

Social Media and Radio News Production: A Study of Selected Radio Stations in Ghana

Mashud Zakaria¹ Andy Ofori-Birikorang²

1.Ghana Institute of Journalism, Accra, Ghana

2.Department of Communication and Media Studies, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

Abstract

This article investigates social media use by selected radio stations in Ghana. This is against the backdrop that the integration of social media into radio news production has received minimal investigation and documentation, especially within the Ghanaian context. Employing cyber ethnography, interviews and documents analysis as well as the Technology Acceptance and Technology Appropriation models, this study examines how two radio stations in Accra (Peace FM and Citi FM) use social media for news production. The research revealed that social media has been useful in enhancing journalistic tasks of news gathering, sourcing, news reporting, news editing, and public engagement or interactivity. However, the point of departure in terms of the appropriation of social media by the two radio stations lies in the area of news dissemination. Citi FM appears to appropriate social media for news dissemination in a variety of innovative ways through the use of multimedia applications and tools compared with Peace FM. The rationale for the variation in social media use for news production by the two radio stations may be linked to linguistic considerations as well as instrumentality of use.

Keywords: Social media, radio news production, Radio in Ghana, Technology Acceptance Model and Technology Appropriation Model

Introduction

The advent of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram represent a new phase of the revolution and development of new media in the globalized world (Adegbilero-Iwari & Ikenwe, 2014). Boadi (2013) citing Lind and Zmund (1995) is of the conviction that social media platforms have, among other things, democratised content creation and dissemination of information among groups, individuals, and institutions while consolidating existing connections among them. The interactive and democratic nature of social media appears to have attracted growing number of users worldwide. Approximately 2 billion internet users are using social networks for news, information, entertainment and business activities and these figures are still expected to grow as mobile device usage and social networks increasingly gain traction (Statista, 2016). Facebook has the highest number of active users (over 1.5 billion), followed by WhatsApp (900 million) and then others such as QQ, Facebook messenger, Tumblr, Instagram, and Twitter (Statista, 2016).

In the area of news and information, Alejandro (2010) argues that social media has not only revolutionised news consumption habits of media audiences but also has had an impact on news gathering processes among the traditional or mainstream media - television, radio and newspapers. Laird (2012) asserts that people are using social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to keep up to speed with happenings around them as “traditional news outlets become increasingly less relevant to the digital generation”.

Though Newman, Dutton and Blank (2012), Alejandro (2010), and Hachten and Scotton (2007) are of the conviction that the mainstream media is still a major source of news and information for a large number of audiences, they also argue that the audience for social media are growing rapidly. As a result, the mainstream media is pushing to keep up with the trend by integrating social media into its daily routines (Scolari, 2009). For example, journalists are now inclined to use social media to break news quickly before putting up their full stories (Laird, 2012).

Significantly, the broadcast media, particularly radio, cannot escape the intricacies of the evolution of social media. Scolari (2009) asserts that the arrival of new media technologies, which are not based on the broadcasting logic, is challenging the knowledge about traditional mass media technologies, including radio. Cordeiro (2012) avers that radio broadcasting is facing severe competition for people’s attention among all available audio contents brought about by growing internet and social media technologies. Cordeiro (2012) notes that radio listeners now have access to an increasing amount of content, including news and entertainment, from different social media platforms and formats. As a result, a new audience- non-traditional, non-passive, participative and independent- has emerged. They appear to respond to the interactive features of social media. This situation is challenging radio broadcasters to improve their traditional broadcasting towards multimedia content and distribution.

In view of this, Castells (2003) is of the conviction that the social media revolution has spurred a number of radio broadcasters to devise several strategies of remaining competitive. They do so by using internet technologies to create intranets for news gathering, providing a platform for news distribution and dissemination. Again, streaming technology has become crucial for radio’s online development, providing live audio

transmissions and making radio broadcasting available via digital devices (computers, mobile phones, tablets) and networks (spreading of radio content through the web using sharing tools). Radio today is available both in digital and analogue platforms that combine to fit with audience needs, uses and routines (Cordeiro, 2012).

What is significant, however, is that the integration of social media into the news production process by a number of radio stations has received minimal documentation, especially within the Ghanaian context. A few scholars such as Cordeiro (2012), Zoellner and Lax (2015) and Levenshus (2007) have carried out researches in this area but it appears these works are usually situated within the Western context. This study, therefore, attempts to examine how Ghana's radio stations are using social media for news production.

Social media and radio news production

A study by UK's Federal Office of Communication (Ofcom) in 2013 on the current state of radio in a digital age showed that radio listenership among Britain's audiences remains high despite the development of new media technologies, including social media. The study further reveals that radio's key qualities such as accessibility, ubiquitous platform, dependable companion and deliverer of timely national and local news remain significant among audiences. Despite this, there is still competition from new media technologies such as digital and mobile media as well as social media. New media appears to be overtaking radio in serving as a primary source of music -especially among younger audiences- and as a unique medium for instantaneous news delivery (Ofcom, 2013).

Therefore, in anticipation of the impact of new media technologies on the competitiveness of radio as an interactive medium, Brecht (2000a) called for radio to become "two-sided" rather than "one-sided". The assertion is that radio should move from a "distribution apparatus" into a "communications apparatus" that should "let the listener speak as well as hear" (Brecht, 2000b, p.42) and this can be achieved with the integration of new media in programming. Following from this, it appears that while some radio stations are already taking steps to incorporate social media into news production in order to facilitate engagement and interactivity with audiences, others are lagging behind. In her study of how public radio stations in the US are responding to the social media surge, Levenshus (2007) gives quite an interesting perspective on this matter. Using the survey method along with case studies, Levenshus (2007) asserts that radio stations show some ambivalence towards the use of social media in broadcasting. Station executives are resisting social media experiments because of lack of knowledge, lack of resource allocation, and institutional culture.

