Utilisation of Internet Tools by Broadcast Journalists: Evidence from Rivers and Bayelsa States, Nigeria

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine the utilisation of the Internet by broadcast journalists in two states in Nigeria, namely Rivers and Bayelsa States. The survey method was employed to gather information from a sample of three hundred (300) broadcast journalists systematically selected from a total population of 601 radio and television broadcast journalists in the two states. In order to elicit relevant data for the study from the respondents, a 21-item questionnaire was used and the Kuder-Richardson formula 21 (KR-21) was used to establish reliability of the research instrument at 0.70. The results show that the Internet has changed the way broadcast journalists in Rivers and Bayelsa States perform their professional duty especially in the use of Internet tools for gathering information and surveillance of their immediate environment and beyond. The findings also suggest that there is a shared perception between television and radio broadcast journalists in Rivers and Bayelsa States on the time they spent on the Internet and the utilisation of Internet tools in their professional practice. The conclusion is that broadcast journalists in the two states have good knowledge of Internet tools and they use these tools to carry out their jobs effectively. Accordingly, it was recommended among others, that the journalists should continue with the use of Internet tools to get useful information and to broadcast useful information to listeners/viewers but they should consider the application and use of new technologies like the Internet as complimentary rather than a replacement for basic journalism skills which sets them apart as professionals.

I. Introduction

Technological advancements in various aspects of human endeavour seem to be moving at geometric progression considering the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The introduction of computers for information gathering, processing and dissemination form the basic nucleus for this advancement and provides the basis for digital information and communication culture. This is evident in the pervasive use of computers today. Computer technology has made assembling broadcast packages much easier and faster; fewer field reporters and producers are needed, and technical support is minimized. Technology today, is a major determinant of information gathering, processing and dissemination, such that "…the computerization of information has enabled the modern broadcast journalist to be more dynamic, versatile and vibrant in the practice of his profession" (Asak 2012, p.240). In addition to his traditional tasks, the broadcast journalist today is also a "video journalist as he can shoot, edit and upload his own story" (p.244). This is made even easier for him as a result of digital technology.

Consequently, new media such as the Internet has become part of the journalist's daily routine. A survey of newsrooms in 2001 by Professor Steve Ross of Columbia University reveals that "at least four out of every five reporters were using the Internet…everyday" (Itule and Anderson 2008, p.167). However, one wonders what these journalists use the Internet for. Is it more for pastime like constantly logging on to Facebook or Twitter in order to be in touch with friends and relatives? The 2011 Arketi Web Watch Media Survey reveals that the majority of its respondents (journalists) use the Internet to read news. This survey, which was specifically aimed at journalists and their use of technology, shows nine other top ways in which journalists use the Internet. These include: Searching for news sources/story idea, Social networking, Micro-blogging, Blogging, watching webcasts, watching YouTube, exploring Wikis, producing/listening to podcasts and social bookmarking. According to the Nielson Company, a research firm in the U.S, by early 2009, time spent on social networks and blogs had become the fourth most popular online activity, ahead of personal email; and that globally, one in every 11 minutes online is accounted for by social network and blogging site (Nielsen,2009).

Journalists use the Internet to achieve various tasks in their work situations as they gather, process, and disseminate information. The Internet provides a mass of detailed information whether in terms of covering a story, writing a feature, editing a copy or doing background research or, to find new ideas and new contacts, if the journalist knows where to look. In addition, the Internet helps to train the journalist, especially with respect

to application of new media technologies, in various aspects of his profession as he takes advantage of self training tutorials on the Internet.

However, few journalists in developing countries like Nigeria, seem to be trained on how to work with the Internet. In line with this, one wonders if broadcast journalists particularly are conversant or know the extent to which Internet can be applied in broadcasting to achieve specific objectives in journalism practice. Itule and Anderson (2008) note that journalists of the 21st century are expected to use the Internet for research and reporting. Today, in developed countries of the world, broadcast journalists are using the Internet in more ways than can be imagined some years ago. Nwagbara (2011) also underscores this point in her contrast of what use to be and what obtains today; thus in the past,

> "if a person needed to know about the world, acquire skills or capacities or imbibe acceptable behavior patterns which would enable him operate meaningfully as part of society, he was referred to the school. But today, the trend seems to be changing because the mass media appear to provide easy and fast access to information at little or no cost on the part of the individual involved" p.108.

