New technologies and journalism practice in Nigeria and Ghana

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New Technologies and Journalism Practice in Nigeria and Ghana

New technologies are generally perceived as the basic tool for survival in modern society. But the extent of their availability and use, as well as their impact on newspaper journalism practice in West Africa is unknown. This paper presents the results of a study that investigated the impact of new technologies on newspaper journalism practice in two West African countries — Nigeria and Ghana. The study, conducted in five newspapers in the two countries, found that, although a majority of the journalists believed the new technologies have improved the quality of their newspapers, fewer than half of the journalists were unimpressed with the level of the technologies available to them in the performance of their duties.

Whenever new technologies are introduced, the expectation is that change — particularly improved efficiencies — will follow. However, research and anecdotal evidence suggest that the willingness — and ability — of journalists to accept and adapt to technological change varies across cultures. This research presents the results of a study that investigated the impact of new technologies on newspaper journalism practice in two West African countries — Nigeria and Ghana.

Literature

The emergence of new technologies in newspaper journalism — video display terminals (VDTs), pagination systems, computer graphics terminals, the Internet, interactive multimedia systems and digital telecommunications — has dramatically altered traditional newsgathering processes and production formats. A number of studies have been conducted on the impact of new technologies on journalism practice in various countries. Ewart (1997), Green (1997), Dombkins (1993), Williams (1993), as well as
Green and Radford (1993), among others, have conducted studies on how aspects of the new technologies affect newsroom practices in Australia, including Australian journalists’ reactions to the introduction of new technologies in their work places (Henningham, 1995). In the United States and Canada, studies by Auman (1994), Morton (1993), Randall (1986), Russial (1994, 1995 & 1998), Underwood, Giffard and Stamm (1994), as well as McKercher (1991) have also examined new technologies’ impact on various aspects of journalism. But despite the growing literature in this area of academic scholarship, little is known of the impact of new technologies on West African newspaper journalism.

The significance of this paper lies in its contribution to cross-cultural knowledge about how newspaper journalism is being shaped by new technologies. As stated in the preceding paragraph, the focus on West African newspapers is informed by the fact that, while new technologies are known to be impacting various groups and occupations in various societies, not much is known about new technologies’ impact on newspaper journalism practice in West Africa and indeed the whole of Africa.

In a study of the technological adaptation process among the Maori people of New Zealand, Schaniel (1988) explains that new technology may create change in society, and that the direction of change is determined by the nature and function (or use) of that technology in the adopting culture. Similarly, Kim (1998) studied the social processes surrounding the introduction of computer technology in educational institutions in Malaysia, New Zealand and Pakistan and found that family norms and schools’ institutional context influenced how students appropriated the computer in each country. The underlying point here is that different societies respond in different ways to the new technologies.

In a related study of the impact of new technologies on the educational and socio-economic development of Africa and the Asia-Pacific countries, Obijiofor et al. (2000) found that there are serious barriers to the use of new technologies in educational and socio-economic development, such as issues of infrastructure support, access to the technologies, training and skills development, and hierarchical social relations which determine who has access to new technologies. Generally new technologies are considered appropriate, even though there remain concerns over economic priorities, basic needs or computers. The study showed that developing African and Asia-Pacific countries are caught in a ‘Catch-22’ situation: without using the new technologies, their future generations would further lag behind and could find themselves further impoverished. If they use the technologies without addressing some of the concerns and needs...
LEVI OBIJIOFOR: New technologies ... of their societies, they could be placing their carts before their horses.

Following on from that study, Obijiofor (2001) examined specifically Singaporean and Nigerian journalists’ perceptions of new technologies. The study found that, although new technologies were transforming journalism practice in Nigerian and Singaporean newspapers, and even though the diffusion of new technologies was slow in Nigeria, the new technologies were regarded in both countries as facilitating unethical journalism practice (Obijiofor, 2001).

There is no doubt that technological advances have affected the methods journalists use to find and report news. In the past, journalists relied mostly on their contacts as their news sources. Reporters were encouraged to initiate direct contacts with their sources, in order to confirm and re-confirm the veracity of their stories. However, with the emergence of new technologies, which are used in news reporting and production, tradition is increasingly giving way to new methods of journalism practice. For instance, in a study of Australian journalists’ reactions to new technology, Henningham (1995: 226) observed that, “Computers in conjunction with communication software have also transformed the transmission of and re-routing of copy. No longer must reporters in the field tediously dictate their hand-written stories from noisy public phone boxes to hard-of-hearing copy-takers: they now type their story into a notebook computer, and send it through the phone lines ... for immediate processing by sub-editors.” But Henningham (1995: 236) also noted that, in regard to Australian newsrooms, the nature of work performed by journalists affected their attitudes to the technology, with section editors being “the least convinced about the positive impacts of technology” (1995: 236).