In Ghana, a number of radio stations are adopting new media technologies and platforms in order to keep up with the social media surge. A Social Media Index Report released by Pen Bytes, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) shows that for its February 10, 2016 radio index, over 300 radio stations in Ghana showed some social media activity in terms of how they leveraged platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to, among other things, disseminate news and engage their audiences. On Facebook, the study showed that radio stations in Greater Accra such as Adom FM, YFM, Peace FM, Hitz FM, Citi FM, Radio XYZ, and Asempa FM are ahead of the other radio stations in Ghana in the way in which they integrate social media in their programming, including news production (Social Media Index Report, 2016). With regard to Twitter, the study showed that few radio stations have Twitter accounts and that Facebook appears to be more popular among radio stations compared with Twitter. Nonetheless, Joy FM, Citi FM, YFM, LIVE FM, Starr FM, Peace FM, PLUZZ FM, Kapital Radio, Adom FM and Ultimate Radio are leading in terms of Twitter use (Social Media Index Report, 2016).

Zoellner and Lax (2015) conducted a study on *Social Media and Local Radio Production in the UK*, using a multi-method case study investigation of local British radio stations in addition to programme analysis, expert interviews and web analysis. The researchers found that social media use among radio stations in the UK has evolved from a specialist tool or platform to a role that is now mainstream and part of a journalists' day to day routine. Key aspects of social media use by journalists include finding sources of stories and identifying potential interviewees or participants.

Scannel (2010) also asserts that in the last few years, traditional ways of transmitting radio content are being woven with interactive online environments, particularly news websites and social media. Audience members engage in the prolonged life of radio news and are invited to communicate not only to, but also with radio journalists, as well as among each other. Thus, journalists share links from their personal Twitter and Facebook accounts to website versions of radio content. Content include short tweets with audio clips, blurbs, shout-outs, calls for information and snippets of news:

Radio news used to disappear after being on air; it needed to have immediate impact...Now, radio news has longer lives and journalists follow them online. It even happens that stories spur a debate on Twitter, and other media use it as a basis of their own stories (Singer et al, 2011, p. 422 cited in Scannel, 2010).

Adding another dimension to the radio-social media argument, Cordeiro (2012) also notes that technological convergence and the interactive nature of new media tools pose a serious threat to the existence of

radio as a source of news and information. In her study, *Radio becoming r@dio: Convergence, interactivity and broadcasting trends in perspective*, Cordeiro asserts that radio listeners now have access to an increasing amount of content, including news and entertainment, from different new media platforms and formats. As a result, a new audience that is non-traditional, non-passive, participative and independent has emerged. These audiences, according to Cordeiro (2012), appear to respond to the interactive features of social media and challenging radio broadcasters to improve their traditional broadcasting towards multimedia content and distribution. Cordeiro (2012) also argues that though some radio stations have integrated podcasts, streaming services, on-demand videos, and online social network posts into their activities, the trend towards online content would revolutionise radio into *r@dio*. Thus, *r@dio* means that radio and its available content would be streamed online or over the internet.

Theoretical Framework

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

TAM was originally conceived by Davis in his doctoral thesis in 1985 and suggests that an individual's motivation to use a technological device is influenced by the system's features and capabilities (Deo-Silas, 2013). Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989) suggest that *Perceived Ease of Use (EU)* and *Perceived Usefulness (PU)* are two significant determinants of computer usage behaviour. The scholars explain PU as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her task or activity. Within the social media circles, users of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr may be motivated to use them because they help to meet the related needs of the individual. Perceived Ease of Use (EU), on the other hand, has been defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort. The importance of perceived EU signifies the degree to which an innovation is perceived not to be difficult to understand, learn, or operate (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989). The TAM has been used in several studies to explain and conceptualise journalists' social media habits as well as the motivation for the adoption of these interactive platforms for news production. Deo-Silas (2013), for instance, employed the TAM to examine how newsroom journalists across various media houses in Ghana, including radio, use social media for their routine journalistic practices. This therefore, justifies the application of the model for this study.

Technology Appropriation Model (TaM)

This model was birthed from the socio-cultural theory. In the socio-cultural field, appropriation refers to cultural learning, or the application of cultural tools (Overdijk & van Diggelen, 2006). Wertsch (1998) describes appropriation as the act of taking something that belongs to another and making it one's own. Sey (2011) gives quite a broad definition of appropriation when she contends that the user appropriation of technology may not only lead to dramatic or mild deviations from the original purpose of the technology and bring about significant structural change to the technology itself but may also change the way the organisation or the individual operates. Thus, technology appropriation, in her view, is a two-way affair.

Bar, Pisani and Weber (2007) also contend that technology appropriation occurs when users take full advantage of features provided by technology designers. They argue that technology embodies two components: structural features and spirit. Structural features are the types of rules, resources, and capabilities the system offers such as how restrictive, sophisticated, or comprehensive it is. The spirit of a technology refers to the values and goals underlying the structural features, such as what types of uses are considered proper or not (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994 cited in Sey, 2011).