The job of a broadcast journalist like other journalists, involves seeking for and gathering data (which may be information), processing them and disseminating such information to other people. In performing these functions, the upwardly mobile journalists, can use the Internet to achieve all these. Though, the Internet should not and ought not replace the professional writing skills of the journalist, it goes a long way to assist him in making his work much easier, efficient and effective (Asak, 2012).

The Internet tools that broadcast journalists use in the course of their work can be broadly categorized under four major headings according to Birbal and Taylor (2006). These are Communication in the form of e-mail, chat, Usenet, Linkserv, social networking like the Facebook, Twitter, Youtube; the World Wide Web (www); the File Transfer Protocol (FTP); and Terminal Emulation tools. However, it should be noted that these tools are not totally independent or exclusive of each other because a broadcast journalist can, while at a particular website, send an e-mail to a potential source from the website while at the same time chatting on Skype and downloading or uploading an audio or video file using the file transfer protocol..

Communication tools which are the most popular are used to get in contact with sources and others who may not be direct sources of information; the use of the World Wide Web is to get information or data in the form of text, graphics, audio, video and so on; the file transfer protocol (FTP) is to facilitate acquisition and transfer of documents on the Internet while Terminal Emulation tools are used to access remote computers for data or information that is normally not in the public domain as information on other websites.

This research focuses on the uses of Internet tools by broadcast journalists in performing their professional tasks. The study takes as its structure, the use of the Internet by broadcast journalists as it relates to three elements identified by Quinn and Lamble (2007) as constituting the basic parts of the journalistic process: generating ideas, gathering information and production.

II. Statement of the Problem

There is more competition in the media industry today than ever before because of the advent of new technologies. Such competition behoves television and radio producers and directors to provide content that will hold the audience/viewer's interests and attract the advertising dollar. With increasing competition from other media outlets and the increasing exposure of the public to the Internet, programme/news management in developed economies have turned, in addition to traditional ways of broadcast journalism practice, to new options like social networking, blogging, search engines, e-mail and so on.

This implies that the broadcast journalist should be trained multi-skilled personnel. The question borders around whether broadcast journalists in Nigeria understand that in order to compete in broadcast content today, they must be well trained in the use of new technologies like the Internet in gathering, processing, producing and dissemination of information.

This age of citizen journalism is an era where anyone who is computer and Internet literate can become a 'journalist' by gathering and reporting information online. However, Wilson (2007) had argued that overwhelming quantity of unevaluated information with regards to accuracy and relevance poses a big problem of credibility or the possibility of misleading users of the new media such as the Internet. In this respect, skills to access and sift through the mountain of information available on the Internet as well as use only salient, relevant and credible information. This is an uphill task for the journalist who is not trained in the knowledge and application of Internet tools.

In Nigeria, especially in Rivers and Bayelsa States, one is not certain to what extent broadcast journalist are currently employing Internet tools in the task of broadcast journalism as a result of their knowledge and skills. This study therefore set out to determine how broadcast journalists in Rivers and Bayelsa States use Internet tools in performing their duty as broadcast journalists.

III.   Objective of the Study

The purpose of this research was to ascertain the utilisation of Internet tools by broadcast journalists in Rivers State and Bayelsa State; and also to determine whether they spent the same amount of time on the Internet. In addition, the study also attempted to ascertain if the time spent by television broadcast journalists differ from those of radio broadcast journalists in the two states.

IV.   Research Hypotheses

H₁: Journalists who work for television stations in Rivers State tend to spend more time on the Internet and use Internet tools more than journalists who work for radio stations.

H₂: Journalists who work for television stations in Bayelsa State tend to spend more time on the Internet and use Internet tools more than journalists who work for radio stations.