Also in Australia, Ewart (1997) noted how the introduction of computer pagination technology in a regional Australian newspaper has changed the role of sub-editors. According to Ewart, a sub-editor’s ability to sub is now secondary to the ability to operate computer programs. But another study in Australia that examined the impact of technology and environmental factors on newspaper organisational design (Dombkins, 1993: 36), found that, although new technologies may enable editors and sub-editors to see the normal newspaper page on the screen and permit sub-editors to check spellings and calculate story length electronically rather than manually, the problem remains that sub-editors also lose their word skills in the process, rather than rely on their natural talents. Similarly, Green (2000, cited in Obijiofor and Green, 2001: 93) reported that, “the introduction of pagination computer technology in some Australian regional newspapers resulted in
Despite Dombkins’s (1993) research findings, there appears to be general optimism that the new technologies have helped to advance journalism practice rather than undermine or complicate the process. Some researchers, for instance, have pointed to how the new technologies helped journalists to acquire new skills and allowed them to do their jobs in a more efficient manner. Morton (1993) argues, for example, that new technologies have assisted in promoting “economic efficiency” in newspaper management. Russial (1994: 91) argued further that technological innovation in many newsrooms such as video display terminals (VDTs), pagination systems, electronic photo desks and computer graphics terminals have transformed the news production process. Randall (1986) found that transition from one editing and typesetting technology to another could either increase or and also reduced the rate of typographical errors in newspapers, depending on the nature of the technology and the level of complication in how complicated the process of transition.

For all the optimism surrounding the new technologies, Kyrish (1994) has cautioned that people should not rely solely on arguments that promote new technologies “as autonomous, revolutionary and utopian”. He pointed to how cable television’s arrival in the United States was met with the same degree of enthusiasm as the current optimism surrounding the information superhighway. In each case, he noted, public expectations did not match the reality. In the same tone, Weise (1997) notes that the Internet technology has not really changed the nature of news reporting. She is particularly cautious about Internet-based news stories, arguing that, “The Net is a place of intrigue, rumour and fabrication” (Weise, 1997: 160).

The main aim of this study is to investigate how new technologies have impacted newspaper journalism practice in Nigeria and Ghana. The other aims are to determine:

• whether new technologies impact newspaper quality through a reduction or increase in typographical errors and design flaws;
• whether there has been a change in local, national and international news content mix; in particular news involving developing and developed countries;
• whether journalists perceive new technologies as facilitators of ethical or unethical journalism practice;

Aims
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Hypotheses

• the extent to which journalists are optimistic or pessimistic about how new technologies would impact the future of journalism in their countries. This is important because, a pessimistic view, for example, may adversely affect professional commitment to values and standards.

• the effect, if any, of new technologies on traditional role of journalists; and

• whether new technologies have produced, among newspaper journalists, more or less job-related stress.

Four hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study.

H1: A majority of Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists believe that new technologies have improved rather than harmed the quality of their newspapers, in terms of typographical errors, as well as layout and design flaws.

H2: A majority of Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists believe that new technologies, in particular the Internet promote unethical rather than ethical journalism practice. This hypothesis was designed to test whether or not a previous research outcome (Obijiofor, 2001), which showed that 28 per cent of Singaporean and Nigerian journalists believed that new technologies promoted ethical journalism, would be upheld.

H3: A majority of Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists believe that new technologies have increased rather than reduced wider access to news from developing countries. This proposition was founded on the assumption that, not only has the Internet opened up sources of news about developing countries, it has also done so in an inexpensive way. However, an alternative view argues that disparity in access to Internet resources, for example, is a major problem in developing African countries.

H4: Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists will be more optimistic than pessimistic about the impact of new technologies on the future of journalism practice in their countries.

This study was conducted in Nigeria and Ghana in July 2002. Survey questionnaires were designed and administered personally by this researcher to a total of 100 Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists over a period of two weeks. The questionnaire was aimed at uncovering Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists' attitudes to and perceptions of the new technologies in their professional practice. A majority of the questions administered to journalists in the two countries were adapted from Henningham’s (1995) study of Australian journalists’ reactions to new technology.
The questionnaire consisted of a total of 15 questions, six of which were open-ended. The rest of the remaining nine questions were closed-ended questions designed to test journalists’ opinions about impact of new technologies on: the quality of newspapers; amount of time saved at work; ease of job performance; level of satisfaction with available technologies at work; ethical or unethical journalism practice; access to news from developing countries; future of journalism practice; and threat of the Internet to newspaper as a news medium.