The Technology Appropriation Model (TaM) has been used in various studies to explain how the media houses use social media for their routine newsgathering and distribution processes. In his study of *New Technologies and Print Journalism Practice in Zimbabwe: An Ethnographic Study*, Mabweazara (2010) used the TaM to explain and conceptualise how selected newspapers in Zimbabwe appropriate online and social media tools in the course of their journalistic work.

Methodology

This study employed the qualitative research approach with the help of the multiple case study design to examine social media use by the selected radio stations (Citi FM and Peace FM). Stake (1995) and Yin (2009) define multiple or collective case study as examining cases across multiple sites. The use of the multiple case study design enabled the researchers to draw similarities and differences in the use of social media for radio news production by the two radio stations.

Sample for the study was drawn from a February 2016 *Social Media Index Report* released by Pen Bytes, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) on the social media presence (Facebook and Twitter) of 10 radio stations in Ghana. The purposive and representative sampling techniques were used to select Citi FM and Peace FM for the study. Citi FM placed first and second in the area of Facebook and Twitter use respectively on the *Social Media Index Report*. Peace FM on the other hand placed tenth and sixth in both Facebook and Twitter use respectively. Though any of the radio stations that made it to the top ten list of the Report could have been

selected, we chose Citi FM and Peace FM because the two radio stations readily availed themselves for the study. Baxter and Jack (2008) argue that convenience is at the core of qualitative research because availability of participants who will provide data for the study is an important consideration in purposive sampling. Significantly, the fact that Citi FM broadcasts in English and Peace FM in Twi also provided some linguistic representativeness to the sampling. Biber (1993) defines representative sampling as the extent to which a sample includes the full range of variability in a population such as age, gender, language, ethnicity or race.

In terms of sample size and data collection methods, we purposively interviewed six participants; three from each radio station. The participants included online editors, broadcast journalists, producers, and social media coordinators. Cyber ethnographic studies of both radio stations' Twitter and Facebook handles (multiple sites) were done over a six-month period (8th June, 2016 to 8th December, 2016) to validate responses from the interviews conducted and documents analysed. Facebook and Twitter were chosen for the cyber ethnographic studies because the *Social Media Index Report* (2016) ranked the two platforms as the most popular social media sites among Ghana's radio stations. All posts (status, updates, pictures, videos, audios, and podcasts) within the period of the study were observed and coded on a cyber-ethnography log sheet. On Facebook, a total of 5,292 posts were sampled for Citi FM within the period under study while Peace FM garnered 2,049 posts. With regard to Twitter, the study analysed 7,281 tweets from Citi FM and 3,994 for Peace FM. Data was analysed using qualitative content analysis, descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

Findings and discussion

News gathering

The study revealed that social media helps Citi FM and Peace FM keep up with and utilise a variety of news and information that abound on social media platforms. Respondents from both stations revealed that the array of User-Generated Content (UGC) on social media such as short videos, pictures, audio clips, news stories, and feature articles provides vital information for both radio and online news production. Respondents contend that some social media users who post various news items on their pages draw the attention of the radio stations to such content by way of tags, tweets, and emails. These stories are then verified and incorporated into the radio news bulletin or generated into online news and shared on their various platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Indeed, Moyo (2009) and Sambrook (2005) describe everyday citizens who collect and share such content through social media platforms as *Citizen Journalists*. Alejandro (2010) and Canter (2013) argue that the advent of social media has made audiences active producers of information, subverting the traditional notion of journalists being perceived as "central authority" in news gathering.

It also came up that the two radio stations, through verbal policies, encourage their reporters to be active on these social platforms in order to quickly and promptly gather information for the news production process. Even without such verbal policies, reporters actively participate, monitor and use social media for news gathering. The rationale is to help them keep up with what is happening around them for timely incorporation into the news production process. One respondent stated,

Any journalist who would not work with social media will always be late in news gathering. Sometimes, a story breaks in other parts of the country, say in a village and you have a relative who calls to tell you - maybe a three-storey building has collapsed and killed people. What do you do? You can't just take a car and go there... we just ask the person to video it to us or just take shots and send it to us through our social media platforms. So, we encourage as much as possible, our journalists to be on social media and to be on the alert because those platforms are where we can follow certain leads... (Respondent 2, Peace FM)

The above findings show how social media has become vital in news gathering within the two radio stations. They appear to be leveraging the significance these platforms provide for information collection or news gathering in order to facilitate their work. This revelation is consistent with Perceived Usefulness (PU), a key assumption of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989).

Sourcing

Respondents from the two radio stations were unanimous in admitting the usefulness of social media in connecting with various news sources for both online and mainstream newsgathering and dissemination processes. These sources provide scoops, exclusives and vital information for both breaking and non-breaking news broadcasts. The sources also help in connecting with other potential news sources who can provide important information necessary in the news production and distribution processes. These sources potentially contribute various content such as audio, videos, pictures and other relevant information, sometimes of national and public interest. Such information becomes critical in enriching radio journalism as indicated by an interviewee,

For example, recently a story broke in neighbouring Burkina Faso and I needed a journalist in that country to speak to. All I did was to go on Twitter, search for a journalist in that country and send him a

private message asking that I speak to him on an issue...He sent me his contact and bingo! We were on (Respondent 1, Citi FM)

Respondents from both stations revealed that some news sources can readily be contacted through social media and that any other means of contacting them may prove difficult and abortive. They both cited Ghana's former Foreign Affairs Minister, Hannah Tetteh, as a source who can be easily reached through social media;

There's been an occasion where Hannah Tetteh, you know she has been so active on Twitter, you may send her a text, you may not get her or something but once you hit her up on Twitter, she is able to reply you either by direct mail or publicly. So you can use it for a story if you want (Respondent 2, Peace FM).

