

Prospects of New Media and Problems of Old Media in a Digital Age: An Evaluation

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<p>Corresponding Author Nwokeocha Ifeanyi Martins</p> <p>Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State.</p> <p>Article History</p> <p>Received: 09/10/2024</p> <p>Accepted: 20/10/2024</p> <p>Published: 22/10/2024</p>	<p>Abstract: This paper discusses new media prospects and old media problems in the context of the digital age. The period of fast technological development has passed through considerable changes in the media landscape: traditional forms of media were beset with many challenges, while new media platforms emerged. The study sets out to critically assess the benefits and challenges of such changes in highlighting impacts on society, journalism, and the general media franchise. The study was anchored on technological determinism and the theory of Media Ecology. This study adopted a mixed-method research design. Using stratified random sampling, 25 representative samples were drawn from media houses in Uyo metropolis to better represent the different age groups, demographics, and media preferences. The list included two registered journalists each from Comfort FM, AKBC TV, Spectrum TV, Ink Newspaper, and Censor Newspaper, respectively. This gave a total of 35 in terms of sample size. The data collection instrument was an in-depth interview guide. The findings of the study revealed that the coming together of old and new media has imposed upon the current digital age a somewhat complicated and dynamic media landscape. Prospects opened up by new media brought diversity and many other opportunities for engagement; still, they are challenges regarding credibility and information overload. Recommendations were that traditional media outlets needed to embrace the usage of digital technologies and platforms if they intended to be relevant in the digital age. That also means investing in online distribution, interactive capabilities, and personalization.</p> <p>Keywords: Prospects, New Media, Problems, Old Media, Digital Media.</p>
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Introduction

The coming of the digital era changed many aspects of the outlooks on media: the way information is disbursed, consumed, and perceived. This is probably the reason why Franks & Burkell (2018, p. 42) assert that "the emergence of new media platforms has revolutionized the way information is disseminated, consumed, and interacted with by the masses.". This shift has presented both opportunities and challenges for the traditional or "old" media and the newer "new" media platforms. Being at the forefront of the prospects and problems associated with these forms of media is very important in knowing the dynamics occurring within the current media ecosystem. Social media platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, combined with YouTube, have disrupted traditional avenues of media (Zollman & Neuman, 2019). They have given people the right to become content creators themselves, and to share experiences, views, and opinions with the world. User-generated content democratized the media and gave birth to a more inclusive and diverse media

environment (Johnson, 2018). Mimms (2020, p.11) corroborates the view that:

The new media denotes other digital platforms like social networks, online news portals, podcasts, blogs, and online video portals. New media has changed both the way people communicate and experience information and democratized the process of creation and dissemination of content. These platforms have enabled individuals and communities to have their say, share knowledge, and hold dialogues with the rest of the world.

On the other hand, traditional media, meaning print and broadcast media, which includes radio, has been the leading form of news and entertainment for a while now (Napoli, 2019). Due to the rise in the use of digital media, traditional media is disrupted and sees many challenges for their survival. Newspapers and magazines struggled to show good readership advertising revenues and circulation (Shin & Thorson, 2017). Broadcast media is unable to compete with the change in consumer preference because new

media accord much personal level and on-demand content experience to the audience. New media technologies, by nature, have been able to deliver news instantly to a large audience. News spreads rapidly across geographical and linguistic boundaries (Deuze, 2012). It helped people from different parts of the globe to interact more and created awareness regarding any important event or social cause. Thus, new media has emerged as a powerful tool for mobilizing social and political movements (Castells, 2012).

While the new media has opened up many prospects, it equally has created challenges for the traditional media. Many traditional media (the newspapers and television networks) find people not reading or watching them as audiences drift to digital platforms. This has resulted in reduced advertising revenues and a financial instability situation for most of the traditional media organisations (Pew Research Center, 2020). Besides, the proliferation of fake news and misinformation has become increasingly critical in the time of digitization. Due to this, the information on social media sites is turning out to be virally shared within a minute or less. Thus, this has resulted in a loss of public trust in media and questions the credibility and reliability of digital information (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). In addition, content monetization became a challenge for old and new media. While online advertising mushroomed, traditional media companies began to fail due to their lack of ability to successfully implement their business model in the digital world (Picard, 2014). On the other hand, in the framework of new media, content providers often cannot create sustainable revenues.