For each of these variables, the journalists were requested to provide further explanations or reasons for their responses. These unstructured responses were then extrapolated into coded response categories. Cross-case analysis method, which involves gathering markedly different and similar responses, was then applied to analyse the data. Cross-case analysis involves gathering markedly different and similar responses. In this regard, the open responses were then categorised according to degree of uniqueness or similarity.

Questionnaires were administered randomly to journalists working in three English language daily newspapers in Nigeria (The Guardian, This Day and Daily Champion) and two English language daily newspapers in Ghana (Daily Graphic and The Chronicle). All but one of the newspapers is privately owned. Ghana’s Daily Graphic is government-owned but was included in the study because it has the largest circulation in the country.

Twenty questionnaires were administered randomly to journalists in each newspaper organisation, giving a total of 100 questionnaires. Of this number, 52 questionnaires were completed and returned. The return rate varied across the two countries. After repeated trips to the newsrooms, a little over 68 per cent of the 60 questionnaires administered to journalists in three Nigerian newspaper organisations were completed and returned (41 of 60 questionnaires). In Ghana, the response rate was very small, merely 27.5 per cent, despite explanations about the objectivity of the study and guarantees of anonymity. In fact, the response rate among journalists working in The Chronicle newspaper (in Ghana) was highly disappointing. Ghanaian and Nigerian journalists’ poor response to research questionnaires compares with similar results in the Pacific Islands (Masterton, 1989; Layton, 1995; Robie, 1999). For example, Masterton administered 321 questionnaires to working journalists and “citizens who are often reported by those journalists”. Only 79 responses were received, giving a low return rate of 24.6 per cent. Of the 79 respondents, 36 were journalists. Similarly, Layton (1995) distributed 300 questionnaires to 47 newsrooms in eight Pacific Island countries. She received 164 completed questionnaires, a return rate of 54.6 per cent. Robie
(1999) distributed 188 questionnaires to Fijian and Papua New Guinean journalists. He received 124 responses, a return rate of 66 per cent. As argued in a related study (Obijiofor and Hanusch, 2003), the poor attitude of journalists to research questionnaires raises questions about the problems of conducting surveys research among journalists in Nigeria and Ghana.

It is important to caution, in view of the limited sample size, that the results presented in this paper should be regarded as preliminary and should not be taken as a generalisation or representation of the complete situation in all newsrooms in Nigeria and Ghana or in the West African sub-region. Further research involving a larger sample would be required before a general more complete conclusion can be drawn.

Nigeria and Ghana were selected for this study because of their political and social standing in the West African sub-region. For instance, Nigeria and Ghana are regarded as sub-regional leaders in West Africa, and the level of journalism practice in the two countries is regarded as high. As Chaudhary (2001: 35) has noted, Nigeria is “one of the largest countries in Africa” and it “has more daily newspapers than any other African country”. Most recently, Nigeria and Ghana have undergone democratic reforms and their news media enjoy greater freedom than was previously the case.

Results

There is considerable striking agreement among the journalists sampled in Nigeria and Ghana that new technologies have improved rather than harmed the quality of newspapers in their countries. More than nine out of ten journalists (96.2 per cent) felt said that new technologies have improved the quality of their newspapers (Table 1). No journalist said that new technologies have harmed the quality of newspapers. However, one respondent (2 per cent) was unsure whether new technologies have improved or harmed the quality of newspapers.

Table 1: Impact of new technologies on quality of newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>NIGERIA</th>
<th>GHANA</th>
<th>TOTAL* f (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved quality</td>
<td>40 (97.5)</td>
<td>10 (91)</td>
<td>50 (96.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmed quality</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1 (2.4)</td>
<td>1 (9)</td>
<td>2 (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>41 (79)</td>
<td>11 (21)</td>
<td>52 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi Square = 58.04; df = 2; p< .001
Figures in Table 1 support Hypothesis 1, which stated that, “A majority of Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists believe that new technologies have improved rather than harmed the quality of their newspapers, in terms of typographical errors, as well as layout and design flaws.” Hypothesis 1 was found to be significant at .001 level. On a comparative basis, the results were also similar. Exactly 97.5 per cent of the journalists sampled in Nigeria (as against 91 per cent of those sampled in Ghana) said that new technologies have improved the quality of their newspapers. In both countries, no journalist expressed negative views about the impact of new technologies on the quality of newspapers. However, two journalists (one from each country) could not say whether new technologies have improved or harmed the quality of newspapers.