H₃: Journalists who work for television and radio stations in Rivers State tend to spend more time on the Internet and use Internet tools more than journalists who work for television and radio stations in Bayelsa State.

V.   Research Method and Procedure

Survey was used for this study to find out the use of Internet tools by broadcast journalists in Bayelsa and Rivers states respectively. This is appropriate because the phenomenon under study involved investigating people's motives, inquiring into their opinions, beliefs, behaviour as well as attitudes. The population for the study comprised 601 broadcast journalists, male and female, that are currently practicing broadcast journalism as a profession in Rivers and Bayelsa States of Nigeria.

A sample of 300 was drawn from the population of six hundred and one (601) practicing radio and television broadcast journalists in the two states. The three hundred (300) journalists were proportionately selected from the population (see Table 1). In selecting the sample, fifty percent (50%) of the population from each broadcast station was used as the basis for proportionately selecting the sample of broadcast journalists for the study (Olise, 2011).

The formula for selecting the sample size also follows the guideline recommended for selection of sample by Comrey and Lee as cited by Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p.101). The sample eventually selected consisted of 198 radio and television broadcast journalists from Rivers state and 102 radio and television broadcast journalists from Bayelsa state. The stations and corresponding data collected are as follows:

Table 1a: Broadcast stations in Rivers States

| | RIVERS STATE | | | | RIVERS STATE | | |
| | RADIO | | | | TELEVISION | | |
	Name of Radio Station	**Number of Journalists**	**Percentage Selected (50%)**		**Name of Radio Station**	**Number of Journalists**	**Percentage Selected (50%)**
1.	Radio Rivers 99.1	36	18	1.	NTA, P/H	64	32
2.	Treasure FM 98.5	32	16	2.	RSTV	48	24
3.	Rythmn FM 93.7	28	14	3.	AIT	38	19
4.	Love FM 97.7	26	13	4.	Silverbird	33	17
5.	Garden City FM	26	13				
6.	Cool FM 95.9	20	10				
7.	Wazobia FM 94.1	16	8				
8.	Raypower FM 106.5	28	14				
	Total	**212**	**106**		**Total**	**185**	**92**

Table 1b: Broadcast stations in Bayelsa State

| | RADIO | | | | TELEVISION | | |
	Names of Radio Station	**Number of Journalists**	**Percentage Selected (50%)**		**Name of Radio Station**	**Number of Journalists**	**Percentage Selected (50%)**
1.	Radio Bayelsa	34	17	1.	NTA, Bayelsa	57	29
2.	Royal Radio FM	28	14	2.	Gloryland	26	13
3.	Raypower FM	24	12	3.	AIT	35	17
	Total	**86**	**43**			**118**	**59**

VI.   Method of Data Analysis

The data for this research were analysed using window SPSS version 18. Descriptive and inferential statistics were involved. Such descriptive statistics involved the use of frequency distribution, simple percentages, mean scores and Standard deviations. The Inferential statistics used in the testing of hypothesis was

independent –samples t test. Data were presented in tables after collating and computing answers to items in percentages. Responses were presented using a combination of univariate and multivariate tables where appropriate, based on the frequency of the responses which were expressed in simple percentages.

Testing the Hypotheses

        Hypotheses formulated for this study were tested to determine the statistical significance of the research study at a 0.5 level of significance. This was achieved by using inferential statistical analysis which involves testing the hypothesis and applying correct statistical method and distribution of data, to know if there is a significant difference in the variables. The hypotheses of the study were tested by using the independent – samples t test.

