Journalists' perceptions of opportunities for integration of new media for professional use: A study of three mainstream newspapers in Kenya

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Abstract

The study evaluated journalists' perception of opportunities for integration of various new media platforms for professional use. Print media journalists in Kenya and the world over have adopted new media technologies for professional journalism. However, a review of relevant literature shows that little research has emerged on the current integration practices targeting the three media houses combined. The study was guided by Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations theory. The qualitative multiple case study design was adopted. A sample size of 15 journalists drawn from both the print and online teams was selected purposively from three mainstream newspapers in Kenya. Data was generated using in-depth interviews, analysed thematically and presented in a narrative form. The study revealed that new media platforms have emerged as powerful tools of journalism across the mainstream print media in Kenya. Some of the opportunities cited in the use of new media are expanded tools for news gathering and new channels for dissemination of information to audiences. And of the various social media platforms, Twitter and Facebook and Whatsapp were the most widely used by journalists in Kenya for finding sources, story ideas and distribution of their journalism, among other uses. Legacy journalists were, however, slow in embracing new media while correspondents and those with personal drive saw new media platforms as an opportunity to improve their journalism. The study recommends research on the kinds of trainings offered to journalists to become fully multi-skilled. A further study on the problems facing journalists as they interact with the newest technologies would also be relevant.

Keywords: New Media, New Media Platforms, Social Media, Diffusion of Innovations

Introduction

New media has been variously described as social media, social media networks or new technological devices used in communication (Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant & Kelly, 2009; Pavlik, 2001). Alejandro (2010) says they are a variety of websites and applications that allow anyone to create and share information online. Examples are Wikipedia, social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook and YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Telegram, Bebo, Snapchat, etc. Manovich (2001) argues that texts distributed on a computer are considered to be new media, whereas texts distributed on paper are not.

New media has created possibilities for new storytelling techniques for print media as opposed to text that has predominantly been its mode of sharing content with audiences. Today, news can be shared in form of text, audios, videos, images and graphics. Some defining characteristics are that new media are digital, interactive, hyper-textual, virtual, and networked (Pavlik, 2001). These characteristics have made communiction two-way, where the user creates and shares content that others can react to in form of comments and likes. Print media and other old media was predominantly one-way communiction where there is little interaction with the audience. With Smartphones and internet connection, the audience is increasingly turning to these other distribution channels for news.

In order to remain relevant, the print media started integrating new media for news sourcing, production and distribution in the early 2000s. Integration of new media started in the US, Europe and Asia. The integration of the new by traditional media like newspapers is referred to as convergence where they work together as a single system (Kinyanjui, Busienei, Ndonye & Michael, 2014).

As a result, print journalists had to adjust to accommodate new ways of doing their job from reporting for a single platform – the newspaper – to producing content for distribution via multiple new media platforms.

This study focused on the perceptions of journalists at three print media organisations – *the Nation*, *The Standard* and *The Star* – on the integration of various new media technologies for professional use. There is a growing body of research on the impact of Internet-enabled technologies on print journalism. Previous literature on new media and journalism in Kenya has focused on the adoption of new convergence technologies in journalism (Juma, 2013), the impact of social media networks on news gathering and delivery (Wawire, 2013), the impact of social media on professional journalism (Nyamboga, Ooko & Kaboyo, 2014), the impact of social media on traditional mass media functions in Kenya (Muria, 2010), the impact of social media on print journalism (Kiguta, 2018), a study on how social media have changed newsroom operations in Kenya (Kamenchu, 2015). However, the bulk of the existing literature is based on research focusing on a single media house or upon a small sample of journalists working with a single platform only, for instance, Twitter or Facebook. Muindi (2018) carried out a study on the use of Twitter as journalistic tool at the Daily Nation Newspaper in Kenya for news gathering, production and distribution and how journalists strike the balance between speed and credibility of news distributed on this platform. Therefore, little research has emerged on journalists' opinions and perceptions on the opportunities for integration of various new media technologies for professional use. This study is thus focused on the perceptions and opinions of print media journalists in Kenya on how new media affects their profession and in what ways they use various new media technologies.

