

New Media and Journalism Education among Staff and Students of Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria

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Abstract

This study examined the implications of new media on journalism education with a particular focus on the staff and students of Mass Communication, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria. The study adopted survey method of research and it employs simple random sampling technique. The population of the study was 1067 and the sample size was 107 using 10% from the population. Therefore, 107 questionnaires were distributed, but only 100 were retrieved. The theories adopted by the study were Uses and Gratification Theory and Diffusion of Innovation Theory. The study has the following objectives: To know whether the Staff and Students of Mass Communication apply the New Media in the Process of Teaching/Learning. To find-out the Implications of New Media on Journalism Education. To Examine the Challenges of using New Media in Teaching/Learning among the Staff and Students of Mass Communication. The study reveals that new media has contributed positively in improving journalism education and the new media platform patronized most by the respondents was social media. The study also discovers that New media was mostly used for general information, research and assignment. And the most common challenge of using new media discovered by the study were poor network and lack of facilities.

Key words: New Media, Journalism Education, Internet, Email, Mass Communication

Introduction

The advent of new media has affected every aspect of our lives. It has brought about many changes to the society by influencing the way we interact and communicate with each other. The mass media as agent of mass mobilization and education is in no small way affected by the new media. It has immensely contributed towards the improvement of journalism education. Nowadays, both students and lecturers have realized the importance of new media in teaching and learning. As Madhya (2012) in Abdulhakeem (2014) noted that the new media is like a (new trust) that transverse all boundaries of political, economy and religion. It is embraced by almost all of the people in the world. New media wield a great influence over the young generations as they are well conversant with information technology (IT) and have “urge to know”.

Manovich (2001) defined new media as computer technology used as a distribution platform; new media are the cultural objects which use digital computer technology for distribution and exhibition, e.g internet, websites, computer multi-media, blu-ray disks etc. Today’s world is a global village. Everyone is connected to one another in this vast network generated by the internet. In line with this, Marshall McLuhan cited in Robert (2010), stated that the new electronic independence recreates the world in the image of a global village. This electronic independence is inherently dependent upon the internet. It illuminates the lives of thousands of people by spreading knowledge internationally, thereby making us global citizens.

Robert (2010) further noted that the communicating and free sharing of thought among people were restricted by long distance, nationally and/or regionally. But now, even these barriers cannot stop the flow of information and knowledge. The new world of social networking allows free sharing of thought, online social networks are created by websites such as Facebook which has emerged as a giant in this

social world. How do these networks affect our education, and how do they influence the lives of students?

The term new media is referring to the internet, at the same time a mass medium and a medium of interpersonal communication. As a technology base, the internet serves both dimensions and for the reason the market and the state have adopted it as the new central element in the media system.

According to Manovich (2001) “New Media from Borges to HTML (hyper text markup language) in 1950’s connections between computing and radical art began to grow stronger. It was not until the 1980’s that Allan Key and his co-workers at Xerox PARC began to give the computability of personal computer to the individual, rather than have a big organization to be in charge of this. Writers and philosophers such as Marshall McLuhan were instrumental in the development of media theory during this period. Its new famous declaration in understanding media: the extension of man (1964). That “the new medium is the message” draw attention to the too often ignored influence of media and technology themselves, rather their “content” have no human experience of the world and on society broadly.

Until the 1980’s according to (wikipedia) the media relied primarily upon print and analogue broadcast models, such as those of television and radio. The last 25 years have seen the rapid transformation into media which are predicated upon the use of digital technologies, such as the internet and video games. However, these examples are only a small representation of new media. The use of digital computer has transformed the remaining old media, as indicated by the advent of digital television and publications. Even traditional media forms such as the printing press have been transformed of technologies through the application of softwares like: Adobe, Photoshop and Desktop publishing tools. Shapiro (1999) argues that the emergence of new digital technologies signal a potentially radical shift of who is in control of information, experience and resources.

Neuman (1991) cited in Idu et al. (2016) argues that new media will alter the meaning of geographic distance, allow for a huge increase in the volume of communication, provide the possibility of increasing the speed of communication, provide opportunities for interactive communication, allows forms of communications that were previously separated to overlap. Consequently, it has been the contention of scholars such as Douglas Kellner and James Bohman that new media and particularly the internet provide the potential for a democratic postmodern public sphere in which people can participate in well informed, non-hierarchical debate pertaining to their social structure.

