashion is known as Cultural Synchronization.

These could be seen how the developed countries flood their foreign programmes and most of these programmes are irrelevant to the needs of the developing nations, but only to convert the developing nations into dumping grounds in order to make extra revenues from the foreign sales. It will only discourage domestic programme production in all the developing nations. In support of this assertion, Elihu [1973] expresses that the adoption of borrowed goals and sets of professional norms from the Western Mass Media is inappropriate for meeting the needs of developing nations.

Ojebode [2004] asserts that globalization of the media of communication as a result of ICTs has liberalizing access to media products across the nations of the world. It is the process of internationalization of the mass media, such that media products of a nation are received by citizens of other nations on the globe even without the approval of or control by their governments. The satellite and the Internet have brought this to reality. These worrisome issues provoke the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] to inaugurate the McBride commission to study “the question of how to maintain national and cultural values [or sovereignty] in the face of rapid globalization of mass media”, Baran,[1999].

Ojebode [2004] reports that McBride Commission recommended a new order called the New world Information and Communication Order [NWICO] to ensure absolute sovereignty of developing nations over all of their information sources; increased control by developing nations over world communication institutions; more coverage of ongoing projects rather than of coups, riots and disaster; increased horizontal communication among developing nations and better international news ratio in favor of developing nations, McBride [1980]. Did it work? That should be the pertinent question to ask. The major aim of the study is to expose the double edge sword of ICTS and how its power for good and for bad resides on indigenous mass media. To identify the problems associate with browsing for information from the internet and how internet can be used to facilitate mass communication in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the merits associated with Information Technology [IT], it is disheartening to see that there is a widening gap and disparity of information flow between developed nations and developing countries of which Nigeria is among. The global information and communication order reflects an environment of the developed world where the population is advanced technologically and has a grasp of Internet use. The pace of technological advancement in developing world especially in Nigeria is very slow. This has negatively affected the use of Internet in handling issues relating to mass communication.

Often times, the quality of services rendered by our indigenous media outfits is of low quality as a result of their inability to appropriately integrate information technology in the ways they disseminate information. Besides, the level of knowledge of most Nigerians in computer application and use especially computer software is low. This makes it difficult for media practitioners to explore the full benefits associated with information technology as it relates to mass media of communication.

The links, networks and connections created by globalization through ICTs have brought about transformations of some positive effects and defects in the media practice and its audiences, which lead to changes in the mass communication process such as: concentration of ownership, audience fragmentation, hyper commercialism, convergence and so on were influencing the nature of the mass communication process. Each of the variables redefines the relationship between audience and media industries, resulting to lack of distinction among media. It influences the amount of advertising people see and their attitudes and behaviors also.

Methodology

The population studied was represented by the seven departments of the Africa Independent Television [AIT] in western part of Nigeria, located at AIT Road-Lagos Abeokuta Express way. The scope of the study is on the five of these departments formed the sample size, which focus mainly on the departmental managers of AIT. The sample technique was purposive non-probability sampling technique, which was chosen based on specific

characteristics and qualities peculiar to AIT station. AIT is the first private station in Nigeria and the only privately owned Independent Television station in the Federal Republic of Nigeria to be on cable. It was based on these peculiarities that AIT was chosen for this study. The research instruments used were the structured interview guide of the survey design, and the questionnaire for 20 officials. The selections of the interviewees were based on the importance of their department to the study and their knowledge in media station management.

Concepts Analysis, Definitions and Explanation

Gate keeping and Selection Media Theory

McQuail [2005] opines that ‘gate keeping’ has been widely used as a metaphor to describe the process by which selections are made in media work, especially decisions regarding whether or not to allow a particular news to pass through the ‘gate’ of a news channels . He further, to say that the gate keeping theory deals with the processes and factors that influence the decisions of media organization, to select or reject potential newsworthy items for public dissemination.

The theory postulates that media organizations as well as key media professionals act as gates, to the flood of information coming in from the larger society. These gates are opened to let some kind of information through for processing and publication; or they are shut to deny other kinds of information the opportunity for processing and publication. In the light of this research, the media organizations constitute a determining factor in the kind of information or media culture received and disseminated. Therefore, the power to receive or reject information that will develop or harm the societal culture, the media responsibilities and activity, society or country is in the ambit of the media.

Social Responsibility Media Theory

Tejumaiye [2003] opines that social responsibility theory was founded on a basic commitment to free speech. However, this theory insists on the principle of accountability to the society even as the right to free speech is exercised by the media. Nonetheless, it insists that the media have an obligation to promote a harmonious and fruitful society by maintaining high standards of professional performance and raising social conflicts to the level of discussion. The media are thus, expected to regulate themselves, through public intervention and to ensure that media responsibility is not discouraged. Such interventions take the forms of regulatory councils; commission of enquiry etc.