As print media started integration of new media, journalists who are at the centre of news gathering and production were required to acquire new skills. The modern journalist is, therefore, expected to be multi-skilled to survive in the newsrooms. Journalists are required to deliver content in new formats. Many news organisations moved to retrain their reporters in order to deliver content with multimedia elements for the different distribution channels. Herrick (2003) explains that with integration of new media, journalists are expected to become jack of all trades, and operate all gadgets – a wireless laptop, a digital camera and a digital camcorder – necessary to gather, write and produce stories for multiple platforms. This kind of journalism is considered more efficient as journalists are able to write a story, take a picture, shoot and edit a video as part of their work. Pavlik (2001) notes it represents a potentially better form of journalism.

Globally, a lot of media organisations have adopted social media. For example, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) began integrating social media in 2006 (Media Council of Kenya, 2016). In Africa, the majority of newspapers started convergence much later after major newspapers from around the world. Earlier studies have majorly concentrated on the impact of new media on modern journalism and convergence journalism. Fewer studies have emerged on perceptions of journalists on use of new media technologies in their journalistic practices.

Contextually, print media in Kenya has followed the world-wide trend to embrace new media technologies to remain relevant in its role of dissemination of news and information. The three print media organisations that were studied – *The Nation*, *The Standard* and *The Star* all started adopting new media technologies to reach out to audiences that were increasingly consuming news in online platforms though at different times. *The Nation* started adopting new technologies in 2012 (NMG Convergence Presentation, 2012).

The Standard was perhaps the first print media house in Kenya to attempt convergence journalism in 2009 with the appointment of Managing Editor in charge of convergence Dr. George Nyabuga (*The Standard*, June 12, 2009).   *The Star,* on the other hand, began restructuring in early 2016 with a changed business model that embraced convergence where staff would no longer work for a particular platform but cut across its print, digital, radio and TV businesses (Kiguta, 2018).

Mbatia et al. (2014) note technology has grown rapidly as Kenya provides one of the largest markets in East Africa. As a result, the media in Kenya has experienced rapid technological convergence (Mbatia et al., 2014). This means that media organisations have to rethink new strategies to reach their tech savvy audience. ''Media producers must respond to newly empowered consumers'' (Mbatia et al., 2014 p.714). "Unlike traditional media, which is one-sided, social media is more interactive and provides the opportunity to receive instant feedback on any messages put across to audiences. This has created the need for more intentional and relevant communication" (Mbatia et al., 2014 p.715).

Kenya's social media growth has been on the rise. According to a Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) report covering January to March 2018, most Kenyans use their smartphones to access the Internet. The growth of social media in Kenya has continued with more politicians embracing the interactive forums. A January 2016 study conducted by the American public relations firm Burson-Martseller ranked President Uhuru Kenyatta who has two million likes on Facebook as the most popular sub-Saharan African leader on social media (Agutu, 2016). Politicians are journalists' sources of news and the latter must follow them wherever they are in online platforms like social media.

Also, a good number of organisations and prominent people sometimes choose to give their news via their social media accounts rather than go the traditional way of calling a press conference (Bull, 2015). In Kenya, young people use their smartphones to interact on social media and get information on the goings on in society. Journalists must, therefore, follow sources on social media platforms. Haddow & Haddow (2013) have argued that social media are powerful tools that guide journalists in new ways of telling stories. This is because social media have various tools that enable convergence of audio, video and text.

Theoretical Review

The study was guided by Diffusion of Innovations Theory. The theory, developed by Everett Rogers (1995), seeks to explain how individuals and organisations adopt innovations. Diffusion is the process by which a technology is adopted and gains acceptance by members of a certain community (Rogers, 1995). Rogers made key contributions that help in gaining understanding of the diffusion of innovations in organisations. The theory is best placed to explain adoption of new media technologies, which is the focus of this study.

According to Rogers, the adoption process involves five major stages; awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and the adoption. Rogers also pointed out that the diffusion of an innovation takes place over time. People operating in a social context into which a new innovation has been introduced learn about it (awareness) in different ways and or way of doing things may or may not fit easily. Rogers noted adoption decisions depend on characteristics of (i) the technology, (ii) the adopter and (iii) the environment.

Characteristics of the technology relevant to its adoption are relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. Characteristics of an adopter are identified as financial security, opinion leadership, age, personal confidence, level of information, and attitude. Thirdly, adoption decisions are thought to also depend on characteristics of the environment (Rogers, 2003).