This finding is in line with the European Commission's (2012) assertion that an important capability of social media is that it allows the journalist to identify and approach news sources who would otherwise be difficult to find in routine journalistic practice.

An added significance of social media in the area of news sourcing for radio news production lies in how it aids in opinion polling or vox pop. This follows the fact that while social media presents an array of people who hold opinions on issues of national interest, at the same time it affords the radio stations the opportunity to sample the opinions of the public without "going on the streets" or using the traditional "phone-ins". In doing so, respondents argue that social media helps to compresses space and time and reduce the workload of journalists while ensuring swift information collection. This revelation appears to show how the traditional mode of street interviews appears subverted by social media as explained below:

...there are times you just want to sample views of people on social media on an issue – it also allows a different way of sampling thoughts of people. The days of strict use of recorders and physical presence of journalists in order to interview a source or to get information from the public through vox pop are long gone (Respondent 1 Citi FM).

News Reporting

Findings from the study point to a myriad of ways in which Citi FM and Peace FM capitalize on the strength of social media to report variety of events including breaking news, running stories and other important events to an array of social media users and radio audiences. This is done through live tweets or texts on websites and the use of a variety of social media applications to "transmit" an event or news live. This enables reporters from the two stations to file reports live from the field before arriving in the newsroom to file their audio reports. Respondent 2 from Citi FM explains that:

But for social media, its advantage on that score is that if a journalist is at a press conference and the Finance Minister is addressing it, the reporter will tweet it live; giving the updates as and when they come from the event.

In reporting events live, Peace FM, for instance, appropriates an application called "Storify" for providing live updates of key events such as demonstrations, press conferences, and other running news events, especially on their websites. One participant indicated that,

It [storify] is a third-party sort of platform but you can embed the code on the website. So whatever you are doing on that platform – for pictures, for video, for audio – you put it there and it will be showing on the website. So it gives you minute-by-minute update of what is happening. So we use it for let's say influential press conferences that a lot of eyes are on (Respondent 3, Peace FM).

The use of these applications such as "Storify" by Peace FM for news reporting and the application of Twitter for providing live updates of events shows how these media houses take optimum advantage of the features provided by social media for news reporting. This finding is in line with the principles of Bar, Pisani and Weber's (2007) Technology Appropriation Model (TaM) which stipulates that technology appropriation occurs when users take full advantage of features provided by technology designers. The findings also point to the fact that social media is shaping the ways in which the two radio stations traditionally report the news. As Sey (2011) argues, appropriation may also change the way individuals or organisations operate. Respondent 1 from Peace FM (R1P) explains the manner in which the appropriation of social media platforms and their applications is changing the mode of news reporting:

I remember those days when we didn't have the social media thing here in Ghana, we were doing recordings after our various assignments, we will come to the production studio just to put the voice there and replay it before it is carried on air. When it happens like that, it sort of delays the news but now social media has put some sort of expediency on news delivery...

Respondents from both Citi FM and Peace FM argue that the surge in social media has challenged reporters to go beyond collecting and reporting audio content to taking videos and pictures of events to be integrated into the online news production process. This implies that radio journalists are now reporting for both the "ear" and the "eye", a typical case of the subversion of traditional methods of news reporting prior to the advent of social media.

News Dissemination on Facebook

Table 1: Comparative frequency distribution of type of post on Citi FM and Peace FM’s Facebook pages from 8th June 2016 – 8th December, 2016.

Categories	CITI FM		PEACE FM	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
News & Features	3617	68.3	2006	97.9
News Headlines	803	15.2	0	0.0
Breaking News/updates	98	1.9	0	0.0
Opinions (News)	573	10.8	0	0.0
Other (Non-News)	201	3.8	43	2.1
Total	5292	100.0	2049	100.0

Table 1 shows a comparison of the types of stories Citi FM and Peace FM disseminate to their audiences on Facebook. For Citi FM, the table reveals that the station capitalises on the strength of Facebook to disseminate variety of news content. Large portions of the content distributed to its audiences are news and features (68.3%), followed by news headlines (15.2%); opinions (10.8%) and breaking news and news updates (1.9%). The rest (3.8%) are for non-news activities. From the Table, unlike Citi FM which uses Facebook to disseminate variety of news content, it is apparent that Peace FM uses Facebook to predominantly disseminate news and features (97.9%), though such content (news and features) cumulatively dominate the post content of these two radio stations. Only 2.1% of Peace FM’s Facebook content are used for non-news activities. The data is illustrated in the bar graph below:

Figure 1: Comparative frequency distribution of type of post on Citi FM and Peace FM’s Facebook pages from 8th June 2016 – 8th December, 2016