What is ICT\Internet?

Focus [2009] defines ICT to include all technologies that enable the handling of information and facilitate different forms of communication. He also expands the notion of information and communication technologies to include both older and newer technologies: newspapers, radio and television to cam-coders, cell-phones, computers 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. OSCE [2004] described Internet as a global network of interconnected computers which enables users to share information along multiple channels. It is a universal medium for: publishing, distributing and broadcasting

New Modern Information Technologies

Wiki: a wiki is an online resource which allows users to add and edit content collectively through the use of hypertext. Wiki’s collection of web pages can be navigated and edited by anyone.

Micro-blogs: A cross between instant messaging and blogging, Twitter is a micro blogging system that allows a user to send a short, 140-character information updates

Photo sharing: the best known online photo sharing site is flickr. Users upload digital still photos. Public photos may be viewed and commented on by others

Video sharing: An online video sharing site is YouTube owned by Google. Videos are uploaded by users and can be viewed free by others

Date sharing: A web application that allows discovering, reading, organisation and sharing on the internet of valuable personally selected data and information is Page-flakes.

Digital storytelling: Digital storytelling is mediated mass communication combining traditional techniques from television, video production, radio, newspapers and magazines with contemporary multimedia tools to deliver informative and entertaining short productions with text, still and motion images, sound, music and voice.

Social networks: A social networking site where users can set up a profile of themselves, create formal connections to people they know, communicate, and share preferences and interests –Face-book.

Social Bookmarks: The social bookmarking site lets you add, categorize and manage social bookmarks for storing, sharing and discovering web pages, and so on.

Machinima: the art of making a real movie in a virtual world is called machinima form the machine cinema. A

machinima is a video production short 3D virtual reality world, such as Second life, and produced with real life tools and techniques.

The ICTs/ Indigenous [Traditional] Mass Communication

The ICT has opened the opportunity to enhance information flow as well as improve shared ideas across international frontier. It is a medium of mass communication that has greatly changed the behavior of man. Internet has brought this to reality; Internet is just growing with apparently no master plan for the expansion. It speeds up mass communication feedback. The web is interactive in nature. It is instantaneous and interactive, allowing users more central in shaping their message.

Rodney [2005] asserts that Internet is gradually changing the traditional systems of mass communication which is delayed, but into online feedback interpersonal communication. [Baran, 2004], while examining the new information technology vice-a-visa traditional mass communication posited that the Internet would be a major factor in redefining the meaning of the mass media. He says, for instance, when a news event occurs, interested parties immediately post messages on the Internet of others to read. This new dimension, he argues, represents a shift from traditional journalism where editors decide what to cover and send reporters to collect the facts. The consequence, no doubt, would be the tendency to surf in the cyberspace with irrelevant materials of the global village.

The traditional freedom of expression becomes excessive in the new information and communication order, [Baran, 2004] notes that there is no central location, no on and off button for the Internet, making it too difficult to control for those who want to do so. For free expression advocates, however, this freedom from control is the medium primary strength. The anonymity of its user provides their expression even the most radical, profane and vulgar great protection giving voice to those who would otherwise be silenced. This anonymity advocate of strengthened Internet control is a breeding ground for abuse. But opponents of control counter that the net affordability and ease of use make it a most democratic medium. Baran, further says that the new information technology advances have made communication easier and more democratic. People can consume some media as wanted and needed than allowing media producers to schedule consumption time and content; rather than the producer, has more control over meaning making.

Danaan, 2006 asserts that the New Technology enables participation by groups previously media neglected can now participate anonymously, which leads to less prejudice. In some cases, new technology enables communication to be accomplished at a fraction of the cost previously established by the order. Danaan further to say that the control of much of the most influential content is in the hands of fewer and fewer people namely large multinational corporation; content decisions are made to fulfill economic or marketing goals, which defines users of communication as simply consumers of content, source anonymity makes it difficult to document and prosecute illegal act' electronic communication which could lead to social fragmentation society, by dividing it into the information rich and poor, in the Information age, hardware, software and education to use them cost money, the difference between the 'haves' and the 'have not's will increase, placing a strain on democracy.

Baran [2004], asks these questions 'can a smaller number of powerful people create havoc or revolution online?[i.e. shutting down government, bugging worldwide system], should law enforcement have encryption codes on the file to use under court order or is this an infringement of privacy and first amendment right? Will new technology be available to everyone? Who will control and regulate the information technology, is official control necessary to ensure equal access and opportunity? Mention but a few.