The journalists were asked to explain why they believed new technologies have improved or harmed the quality of newspapers. The reasons given ranged from speed of production, use of colour photographs, improvement in physical appearance of the newspaper to simplicity of effecting corrections and checking spellings with the aid of the spell check software. Comments from Ghanaian journalists (presented below) are identified with the abbreviation “Gha” and comments from Nigerian journalists have been marked “Nig”. This has been done to protect the identities of the journalists, as promised to them during the survey. Among the journalists sampled in Nigeria and Ghana, there were comments such as:

- The quality is better and the production speed has increased tremendously (Gha).
- Ease of effecting changes in copies, better graphics, speed of delivery of stories if the reporter is efficient on the keyboard. With some packages (graphics), the capability of working on two or more pages at a flip (Nig).
- The comprehensive use of colour technology has increased revenue, brightened layouts and enhanced the quality presentation of newspapers. Internet publishing has also reduced costs and added speed to timeliness (Nig).
- It has improved layout quality and enhanced picture quality as well (Gha).
- The layout and page planning are always very neat and attractive while typographical errors are almost non-existent (Nig).
- The new facilities have made it possible that one takes responsibility for errors. For instance, before computers were made available to so many people, corrections were effected at the mercy of the typesetters (Nig).
- The computer makes the work faster and the layout more presentable (Gha).
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- New computers and other production machinery are equipped with digital technology which enhances precision and speed in production (Nig).
- With the introduction of high-tech computers, work moves faster. Reporters do not have to write in long hand any longer (Nig).
- Modern web printing of multiple colours is a great input in modern newspapering (Nig).
- I now use the new technologies for ... editorial and research purposes which, if manually done, would have been slower and untidy. The research is done quickly and the spell-check is useful (Nig).

The journalists were also asked whether the new technologies helped them to save time in their work or took up more of their time. Henningham (1995) posed a similar question to Australian journalists. As shown in Table 2, an overwhelming majority of the journalists sampled in Nigeria and Ghana (94.2 per cent or 49 of 52 respondents) said the new technologies helped them to save time at work, while only 3.8 per cent (2 of 52 journalists) felt the new technologies actually took more of their time. Only one journalist (from Ghana) could not say whether new technologies took more time or helped to save time at work. On a comparative basis, 97.5 per cent of the journalists sampled in Nigeria (40 of 41 respondents) and 81.8 per cent of the journalists sampled in Ghana (9 of 11 respondents) said the new technologies helped them to save time in their work.

Table 2: Impact of new technologies on time spent at work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>NIGERIA</th>
<th>GHANA</th>
<th>TOTAL* f (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saved time</td>
<td>40 (97.5)</td>
<td>9 (81.8)</td>
<td>49 (94.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took more time</td>
<td>1 (2.4)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>2 (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>41 (79)</td>
<td>11 (21)</td>
<td>52 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi Square = 54.44; df = 2; p< .001

The results presented in Table 2 support the views expressed by Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists (see Table 1) that new technologies have improved rather than harmed the quality of their newspapers. One distinct aspect of that improvement is the time journalists spend in their work. The following comments illustrate the various ways in which the journalists believe the new technologies help them to save time:
- When you type a story straight into the computer, you eliminate the typesetting process and thus save time. Also when...
your correspondent sends stories through the email, you simply transfer them into your (computer) system without having to typeset them (Nig).

- One very aspect is computer networking, which makes every editor and reporter to access copy from the network system. That way, the editor is able to have an overview of the story without necessarily having to meet each reporter or writer face-to-face (Nig).

- I can now send reports via the Internet without having to travel back to the newsroom. Photos also reach me within minutes without physical travel (Nig).

- It is easier getting in touch with other sections and departments to save time of walking up and down getting what information one needs in good time (Gha).

- The computer makes things quicker. Take the spell check, for instance. You can quickly click on it to spell-check your story and you immediately spot your errors and effect immediate correction (Nig).

- Faxes and email make it easier for me to send my stories on time (Gha).

- Digital camera doesn't need any printing or developing. The new technologies are faster and more efficient (Gha).

- I save considerable time working on my stories compared to when I was using manual typewriters (Gha).

- Instead of writing on paper before typing, it is typed direct into the computer and picked up by the editor (Gha).

- Spell checks and grammar applications could be easier and faster; stories could be merged faster; in long texts, searching for any part of the body is easy as well (Nig).

In spite of these positive comments, there were two journalists (one from each country) who argued that new technologies actually took up more of their time because they (and some other journalists) were unexposed to the new technologies and so were unable to understand how to use the technologies; they also said the new technologies imposed extra challenges on journalists.