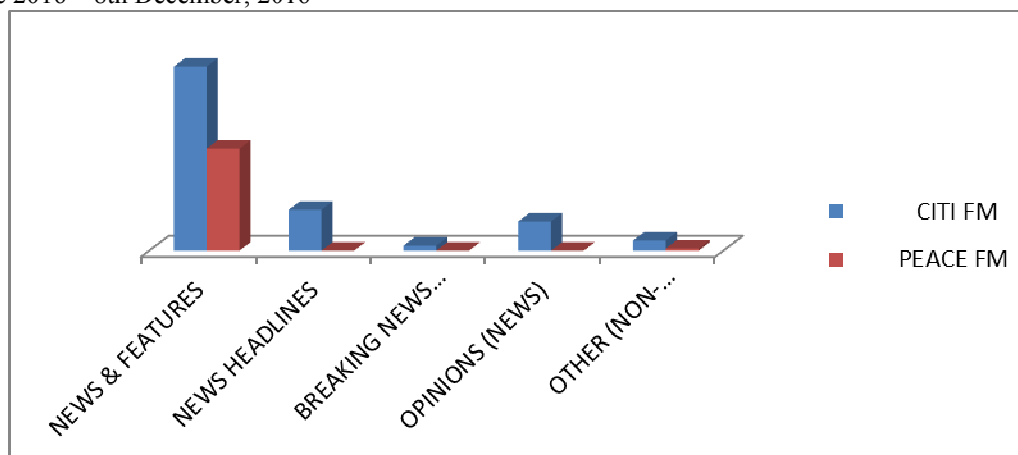


Table 2: Comparative frequency distribution of source of post on Citi FM and Peace FM’s Facebook pages from 8th June 2016 – 8th December, 2016

Categories	CITI FM		PEACE FM	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	1642	32.3	36	1.8
Website	3449	67.7	1970	98.2
Total	5091	100.0	2006	100.0

Source: Field data, 2016

Table 2 displays the source of such Facebook posts. For Citi FM, the data showed that more than two-third (67.7 %) of the content is made up of stories shared from the station’s website while 32.3% are generated on Facebook. For Peace FM, more than 98% of the content is shared from the stations’ website while the rest are generated on Facebook. What this means is that Peace FM appears to share more of its content from the station’s website compared to Citi FM. Such contents reach social media audiences who want to be abreast of events around them. This information is graphically illustrated on the figure below:

Figure 2: Comparative frequency distribution of source of post on Citi FM and Peace FM’s Facebook pages from 8th June 2016 – 8th December, 2016

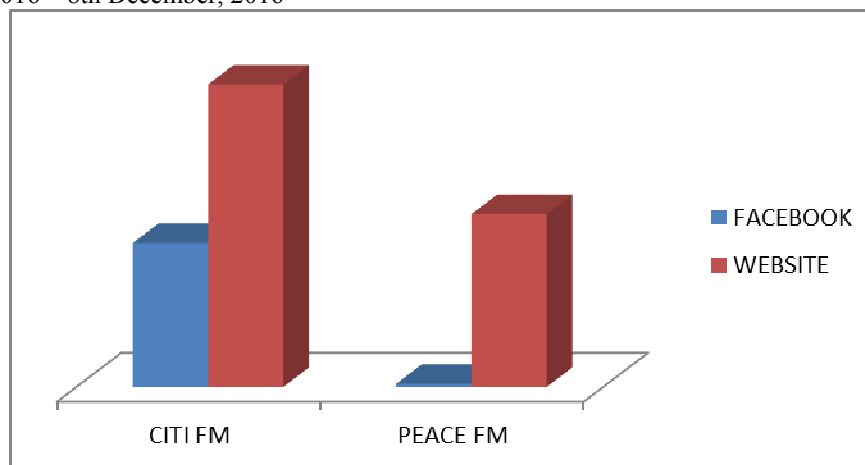
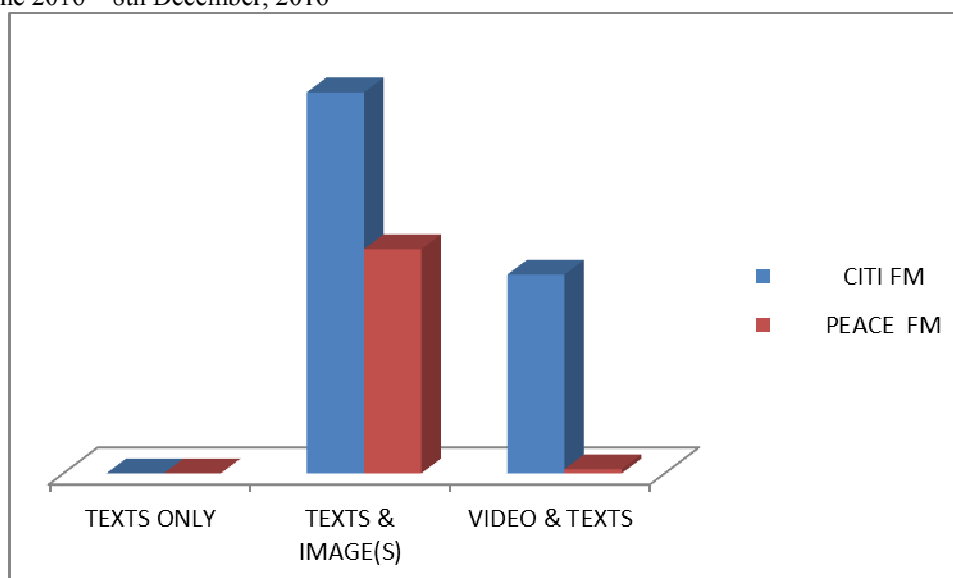


Table 3: Comparative frequency distribution of content of post on CITI FM and PEACE FM’s Facebook pages from 8th June 2016 – 8th December, 2016

Categories	CITI FM		PEACE FM	
	Frequency	Percentages	Frequency	Percentages
Texts Only	0	0	0	0
Texts & Image(s)	3346	65.7	1969	98.2
Video & Texts	1745	34.3	37	1.8
Total	5091	100	2006	100