Another critical issue weighed against traditional media is media ownership concentration. In most countries, a small number of large conglomerates own the majority of the media; this reduces diversity in the presentation of voices and ideas. The problem did not get entirely sorted in the digital age, with large technology companies now wielding significant power in the online media environment too (Franks & Burkell, 2018). Also, there are new anxieties related to privacy and data protection associated with the digital era. New media platforms have been collecting user data with enthusiasm for use in various manners. This fact has consequently triggered anxious questions about personal information being exploited and the ethics of target advertising (Zuboff, 2019). That notwithstanding, traditional media still have a lot worth mentioning and valued. For instance, newspapers have an honoured history of investigative journalism, in-depth analysis, and fact-checking. These are qualities that might distinguish them from the generally superficial nature of new media platforms (Hofmann, Jameson, Laker, & Bohme, 2014).

The digital age has brought several opportunities and challenges to the media industry. New media have transformed ways of information dissemination while empowering the individual, whereas traditional media raise questions on areas of financial viability, fake news, and media ownership concentration. Understanding these prospects and problems is crucial for developing strategies that ensure coexistence and a symbiotic relationship between old and new media in the digital age. This research paper, therefore, tends to critically evaluate the prospects of new media platforms and the problems faced by old media in the digital age.

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Statement of the Problem

The new media, in the contemporary, technological age, has come with marvellous innovations concerning communication and information provision. If social networking media sites, online news outlets, and digital mediums continued to penetrate people's lives, traditional forms of media would struggle to maintain their level and face many obstacles and challenges along the way. Preferences and ways of consumption changed with the two paradigmatic shifts. Mobile phones and access to the internet have turned the tide toward favouring digital platforms more and more in news and information gathering. Newspaper readership has declined, broadcast television has lost viewers, and revenue streams with traditional models of advertising are problematic. The new media landscape also comes with its challenges for credibility and issues of misinformation. The facility for creating and sharing content online has resulted in a great deal of unverified information floating on digital platforms. This further helps in putting the integrity and reliability of news reporting at risk besides testing the facts from falsehoods. Traditional media, on the other side, have long-established systems of fact-checking and editorial controls. This, however, has grown into a big problem for old media; how to outcompete the speed and virality of digital content without compromising its good reputation as a source of trusted information.

Also, the financial viability of traditional media is in question. Many newspapers and television stations witness a decline in revenues; this results in layoffs, budget cuts, and decreased quality journalism. In the digital age, the models of advertisement have shifted as a big fraction of the advertising budgets started being spent online. As a result, old media are unable to make adequate revenue that can keep them running, which worsens the situation in which old media find themselves in the digital era. Against this background, this research paper intends to assess the future of new media and outline the issues affecting old media in the digital era.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to:

- i. Assess the prospects for the new media in the digital era.
- ii. Identify what challenges the traditional or old media face in the digital era.
- iii. Evaluate how new media's potential and old media's problems interact and frame the media landscape in the digital era.

Literature Review

Impact of the Digital Age on Media Landscape

The recent rapid changes in technology have brought many profound changes to the media landscape in recent years, both in how the news and information are created and disseminated and by whom, and also concerning their consumption. The change is due mostly to the pervasiveness of the internet and portable cellular devices.

i. Democratization of Information:

With the democratisation brought about by the digital age, anyone with access to the Internet can create and publish information. Of course, this means it works against the gatekeeping functions of more traditional media outlets since people can become self-publishers on social media, through blogs, or on citizen journalism platforms (Bruns, 2008). This has developed an articulation of voices and perspectives online and offline that enables pluralistic and decentralized sources of information to come into view (Nielsen, 2015).

ii. Disintermediation and Revenue Challenges:

The digitization of media has disintermediated the tradition of media by going around the traditional intermediaries, such as print publishers and television networks (Picard, 2014). Displacing traditional business models and shifting advertising revenues from traditional media platforms to online ones like Google and Facebook has justified the disruption caused (McChesney, 2013). As a result of this, media organizations have faced a major challenge in sustaining financial viability and revenue support for high-quality journalism.