- The new technologies take up more of the time at work only because people are often unable to understand or use them effectively (Nig).

- Working as a journalist in a newspaper industry in this era of high technology means I have to go an extra mile to gather news where others have not reached (Gha).

The views expressed here, although a minority, challenge the notion that new technologies facilitate greater efficiency at work. As I have argued elsewhere Obijiofor (2001: 139) argued, “how new technologies impact the time journalists spend at work is indicative of the extent to which journalists believe these technological
innovations aid efficiency” (Obijiofor, 2001: 139). This study has shown that, while a majority of the journalists sampled in Nigeria and Ghana believe that new technologies help them to save time in their work, a few other journalists believe that new technologies often pose obstacles to speedy performance at work because journalists do not understand how to use the technologies or are not exposed to these technologies. These are valid points and they raise questions about lack of exposure or access to new technologies and lack of training opportunities in various newsrooms, especially in West African newsrooms where technological diffusions are slow. If the experience reported here were to extend to other newsrooms in West African countries, issues identified by the two journalists would seriously affect the rate of new technology diffusion in West African newsrooms.

The questionnaire also asked the journalists to explain how the new technologies have impacted the ease with which they perform their tasks. More than eight out of ten journalists sampled in Nigeria and Ghana (86.5 per cent or 45 of 52 respondents) said the new technologies have made their work easier (Table 3). However, 7.7 per cent of the journalists (4 of 52 respondents) said new technologies have made their jobs more complicated. While 3.8 per cent (2 of 52 respondents) said the new technologies have made no difference to how they perform their work, 2 per cent (1 of 52 respondents) was unsure whether new technologies have made the job easier or more complicated.

Comparative figures from Nigeria and Ghana show a similar trend. In Nigeria, 88 per cent of the journalists sampled in three news organisations (36 of 41 respondents) said the new technologies have made their jobs easier while in Ghana, the figure was 81.8 per cent (9 of 11 respondents).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>NIGERIA</th>
<th>GHANA</th>
<th>TOTAL* f(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easier</td>
<td>36 (88)</td>
<td>9 (81.8)</td>
<td>45 (86.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More complicated</td>
<td>3 (7.3)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>4 (7.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difference</td>
<td>1 (2.4)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>2 (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1 (2.4)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>41 (79)</td>
<td>11 (21)</td>
<td>52 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi Square = 73.84; df = 3; p < .001

Three of the four journalists (Nigerians), who said new
technologies have made things more complicated for them, gave the following reasons:

- The more technology grows, the more stuff you don’t know about and the more re-training has to take place (Nig).
- Personally I am yet to feel the impact on my desk, which has not been computerised (Nig).
- One has to learn the technicalities of new electronic gadgets as well as get acquainted with the technical intricacies of the computer; moreso, the inadequacy of computers available make the difficulties greater (Nig).

The only journalist in Ghana to express a similar view said:

- Of late, whatever that was published was taken as the best but now readers have the option to go into the Internet to crosscheck information (Gha).

There are three crucial points identified in these comments. One: use of new technologies requires constant training and re-training if journalists are to must keep up with the pace of technological developments. Two: lack of access to computers and associated new technologies implies lack of knowledge of how new technologies impact job performance. Three: using the Internet to crosscheck facts implies that journalists have to be more careful about what they write/publish, as the Internet now serves as an alternative channel for newspaper readers to verify published stories, published in newspapers.

These issues are crucial in newspaper journalism practice in the new millennium. Lack of access to new technologies and lack of training and re-training opportunities are likely to impact negatively the ability of journalists to function effectively in their profession and in their societies. Without access to new technologies, and without a basic knowledge of how to use them, West African journalists stand the risk of lagging behind their colleagues in other countries/cultures and indeed are likely to lag behind new developments in technology. These issues must be addressed at the management level in each newspaper organisation. News organisations have the moral obligation to equip their editorial staff with the new technological basic tools that are becoming essential for journalistic ‘survival’ in the 21st century, as the new technologies have been described. More fundamentally, news organisations need to provide regular training and re-training programs to enable journalists to understand how to use the new technologies.

This study also investigated the extent to which Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists were satisfied with the new technologies available to them in the performance of their jobs. The question posed to the journalists was: “To what extent are you satisfied with the level of new technologies available to you in the
performance of your work?” The question carried four descending response options: “Very satisfied”, “Fairly satisfied”, “Somewhat dissatisfied”, and “Very dissatisfied”. Opinions were largely divided on this subject. Only 34.6 per cent of the journalists sampled in Nigeria and Ghana (18 of 52 respondents) said they were “Very satisfied”, while a slightly higher percentage (48.1 per cent or 25 of 52 respondents) indicated they were “Fairly satisfied” with the level of new technologies available to them in their work (Table 4). A further 9.6 per cent of the journalists (5 of 52 respondents) were “Somewhat dissatisfied” while 5.8 per cent (3 of 52 respondents) said they were “Very dissatisfied”.

