

# New Media in Old Media: the Nigerian Case

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### **Abstract**

It is no more new the ravaging effect of social or new media on all and sundry. Most social media platforms ranging from the elaborate Facebook to microblogging websites have millions of people from all over the world using them such that new communities of people are now available in near real time online. Facebook with over one billion users is next to China, the largest country on earth. People interact, sell products and brands, broadcast news, share knowledge, inspire social discussion and react to events and issues almost instantaneously. News communication to the masses have really benefited from the social media explosion. There are so many news media houses, both electronic and print media that have adopted social media. This paper assessed the adoption and use of social media in old or traditional media in Nigeria. Is there any presence of social media in prints and electronic media? How have they been used? What have they been used for? These are the background questions the paper did justice to. Two Nigeria-based national electronic and print media organizations, Channels Television and The Punch newspaper for the former and latter respectively, were used for this study. The two major organizations were found to be actively engaging new media. Social media is been used by the media organizations in their traditional responsibilities of news broadcast and publication in a complimentary manner. Recommendations are made based on the outcome of the study.

**Key words:** Traditional Media, New Media, Social Media Network, Newspapers, Channels Television, The Punch, Nigeria



## Introduction

The internet has maintained a rising weight of impact on the global community. And the myriad of tools and/or technologies that thrive on it continue to multiply in number and in their own individual effects and collective impact as the internet on every aspect of our daily living. Some authors have described the internet as a whole as the new media whereas others have coined the term new media for certain group of tools or technologies available on the internet. However way it is described the internet and its component technologies have reshaped or rather continue to reshape our civilization in that it has meant a departure from the way hitherto information is being created, processed, stored, analysed, disseminated and preserved now referred to as old or traditional media.

The nascent social media technology now occupy a germane position in the new media revolution given its ability for inclusion to the extent that the Web is no more static but rather interactive. It is no more new the ravaging effect of social media on all and sundry. Most social media platforms ranging from the elaborate Facebook to microblogging websites as Twitter have millions of people from all over the world using them such that new communities of people are now available in near real time online. Facebook with over 1 billion users is next to China, the largest country on earth. People interact, sell products and brands, broadcast news, share knowledge, inspire social discussion and react to events and issues almost instantaneously. News communication to the masses have really benefited from the social media explosion.

Many people now prefer digital news than its usual traditional form as newspaper publication or radio/ television broadcast. But Sasseen, Olmstead and Mitchell (2013) report that “Americans over 50 are still somewhat less likely to consume news digitally as those under 50: about 43% of those aged 50 to 64 get some form of digital news yesterday compared with 60% of the younger age groups. What stands out more, when it comes to age, is the degree those under 30 are moving away from traditional delivery systems altogether.” The Nigerian case may not be far from this even if not farther given that America is more advanced technologically than Nigeria. So it is expected that most news consumer in Nigeria still largely depend on the old media. This study thus, aims to see the presence or availability of new media in old media, the latter having not left us.



## **Objective**

Our primary objective is to report the use of or rather the availability of new media technologies such as the internet and especially social media in traditional media.

## **Background Information/ Literature Review**

What is new media? New media has been defined copiously. In Webopedia, new media is defined as “a generic term for the many different forms of electronic communication that are made possible through the use of computer technology. The term is in relation to "old" media forms, such as print newspapers and magazines that are static representations of text and graphics. New media includes: Web sites, streaming audio and video, chat rooms, e-mail, online communities, Web advertising, DVD and CD-ROM media, virtual reality environments, integration of digital data with the telephone, such as Internet telephony, digital cameras, mobile computing.”

Moreover, Logan (2010) sees new media as a term that will in general refer to those digital media that are interactive, incorporate two-way communication, and involve some form of computing as opposed to “old media” such as the telephone, radio, and TV. These older media, opposed to “old media” such as the telephone, radio, and TV. These older media, which in their original incarnation did not require computer technology, now in their present configuration do make use of computer technology, as do so many other technologies that are not necessarily communication media, such as refrigerators and automobiles.