iii. Personalization and fragmentation:

It was also in the digital age that news personalized to suit a person's taste and preference was born. It is on this that Ephraim comments thus, "Through the use of algorithms and data analytics, content providers can create personalized news feeds and create a "filter bubble" aimed at exposing users to content they may already be prejudiced about, beliefs, and interests.". The above, therefore, contributes to another trend of audience fragmentation and hinders the ability of media organizations to reach an audience that is both more global and diverse.

iv. Speed and Real-Time Reporting:

The production and distribution of news have greatly accelerated with digital technologies. Social media platforms and mobile devices enable real-time reporting of news and active citizen engagement in the case of breaking news (Hermida, 2012). This has further emphasized immediacy and the "24/7 news cycle" where journalists work under pressure for quick delivery at the probable expense of accuracy and context (Bruns, 2018).

v. Multimedia and Interactive Storytelling:

The digital era has permitted new ways of multimedia storytelling by integrating videos, audio, interactive graphics, and virtual reality. Also, innovations in storytelling have led to more engaging and immersed audiences; news can be livelier and more immersive than ever before, according to Eisenmann (2020). On the other side, media organizations face the struggle of being able to effectively produce and distribute multimedia content with this development (Sundermann, 2019).

Challenges Faced by Traditional Media in the Digital Age

During this time of rapid digitization, traditional media is forced to bear many challenges that have serious implications for the long-established practices and business models of traditional media outlets. The development and broad use of digital technologies have turned upside down how information is consumed, shared, and produced. In that respect, traditional media institutions, like newspapers, television networks, and radio stations, are facing serious challenges for their survival, as rapid adaptation and innovation become necessary to keep up with the changing environment (Olayinka, Badamosi & Olarenwanju, 2019). The digital era has imposed complicated difficulties on traditional media. Among the most important is the change in the pattern of consumption and the ways of consuming information. Digital technologies have seen people have a vast range of choices on online platforms and social media. In effect, they consume traditional media less. First, there is a low barrier to entry for online media platforms. This traditionally meant that traditional media, with their large resources and infrastructures, were in a monopolistic position regarding control over information. In the digital era, however, every person with access to the Internet can be a content creator; hence, oversaturation with information grows along with competition for attention.

Undoubtedly, traditional media is always struggling to make money from their content online. Digital advertising models change daily, so traditional media cannot keep up and maintain any sort of longevity over their monetisation. Moreover, everything being free on the web has hurt traditional circulation and subscription rates, thus further damaging the economic viability of traditional media (Duru, 2023). Trust and credibility are, however, still in question. Ever since the emergence of social media, misinformation and fake news have somewhat discredited the public in trusting traditional organizations. Traditional media outlets should nowadays ensure verification of information and have their reputation retained for accurate reporting in an era propelled by rumours and sensationalism.

This has had to grapple with the challenge of decline in readership, viewership, and listenership. However, improved mobile phones, tablets, and, most especially, the Internet offer consumers an easily available series of alternatives to news sources and digital content. In other words, the convenience and immediacy of the digital platforms, combined with their personalized news algorithms, have served to further fragment audience attention toward online and social media platforms for information consumption (Ekemini & Daniel, 2017). Its radical consequence is the deep displacement of the audience base in traditional media outlets and, hence, lower advertising revenues, which makes profitability hard to reach or sustain. Another important challenge faced by old media in the digital age is how traditional media need to realign their modes of delivering content in line with changing consumer preferences. These days, people expect to have instant access to news and to be able to interact with the news in a multitude of ways, including video, infographics, and interactives. Traditional media outlets will need to make investments in robust digital platforms to meet such emerging needs while ensuring that journalistic integrity and

accurate information are preserved (Maxwell, 2019). The digital era has also remade the way advertising is done, and this change has further hit traditional media outlets. More budgets from advertisers are attracted by Web-based platforms, which want to invest in channels offering more precise targeting and measurable results. This, in turn, is hurting traditional streams of revenue in advertising, which has been the reason forcing many traditional media organizations to go into new revenue models: that is, native advertising, sponsored content, and subscriptions.