In the 1980’s, the term “new media” was used to denote cable and satellite television, teletext and videotext. Today, it is sometimes applied to blogs, social networking sites, cell phone messaging, and other relatively new technology applications (Khalatil, 2008). These applications do serve as media of communication, but it is doubtful they can all be classified as new media (as defined above). In general, the term “new media” applied precisely is that one day turn into new media, so the distinction between “old” and “new” media is only temporary (Khalatil, 2008).

Thomas and Eric (2000) in Abdulhakeem (2014) noted that new media encourage genuine feedback from the audience, thus the internet encourages the formation of user community, while giving voice to anyone digitally connected...these new media include but not limited to the internet, websites, computer multimedia, computer games, CD-ROMS and DVD, virtual reality, apparently the social media of Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube etc, have changed the mode of communication tremendously.

New Media as current means of communication/learning is always associated with certain features which make it unique among different media platforms. Thompson (2018) noted that New Media are digital, interactive, hypertextual, globally networked, virtual and sometimes based on simulation. Magdalena (2006) noted that among the specific characteristics of new media are: mutual connectivity,

access to individual users who can play both the role of broadcaster and recipient, interactivity, openness, omnipresence, space affinity and delocalization.

There are many different types of new media platforms available to different variety of users depending on their interest and affiliations to professions and also organizational set-ups. New Media as new technology is always evolving. Inline with this, Wikipedia (2019) explains that some examples of new media are: telephones, computers, virtual worlds, single media, website games, human-computer interface, computer animation and interactive computer installation. Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia, is a good example of new media, combining internet accessible digital text, images and video with web-links, creative participation of contributors, interactive feedback of users...Facebook is another type of new media, belonging to the category of social media model, in which most users are also participants. Another type of new media is Twitter which also belongs to the social media, through which users interact with one another.

Another internet source @tutor2u Sociology (2018) indicated that new media is best understood as media that uses digital technology and the internet. This includes (but not restricted to):

- Social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter etc.
- The streaming of video and audio files, including both commercial film and music and user-generated media content (such as videos on Youtube).
- Digital/satellite and “smart” television (especially those that facilitate some interactivity).
- Computer games and particularly online gaming.
- Apps for mobile telephones and tablets. New media includes social networks.

Young people, especially the students of mass communication are keen to posting their entire identity, sharing pictures and videos and indicating their religious affiliations, maintaining status and political orientations on the internet. These users interact with others and exchange information about their interest by raising discussion about topics, follow news about specific topics on different social networking sites. This study therefore intends to examine the implications of new media on journalism education with a particular focus on the staff and students of Mass Communication Department, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria.

Statement of the Problem

The increase of new media usage has become a global phenomenon in the past few years. What started out as a hobby for some computer literate people has become social norm and way of life for people around the globe (Boyd, 2010). Students have embraced these sites as a way to connect with their friends and make new ones, share information e.g photos of their activities such as birthdays, photos with friends in class etc, and show case their social lives. Many people, especially students spend lot of time on new media, creating profile, updating or doing research concerning their career or academic work, while some just used it to chat with friends, post latest pictures of event they attended.

The new media has become part and parcel of people’s lives and has been contributing towards the improvement of many subjects and disciplines, particularly, the field of journalism education. It is against this backdrop that this study intends to examine the implications of new media on journalism education with a particular focus on the staff and students of Mass Communication, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria.

Research Questions

- Do the Staff and Students of Mass Communication apply the New Media in the Process of Teaching/Learning?

- What are the Implications of New Media on Journalism Education?
- What are the Challenges of using New Media in Teaching/Learning among the Staff and Students of Mass Communication?