The interpretation is that there may be barriers that would need to be overcome before an innovation can be accepted. For instance, the complexity of an innovation and whether people understand and know how to use it, its price, and if it sits well with an organisations existing values, or whether the adoption is a matter for individuals or organisations to decide will determine if people develop an interest in the innovation or not. For print media organisations, the management and bureaucracies may come into play in the process of adoption. Budget considerations and policies may also determine the adoption of new innovations.

Rogers' model also proposed five categories of adopters; i. innovators ii. early adopters iii. early majority iv. late majority and v. laggards. Rogers identifies characteristics that define each category (Rogers, 2003). Innovators often are willing to take risks and accept uncertainty. As individuals, they tend to have higher incomes, and act as gatekeepers for those who will adopt later. They are risk takers with the financial muscle to absorb possible loss from an unprofitable innovation. The media houses that were studied are not at the same level financially and this certainly affects the journalists. Those with finances are more likely to be innovators. This theory can be used to assess factors that contributed to adoption of certain new media technologies in newsrooms. Early adopters are respected opinion leaders who advise others in their peer and network of contacts.

They are willing to try new products before they are widely accepted. Previous studies have revealed that journalists have not received new media technologies the same way. Although journalists may be seen as a homogeneous occupational group, they do not embrace new media technologies the same way and for the same purposes. Some may not use new media (Hermans, , Vergeer, & d'Haenens, (2009). Previous studies have also shown that differences occur between journalists in terms of how, and to what extent they use the Internet-enabled technologies in their daily work (Garrison, 2000).

Besides, in the changing communication environment, younger adults and youth have gravitated toward social media, avoiding face-to-face communication and, to some extent, mass media (Webster, 2010). Thus, early adoption by younger people would be related to involvement in social media and texting practices. Adults who are younger, more affluent, and better educated are more likely to adopt new communication technologies (Dutton, Rogers, & Jun, 1987; Vishwanath & Barnett, 2011). Personality factors of early adopters might include greater rationality and intelligence (Rogers, 2003; Vishwanath, 2014). This theory can, therefore, be used to assess the characteristics of early adopters in the newsrooms at the three print media houses that were studied.

The early majority is a large group whose members who wait and follow the advice of early adopters (Rogers, 2003). Members of this group do not necessarily wish to be the first adopters of new technologies or ideas but prefer to deliberate for a certain period of time, before making a decision to adopt. The members of the late majority are generally skeptical and cautious and require that the uncertainties associated with new technologies or other innovations are substantially reduced before adopting them. Sometimes social pressure serves to motivate the late majority, but in other cases, economic necessity induces them (Rogers, 2003).

Studies have revealed that media houses have adopted new technologies at different times and this theory can be used to assess how this has influenced adoption patterns by their journalists as well as the characteristics of adopters. Lastly, according to Rogers, laggards have traditional values and are reluctant to change. They have limited resources, are often isolated from social networks, and take a long time to come to decisions (Rogers, 2003). Legacy journalists are reluctant to adopt new technologies while young tech-savvy journalists are extensively exploring new media (Webster, 2010). This study aims to understand the adoption of new media technologies by print media in Kenya and gain a better understanding of journalists use and opinions of new media. Rogers' theory then becomes the ideal framework for understanding journalists' technology adoption and use in Kenya.

Methodology

This was a qualitative study that employed in-depth interviews to gain insight into the typical experiences of the interviewees with new media. The focus of study was journalists at three newspapers in Kenya. Qualitative approach is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena and was, therefore, best suited for my study because the aim was to go deeper in investigation to get the various viewpoints and perspectives of the participants on my research problem (Jwan and Ong'ondo, 2011). I adopted purposive sampling because the aim was to select individuals because they represented some characteristics I sought to study (Creswell, 2012). In total I had a sample size of 15 journalists who included reporters and sub-editors from both the print and online teams. Online sub-editors sometimes gather news that is broken in online platforms when the reporter delays in sending news from the field. Participants were chosen and studied because they were believed to have expert knowledge on the area of study.

This study embraced a multiple case study research design. A case study is a holistic inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its natural setting. My study focused on three mainstream print media houses in Kenya, with the aim of gaining deeper insights into my research question. Yin (2003, 2009) observes that sometimes a number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population or general condition – that is multiple case study or collective case study. The cases may be similar or not, they are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, or better theorising about a larger collection of cases.