In return, social media platforms and user-generated content take up an opportunity and challenge of a different kind for traditional media. It has shaped the front lines of news distribution due to the potency of current citizen journalism reporting on events in real time (Philips, 2017). It also gave birth to misinformation, fake news, and echo chambers that raise concerns about credibility and trust, with traditional media set as the gatekeeper of information. Indeed, traditional media organizations have devised several ways to address these various challenges. Others embarked on a digital transformation by launching online platforms, developing mobile apps, and putting up paywalls for monetizing digital content, while some focused on diversification into events, podcasts, or setting up partnerships with technology companies and social media platforms (Tsokwa, Haruna & Israel, 2021). Besides, partnerships with non-profit organisations and foundations have turned out to be sources for the sustainability of quality journalism.

Evaluation of the Prospects of the New Media and Problems of the Old Media in a Digital Age

In this day and age, the face of the media has changed so fast that any thought of new media requires an appraisal of the prospects of the new media and those elements that affect the prospects of the old media. This analysis will give insight into the evolving dynamics of information dissemination, shifting audience preferences, and the impacts of digital technologies on media organizations.

Prospects of the New Media:

i. **Wide Reach and Global Audience:** The new media has made it possible through social media platforms, online news outlets, blogs, and other small pockets of media to reach an audience which was so far unheard of. This becomes all the more accessible as digital connectivity increases and people from all walks of life and regions can access the diverse range of media.

ii. **Increased Interactivity and Involvement:** New media foster direct interaction between the content producer and the content consumer, unlike traditional forms of media. They can therefore comment, like, share, and contribute to topical conversations, give feedback, or create user-generated content. This level of interaction creates community spirit and enables individuals with the opportunity to voice their opinions.

iii. **Personalized and customized content:** New media platforms make use of data analytics along with algorithms to assist them in providing personalized content tailored according to the

preferences of individuals. This level of personalization will ensure that the users receive content which caters to their interest and enhances user satisfaction and user engagement.

iv. **Low-cost Production and Distribution:** The new digital technology eventually reduced the entry barrier into media production to a reasonable extent. With such technological advancement, content producers can produce quality media contents without necessarily involving expensive equipment and traditional broadcasting networks; similarly, their costs of distribution are lower, with digital platforms providing open access to economically viable channels to reach the audience.

Problems of the Old Media:

i. **Circulation and Revenue Decline:** With most people drifting to digital platforms for information, newspapers and other magazines have slowly witnessed a fall in circulation and readership. Because of this, advertising revenues have fallen, with many of the traditional media franchises struggling for financial viability.

ii. The old media were essentially one-way with very little chances for audiences to interact with them or be actively involved because of low interactivity and low engagement. Due to such passivity in consumption, the digitally active contemporary audience finds it very unappealing and is looking more for active contact with content and creators in real-time.

iii. **Low adaptability to changes in technology:** Since digital technologies have grown and are still growing rapidly, traditional media cannot put up with these technologies. In fact, substantial investments in organizational restructuring will be required for traditional media to adapt to the new emerging digital platforms, formats of content, and audience preferences, which most traditional media have failed to successfully do.

iv. **Trust and Credibility Concerns:** Misinformation and fake news are the epidemics of the digital era. While traditionally, the reputation for credibility and fact-checking would be attached to media organizations, social media platforms have turned the tables by allowing false information to spread like wildfire. The consequence has been that some of its audience members indeed have questioned the credibility of sources in traditional and new media.

While the old media struggles under much load in this digital era, new media unfolds far-flung vistas of innovation, audience involvement, and global reach. But both have their share of problems. Traditional media also have to attune themselves to the changing audience expectations, be accepting of digital technologies, and continue with an audience-oriented approach for survival. Meanwhile, it is also important that new media platforms strive to be more accurate, credible, and responsible in the dissemination of information. Of course, this will later be able to provide a balanced approach toward leveraging the strengths of both forms of media to derive a more diverse, efficient, and responsible form of media in the digital era.