Table 4: Satisfaction with level of new technologies available in the newsroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>NIGERIA</th>
<th>GHANA</th>
<th>TOTAL* f (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>13 (31.7)</td>
<td>5 (45.4)</td>
<td>8 (34.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>21 (51.2)</td>
<td>4 (36.3)</td>
<td>25 (48.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>4 (9.8)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>5 (9.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>3 (7.3)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>3 (5.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>1 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>41 (79)</td>
<td>11 (21)</td>
<td>52 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi Square = 21.8; df = 4; p< .001

While these figures echo the concerns expressed earlier by three Nigerian journalists and one Ghanaian journalist, the figures suggest that availability of new technologies in Nigerian and Ghanaian newsrooms remain a serious problem indeed.

This study further examined Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists’ perceptions of the impact of new technologies on ethical journalism. The journalists were asked whether they believed that new technologies promote ethical or unethical journalism. Only 30.8 per cent of the journalists (16 of 52 respondents) said they believed that new technologies promote ethical journalism while 21.1 per cent (11 of 52 respondents) believed new technologies promote unethical journalism practice (Table 5). These figures show that Hypothesis 2 is not significant at .001 level. Hypothesis 2 states that, “A majority of Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists believe that new technologies, in particular the Internet promote unethical rather than ethical journalism practice.” This was not the case, according to figures in Table 5.
Table 5 also shows that an unusually large percentage of the journalists sampled in this study (42.3 per cent or 22 of 52 respondents) – all of them Nigerians – were ambivalent in regard to whether new technologies promoted ethical or unethical journalism. The reason for this manner of response is not clear but it would appear that these Nigerian journalists preferred to adopt a neutral position. If, for instance, they expressed views that suggested new technologies promoted unethical journalism, it could imply they were also guilty of unethical journalism practice.

A country-by-country breakdown of the figures in Table 5 shows that a greater percentage of the journalists sampled in Ghana (63.6 per cent) than those sampled in Nigeria (9.8 per cent) believed new technologies promoted unethical journalism. It is clear that Ghanaian journalists were more prepared than their Nigerian colleagues to express their views on whether new technologies promote unethical or ethical journalism. Among the journalists sampled in Ghana, opinions fell mostly within two main response categories: new technologies either promote ethical journalism (36.3 per cent) or unethical journalism (63.6 per cent). There were no neutral opinions.

Journalists sampled in Nigeria and Ghana were also asked whether they felt new technologies have increased wider access to news from developing countries. More than seven in ten journalists (78 per cent or 41 of 52 respondents) responded in the affirmative while fewer than two in ten journalists (13.4 per cent or 7 of 52 respondents) were convinced that new technologies have not increased wider access to news from developing countries (Table 6). This result supports Hypothesis 3, which states that “A majority of Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists believe that new technologies have increased rather than reduced wider access to news from developing countries.” Only 7.7 per cent of the
The availability of news on the Internet and cable television, as well as the ease of accessing Internet sites were cited by Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists as the reasons why the new technologies have increased wider access to news from developing countries.

- Information about developing countries is now readily available on the Internet and people can just log into the websites from anywhere in the world (Nig).
- Cellular phones, email, fax, Internet, etc., have revolutionised information flow and the world is now a global village (Nig).
- By accessing the web site of any country or region as well as organisation, information is readily available (Gha).
- News stories are put on the web and therefore are available to everyone (Gha).
- An example is CNN whose presence in key capitals of Africa helps to break news with ease to the rest of the world (Nig).
- It is now possible for a sport journalist in Lagos to access the match report of a World Cup game played in Japan and download it for publication (Nig).
- The Internet has widened our access to news around the world. It has also shortened the production process through email (Nig).