Inahoro [2002], opines that in a developing country like Nigeria, the issues concerning information and communication media arouse both passion and intense interest, this global invasion has not helped the Nigerian media to grow, rather than Nigerian media being the beneficiaries, but were affected negatively in many ways. He further supported his argument by citing a result finding on use of Internet. He stated that nearly 90% of all Internet users are in industrialized countries, with United States and Canada alone accounting for 57% of the total. While, in contrast, Internet users in Africa and the Middle East together account for only 1% of the global Internet uses, therefore, the accusation on the issues of wide-gap, cultural imperialism and cultural synchronization on the Western Media over the indigenous Media, create a bleak and hopeless scenario of perpetual dependence of the developing countries over the developed countries 'is a simple truth'.

For instance, Programme Providers such as TV Africa and Africa Broadcasting Network [ABN] have debated on the impact of these media fair or foul, have gained prominence that the Foreign stations set an agenda [a euphemism for standards] in that few Nigerians are now watching local stations while members of the political [or administrative] establishment who adorn their living rooms with satellite facilities remember their own local channels only during the evening news. This explains the reason why no Nigerian stations –Radio or TV has not being able to "break the news" first before the high profile broadcasters. For instance, the two airplane crashes that occurred were telecast between 12 to 24 hours after graphic footages of the event were shown on CNN and BBC. The Nigerian mannerisms of self-censorship and inexplicable quiescence have made foreign

broadcast a toast of Nigerian audiences, especially in the treatment of emergency reports. Such reports had created security problems and exacerbated crisis situations.

The CNN reports on the crisis in Jos and Kano were clearly inflammatory and against the accepted norms of news reporting. Not only were the casualty figures uncorroborated with medical personnel but were fictitious as well. CNN reporters also stated that human beings were slaughtered everywhere and also suggested at the Idi-Araba riot in Lagos that the military was more preferable to the Nigerian citizens than democratic establishment. That provoked the Director General of the Commission to summon the reporters and wrote CNN, drawing their attention to such gross professional lapses.

Method of Data Analysis:

The qualitative and quantity data analyses were employed for this work. The data for this study were collected through two procedures, namely, the primary and secondary sources. Primary sources were through structured interview, while, secondary sources were obtained through published and unpublished works. The Responses from questionnaire and interview questions constituted the bases of analysis.

Summary of the Discussion of the Findings:

Research Question One: What impact has ICT had on the Management Effectiveness?

The Deputy General Manager, Central Administration and Registry replied by saying that as a result of the challenge posted by globalization in the area of technology and information technology, the management has seen the need for upgrading of the station equipment and staff development through training and re-training. Many times the station had to send staff abroad to go for training on the operation of certain equipment. Since the production of the station is digital, the station has to train its staff on the use of digital machines for production.

Research Question Two: To what extent has Information Technology contributed to the programming of Africa Independent Television since her inception?

Africa Independent Television [AIT] seeks to produce programmes that can be said to be next to reality. The pictures presented to the audience must compliment the content of the programmes produced and transmitted. AIT began with the Digital Video Camera [DVC], but presently AIT has the Tape-less cameras that used in international broadcast stations like BBC and CNN for broadcast productions. Computer Assisted Programming is process whereby programmes are run by computers and are capable of surfacing programmes for hours without human intervention is also used in AIT station. AIT broadcasts to the international audiences across United Kingdom, United States of America and the Caribbean countries etc. The station makes maximum use of computer and latest equipments that meet international broadcast standards. With every department equipped with the computer and internet services, the station's access to information has since inception been easy. To achieve this in-depth coverage of its global audience, AIT makes an extensive use of Information Technology [IT], which has in turn contributed to the total programme packaging. Etc.

The station's relies on a careful blend of homegrown Nigerian expertise plus a backup of seasoned professionals from Europe, the United States and other parts of Africa. All members of the management team are highly qualified practitioners in the field of broadcasting, with the proven capabilities required in this highly competitive sector. The management of AIT, aware that technological innovations in digital and fibred optic networks and other areas of communication and broadcasting transmissions, is set to redefine the total nature and system of communication in the new millennium. Presently, with a staff strength of about 600 people in Africa, Europe and the United States, DAAR Communications Limited has a decentralization management structure that allows for autonomy in the running of the distinct services that make up the broadcast company: Ray power 100.5FM, Ray power 106.5FM, AIT and DAAR Internet with separate general managers for each of the stations. AIT holds almost 30 percent of the total population of DAAR Communications staff strength. AIT in her programming is committed to the task of bridging the gap in global communication, which places Africa at the ruthless mercy of the western perspectives, opinions and nuances. AIT provides a fresh slant to television transmission, broadcasting experiences with the wider global community.