Theoretical Frameworks

The following theories were considered relevant in this study:

Technological Determinism Theory

Technological determinism is a theory explaining how technology in general, and development in technology in particular, forms society and determines the current process of its development (Morah & Okunna, 2020). It says technology is a cause of changes in society and culture in the way people communicate and interact with each other and the world around them. It is here that new media prospects along with the problems of old media in the digital age have to be looked into with the help of the theory of Technological Determinism (Morah & Brown, 2024). Indeed, this theory explains how the coming of new media technologies like social media platforms, streaming services, and digital devices has considerably changed the manner of access, sharing, and consumption of information. Technological Determinism is a theory that postulates such developments within the media frontiers have essentially transformed the very concept of media, which, in turn, has altered societal norms and ways of communication. Jenkins (2006) explains that:

From a Technological Determinism perspective in the framework of new media, such as social media platforms, mobile applications, and systems for digital content delivery, it states that technology has, in effect, had deep effects on how people gain, use, and circulate information. Democratization through increasingly ubiquitous digital devices and internet connectivity turns active participation in content creation and distribution. New forms of media have emerged embracing this aspect through the facilitation of user contribution.

Also, technological determinist theory mentioned that new media technologies destroyed the conventional forms of media that brought troubles to the old media. Examples of old media are newspapers, broadcasts, television, and radio; all these face difficulties in their way to adapt themselves to the digital world (Allen, 2019). Conventional media fought hard due to the change in consumer behaviour on online platforms to retain audiences and revenues conventionally earned. Revenues from advertising were declining, circulation was reduced, and there was a need to rethink their business models accordingly. Another aspect that technological determinism does affect is that of democratization of media. In this digital age, everybody has the potential to become a producer and distributor of content, thereby challenging traditional gatekeepers from old media.

Through such platforms as YouTube, blogs, and podcasts, content becomes very easy to create and share, while a great diversity of points of view, voices, and stories starts to surface. Shirky (2008) says the shift in direction toward participant-generated media offers a more participative and collaborative culture shift away from the centralized control over media. The proliferation of digital media disrupts traditional media organisations with new business models and revenue sources. Meanwhile, the traditional media struggle to adapt to new consumption habits on the part of the

audience and find a path to monetization that is sustainable since all attention will shift towards digital platforms. Jenkins (2016) reminds me of how such changes in formality forced those changes into a "convergence culture" of mergers and acquisitions between media conglomerates and entities related to digital media.

Jenkins (2016) further suggests that the affordances of new media technologies for real-time interaction, personalization of content, and targeting advertising changed the expectations and preferences of audiences. At the same time, traditional media organizations faced a challenge to adapt to the new digital environment, mastering the new technologies and elaborating on their digital strategy to stay relevant and competitive. The theory also shows how technology influences structural changes in society and power relations. The proliferation of newer media has given space to voices and perspectives that earlier were unable to break the barrier of traditional media gatekeepers. However, it is relevant to point out that new technologies brought such negative phenomena as information overload, lack of media literacy, spread of misinformation, and privacy issues.

Relating this to the study, it is obvious that the theory explains both the high impact of technology on the changes within society and culture due to the transformation that has taken place with new media platforms. In the same breath, however, it points out challenges faced by traditional media outlets in their struggle to adjust to the digital landscape. Yet, it is equally important to note that the theory does not require that people passively receive the influences of technology. While the theory emphasizes how technology shapes society, the interdependence of technology and human agency is part of this. Hence, these media consumption practices can be influenced by technological affordances, user preferences, and socio-cultural environments together.

Media Ecology Theory

This theory originally appeared in the 1960s under the contributions of communication theorists Marshall McLuhan and Walter Ong. His 1964 book, "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man," introduced media ecology (McLuhan, 1964). This involves looking at how media technologies shape and influence human perception, communication, and social interactions. The theory addresses the relationship that media, technology, and communication bear with their environment (Meyrowitz, 1985) cited in Samuel & Nana (2021). It tries to show how media shapes and influences the perception, cognition, and social interaction of humans. The theory is, in other words, based on an assumption that media technologies are not just instruments, vehicles, or tools of information, but rather powerful forces in shaping our perceptions, interactions, and ultimately, our entire social and cultural environment. This theory emphasizes how media impinges on individual and collective consciousness-how media influences the way people think, communicate, and construct meaning.