Table 2a: Responses to whether the use of Internet tools affect broadcast journalists' research or gathering of information on a story

	RIVERS STATE										
	RADIO						TELEVISION				
	Name of Radio Station	**YES**	**NO**		**%**		**Name of Radio Station**	**YES**	**NO**		**%**
1	RadioRivers 99.1	19	9	28	25%	1	NTA, Ph	17	3	20	24%
2	R-N/Treasure FM	8	6	14	13%	2	RSTV	27	11	38	45%
3	Rythmn FM 93.7	4	9	13	12%	3	AIT	13	3	16	19%
4	Love FM 97.7	3	5	8	7%	4	Silverbird	7	3	10	12%
5	Garden City FM	2	8	10	9%						
6	Wazobia/Cool FM	14	5	19	17%						
8	Raypower FM	13	7	20	18%						
	Sub Total	**63**	**49**	**112**	**100%**			**64**	**20**	**84**	**100%**

        Table 2a shows that majority of the respondents in the radio stations in River state, 63 (56%) said their use of Internet tools affected their research and or gathering of information on a story. In the same way, 64 (76%) of respondents in the television stations said their use of Internet tools affected their research and or gathering of information on a story.

Table 2b: Responses to whether the use of Internet tools affect broadcast journalists' research or gathering of information on a story

	BAYELSA STATE										
	RADIO						TELEVISION				
	Name of Radio Station	**YES**	**NO**		**%**		**Name of Radio Station**	**YES**	**NO**		**%**
1	Radio Bayelsa	7	9	16	37%	1	NTA, Bayelsa	12	16	28	55%
2	RoyalRadioFM	11	4	15	35%	2	AIT	10	3	13	25%
3	Raypower FM	7	5	12	28%	3	Niger DeltaTV	6	4	10	20%
	Sub Total	**25**	**18**	**43**	**100%**			**28**	**23**	**51**	**100%**

        Table 2b shows a distribution of respondents based on whether the use of Internet tools affected their research or gathering of information.

Table 3a: Time spent on the Internet because of the use of internet tools for assigned tasks

	RIVERS STATE																
	RADIO								TELEVISION								
	Name of Radio Station	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**		**%**	**Name of Radio Station**	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Total**	**%**
1	Radio Rive	7	12	5	2	2	28	25%	1	NTA, P/H	6	11	4	1	1	23	27%
2	R-N/Trea	2	9	1	1	1	14	13%	2	RSTV	9	15	7	3	1	35	42%
3	Rythm nF	1	8	2	2	0	13	12%	3	AIT	3	10	2	1	0	16	19%
4	Love FM	0	5	2	1	0	8	7%	4	Silverbird	3	7	0	0	0	10	12%
5	Garden City Fm	3	4	1	1	1	10	9%									

6	Wazobia	6	6	4	3	0	19	17%									
8	Raypower	4	9	2	3	2	20	18%									
	Sub Total	**23**	**53**	**17**	**13**	**6**	**112**	**100**		21	43	13	5	2	84	**100**

Table 3a indicates respondents' opinion on time spent on the Internet. Majority of them , 76 out of 112 and 64 out of 84 agreed they spent time on the Internet.

Table 3b: Time spent on the Internet because of the use of internet tools for assigned tasks

					BAYELSA STATE												
RADIO												TELEVISION					
	Name of Radio Station	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree		%		Name of Radio Station	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree		%
1	Radio Bayelsa	5	5	3	3	0	16	27%	1	NTA, Bayelsa	7	13	4	3	1	28	55%
2	Royal Radio	4	6	4	1	0	15	42%	2	AIT	2	9	1	1	0	13	25%
3	Raypower	2	8	1	1	0	12	19%	3	Niger Delta Radio	2	5	2	1	0	10	20%
	Sub Total	**11**	**19**	**8**	**5**	**0**	**43**	**100**			**11**	**27**	**7**	**5**	**1**	**51**	**100**

Table 3b shows that out of the 43 broadcast journalists working in radio stations in Bayelsa State, 30 of them agreed to spending time using the Internet to perform assigned tasks. For the television journalists, out of 5, 37of them agreed to spending time using the Internet to do their jobs.

Table 3c: Perceived time Spent On Internet And Use Of Internet Tools By Broadcast Journalists In Rivers and Bayelsa States

	S/A	A	TOTAL	%
RIVERS STATE	44	96	140	67
BAYELSA STATE	22	46	68	33
TOTAL	66	142	208	100

Table 3c shows the aggregate of all broadcast journalists, 140 (67%), in Rivers State who agreed that they spent much time on the Internet and in the process made use of Internet tools a lot. This figure makes up 71% of total broadcast population in Rivers state. In comparison, a total number of 68 (33%) of broadcast journalists (72% of total broadcast population) in Bayelsa State agreed that they spent much time on the Internet and thereby, used Internet tools a lot.

