

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A first step has to be made in terms of the developments on the technological front and the ways in which these developments are making inroads into our understanding of journalism. Computerization in all sectors of society has taken place in particularly Western capitalist democracies - with effects on the way the economy and society operates. Practically all media companies have switched to computer network systems, electronic communication traffic and the 'paperless office' are topics of debate in management circles and the convergence of media as well as the fact that the television set, video player and personal computer have found their way into an increasing number of West-European, North-American and Australasian households are signs of the high impact of technology on all aspects of life.

The Internet as it can be considered to be affecting journalism in general and the professional ideology of journalism in particular will be discussed here in two ways: how it has made inroads into newsrooms and desktops of journalists working for all media types in terms of Computer-Assisted Reporting (CAR); and how it has created a new type of journalism: online journalism.

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Although it must be said that every country or region has its own specific issues regarding new media developments and journalism, the author assumes that some of the more general points made here can be extrapolated to the developments in more or less similar areas in the world such as North America, Australia, Western Europe and Japan.

1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central questions which have been addressed to some extent in these publications can be summarized as:

1. What kind of business model works for journalism online (i.e. where can we make profit)?
2. Will traditional news media or even traditional news values disappear because of the Internet?
3. Should there be journalism at all online?
4. If the answer to question 3 is "Yes", what kind of journalism should it be and what kind of skills is required of journalists working for and with the Internet?

1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY

This paper aims to offer some thoughts on how to answer this question in three steps. First a brief sketch of the two key developments in journalism and new media technologies in the last decade or so addresses the state of the art in ejournalism: as it impacts upon all journalists through Computer-Assisted Reporting (CAR) and upon a specific 'group' of media professionals through the establishment of online journalism. Secondly data from a 1999 survey of online journalists in Nigeria the self-perceptions and the dilemmas of this new group of media professionals are analyzed, with a

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specific focus on an emerging new 'mindset' of news media professionalism in an online environment. Thirdly we will examine how these insights might inform us in addressing some of the 'buzzwords' regarding the future developments in ejournalism: annotative reporting (Paul, 1995; Baroel, 1996), open-source

journalism (Moon, 1999) and the concept of hyperadaptivity(Guay, 1995; Nelson, 1999).

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research focuses on the impact of internet on newsmedia. For purpose of this study the scope is limited to the Nigeria News media industry. The study will stretch the effects on internet on News Media professionalism, mindset and buzzword.

However the findings of this research work may be applicable to other countries of the world especially within Africa.

IMPACT OF THE INTERNET ON NEWS MEDIA PROFESSIONALISM, MINDSETS AND BUZZWORDS

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