Regardless of the preceding views, some journalists argued that new technologies have not increased wider access to news from developing countries because of the poor level of telecommunications development in developing countries. Here is one particular view:

- Most of the developing countries cannot be accessed through the Internet because the Internet facilities are either unavailable or sub-standard where they exist at all (Nig).
- The journalists sampled in Nigeria and Ghana were asked whether they were basically optimistic or pessimistic about the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>NIGERIA</th>
<th>GHANA</th>
<th>TOTAL* f (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32 (78)</td>
<td>9 (81.8)</td>
<td>41 (78.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6 (14.6)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>7 (13.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>3 (7.3)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>4 (7.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>41 (79)</td>
<td>11 (21)</td>
<td>52 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi Square = 29.78; df = 2; p< .001
impact of new technologies on the future of journalism practice in their countries. About eight in ten journalists (80.8 per cent or 42 of 52 respondents) expressed optimism while a mere 13.5 per cent (7 of 52 respondents) were pessimistic about the impact of new technologies on the future of journalism practice in their countries (Table 7). Nearly four per cent of the journalists (3.8 per cent or 2 of 52 respondents) were undecided about the question, while one journalist did not respond.

Results in Table 7 support Hypothesis 4, which states that, “Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists will be more optimistic than pessimistic about the impact of new technologies on the future of journalism practice in their countries.”

Comparatively, a slightly higher percentage of the journalists sampled in Nigeria (85.3 per cent) expressed optimism than 63.6 per cent of those sampled in Ghana.

To test the sentiments expressed by Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists in regard to the future impact of new technologies on journalism practice, the journalists were asked further: “Do you think the Internet will destroy the newspaper as a news medium?” Very few journalists (11.5 per cent or 6 of 52 respondents) perceived the Internet as a major threat to the newspaper (Table 8). However, a majority of the journalists (67.3 per cent or 35 of 52 respondents) did not believe the Internet posed any threat to the newspaper. A breakdown of the figures in Table 8 shows that a higher percentage of the journalists sampled in Nigeria (75.6 per cent or 31 of 41 respondents) did not believe the Internet posed any threat to newspapers. In Ghana, opinions were evenly divided among the journalists sampled: 36.3 per cent did not believe the Internet posed a threat to newspapers and exactly the same percentage was unsure. A slightly smaller percentage (27.3 per cent) believed

### Table 7: Impact of new technologies on future of journalism practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>NIGERIA</th>
<th>GHANA</th>
<th>TOTAL* (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td>35 (85.3)</td>
<td>7 (63.6)</td>
<td>42 (80.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pessimistic</td>
<td>4 (9.8)</td>
<td>3 (27.2)</td>
<td>7 (13.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1 (2.4)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>2 (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1 (2.4)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>41 (79)</td>
<td>11 (21)</td>
<td>52 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi Square = 60.24; df = 3; p< .001

Results in Table 7 support Hypothesis 4, which states that, “Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists will be more optimistic than pessimistic about the impact of new technologies on the future of journalism practice in their countries.”
the Internet posed a threat to newspapers.

But when the journalists were asked to rate the Internet as a news medium, the results were hardly convincing. Table 9 shows that 46.2 per cent of the journalists sampled in Nigeria and Ghana (24 of 52 respondents) rated the Internet as “Better than other media”, while only 17.3 per cent (9 of 52 respondents) rated the Internet the “Same as other media”. A smaller percentage (7.7 per cent or 4 of 52 respondents) rated the Internet as “Worse than other media”. A high number of journalists in the two countries (15 of 52 respondents or 28.8 per cent) did not answer the question.

Results in tables 8 and 9 show a particular trend: although a majority of the journalists sampled in Nigeria and Ghana did not believe the Internet posed a threat to newspapers, fewer than half still rated the Internet as “Better than other media”.

### Table 8: Internet as a threat to newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>NIGERIA</th>
<th>GHANA</th>
<th>TOTAL* f (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 (7.3)</td>
<td>3 (27.3)</td>
<td>6 (11.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31 (75.6)</td>
<td>4 (36.3)</td>
<td>35 (67.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>5 (12.2)</td>
<td>4 (36.3)</td>
<td>9 (17.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2 (4.8)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2 (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>41 (79)</td>
<td>11 (21)</td>
<td>52 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi Square = 33.85; df = 3; p< .001

### Table 9: Rating of the Internet as a news medium

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>NIGERIA</th>
<th>GHANA</th>
<th>TOTAL* f (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better than other media</td>
<td>18 (44)</td>
<td>6 (54.6)</td>
<td>24 (46.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same as other media</td>
<td>7 (17)</td>
<td>2 (18.1)</td>
<td>9 (17.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worse than other media</td>
<td>2 (4.8)</td>
<td>2 (18.1)</td>
<td>4 (7.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>14 (34.1)</td>
<td>1 (9.1)</td>
<td>15 (28.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>41 (79)</td>
<td>11 (21)</td>
<td>52 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi Square = 7.61; df = 3; p>.001
The journalists were further asked to explain why they felt the Internet would or would not destroy the newspaper as a news medium. The reasons given by journalists who said the Internet would not destroy newspapers include the psychological need by newspaper readers to keep the hardcopies for future reference and research, the inability (owing to poverty) by many people in the developing countries to access the Internet, the logistical problems which make it difficult for rural dwellers to access the Internet (rural communities lack basic infrastructure such as regular supply of electricity and other telecommunications facilities). One noticeable finding was that, among the six Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists who said the Internet would destroy the newspaper as a news medium, only two were willing to offer reasons. The rest left blank the space provided in the questionnaire.