Perhaps one of the most interesting theories regarding Media Ecology in this research deals with the approach to the medium as the message, popularized by Marshall McLuhan. This is a theory concerned with how the medium through which information is

conveyed participates actively in perception and understanding. That said, new media in social media platforms, blogs, and online news-revolutionize how information is created, relayed, and consumed. Of course, new media are interconnective and interactive and bring about new modes of communication in discussing, in real-time with others, issues, sharing opinions, and joining online communities. Meanwhile, old media, radio, and television fight in different ways in this digital era. These previous forms of media had been highly one-way media, with audiences merely recipients of information. In new media, the audiences have emerged as active agents of content creation and flow, thus dissolving the role distinctions between producer and consumer. This has resulted in a decline in the influence and profitability of traditional media since they have a hard time adapting to the new media environment.

The theory explains the relationship between media and the surrounding environment in which they operate. The digital environment is essentially filled with information, hence the outcomes in the form of information overload and shattered attention. This effect poses challenges for both the individual and the traditional media organizations competing for the limited span of human attention and seeking to provide content that captures and maintains interest from its viewership. Concerning this study, the theory sheds light on how media technologies shape our environment, consciousness, and cultural practices. This perhaps explains why new media has redefined the communication process in our society, as well as redefined media consumption among media users.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, hence combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. This will help attain a deep understanding of the prospects and the problems of the new and old media, respectively, in the digital era. A representative sample of 25 media consumers from Uyo metropolis was drawn, and 2 registered journalists each were selected from Comfort FM, AKBC TV, Spectrum TV, Ink Newspaper, and Censor Newspaper through stratified random sampling techniques, ensuring adequate representation from various age brackets, demography, and media preferences. This gave a total of 35 in terms of sample size. Data collection was, therefore, done with an in-depth interview guide that has been carefully designed to elicit responses that border on the prospects of new media and the problems of old media in a digital age.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: What are the prospects of new media in the digital age?

The respondents believe that in the digital age, new media brings a great number of possibilities that have changed how information is disseminated and consumed. Most of the respondents purportedly say that the new media in this digital age has given way to greater accessibility. In other words, one great possibility of new media is its increased accessibility to information and content. This means that with increased digital platforms, it would be easy for whoever

uses the internet to produce, distribute, and consume media content across all devices. This will explain why Franks & Burkell (2018) aver that such a shift democratized distribution for the representation of diverse voices and perspectives. According to some of the respondents, one of the major prospects that present themselves with the new media in the digital age is real-time communication. They strongly feel that new media have allowed for communication and interaction in real-time. The old media were far less able to connect people over great distances without being slow or out of reach. Now, with the help of social media, video live streaming, and messaging applications, people and organizations can engage each other in real-time discussions. This perhaps explains why Deuze (2012) argues that one of the clear benefits of new media is that it can reach millions of people in real-time. Digital platforms operate at incredible speeds, and as such, news spreads faster and surpasses geographical and linguistic boundaries. A result has been increased globalization whereby more and more people have become aware of major happenings or social causes going on in most parts of the world. In this regard, new media have turned out to be a powerful tool for the mobilization of social and political movements, according to Castells (2012). Others yet believe that the prospect of new media in the digital age is personalized content. The new media, they argue, can make personalized content possible with individual preferences and tastes. Little wonder why Hofmann et al. (2014) posit that advanced algorithms and data analytics enable platforms to make recommendations and advertisements that are increasingly personalized based on user behaviour, demographics, and preferences. This not only enhances the user experience but also aids content creators with the proper targeting of the audience.