The AIT reveals the two-edge sword nature of these New Technologies on the indigenous mass media of communication. As a result, AIT was unable to motivate her Staff neither pay the staff at and when due, because it was overstretched beyond its capability. From all indications, this work has been able to investigate its subject matter.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution on the Advantages Associated with IT

Questionnaire' Questions	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Total (%)
Level of computer literacy of the respondents	18 (100.0 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	(100.0)
AIT as a 24 hours television broadcast	18 (100.0 % [^])	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	(100.0)
High quality of TV production by Information Technology	17 (94.5%)	1 (5.6%)	0(0%)	(100.0)
Information Technology as a time saving device	17 (94.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.6%)	(100.0)
Use of Information Technology to facilitate life Telecasting	10(88.9%)	0(0%)	2(11.2%)	(100.0)
Appraisal of IT to Mass Media in Nigeria	11(61.1%)	0(0%)	6(33.2%)	(100.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 1 in item 1 all the respondents indicated that they were computer literates. This implies that all the respondents are qualified to express their views in this study. In item 2 one can be deduced that AIT is a 24 hours non-stop television broadcast station whose operations are based on IT. Item 3 in table 1, 17 of the respondents [94.5%] indicated that as a result of IT applications at AIT, the quality of television production from the station is very high. While, 1 respondent [5.6% had a contrary view. The identification of high quality in the TV production shows one the major advantages of IT. In item 4, 17 respondents [94.4% subscribed to the fact that information technology saves time, energy and cost in operating TV stations and running programmes, with 1 respondent [5.6%] having contrary opinion. This identified one of the merits associated with the use of information technology in mass media. In item 5, 16 respondents [88.9%] subscribed to the fact that through IT, viewers and programmes presenters are brought together via live shows. This is another identified role played by IT in mass media [TV].While, in item 6, 11 respondents [61.1%] agreed that IT has done more good than harm to the media organizations in Nigeria. With 6 respondents [33.2%] disagreed with the opinion and perceived IT as a two double-edged sword that needs to be cautioned.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution on the Problems Associated With IT in Mass Media in Nigeria

Questionnaire' Questions	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Total (%)
Illegal communication content is more easily created and distributed	17 (94.4 %)	0(0%)	1(5.6%)	(100.0)
Piracy is easier and more widespread	16 (88.9 % [^])	0 (0%)	2 (11.1%)	(100.0)
It makes it difficult for mass media to be regulate and controlled	18 (100.0%)	0 (0%)	0(0%)	(100.0)
Rumors and unconfirmed news spread easily	17 (94.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.6%)	(100.0)
Content is at times sent an received without context	15(99.4%)	0(0%)	3(16.8%)	(100.0)
Reliability of sources of information are at times questionable	16(83.3%)	0(0%)	2(16.7%)	(100.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2014

In table 2 above, the problems discovered in course of this study included: illegal communication of content, piracy, un-over and unconfirmed news spread. The major problem identified in this study was that IT makes it difficult for the contents of mass media to be regulated and controlled. Furthermore, findings from this study shows that the roles that IT play in AIT station in Nigeria are diverse, varying from News gathering, News reporting, information storage, manipulation of images/speeches, transmission of live programmes and phone-in-programmes. This conforms to the research findings of Suola [1998] were she discovered that Information and communication technology has precipitated a revolution in the communication industry, with an emphasis on improved methods and efficiency, and it guarantees accuracy, efficiency, prompt transmission and distribution of information. While, Defleur and Dennis, [1998] opines that the dynamic elements in the system have widened the media horizon. In such that print [which started with crude technology], and the electronic [which was an improvement on the former] are merging with new digital technologies, namely the computer, to create an age of new media.

Testing of Hypothesis

Testing of hypothesis [Ho] using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation [PPMC] shows a value of 0.84 and is statistically significant at $p < 0.05$. Based on the premises of the statistical result, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between information technology and the quality of service rendered by AIT.

Conclusion

The ICTs have been commended and praised for being one of the major catalysts of the spread of the media and development, especially in the developing world. In support, Freidman [2000]: commenting on the strength of ICTs, asserts that it can be incredibly empowering and coercive, as well as democratize opportunities and impediments, leave you behind and at the same time rapidly catch up with you, were it is homogenizing cultures, it is also enables people to share their unique individuality farther and wider. While, Porter [2005] opines that ICTs [globalization] is much like fire. Fire itself is neither good nor bad, when used properly, it can cook food, sterilize equipment and so on, but when used carelessly, fire can destroy lives, towns on and on. He further to say that it is our job to pick up ICTs [globalization] examine it from all sides, dissect it, figure out what makes it thick, and to nurture and promote the good side

Recommendations

- The media organizations should expose their staff to high quality training programmes in information technology. Such training should be in form of workshops, seminars, demonstration, public lectures in ICTs. This would restore the dignity of communication professionals to meet the new trend in information and communication technology [ICTs]
- Government should subsidize the price of ICT equipments imported into Nigeria for the use of media houses in the country.
- Government should ensure that the regulatory authorities established to regulate the activities of media houses to devise a means of checking the excesses of the media organizations which use ICT for wrong purposes e.g piracy or spread false rumors.
- Adequate exposure in ICT is needed in the 21st century in-order to achieve millennium development goals

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