Research findings and discussion

Expanded tools for news gathering and new channels for content distribution

The majority of respondents said they have embraced new media to aid in their professional work. One of the opportunities they see in use of new media is the expanded tools for news gathering and new channels for dissemination of information to audiences. The majority of journalists said they used social media for several reasons; to find story ideas/source news, to follow sources especially the government officials, to distribute their journalism by sharing story links with followers and friends online, to interact with audiences and to aid reporting. One journalist said, "I use new media for research purposes but you can also stumble on a story or story idea on Twitter or Facebook and even on Whatsapp." Another respondent commented, "I have used Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Social media platforms are for social interactions, but you find that they are also a source of news. I use social media in two ways; for social interaction – getting to know what people are thinking or talking about – and also for gathering information."

This confirms that new media has provided opportunities for researching stories but only those who have embraced new ways of reporting find it useful. However, the study revealed that some new media platforms are less favoured. Journalists reported that they are unlikely to use some platforms like Instagram and Snapchat in their daily journalistic practices even though the news organisations they work for have integrated them. One respondent noted, "I have never used Instagram although I know the best photos of the day are posted on the organisation's official Instagram account."

The organisation's policy

Another reason provided for use of new media is that the media organisations have made it a policy for every journalist especially the reporters on the beat to use them. Every journalist is expected to write stories, take videos and audios, shoot photos and send the content via Whatsapp when the news events are still unfolding. One respondent said, "I use Whatsapp mostly to speak with sources but not to break news." Another one said, "Everyone is on Whatsapp group, from the top editors, to reporters and correspondents. It's a requirement to post photos, videos and audios here while still at news events so that editors can pick and process for distribution to audiences in various platforms." Reporters are expected to send one liners from the news event which are then picked by online editors and processed for the various social media platforms. After 10 minutes reporters in the field also send about five paragraphs as news unfold which again is shared via Whatsapp to be picked by editors to be distributed to audiences via the websites. The reporters are also expected to send videos, audios and photos via Whatsapp. After 30 minutes if still in the field they should type a more detailed story and send via Whatsapp. The study thus revealed that Whatsapp is very critical for reporters and they cannot avoid using the platform.

The study revealed that Whatsapp is a useful verification tool too. "If you are not sure about a story or photo you post it here so that others can comment on it. We have avoided making big blunders by letting the seniors see the stories we are pursuing and some have turned out to be fake news," one reporter said.

Twitter, Facebook and Whatsapp as the preferred social media platforms

Some platforms are used more frequently than others. Of the various social media platforms, reporters mostly preferred Twitter, Facebook and Whatsapp. A crime reporter who uses Twitter often commented:

> It is more interactive; you are able to make views on Twitter and to get people's reactions. There is a level of interaction that Twitter gives people; you get comments and opinions on what you have posted. You can conduct a voice talk on Twitter too.

Facebook is used to source for stories and share story links with audiences. Compared to Facebook, however, Twitter is the winner as one reporter commented:

> I think Facebook is a bit slower. Yeah, you can socialise and catch up with friends from high school but Facebook isn't really a place to break news. If you look at its timeline, you realise it is not in chronological order – that at the top of your feed you will get posts from last night and what you really want is what is happening right now yet Twitter gives you that.

Another reason given for the popularity of Twitter is that government and public officials, prominent personalities and politicians have a presence on Twitter. They constantly tweet and some of their tweets make news. The advantage for Twitter is that what the leaders say on the platform is official. So, journalists in various beats like politics, crime, education and health said they are constantly on Twitter to get stories ideas. "For me, I source most of my information on Twitter," a crime reporter said. Every morning he checks what the Director of Criminal Investigations has tweeted, or if there are any tweets from the Director of Public Prosecutions. He scans the websites of the government agencies dealing with crime to find news.

Another reporter noted, "Twitter is also one of platforms where the members of the public post incidents. At the end of the day these may develop into a news stories."

There was unanimous agreement from respondents that they are always keen to see what's trending on social media and to pursue it as stories for their publications. However, the issue of credibility of news sourced on social media platforms was raised. This problem is compounded by the pressure to be the first to break news. So, journalists have little or no time to verify the news sourced online. The study found out that all the three media houses have on several occasions published erroneous information. One respondent said, "We have made mistakes but are still required to verify information before publishing." Thus, new media has created new possibilities for journalists to gather and distribute content faster than old media but this has not been without ethical challenges. Nyabuga and Booker (2013) say the breaking news facility now used by various media makes it difficult to ascertain the quality, credibility, and reliability of the information, because of the obsession with immediacy and scoops.