Testing of hypotheses
Three hypotheses were tested in this study. The purpose was to ascertain findings of the thrust of this work as presented in tables 12, 13 and 14.

Hypothesis One
H_1: Journalists who work for television stations tend to spend more time on the Internet and use Internet tools more than journalists who work for radio stations in Rivers State.

Table 4: Analysis of Mean and standard deviation of agreement between Television Broadcast Journalists and Radio Broadcast Journalists in Rivers state on the variable 'I spend much time on the internet which make me use internet tools a lot for my work'.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	DF	Decision
Radio Broadcast Journalists	76	4.30	0.46			138	
Tv Broadcast Journalists	64	4.33	0.47	0.524	0.748		p>0.05 (NS)

Table 4 present result of t-test analysis of statistical difference in the time spent on internet and use of internet tools in professional practice between television Broadcast Journalists and Radio broadcast journalists in Rivers States. The mean score of agreement by Radio Broadcast journalists in Rivers state on the variable 'I spend much time on the Internet which makes me use Internet tools a lot for my work' (M = 4.30, SD = 0.46) did not differ significantly (t = 0.524, df = 138, two tailed p = 0.748) from that of the television broadcast Journalists of the same state (M = 4.33, SD = 0.47) at 95 % probability level. This implies that there is no significant difference between the two groups, therefore the alternate hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis upheld. It can therefore be said that there is a shared perception between television broadcast Journalists in Rivers State and radio broadcast journalists of the same state on how much time they spent on the Internet and make use of Internet tools in their professional practice.

Hypothesis Two
H_2: Journalists who work for television stations tend to spend more time on the Internet and use Internet tools more than journalists who for radio stations in Bayelsa State.

Table 5: Analysis of Mean and standard deviation of agreement between Television Broadcast Journalists and Radio broadcast journalists in Bayelsa state on the variable 'I spend much time on the internet which make me use internet tools a lot for my work'.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	DF	Decision
Radio Broadcast Journalists	30	4.37	0.49				
Tv Broadcast Journalists	38	4.29	0.46	0.20	0.51	66	p>0.05 (NS)

Table 5 present result of t-test analysis of statistical difference in the time spent on internet and the use of internet tools in professional practice between television Broadcast Journalists and Radio broadcast journalists in Bayelsa State. The mean score of agreement by Radio Broadcast journalists in Bayelsa State on the variable 'I spend much time on the Internet which makes me use Internet tools a lot for my work' (M = 4.37, SD = 0.49) did not differ significantly (t = 0.20, df = 66, two tailed p = 0.51) from that of the radio Broadcast Journalists in the same state (M = 4.29, SD = 0.46). This implies that there is no significant difference between the two groups, therefore the alternate hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis upheld. It can therefore be said that there is a shared perception between television broadcast Journalists in Bayelsa state and Radio broadcast journalists in the same state on how much time they spent on the Internet and made use of Internet tools in their professional practice.

Hypothesis Three
H_3: Journalists who work for television and radio stations in Rivers State tend to spend more time on the Internet and use Internet tools more than journalists who work for television and radio stations in Bayelsa State.

Table 6: Analysis of Mean and standard deviation of agreement between Broadcast Journalists in Rivers state and Broadcast Journalists in Bayelsa state on the variable 'I spend much time on the internet which make me use internet tools a lot for my work.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
Broadcast Journalists in Rivers state	106	4.32	0.47			
Broadcast Journalists in Bayelsa state	102	4.31	0.47	0.20	0.51	p>0.05 (NS)