Literature Review

Sometimes ago, the field of communications and the mass media as a field of study was largely confined to the school of journalism. But now the rise in interest to study this from outside that area stems mostly from the advancement in technology, where the changes of modern living has solidified the image of our world as one big global community, where virtually everyone can easily and quickly reached. There is no doubt that today we are greatly influenced by the new media. That is why most researchers have taken up the mettle in understanding its functions and its implications on changing the mindsets of mass communication students and journalism educators. In line with this, Pearson (1999) noted that until 1996, few formal studies had been conducted into the relationship between journalism education and the internet. Most of the literature was in reflective essay form or concentrated upon anecdotal accounts of teaching with a particular piece of software. While such accounts were useful as an introduction to the area, there was dire need of substantive research in the field which explored the usefulness of such technologies in journalism education.

According to Pearson (1999) so too had educational resources for journalism students and faculty begun to appear in 1995, Gunaratu and Lee (1996) further explained general reporting textbooks had been slow to include internet resources because of the delay between writing and publication. Specialist texts on computer-assisted reporting and online research became available as resources for journalists and texts for reporting classes. Nevertheless, it was becoming clear that one of the very qualities that proponents of the internet boasted as its advantages over print-its currency-worked against textbooks on the subject because they dated very quickly.

Arrant (1996) reported on the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication on the widespread adoption of the internet among its program members. His survey of 133 programmes in January and February 1996 found that e-mail and internet access was provided to 96% of professors and World Wide Web (WWW) access was provided to 87% of them. In 93% of these programs students had access to such resources, with 90% having access to e-mail and the internet and 80% to the web. At that stage 71% of the programs featured a home page on the web and half of the professors surveyed had their own home pages.

By 1997 journalism educators were reporting upon their experiences with the development and use of such resources with their students. In line with this, Ketterer (1998) chronicled the establishment of a resource site for student editors and reporters at the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri, Columbia. He developed the site to save students time in accessing internet search engines and to channel their research towards internet sources known for their credibility. In order to further improve the reporters reliance on sources, Ketterer (1998, p. 12) developed a checklist for assessing an internet site's reliability as a source of information. The approach involved applying different levels of rigour to the verification process for sites according to their domain names and their currency. Noteworthy, was the fact that Ketterer's article reporting his research featured the web addresses of all of his materials, including the resource lists, verification guidelines and navigation exercise, indicating a new avenue by which journalism educators could share their resources as they developed them.

Ketterer (1998) suggested that students needed encouragement in using internet-based resources. He continued: because the web is a new tool, educators and editors must become knowledgeable about its resources and suggest sites to students. Students must view the web as an important resource and use it when appropriate. At the same time, they must realize that sometimes the information can be obtained via conventional sources, such as an official state manual, atlas or cross directory.

Panici (1998, p.57) surveyed 56 Mass Communication faculty on a range of issues, including the kinds of new media they used themselves and required their students to use in their courses. Most instructors used the WWW (63%), internet search engines (61%), videotapes (56%) and electronic mail (56%) to prepare their course materials and lectures. For research purposes, they used internet search engines (67%), WWW (60%) and e-mail (56%); while in the classroom they used videotapes (86%), audio equipment (965%), WWW (48%) and e-mail (46%).

The student resource ratio is clearly a factor in determining the educational benefits of the internet, as it is with any educational resource allocation. Somera (1997, p.85) reported that resource constraints at an institution in the Philippines resulted in an instructor abandoning a requirement that communication students access an online resource as part of their class. Somera wrote that the students had difficulty getting a turn on the library computers because other students were using them for internet chat purposes. Resource provisions will undoubtedly vary across countries and institutions.

Tapsall and Granato (1997, p.16) reported that they did not perceive resources as a difficulty in the introduction of new media Journalism Information Systems unit at the Queensland University of Technology, Australia. Students were able to access seven internet-connected computer laboratories for their work, allowing for small tutorial sessions where each student had a computer. However, they reported the real resource problem arose at a technical and bureaucratic level with cumbersome systems of password registration for e-mail access.

Theoretical framework

The theories adopted for this study were Uses and Gratification and Diffusion of Innovation theories. The Uses and Gratification theory suggests that the media users play an active role in choosing and using the media. Users take active part in the communication process and are goal oriented in their media use. The theory explains that a media user seeks out a media source that best fulfils the need of the user. Uses and Gratification theory according to Asogwa and Esimokha (2015) recognizes that the user has alternate choices to satisfy his needs.