Following are the reasons listed by the journalists, beginning with the opinions of those who did not believe the Internet posed any threat to the newspaper.

- It will not because reporters still have the option of confirming news and deciding whether to use or not to use (Nig).
- Because it does not encourage investigative journalism. Moreover, not all information on the Internet are credible (Nig).
- Internet does not carry community news, and newspapers are more convenient to read. We have non-editorial material which are necessary but not in the Net, and some of them are cheaper and more accessible (Nig).
- Not everyone has access to the Internet especially in the Third World. But you can pick up a newspaper from every vendor. You can also keep it and make future reference. It’s not quite that easy with the Internet (Nig).
- Even if every individual owns a PC the documentary value of the newspaper will make it win more patrons. The newspaper, like books and journals, have grown, over time to be among mankind’s psychologically accepted reading traditions (Nig).
- The newspaper and the Internet serve different purposes. The Internet is like a textbook, more of a custodian of information than a presenter. The newspaper, on the other hand, presents information already synthesised from a range of subject matters (Nig).
- There will always be need for informed and serious analysis of issues, events and developments in all societies. And the newspaper provides the platform for such (Nig).
- The new technologies or Internet are not encouraging journalists to go the extra mile. There are limitations to the level of facts that are being given to us through the Internet (Nig).
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• As long as we can maintain the line between fact and fiction the newspaper will survive (Nig).
• The Internet does provide quick information but it lacks depth, layout, features, verve and graphic design layout which a newspaper provides (Nig).
• Reading is a culture and nothing in the Internet really approximates to reading a hardcopy. Moreover, not many people can afford the present cost of browsing (Nig).
• In our own clime, many people do not yet have Internet access. Moreover, the newspaper has a special appeal which Internet lacks (Nig).

Of the two journalists (out of six) that said the Internet would destroy the newspaper as a news medium, the reasons were:
• It (Internet) will, in the final analysis, reduce circulation and lead to the demise of newspapers. The rate at which Internet connection rates continue to go down, the future of newspapers looks bleak (Gha).
• Newspapers will find it difficult to sell hardcopies (Gha).

Conclusion

This study of the impact of new technologies on newspaper journalism practice in Nigeria and Ghana has shown that over 90 per cent of the journalists sampled in the two countries believe new technologies have improved rather than harmed the quality of their newspapers. One major aspect of that improvement is that new technologies help journalists to save time in their work. Other improvements in quality of newspapers include accelerated speed of production, enhancement of newspaper aesthetics through colour photography and ease of crosschecking spelling errors with the aid of the spell check software.

Despite the improvements in newspaper quality, the journalists sampled in Nigeria and Ghana still contend with problems associated with lack of access to new technologies (including lack of basic computers in the newsroom), inability to use the new technologies owing to lack of exposure and training programs, which should keep journalists up to date with the pace of technological developments.

Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists sampled in this study were undecided about whether new technologies promoted ethical or unethical journalism practice. But the journalists were largely of the view that new technologies have increased wider access to news about developing countries essentially because of the Internet and cable television, which have made it much easier to report news events even in remote parts of the world. Nigerian and Ghanaian journalists were also very optimistic about the impact of new technologies on the future of journalism practice in...
their countries.

Although two-thirds of the journalists did not believe the Internet posed any threat to the newspaper as a news medium, fewer than 50 per cent of the journalists rated the Internet as “Better than other media”.

The crucial issues identified in this study remain the lack of access to new technologies and the lack of training and re-training programs designed to acquaint the journalists with developments in new technologies. As stated elsewhere in this paper, these issues are likely to impact negatively the ability of journalists to function effectively in their professional practice and in their societies. Without access to new technologies, and without a basic knowledge of how to use the technologies, West African journalists stand the risk of lagging behind their colleagues in other cultures and indeed are indeed likely to lag behind new developments in technology.

As cautioned earlier, the findings reported here must be regarded as preliminary. Further studies involving larger samples are required before a full picture of the situation in Nigeria and Ghana and indeed West Africa could be derived.

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