New media allows journalists to share content in a matter of seconds. That makes it very difficult to verify news before it is published. The respondents noted since journalists' source for news on Twitter and Facebook, some of the sources have created pseudo accounts whose aim is to spew untruths and it becomes difficult sometimes to verify the true or real accounts of sources. Other times sources in online platforms deliberately send in stories they know are not true. One online sub-editor explains:

> People want to tweet fast and in this era of fake news, it's a big challenge for us. Someone can post photos of a serious road accident as if it has just happened and when we post it in our official social media accounts readers react saying the accident happened three years ago. So, it's a big challenge for media houses. The element of speed in trying to compete to break news is a big challenge and we have made mistakes.

According to the Media Council of Kenya (2016) report, journalists are not only expected to break news as fast as it happens but their professional ethics demand that they verify the information they give out. The report further says social media platforms are especially important in breaking news but it is the work of professional journalist to verify the reports by gathering more information on the matter before distributing it to the audiences. This study found out that media houses were asking journalists to look out for credible sources online. A good number in this case are government ministries, ministers, security agencies and parastatal heads because some are very active online.

Some journalists have, indeed, resulted to using official trusted accounts to verify whatever news they source elsewhere online. The study found out that journalists are also encouraged to verify news by contacting multiple sources. However, this does not happen often since the fear of scoops works against the need for verification of news. Verification is also the duty of editors and sometimes this has not been possible because everyone gets carried away by the pressure to be the first tweet or post and make scoops.

However, journalists are guided by professional ethics that they must strive to adhere to at all times. Issues of credibility, accuracy and truthful reporting, objectivity should be observed not just in print but also online publications. The print media social media accounts should be the first-place audience turn to confirm news read in other platforms. The audiences need to gain trust that print media are credible purveyors of information in their online platforms. The media exists to inform the public on the latest happenings in society and this can best be achieved if what is reported is nothing but the truth. Media Council of Kenya (2016) recommends the following: There is need to reexamine media ethics and professionalism as technological changes generate challenges requiring continuous examination and application of existing standards.

This will promote professionalism as well as trust in the media as an important actor in Kenya. This is especially due to the fact that the media plays an important role in accountable leadership and democracy.

Apart from Twitter, Facebook and Whatsapp, some reporters are exploring several other social media tools to aid in their reporting. There are those who record audios for other purposes other than for use in websites. One reporter said he records not necessarily to provide podcasts for radio or audios for the website but to ensure he does not miss out any details while writing his story for print. Some of his audios end up on the website though. A court reporter said:

> I record because the judgments are not available immediately. It makes it easier when I return to the newsroom as I listen to the audios as I write my story. You can write on your notebook but there are things you definitely miss out but if you are recording you have everything.

Personal initiative drives use of new media

The study revealed only journalists who appear to have a natural drive and have taken personal initiative are using more social media platforms. For instance, one crime reporter uses a combination of social media tools. Some of the platforms he uses are Telegram, Signal, Whatsapp, Twitter, and Facebook. He said he uses Telegram as "it is safer nowadays because at times you find Whatsapp is too clogged". He uses both Telegram and Whatsapp to make calls. As long as you have bundles you can make calls. Asked what he uses Signal for, the respondent said, it is more like Whatsapp. "You can upload photos, you can make calls, you can chat." These platforms are beyond what they majority of journalists use. No doubt those who have shown personal interest have reaped unlimited benefits of social media. But of course, not many journalists have the interest to do that. It is about dedication. "For me it is an issue of being dedicated. It is a calling kind of to be digital."

The study found out that those using multiple social media tools for their professional work were doing it on their own without any facilitation by their employers. They are also pursuing courses on interactive journalism. Besides, some of these journalists are the champions of convergence at their media houses involved in training their colleagues. A crime reporter said:

> I can file a story from the (DCX, the company's content management system). I can send a story to the editors through e-mail or Whatsapp. We can communicate through mobile. There are many ways of filing stories. Nowadays people don't use airtime. You see people don't understand the importance of having bundles. People don't understand that they can make calls on Whatsapp or Telegram, you can use Messenger, use Signal for professional work. For me I use all of those. So, it is really lack of knowledge for those not using new media.

