

Chapter 6

Convergence of Old Media in New Media: Need for Unification of Regulatory Bodies in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Information communication technologies (ICTs) have continued to evolve at very rapid rate. The advancement in ICTs impacted greatly on the practice of journalism and blurred the distinct values that separate radio, television and newspapers in the old media. It is now possible to accessed radio, television and newspaper from one source in the new media. However, there is no clear-cut law or regulation that addresses this convergence of the old media in the new media in Nigeria. The chapter takes a look at the various media laws in the country and notes their point of convergence or divergence if any. The chapter further explores the nation's media laws for their places in the country's ICTs policy or the reverse order where such media laws cover or take care of certain ICTs operations. It found there are gaps in ICTs regulations in the country. It recommends a unification of policies or extant laws to address the new order where the old media have been rolled into one. The study draws on the historical and archival methods. Data gathered through observations and reviews of available relevant literatures were analyzed qualitatively.

INTRODUCTION

Media in this study refers to any medium that enables the practice of journalism. Journalism takes place in the old and new media. In the old media, the demarcation is quite clear, where there exists two broad categories. These are the print

and electronic media. The print media is distinct from the electronic media. There is equally a level of distinctiveness among the various media that makes up a particular medium. For instance, the newspaper and the magazine as members of the print medium possess distinct quality that distinguished them. The radio and television, two members of the electronic medium, also have qualities that make them to be different from one another.

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The newspaper setting and the magazine setting are not the same. The radio and television equally operate under different environments. All of these differences have a bearing on the 'house style' of the various media. The way newspaper stories are written is different from the way magazine stories are written. There are also variations in the way radio and television stories are written.

In the new media, it is a different world. The paraphernalia of the new media are principally ICT based. They comprise of software and hardware components. Hard ware components are computer equipment and other devices that make up a computer system while softwares are programmes and applications that can be run on a computer system. The practice of journalism in the new media takes place within the operational precinct of telecommunications and the internet.

It can be said that the old media is well structured. There are well defined operational environments. The operational equipment is well specified. There are age old procedures in the way and manner editorial materials are packaged. The new media however does not recognize the institutional structure of the old media. The new media allows for production, storage and retrieval from a single source. The new media enables a very high rate of information sharing. This is promoted by a self editing regime under which the new media operates. The concept of gate keeping has however begun to evolve gradually in the new media.

There is plurality of voices in Nigerian media world today. There is tremendous increase in the number of media houses. Development in the ICT world has equally helped to revolutionized and transformed how journalism is practiced. The impact of ICT innovation is felt in all spheres of journalism practice - radio, TV, newspapers, magazine or on the internet. There are hardly any of these media of communication where the emergence of a new technology has not impacted on its operation. (Smith, 1983). The internet on

its part presents a platform where the application of ICT tools reign supreme.

The *convergence of the different media* on the internet further adds value to the role of ICTs in modern day journalism practice. Somehow, while the wall demarcating the different media of mass communication is pulled down, not very much has been heard about the unification of regulatory bodies into one umbrella organization to effect perfect monitoring of the new environment where journalism is practiced (Varner, 1983).

The successful or gradual merger of the old media in the new media in Nigeria therefore has not come with any clear-cut law or regulation that is enforced by a body set up for that purpose. Newspaper laws are still distinct from that of radio and television. The laws governing the practice of journalism in the old media have no bearing with the nation's ICT policy. The chapter takes a look at the various media laws in the country and notes their point of convergence or divergence if any. The chapter further explores the various media laws and sees if they are mentioned in the nation's ICT policy or the reverse order where such media laws cover or take care of certain ICT operations.

METHODOLOGY

In order to put this report together, a method to collect data from different sources was worked out. Books, journals, CDs and available websites were randomly searched for form of works on new media, conventional media, and legal regulations. The retrieved literatures were critically examined against the backdrop of emerging issues in ICTs and the communications world. The analyzed data were reported qualitatively.

STRUCTURE OF THE OLD MEDIA

The *old media* is well structured organizationally. In this circumstance, the structure is the same in

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