Out of the news content disseminated on Facebook, it also appears from Table 3 that the two radio stations disseminate a mix of *texts* and *images* and *texts* and *videos* of news stories to their social media audiences. However, Citi FM disseminates large portions of such texts, audio and audio-visual materials to their audiences compared to Peace FM. About 65.7% of news materials posted on Facebook are texts and images (in the form of news stories with pictures) while 34.3% are video and texts (in the form of recorded and live videos). On Peace FM’s Facebook page, over 95% of the content are texts and pictures (news stories with pictures) while less than 2% are video and texts (recorded and live videos). These data are illustrated in the graph below:

Figure 3: Comparative Frequency distribution of content of post on CITI FM and PEACE FM’s Facebook pages from 8th June 2016 – 8th December, 2016



In all, this shows the level of integration of multimedia content by Citi FM into the news dissemination process compared with Peace FM. The reason for this variation in usage may be linked to linguistic factors and instrumentality of use. This is especially so when Peace FM predominantly targets indigenous Akan speakers (Nyavor, 2010) and social media appears to target the elite. It is therefore not surprising that social media provides more leverage for Citi FM which is an English-speaking radio station. Respondent 1 from Citi FM elaborates on the use of videos and other multimedia tools for news dissemination:

Lately, we have realized that videos are also an integral part of what is happening on social media. So we think the new multimedia is also getting on these social media platforms like Facebook. As a result, we have introduced Citi TV. It's an online television where we record our news and other outdoor events like MOGO, "December to Remember" on it.

The study also shows that these media houses appropriate a Facebook application called *Facebook Live*. This audio-visual application enables the stations to broadcast or stream important events live, broadcast breaking news stories and to broadcast the news live from the studios in order to give Facebook users a feel of what is happening on location. Figure 3 indicates how the *Facebook Live* application is used by Citi FM for news dissemination.

News Dissemination on Twitter

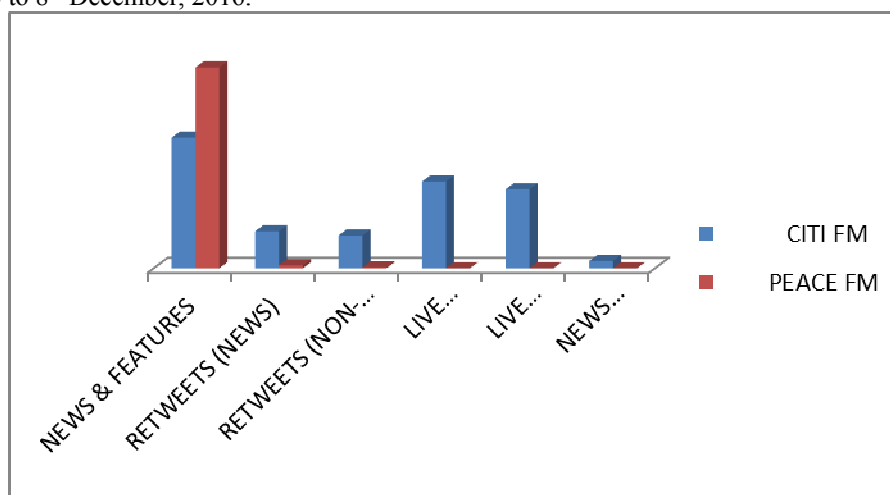
Table 4: Comparative frequency distribution of type of post on CITI FM and PEACE FM's Twitter pages from 8th June, 2016 to 8th December, 2016

Categories	CITI FM		PEACE FM	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
News & Features	2544	34.9	3912	97.9
Retweets (News)	721	9.9	61	1.5
Retweets (Non-News)	641	8.8	21	0.5
Live Updates/Tweets (News)	1691	23.2	0	0
Live Updates/Tweets (Non-News)	1539	21.1	0	0
News Updates/Headlines	145	2	0	0
Total	7281	100	3994	100

Source: Field data, 2016

Table 4 shows the news dissemination activities carried out by Citi FM and Peace FM on Twitter. News dissemination on Twitter by the two radio stations appears quite varied compared with such activity on Facebook. This may be due to the differences in features provided by the two platforms. Citi FM uses Twitter to disseminate news and features (34.9%) and provide news updates and headlines (2.0%) to Twitter followers. About 23.2% of the content were live updates or tweets of the news and interviews conducted during the bulletin while 9.9% were retweets from Twitter fans about the news. The rest (about 30%) of the content were not related to news dissemination activities (non-news). What this means is that Citi FM uses its Twitter page for other activities other than news, though they appear insignificant. For Peace FM, it appears much of its tweets (97.9%) are aimed at disseminating only news and features to its audiences. In all, what this means is that Citi FM uses Twitter to disseminate varied content compared to Peace FM which appears to restrict its news dissemination activities to the distribution of news and features. This information is graphically illustrated on the figure below:

Figure 4: Comparative frequency distribution of type of post on CITI FM and PEACE FM's Twitter pages from 8th June, 2016 to 8th December, 2016.



In the area of using Twitter for live news updates, Respondent 2 from Citi FM rationalizes that Twitter makes it easier to disseminate information quickly, attributing it to the ease with which it is used for live tweets, updates and videoing. This revelation is in tandem with the Perceived Ease of Use (EU) principle of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989) which states that users are likely to adopt an innovation if it is perceived not to be difficult to understand, learn, or operate as supported by this statement from a participant

Twitter has been designed in such a way that it makes tweeting live events easier and faster compared with

Facebook. That is why you see us doing more live stuff on Twitter (Respondent 2 Citi FM).