Those who deliver content for multiple platforms are also active 24 hours. Their phones are permanently on in readiness for any breaking news. As a result, they have delivered breaking news for their online platforms at night on many occasions. The reporter added:

> Somebody can get a news item at night and decide to call you. People are not comfortable calling you on the ordinary line. They call you on Whatsapp so you have to have bundles if you don't have the Internet in your house. Your phone has to be charged, so that you can receive or make a call.

But the study also revealed that while personal drive is a major factor that determines how enthusiastic a journalist is in embracing new media for news gathering, the managements of the media houses have been faulted for failure to facilitate journalists with bundles and airtime while in the field. The respondents said it is a challenge to send back videos and audios from news events as they have no bundles to enable them switch on their internet. As one reporter put it:

> The cost of internet on mobile is still high. We are not facilitated with airtime and bundles to upload content on Whatsapp while in the field. The content management system uses internet.

Besides, the study found out that while the media houses set up systems and processes to enable convergence, journalists had not been provided with adequate and necessary equipment for creation of multimedia content as new technologies evolve every day. Asked whether the respondents have digital recorders one said of them said, "No, I don't think people have enough of them because sometimes I have looked for equipment when going out to a story, like a video camera, and it is a long process trying to get it and sometimes you might not get it." There are few recorders that reporters can access and return upon completion of their assignments. But it becomes a challenge when many reporters want the recorders at the same time. Most respondents said they use their smartphones to capture the video, the photo and the audio yet some of these phones don't give quality videos. The quality of the content whether text, audio, video or images matter. Media houses are strong on print in terms of quality of stories and the same should be applied for online content.

Some journalists are keen on engaging audiences online but others said that should be left to social media moderators. Apart from using social media to source for news, some journalists said they use it to share their story links and to promote or highlight those stories to their followers. Those who share their story links are concerned about the comments from audience on their stories. "It is an opportunity for me to hear what the audience has to say and sometimes it leads to other story leads," one reporter said. "I am able to take the story forward when I engage the audience. There are fresh quotes and ideas," another respondent said.

The study also revealed that correspondents use social media more than other journalists on permanent employment. A notable trend revealed that correspondents are actually driving convergence across the media houses. This is pegged on the fact that they are not on permanent employment and get paid for the content they produce.

They are, therefore, more likely to take audios, videos, still photos as well as write stories. One respondent noted, "The permanent staff don't care so much about convergence as opposed to correspondents who know if I send a photo or a video, I will earn some extra money."

The study also revealed that while the majority of journalists are using new media, some journalists especially those with years of experience in print media were still reluctant. An online sub-editor said, "There are those who do not use social media or even attempt to file stories for the online platforms. This is true especially for the legacy journalists – the print journalists." Some of the reasons for giving new media a wide berth is that they find the new platforms for distribution of content as narrow and lacking in depth when it comes to news. The established journalists have argued that they prefer reporting incisive and detailed pieces for the print publications instead of sharing content in 180 characters, for instance. An online sub editor commented:

> … I am going to say older, more experienced journalists are really into legacy media. They have held onto the way things should work, the old ways of doing things. Even getting someone to run a Twitter account becomes a fight.

One reporter commented on why she is not focused on filing for print. "You know you want to get the meat of the story for print. So, if you are at the same time taking videos and sending paragraphs as you go along, that can be a little bit confusing handling all that at the same time."

However, legacy journalists have also cited increased workload for their reluctance to embrace new technologies or Digital First strategy adopted by their media houses where the requirement is to file content for online platforms first and finish with print. For the longest time print journalists filed stories for only a single platform. With the media houses integrating new media, the requirements for the journalists have changed.

There is need to create content for different platforms and this means reporters need to repurpose their stories to fit the style of various distribution channels or create entirely new content exclusively for the web. The legacy journalist cannot survive in the changing media landscape unless he adopts new media. Respondents are unanimous that as long as you are still in the newsroom, you have no choice because convergence is real so even if you are an older journalist, you have to make an effort to have the multimedia skills.