Table 6 present result of t-test analysis of statistical difference in the time spent on internet and use of internet tools in professional practice between television/radio Broadcast Journalists in Rivers States and those in Bayelsa state. The mean score of agreement by television/radio Broadcast Journalists in Rivers state on the variable 'I spend much time on the Internet which makes me use Internet tools a lot for my work' (M = 4.32, SD = 0.47) did not differ significantly (t = 0.20, df = 126, two tailed p = 0.51) from that of television/radio broadcast Journalists in Bayelsa state (M = 4.31, SD = 0.47). This implies that there is no statistically significant

difference between broadcast journalists in Rivers states and those in Bayelsa state on time spent on the internet and the use of internet tools in their professional practice; therefore the alternate hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis upheld. It can therefore be said that there is a shared perception between broadcast Journalists in Rivers state and those in Bayelsa state on how much time they spend on the Internet and made use of Internet tools in their professional practice.

VII.   Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study are in line with what Acharya et. al (2012) reported, that journalists use time on several tools on the Internet and that they use the Internet especially for news content; integrating the use of online resources into the newsroom. Furthermore, Acosta's (2004) findings that journalists spent most of their time researching news on the Internet and rewriting materials also validates the findings of this study. The perceptions here, suggests that time spent on the Internet by broadcast journalists is in tandem with the use of Internet tools for their work. This seem to corroborate Cassidy (2007) that journalists have to have a certain degree of trust in the information they find on the Internet in order to actually make use of it.

The findings suggest that broadcast journalists in Rivers and Bayelsa States had access to the Internet and were conversant with its use. The access to Internet may be through public cybercafés, office terminals, laptops or smartphones.

More importantly, the findings established that broadcast journalists in the two states in Nigeria, had knowledge of the use of Internet tools. They applied such knowledge in their professional broadcast practices to achieve specific tasks or objectives.

Furthermore, the findings show that Broadcast Journalists in Rivers and Bayelsa States considered the satisfaction derived in the use of Internet for surveillance of the environment as the most important gratification. In line with this, the findings indicate that the use of Internet tools, affected how broadcast journalists in Rivers and Bayelsa States generated story ideas and gather information on a story. And this, perhaps, explains why the study demonstrates that Broadcast Journalists in Rivers and Bayelsa States spent time on the Internet which made them use Internet tools a lot for their work.

The study confirms that there was a shared perception between television and radio broadcast journalists in Rivers State on the time they spent on the Internet and the utilisation of Internet tools in their professional practice. The same holds true for television and radio broadcast journalists in Bayelsa States. The findings show that such shared perception exists between broadcast journalists in Rivers State and those in Bayelsa States on the time they spent on the Internet and utilisation of Internet tools in their professional practice.

VIII.   Conclusion/Recommendation

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions were reached.

Broadcast journalists in Rivers and Bayelsa States (in addition to the traditional method of nosing around for news) were making use of Internet tools in the surveillance of the environment to keep abreast of news events which they presented from a more professional perspective. The use of Internet tools complement very well, the other methods of surveillance of the environment by broadcast journalists.

New media technology as crystallized in the Internet is obviously changing the way broadcast journalists are doing things in their professional practice. To spend time glued to a computer screen using internet tools to their advantage underscores the importance of this new media to broadcast journalists.

No doubt, the use of Internet tools by broadcast journalists in their professional practice has come to stay. The years ahead will see more broadcast journalists making use of these Internet tools and finding more uses for them in the course of their professional practice. The clarion call is for all broadcast journalists to become Internet literate because, to end in the words of Nwagbara (2011),

> "Literacy is a major component of development. If any country must experience change
> from one state of development to an improved one, literacy must be taken very seriously.
> In fact, literacy is the key skill for modernization, education and the ability to use the
> media" p.109.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are advanced given the findings and conclusions of the study.

Broadcast Journalists especially in developing countries like Nigeria, should continue to use Internet tools to get useful information and to broadcast useful information to listeners/viewers. However, they must acknowledge at all times that the use of Internet tools for their work is complementary and not a substitute for journalistic skills which sets them apart from amateurs or citizen journalists.

Also, they should learn more about other Internet tools like Terminal Emulation and File Transfer Protocol as well as the uses to which these tools can be put, relevant to their profession.

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