Others believe the new media of the digital era is an interactive engagement. New media, some would argue, altered the nature of audiences' engagement with content. Contrary to earlier mass media, which passively enabled consumption, new media allows users to comment, like, share, and otherwise create user-generated content, allowing even more interactive experiences and creating a sense of community. It is what has made Eisenmann (2020) argue that users of social networks can comment, like, share, and otherwise create user-generated content, allowing for more interactive experiences and creating a sense of community. New media in the digital age has given some very captivating vistas. New media platforms have introduced new channels of communication through which information can be instantly disseminated to many in a very short time (Werner, Samuel, 2018). Such global connectivity has made news and various contents more accessible to a very big audience. Besides the above, the interactive elements of new media invite users to participate rather than merely being passive recipients (Frank, 2023). The users will thus become more involved with the media. New media have also made ways for novel storytelling and the creation of more engaging and personal multimedia content for the users. These prospects, however, demonstrate the transformative power of new media, shaping the digital landscape and influencing various aspects of our lives, from communication to content consumption.

Research Question Two: What are the problems faced by traditional or old media in the digital age?

The major problems faced by traditional or old media in the digital age are quite enumerable. From their responses in the interview, some of the respondents said that the major problem faced by traditional or old media in the digital age can be attributed to the falling advertising revenue. Traditional media outlets relied chiefly on advertising revenue, which has fallen with increasing shifts toward digital advertising platforms. The PwC's Global Entertainment & Media Outlook (PwC, 2019) "estimates that the revenue of print newspaper advertising went down by a compound annual rate of 10.4% between 2014 and 2019, while its equivalent, digital advertising has grown in the same period by a compound annual growth rate of 9.7". Thus, accordingly, the Pew Research Center (2020) observes that though new media has opened up numerous possibilities, it has also imposed challenges for traditional media. As their audience shifted to digital media, traditional media longer just newspapers but also television networks difficulties with a reduction in readers/viewers. This, in turn, is ascribed to lower advertising revenues, which make many traditional media outlets financially unstable.

Some others claim that it has changed consumer preferences. In their words, the digital present would be presenting various kinds of media on offer, and consumers can customize their intake of content. This has given rise to fragmentation in the attention of audiences and a flight toward digital platforms. A study by the Reuters Institute showed that, in 2019, 50% of adults in the UK accessed news online, against only 18% in print (Reuters Institute, 2019). Also, a number of the respondents believe that the major problems faced are fake news and trust issues. They explain that with the rise of social media and user-generated content, the spread of misinformation and fake news has become a major headache. However, the traditional media, often marked by high fact-checking and editorial standards, find it hard to regain and retain their audience's trust. According to Edelman (2020), people are less trusting of traditional media in general. Little wonder Bruns (2018) argues that with increased social media comes increased misinformation and fake news, hence degrading public trust in what traditional media institutions have on offer. For traditional media, the burden of authentication and maintenance of prestige for sober reporting falls upon them in an age filled with rumours and sensationalism.

Some of the respondents believe that it was due to digital disruption and technological advancement. As they said, in the digital age, the business models of traditional media were disrupted; adaptation was required to shift toward digital distribution and new revenue models with a proliferation of streamers online, news aggregators, and social media platforms (Azeez, 2017). Since traditional media failed to keep up with technological advancement, it lost market share. For instance, obvious changes include the decline in sales that is facing physical newspapers translating into closure and job losses in the industry.

Some of the respondents seem to feel that this big issue rests on the monetization of content and subscription models. Transitioning from free to monetized digital offerings was reported to be one of

the big challenges of traditional media (Smith, 2019). Though subscription models are on the rise, it is very difficult in most cases to get the users to pay for a digital copy if other versions come for free. One of the few examples that succeeded is that of The New York Times when it had to monetize its subscription model digitally (The New York Times, 2020). The New York Times, 2020. Worth mentioning is the fact that such challenges, though echoing the case of traditional media, in the case of digital ones create problems regarding information overflow, privacy, lack of data security, and difficulties in raising money from sustainable revenues in an increasingly competitive environment (Dwyer & Martin, 2017).

That said, with the great opportunities brought about by new media, traditional or old media have faced several challenges in this digitization era. Mainly, traditional media has struggled to keep pace with the increasing pace found in digital platforms. The 24-hour news cycle demands that news get updated in real-time, hence pressuring traditional media to keep up with the information that is rapidly being disseminated. The movement to digital from physical media has also brought a lot of losses to old media. For example, the advertising model is not at all similar to that of conventional advertising. Moreover, the problem of trust and credibility of old media has become highly critical in recent times, with the spread of 'fake news/misinformation' over digital platforms.