Respondents also cited lack of continuous training for multi-media skills. The study revealed journalists were offered training when their media houses launched convergence journalism. However, there haven't been follow up trainings. One reporter put it, "There have been some training but not many. I have been trained once since I joined the company three years ago." Questions arise over the quality of multimedia content coming from reporters who say they lack training. With no sufficient training are they doing it right? Are they producing quality videos, audios and photos? One respondent said, "I could say it is trial and error. It depends on the reporters' effort; one can try and get a good camera to get a good photo even a good smartphone instead of submitting for the sake of it. It is a challenge though."

 "…for now it depends so much on how aggressive you are as an individual to take videos and sometimes do stories that can go viral. You also need to know which stories can be used as exclusives for the paper," another one said.

The management has tried to offer in-house trainings on need basis but not much has been done due to lack of finances. However, there is need to equip journalists with the necessary skills in order to function properly in the current digital media landscape.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study evaluated the journalists' perception of the use of various new media platforms for professional use in Kenya. The study established that new media technologies have emerged as powerful tools of journalism. However, younger reporters, correspondents and some legacy journalists with a personal drive had adapted easily to the use of new media. Legacy journalists were found to be reluctant to embrace new media in their journalistic practices. Some journalists cited increased workload that made it difficult to adopt new media technologies. Diffusion of innovation theory offers an explanation for such adoption patterns. Respondents' characteristics such as age determined level of adoption of new media. Younger journalists reported finding new media technologies easy to use and indeed they used them often.

The reason may partly be that they have grown up interacting with these new technologies unlike legacy journalists who have to learn how to use them especially for content distribution to help their media organisations drive traffic to traditional platforms and to increase the online numbers. Besides, most respondents cited lack of sufficient training for multimedia skills meaning they found it difficult to use the new innovations. Diffusion of innovation states that the complexity of innovations and whether people understand and know how to use it affects the rate of adoption. This can partly be attributed to some journalists' failure to embrace new media technologies. Other factors that may affect the rate of adoption according to Roger's are the price of an innovation. Media houses have cited lack of finances to hold continuous trainings for journalists. The theory thus helps in understanding some of the factors that come into play in understanding journalists use or failure to use new adoptions.

Rogers' categories of adopters can be used to explain the findings that one of the media houses fell in the innovators category for having launched convergence journalism ahead of the other two. Another media organisation started and sustained the efforts to integrate new media by acquiring new systems and innovations like chart beats, smartphones, digital and audio recorders ahead of the others. Financial stability was a major contributor while the others waited until there was pressure from the industry to adopt new technologies. It reached a point where no print media houses could function without the integration of new media. According to Rogers' theory, finances may be a barrier to adoption of new media technologies. But the study found out innovators had the financial muscle to afford an innovation and could take the risk in the event the innovation failed.

According to Rogers, adoption of new innovations also depends on who is making the decision for the adoption; the individual or the organisation. This plays a major role in determining if people develop an interest in the innovation or not. This observation confirms the findings that for some journalists, it became possible to be early adopters when their media houses became the first to adopt new innovations. Therefore, Rogers' theory helps to interpret the findings on the categories of adoption journalists fell in. From my study, the early adopters are the convergence champions at the media organisation they work for. From various discussions above, these are the journalists who quickly adopted the new media technologies and became champions or convergence trainers for their media organisations. They are not pushed by anyone to file videos, audios and photos beyond the story for print. From our study, the early adopters are only a handful. The laggards are the established print journalists who have not embraced new media yet.

Since the world is increasingly become digital, there is need for media houses to ensure all journalists can create stories with multimedia elements. Media houses should find a way to motivate legacy journalists to embrace new technologies. Journalists should be equipped with the necessary skills and equipment to function properly in multimedia newsrooms. There should be continuous training and refresher courses for journalists to become more productive in the digital age. Most respondents also said the ethics of journalism such as accuracy of facts was being compromised by the speed, they were required to file stories in online platforms. This is a big concern as mainstream compete to be the first to break news. However, the speed of delivery should not stop a journalist to conduct even the most basic level of verification of news before publishing such as contacting multiple sources of information. Finally, media organisations should strive to use as many new media technologies to reach out to a fragmented audience since the study revealed they were not using all the new media platforms available. The study recommends that further research on the kind of trainings being offered to journalists to enable them to become fully multi-skilled be conducted. Further research on problems facing journalists as new media evolves would also be relevant.

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