The internet described as the second division of mass media by Mittal and Mittal (2013) is in many ways according to Siaspera (2012) the prototypical new medium. The internet is used by people all over the world to communicate and socialize; to find information, learn new things and be entertained; and to do work, generate income and run a business (Mittal and Mittal, 2013). This study therefore focuses more on the web 2.0 component of the internet with specific emphasis on social media. Although, it has been predicted that with internet penetration growing in sub-Saharan Africa at a very quick rate, driven by a demand to access the capabilities of mobile devices and computers, we are in an age where the various forms of ‘old’ media will be accessed primarily from digital devices within the next 1-3 years (Terragon Nigeria, 2011), yet our focus is to see how the new media is accessed using the old media.



Mass Media plays a crucial role in connecting the World of individuals. It has the ability to reach wide audiences with strong and influential messages which impact upon society. The Mass Media has at least three important roles to play: to inform, educate and influence opinion. According to Mittal and Mittal (2013) mass media can be divided into two main categories that are traditional media (Folk, TV, Radio, and Newspaper etc.) and New Media (Internet). However, the rise of new Media has increased communication between people all over the globe. People can interact through websites, facebook , blogs e.t.c. The evolution of these new media technologies has brought about globalization.

New media are web- based /digital computer technologies which can be interactive and networkable such as; the internet, website and so on. According to Croteau and Hoynes (2003), new media, “radically break the connection between physical place and social place, making physical location much less significant for our social relationships”.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt today, that we are witnessing a huge shift in media. There is a massive shift from the old media as people are migrating to the use of smart phones and social media. Social media became popular after the advent of web 2.0, a web based technology which enhances great interaction. This has been fueled by the growing use of mobile devices such as smart phones commonly used to access these social media services. As social media continues to evolve its uses change and expand as well, so is the definition of social media. Today, social media is the most engaging and interactive form of communication or public relations.

Social media differ from traditional/industrial media in many ways, including quality, reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence. Social media refers to interaction among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. It is also defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (“Social Media”, 2013).

Social media are the emerging digital communication channels which create a user- oriented information sharing ground where any people can generate or subscribe information content as both information provider and consumer (Kim, kim and Kim, 2010). Social media technologies are in different forms such as; social blogs, weblogs, podcast, internet, social bookmarking, news



portals or social news, wikis, social networking (like Facebook, e-mail etc.,) social photo (like Youtube) among others.

Social media like Facebook has improved communication or interaction between people all over the globe, provides various entertainment functions as a tool for social change. With the internet one can create his/her own blogs and views events globally, it has brought about more options of communication, access to news online, it has help individuals upload their business online and get new customers for their product, it is an avenue to share or upload pictures of individual or events, groups can be formed to meet people with similar interests and views, it allows creative expression of ideas and knowledge using tools such as blog, the quality, reach, frequency and usability differentiates social media from traditional media among others. However, the criticism is on the reliability and trustworthiness of the information, different availability of information, cyber bullying and time consuming.

### **Channels Television**

“Channels Television is one of the 13 independent television stations currently broadcasting in Nigeria, since the Federal Government deregulated the broadcast media in 1992.

The company was licensed in June 1993 and allocated a frequency on UHF (channel 39). It began transmission two years later under the name Channels Television and now broadcasts to a well discerning audience of over 20 million people.

The establishment of Channels Television as a news station was in response to the yearning of Nigerians for a TV station that will among other things:

- \* Give an alternative medium of communication to the government and its policies, and hold public officers accountable to the people;
- \* Accommodate opposing views;
- \* Inform and educate the general public on how they are governed as well as, what their civic responsibilities are;
- \* Uphold the ideals of balanced reporting, objectivity, fairness and the right of the individual to communicate.



Channels Television’s bias for news has placed it well above other competitors in the Nigerian television industry.

The station has bagged the ‘Best Television station of the Year’, an award endowed by the Nigerian Media Merit Award Trust – eight times in the last thirteen years (2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2010, 2012 & 2013), thereby making Channels Television “the Station of the decade” (Channels Television, 2014).