Table 5: Comparative frequency distribution of source of post on CITI FM and PEACE FM’s Twitter pages from 8th June 2016 – 8th December, 2016.

Categories	CITI FM		PEACE FM	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Twitter	2517	50.3	17	0.4
Website	2389	47.7	3843	96.7
YouTube	102	2.0	113	2.8
Total	5008	100	3973	100

From Table 5, it appears that much of the news content on Peace FM’s Twitter page (96.7%) are shared from the station’s website with just a few (2.8%) coming from YouTube and Twitter (0.4%). However, for Citi FM, source of news content appears almost fairly distributed between the stations’ Twitter page (50.3%) and the stations’ website (47.7%). Only 2.0% of the content is shared from YouTube. What this means is that Peace FM does a lot more news sharing on Twitter from its website compared with Citi FM. Figure 10 below provides an illustration of the news sharing activity by Peace FM.

Table 6: Comparative frequency distribution of content of post on CITI FM and PEACE FM’s Twitter pages from 8th June 2016 to 8th December, 2016.

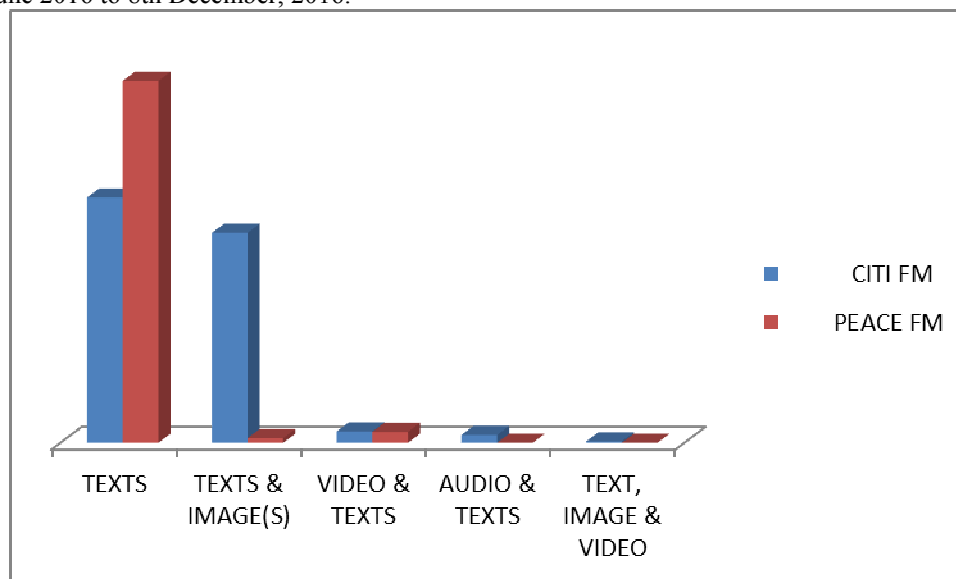
Categories	CITI FM		PEACE FM	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Texts only	2581	51.5	3808	95.8
Texts & Image(s)	2208	44.1	49	1.2
Video & Texts	121	2.4	116	2.9
Audio & Texts	83	1.7	0	0
Text, Image & Video	15	0.3	0	0
Total	5008	100	3973	100

Source: Field data, 2016

In terms of the content of news posts on Twitter, results from the cyber ethnographic studies conducted on the two radio stations’ websites indicate that Peace FM’s news tweets contained more *texts* (95.8%) with a few *texts and video* (2.9%) and *images and texts* (1.2%) compared with Citi FM. The *texts only* and *texts and images* content of the post content of the Peace FM are mostly stories shared from the stations’ website while the *videos and texts* components are stories shared on Twitter from the station’s YouTube page. These videos are edited stories from the station’s sister media house, United Television (UTV) and have been put on the YouTube page of the station.

With regard to Citi FM’s Twitter content, Table 6 shows some distribution among the categories (*Texts only*; *Texts and Images*; *Texts and Audio*, *Texts*, *Image* and *Video*). In other words, more than half (51.5%) of the content are *texts only* while more than 44% of the content are *texts and images*. *Video* and *texts* constitute 2.4% while *audio* and *texts* are 1.7% of the content. *Text*, *image* and *video* constitute only 0.3% of the Twitter news content on Citi FM’s page. The *texts only* content are usually live tweets of news and interviews during the station’s main news bulletins (6am, 12 noon, and 6pm). However, most of the live tweets are done during the stations’ 6pm news bulletin (*Eyewitness News*). The *text* and *image* content are mostly news stories shared from the station’s website while the *texts* and *video* and *text*, *image* and *video* components are recorded or streamed news content. The *audio* and *text* content are usually podcasts of the news shared on Twitter. Overall, what this means is that it appears Citi FM integrates more audio, video and image content in its news dissemination activities on Twitter compared with Peace FM. It also appears Citi FM is taking maximum advantage of features provided by Twitter for news dissemination and this is consistent with Bar, Pisani and Weber’s (2007) postulation under the Technology Appropriation Model (TaM) which stipulates that technology appropriation occurs when users take full advantage of the features provided by a particular technology for their daily activities. The comparative appropriation of Twitter between the two radio stations in terms of content is further illustrated on the graph below:

Figure 5: Comparative frequency distribution of content of post on CITI FM and PEACE FM’s Twitter pages from 8th June 2016 to 8th December, 2016.