Diffusion of Innovation theory is also relevant for this study. According to Asogwa and Esimokha (2015) Diffusion is a process by which a new idea (an innovation) is communicated (spread) through certain channels to the public or among the members of a social system. Diffusion seeks to explain how overtime, an idea, practice or discovery perceived as new spreads through specific population or members of a social system. Innovation on the other hand refers to new ideas, inventions, technological practices or attitudes that are to be diffused (spread) to members of a social system. The five main elements that influenced the spread of new ideas are: Innovation, Communication, Channels, Time and Social System. The stages for the diffusion of innovation are: Awareness, Interest, Evaluation, Trial and Adoption.

Research Methodology

The method adopted for this study was survey and the population of the study comprises all staff and students of the Department of Mass Communication, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria, which was estimated at 1067. The total number of staff was 22, including teaching (lecturers) and technical staff (technologists and technicians), while the total number of students was 1045. The students were divided based on strata, which comprises HND 1 and HND 2 students (both regular and evening), and ND 1 and ND 2 students (both regular and evening). The sample size was 107, using 10% as approved by most communication researchers e.g Maikaba (2015) noted that using 10% from a population can serve as minimum sample size for a study. The sampling technique was simple random sampling and the instrument for data collection was questionnaire. This means 107 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, but only 100 were retrieved.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Table 1: Do you use New Media?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	98	98%
No	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Table 1 indicates that as many as 98 respondents (98%) said that they use new media, and only 2 respondents (2%) said no.

Table 2: Type/Form of New Media Patronize most by Respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Social Media	62	62%
ICT/Computer	1	1%
GSM Phone	28	28%
Email/Internet	6	6%
Others Specify	3	3%
Total	100	100%

Table 2 shows that as many as 62 respondents (62%) indicate that the type/form of new media they patronize most was social media, 28 respondents (28%) patronize GSM Phone most, 6 respondents (6%) patronize email/internet most, 3 respondents (3%) patronize other new media platforms and only 1 respondent (1%) patronize ICT/Computer most.

Table 3: Respondents' Reasons for using New Media

Responses	Frequency	Perception
For research/assignment	32	32%
For teaching/learning	7	7%
For general information	50	50%
For socialization	10	10%
Others specify	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Table 3 indicates that 50 respondents (50%) use new media for general information, 32 respondents (32%) use new media for research/assignment, 10 respondents (10%) use new media for socialization and only 1 respondent (1%) use new media for other purposes.

Table 4: New Media has Contributed Positively in Improving Journalism Education

Responses	Frequency	Perception
Strongly agree	59	59%
Agree	37	37%
Disagree	1	1%
Strongly	3	3%
Undecided	-----	-----
Total	100	100%

Table 4 shows that 59 respondents (59%) strongly agreed that new media has contributed positively in improving journalism education, 37 respondents (37%) agreed with the above opinion, while only 3 respondents (3%) strongly disagreed and no respondent tick undecided.

Table 5: The Staff and Students of Mass Communication faced some Challenges while using the New Media Platform for Teaching/Learning

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	19	19%
Agree	64	64%
Disagree	12	12%
Strongly disagree	4	4%
Undecided	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Table 5 shows that 64 respondents (64%) agreed that the staff and students of Mass Communication faced some challenges while using the new media for teaching/learning, 19 respondents (19%) strongly agreed with the above opinion, 12 respondents (12%) disagreed, 4 respondents (4%) strongly disagreed and only 1 respondent (1%) was undecided.

Table 6: The most Common Challenge experienced by the Staff and Students of Mass Communication while using New Media for Teaching/Learning

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Poor network	36	36%
Financial problem	21	21%
Poor technical skill	12	12%
Lack of facilities	28	28%

Others specify	3	3%
Total	100	100%

Table 6 indicates that 36 respondents (36%) identified poor network as the most common challenge of using new media for teaching/learning, 28 respondents (28%) said it was lack of facilities, 21 respondents (21%) said it was financial problem, 12 respondents (12%) said it was poor technical skill and only 3 respondents (3%) mentioned other challenges.