## **The Punch**

The Punch (n.d) has it that, The Punch newspaper was founded by two friends, James Aboderin, an accountant and Sam Amuka, a columnist and editor at the Daily Times. Sam Amuka became the first editor of the Sunday Punch. Both editions were designed to favor a friendlier apolitical approach to news reporting, combining footages of social events with everyday political news. The paper sustains itself by delving into broad issues that interests a myriad of people (Adigun, 1990). The Punch has since been dubbed the “most widely read newspaper” in Nigeria.

## **Methodology**

Newspapers with national coverage subscribed to by our universities were selected as the print media surveyed for the study. Also Channels Television (Channels TV), a national privately owned media outfit was selected as the electronic media for the study been a specialized news television station. The Punch Newspaper (Punch) was however selected for the print media category having met our selection criteria.

### Selection criteria

The media shall possess section(s) for new media reporting in its daily publication

The media shall possess section(s) for social media reportage in its daily publication

The media shall have adequate use of social media in its daily production

Both Punch and Channels TV meet the selection criteria and thus form the backdrop of our study and report on the presence of new media in old or traditional media in Nigeria.



## Findings

It was found that The Punch has a section, **i-Punch**, dedicated to new media in its daily publication Monday to Friday.

The i-Punch is equally dubbed by The Punch as “... *your daily internet monitor*”. This further explains the intent of the section.

The i-Punch was incorporated into the newspaper in February, 2013.

The i-Punch has since maintained a steady representation on pages 14 and 15 of the Punch newspaper Monday to Friday.

The i-Punch captures new media issues under seven (7) subsections, viz,

- a. ***i-tip***, on the top of page 14, a kind of quotable quote on social media or technology;
- b. Technology news usually culled from the internet, on the far left of page 14;
- c. “***Buzz... social media diary***”, at the base spreading across pages 14 and 15, it garners the comments of the internet public from blogs, online communities and social media networks on at least three topical issues bothering on Nigeria said or done by the elite class;
- d. Report bothering on comments from Twitter and Facebook on major political or trending matter in the society; and also on an important personalities activities on Twitter or Facebook;
- e. “***Trending- Nigeria***”, at the top of page 15, with popular names making the headlines bulleted as it would appear on Twitter;
- f. An educative corner on the far right hand side of page 15 just below “Trending- Nigeria” to teach on the use of social media and other internet technologies;
- g. And also, there is the ***Photo of the day*** section that captures incredibly funny picture sourced from Facebook, BBM, blogs and other social media platforms.





The figure below shows a pictorial explanation of the i-Punch explained above.



Figure 1.0 The i-Punch section of The Punch

The Channels TV equally deploys handful degree of new media in its news broadcast. Apart from having social media accounts with Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Facebook and others, Channels on most Fridays of the week, engages audience through Hangout on Google+ to discuss serious trending national issues. Channels also has mobile applications on which its programmes can be watched on iOS, Android devices and Blackberry with the latest addition been *i-Witness*, a feature for the afore mentioned mobile devices that enable the general public to report/upload pictures and videos of events real time.





Figure 2.0. Channels TV I-Witness Platform.

Also, many times on Channels TV programmes especially “Sunrise Daily”, viewers’ comments are read real time from twitter and other social media platforms. Therefore without having to call in or just sit down and watch viewers can participate on any matter up for discussion. Unlike CNN, Aljazeera et al, it is however not evident if Channels TV have ever used Skype, YouTube or others in that category to report news or used during a live programme. But lately Channels have video streamed live programmes notable among which was the funeral of the late iconic Nelson Mandela in Qunnu, South Africa and most recently, the just concluded World Economic Summit in Davos, Switzerland.

Below are pictorial samples of Channels TV use of new media:

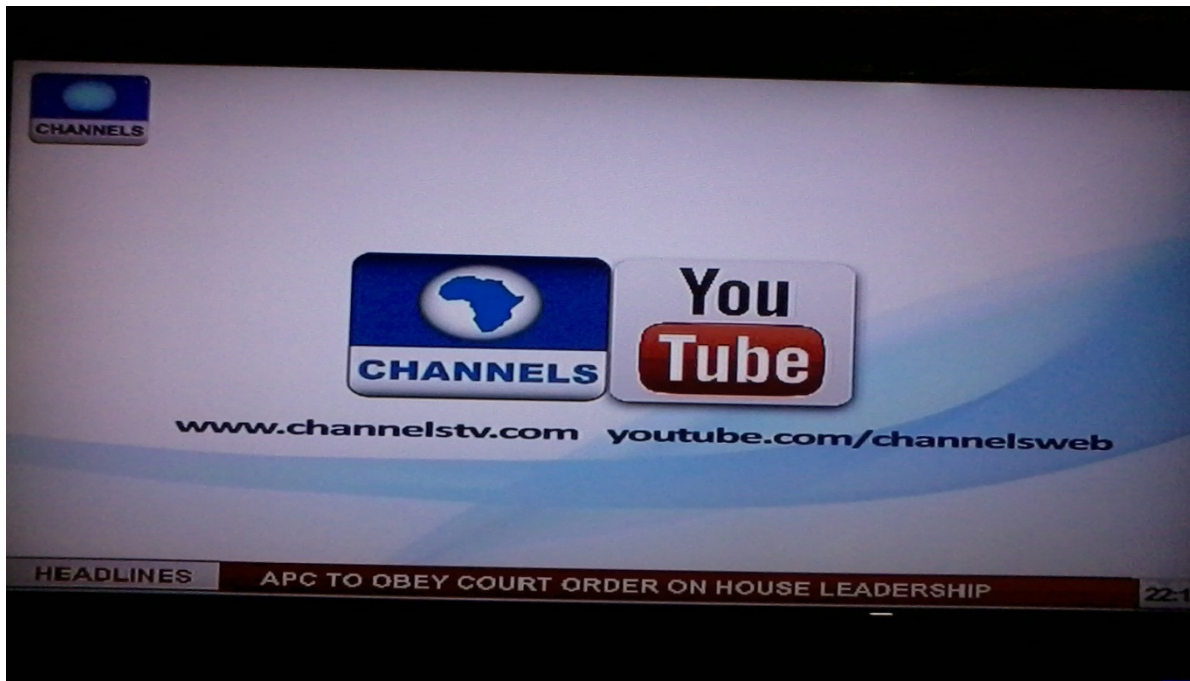


Figure 3.0.1. Channels TV new media tools



Figure 3.0.2. Channels TV new media tools

## Conclusion

With technologies evolving per day in the new media ecosystem we are in for an “ever learning” era in the bid to catch up with the technology savvy world and a “chameleonic time” in our attempt to take the full advantage of technological innovations. In fact most technologies expire before they are deployed; what a dynamic time the media and the world at large must cope with.

Meanwhile, from our study, apart from its primary purpose of serving as a daily internet monitor, we can also deduce the following as the impacts of the i-Punch:

It is a demonstration of the complimentary role technology can play on traditional practices to the extent that we can say new media can have a symbiotic relationship with the old media.

It may be a way of bridging the gap between the technology savvy youth population and the more conservative adult readership.

Also, it may be a means of bringing to the general public happenings in the virtual ecosystem hitherto preserved exclusively for the virtual citizens.

Moreover, it may be another demonstration of journalistic innovation for which The Punch Newspaper is known been the most widely read newspaper in the country (The Punch, 2014)

Which ever way it is viewed The Punch can be said to be leveraging on new media; and much more so, creating a blend between traditional media and the new media. The ultimate gain of this initiative is that without modern communication gadgets and the internet everybody still has the opportunity not to be missing the news and happenings in both the virtual and physical worlds.

As for Channels TV, it is thought that for a group that has won the TV station of the year award for eight (8) times in thirteen (13) years and with over 20 million viewers worldwide (Channels, 2014), leveraging on social media technology is almost an expectation but when compared with other television stations of its stature, especially the aged state-owned Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), it is an innovation brought to bear in the business of news broadcasting.

Over all, the Nigeria media sector can now be said to be equally exploring new media to leverage on its activities.

## Recommendations

Other newspapers in Nigeria should emulate The Punch in capturing and publishing new media in their daily print contents.

Other television stations in Nigeria should take a cue from Channels TV.

Channels TV should up their effort and fully deploy social media by using social tools like Skype, YouTube and others for live programming and news correspondence like global giants as CNN, Aljazeera and so on.

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