Research Question Three: How do the prospects of new media and the problems of old media interact and shape the media landscape in the digital age?

With the inclusion of new media platforms in the digital age, the face of the media has significantly changed, presenting both prospects and exacerbating the problems that traditional or old media would have. Based on the interview, five important interactions between new media prospects and old media problems were identified by the respondents as the following: The majority responded by saying, "It's the democratization of Information Prospective: The new media has opened ways in which previously unprocedurized individual and organizational activity produce, shares, and consumes the information without any traditional gatekeeper." It leads to diversity and access to content, which allows a wide range of perspectives to be heard easily (Meikle, 2009). The respondents argue it is the problem of fragmentation and saturation. They believe it has caused an information explosion, hence fragmentized media. Traditional media is faced with the challenge of a decline in audience and revenue to keep them relevant before information overload becomes overwhelming. Other respondents view it as a user-generated content prospect is, the new media platforms have empowered the users to become content creators reshaping the media (Burgess & Green, 2009). It has also, consequently, provided a variety of means for people to create and circulate their content material through social media, video-sharing platforms, and blogging, thus challenging the dominance of traditional media. At the same time, some responders believe that some of the issues are disinformation and echo chambers. That is, in the digital age, the dissemination of misinformation and the creation of echo chambers have turned into big challenges. The ease of information dissemination on social

media, along with algorithmic recommendation systems, has amplified the effect of echo chambers and the spread of false or misleading information (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

A few of the respondents argued that it is a financial sustainability problem. They said this proliferation of new media has forced the traditional media firms into a financial crisis as it shifted advertisers' spending online and as the money was channelled elsewhere, their prospective revenue streams dried up and has resulted in downsizing and closures and have eroded the quality of journalism (Picard 2014). New media's promises and old media's problems are complexly intertwined to shape the future of media in the digital era. The rise of new media is simply forcing traditional media to change and go digital. Most of the legacy media institutions have built an online presence and created interactive mechanisms to reach their audience effectively. Alongside this, new media have been informed by the legacy of traditional media practices and journalistic ethics instilling greater credibility and professionalism. Hybrid models have also emerged where old and new media prospects interact with each other, which has made traditional and digital media converge. For instance, the newspaper and magazine industries have developed online versions that are more characteristic of the multi-media and interactive elements of new media mostly to keep up with the times and widen their readership base. Evidence for collaboration also exists in cooperative deals between old and new media players for cross-platform content distribution or even for purposes of fact-checking.

Conclusion

This paper has indicated the prospects and challenges that new media in the digital era have. Internet diffusion and technological advancement have transformed the manner of information access and sharing, creating opportunities for different ways of journalism contributions by citizens, as well as democratization of media. On the other side, new media has had to bear with the problem of fake news and misinformation, while on the other hand, traditional media have seen a reduction in their readership and viewership. It is in this aspect that the convergence of new and old media recognizes each medium in today's media landscape. Conventional media has learned to adopt digital technologies into their work procedures while retaining the core of their journalistic work. New media continues to evolve and also comes under fire from many for increased regulation. It is here in this complexity that stakeholders are going to have to manoeuvre if there is ever going to be any hope for an informed and representative media, with free information flow, accountability, and public debate at its pinnacle.

Recommendations

- i. Traditional media must accept the modern digital realities by embracing digital technologies and their use in the development of digital platforms. This means further investment in online distribution, interactivity, and personalization of experiences.
- ii. This will be done through the partnership between old and new media to see how both levels can benefit from one another. This can be through cross-promotions, sharing content, or other ventures whereby the interest of both parties is advanced.

iii. Investments by media organizations should also be routed to analyses of preferences, habits, and expectations on the part of the audience; this forms a very sound basis for a data-driven approach toward the delivery of content that would strike a chord with target audiences.

iv. Transparency, accuracy, fact-checking, and development of solid editorial processes are bases that old and new media use as a means of rebuilding the audiences' trust and journalistic ethics in media.

v. Media literacy education must be promoted at all levels to make the audiences more critical in viewing and navigating digital content. This must be the way to counter misinformation for a healthy media landscape.

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