Table 7: Respondents Assessment of the Contribution of New Media on Journalism Education

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	1	1%
Fair	1	1%
Average	20	20%
Good	37	37%
Very good	41	41%
Total	100	100%

As many as 41 respondents (41%) on table 7 rated the contribution of new media on journalism education as very good, 37 respondents (37%) rated it good, 20 respondents (20%) rated it average, 1 respondent (1%) rated it poor and 1 respondent (1%) rated it fair.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: Do the Staff and Students of Mass Communication apply the New Media in the Process of Teaching/Learning?

To answer this question, table 1 shows that as many as 98 respondents (98%) said they use new media platform, table 2 also shows that as many as 62 respondents (62) indicate that the type/form of new media they patronize most was social media. This could be as a result of the fact that most of the respondents were students and also youths. Furthermore, social media platforms could be Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube etc, and they could be used for teaching/learning purposes among the staff and students of Mass Communication.

Most importantly, table 3 shows that as many as 50 respondents (50%) use new media for general information and using it for general information could include research, assignment, teaching, learning and for other purposes. The same table indicates that 32 respondents (32%) use new media for research/assignment. On a general note, the findings of this study clearly show that majority of the staff and students of Mass Communication have been applying new media in the process of teaching/learning. The findings of this study contradict the findings of a study conducted by Udende and Azeez (2010), where they noted that “not many Nigerian students use the internet as frequently as expected”.

Research Question Two: What are the Implications of New Media on Journalism Education?

To answer this question, table 4 shows that as many as 59 respondents (59%) strongly agreed that new media has contributed positively in improving journalism education, followed by 37 respondents (37%) who agreed with the same opinion. Also, as many as 41 respondents (41%) on table 7 rated the

contribution of new media on journalism education as very good, followed by 37 respondents (37%) who rated it good. This is a clear indication that the new media has positive implications on journalism education. This shows that new media has a strong impact on journalism education as majority of the respondents admitted that new media helps them in their learning/teaching process. The findings of this study complement the findings of a study conducted by Udende and Azeez (2010) that “of the various uses the internet can be put to, academic purpose occupies the highest enviable position as far as students are concerned”.

Research Question Three: What are the Challenges of using New Media in Teaching/Learning among the Staff and Students of Mass Communication?

To answer this question, table 5 shows that as many as 64 respondents (64%) agreed that the staff and students of Mass Communication faced some challenges while using the new media platform for teaching/learning. In like manner, on table 6, 36 respondents (36%) indicate that the most common challenge they experience while using the new media for teaching/learning was poor network, followed by 28 respondents (28%) who attributed the problem to lack of facilities. This is a clear indication that the staff and students of Mass Communication faced some challenges while using the new media for teaching/learning and the most common challenge was attributed to poor network and lack of facilities. It could also be said that these challenges could not be attributed to students’ deficiency in the use of the new media, but to poor network and lack of facilities as pointed out by the majority of the respondents. This is also in line with the findings of a study conducted by Udende and Azeez (2010) that “the problem of accessibility is not absolutely connected to users deficiency but much more related to the facility itself. For example, a majority admitted that network failure is responsible for their inability to login many times”.

Conclusion

This study reveals that new media has enhanced and facilitated teaching/learning among the staff and students of Mass Communication as majority of the respondents apply new media in teaching/learning. Therefore, new media has positive implications on journalism education. However, the most common challenges faced by staff and students while using the new media for teaching/learning were attributed to poor network and lack of facilities. This study discovers that social media platform was used most among the staff and students and they use new media mostly for general information and for research/assignment.

Recommendations

- (1) There is the need for the staff and students of Mass Communication to apply other new media platforms, such as email, internet, computer, ICT, GSM Phone, etc, in teaching/learning, as the findings of this study indicate that most of the respondents mostly used social media.
- (2) There is also the need for the staff and students of Mass Communication to use new media platforms more for teaching/learning than for other purposes.
- (3) There is the need for the school authority to provide new media facilities and ensure constant training for both the staff and students of Mass Communication.
- (4) Finally, the school authority should also provide wireless connection/free internet accessibility for both the staff and students of Mass Communication.

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