But what also appears significant is the appropriation of social media applications such as *Periscope* in disseminating radio news on Twitter. Respondents from Citi FM argue that the *Periscope* application provided by Twitter has enabled them to “broadcast the news live” ensuring swift dissemination of news and enhancing greater interactivity and engagement with audiences. A participant states

The periscope helps our followers on Twitter in particular to have a live experience of what is happening in the studio. We use a mobile phone to do like we are just taking a normal picture or video and then it is showing live on Twitter via periscope (Respondent 1 Citi FM).

Public Engagement and Interactivity

Findings arising out of the cyber ethnographic studies on the social media pages of Citi FM and Peace FM, interviews with key respondents and analysis of documents show use of the strength of the various social media platforms for interacting and engaging with the audiences across various platforms (cross media engagement). Before and during news broadcasts, listeners are engaged on various social media platforms to send in their views and opinions about key headline stories. Extract from Citi FM’s news bulletin on the next page shows how the station, at the beginning of the news bulletin, is inviting the audience to be part of the news through their various platforms.

On Twitter, followers are able to retweet live texts of interviews conducted during news broadcasts as well as news stories, videos and audio material shared on that platform. Hashtags are also used to engage followers and to keep conversations running. Respondent 1 from Citi FM (Respondent 1 Citi FM) explains that,

...we ask our listeners to send us comments, give them our social media handles, hashtags, WhatsApp numbers among others and subsequently pick comments from all these places... You will find that on Eyewitness News.

On Facebook, radio audiences use the interactive features of the platform such as “Comment”, “Share”, “Reply”, “Like” and the messaging application to engage each other as well as with the radio stations. Thus, Citi FM and Peace FM are capitalising on the interactive feature of social media to engage their audience in longer conversations and among the stations’ audiences even way after news broadcasts or when stories are shared. This finding corroborates Scannel’s (2010), cited in Singeret et al. (2011) assertion that before the advent of social media, radio news used to be more ephemeral and fleeting but with the adoption of social media, radio stations are using their online platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and websites) to engage the audiences in longer conversations, a situation which appears to increase the life span of radio news.

Respondents say interactivity has also helped in shaping news content, enhanced the relationship with various social media sources and improved newsgathering and distribution processes.

News Editing

Cordeiro (2012) avers that the advent of social media has, among other things, created a non-traditional, active, and participative audience. Cordeiro is of the conviction that the benefits of such engagements include the feedback radio stations gather from their online audiences concerning not only the news headlines but significantly about the news programme or bulletin itself (Canter, 2013). Respondents from both Peace FM and

Citi FM were unanimous in admitting the role audiences play in shaping the editorial content of the news. It came up that some social media users make editorial inputs into the news such as correction of wrong facts read on air and on the radio stations' social media platforms. Respondents reveal that social media users shape the grammatical and structural content of the news in varied ways. Respondent 2 from Citi FM refers to these virtual or social media editors as *Shadow Editors* and explains their significance in the news production process,

Sometimes, they may even throw in certain things that will help you do a lot of follow ups. For me, they are very crucial; I call them my "shadow editors" because you don't really know the path that you are charting. They are at the back, more or less like gauging you. Though they are not professionals, they see certain things they see you may not see. They sometimes point out errors; it could be grammatical, factual errors or something.

Respondent 1 from Peace FM also makes a similar observation:

As an Akan radio station, we have our audience making contributions regarding the pronunciation of Akan names and certain issues about the culture of the Akans...

The editorial inputs made by social media users within the radio news production process appears useful to these media houses in their daily routines. This is consistent with the Perceived Usefulness (PU) principle of Davis, Bagozzi and Warsha's (1989) Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) which postulates that people are likely to use a particular technological device because of its ability to enhance their daily and professional activities; which, in this case, is news editing.

Conclusion

Social media has been useful in the news production processes of the selected radio stations (Peace FM and Citi FM). This is in line with Davis et al. (1985) Perceived Usefulness (PU) principle of the technology acceptance model which stipulates that people are inclined to use a particular technology if it will enhance their daily tasks. The two radio stations in similar and varied forms appropriate these social media platforms in their routine news production processes. While the point of convergence between the two radio stations in terms of appropriation lies around news gathering, sourcing, reporting and editorial issues, the point of departure hovers primarily around the application of social media platforms and their applications for news dissemination. While Citi FM appears to appropriate social media and its applications to disseminate variety of content such as news headlines, breaking news, and news and features as well as for live tweeting of news and interviews, Peace FM appears largely restricted to news sharing activities. More so, Citi FM appears to integrate more audio-visual materials in its news dissemination process. The content includes recorded documentaries, podcasts, and news headlines with accompanying videos. Peace FM, on the other hand, appears a bit limited to the use of texts and images despite sporadic attempts to incorporate videos into its news dissemination and social media engagement activities.

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Mashud Zakaria is a Lecturer at the Ghana Institute of Journalism, Accra, Ghana. He holds a Master of Philosophy degree in Communication and Media Studies with a major in Media Studies from the University of Education Winneba, Ghana. His research areas include online, print, and broadcast media, social media, development communication, new media technology, and media theories.

Andy Ofori-Birikorang is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Communication, University of Education Winneba, Ghana. He holds Doctor of Philosophy in Media Arts and Studies from Ohio University. His research focuses on Africa with a concentration on media arts theories, development communication, critical communication pedagogy, popular culture and gender studies.