SOCIAL MEDIA'S LIVE NEWS UPDATES AND MODERN JOURNALISM; A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NIGERIAN TELEVISION AUTHORITY (NTA) JALINGO

BENJAMIN, Joshua Vogadika

Department of Mass Communication, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: Benjamin, Joshua Vogadika, Email: vogadikaben@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Real-time news on social media has shifted people's attention away from traditional media outlets, who struggle to keep up with the rapid pace of news stories. This formed the basis for this study as it investigates why social media break news stories ahead of the conventional media stations. This study which is a qualitative one examines the dynamics of social media's live news updates and modern journalism, with a focus on NTA Jalingo. The study explores three key research questions; do social media break news faster compared to NTA Jalingo? What are the challenges hindering NTA Jalingo from breaking news ahead of social media? And how can NTA Jalingo leverage modern technologies to break news faster than the social media? Hence, the study adopts Technological Acceptance Model which predicts how users come to accept and use technologies based on their perceptions of its usefulness and ease of use. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 12 trained Journalists out of the 20 journalists of the station. Findings reveal that social media indeed break news ahead of NTA Jalingo, primarily due to structural, technological, bureaucratic and human resource challenges. To overcome these challenges, the researcher recommends that NTA Jalingo adopts modern technologies, such as social media analytics tools and mobile journalism apps, to enhance its news gathering and dissemination processes. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on social media's impact on modern journalism and provides practical recommendations for NTA Jalingo to improve its competitiveness in the digital age.

Keywords: Social media, Real-time news, Modern journalism, Conventional media, NTA-Jalingo

Introduction

Social media platforms have become an essential tool for users to share live news updates, breaking news, and real-time information though without observing the journalistic principle of balance (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2017). This has led to a shift in the traditional journalism landscape, making mainstream media to struggle to meet up with the challenge it posts to their formal news procedures.

The online tools or platforms that let users create, share, and engage with information, material, or other users in a virtual setting are all referred to as social media. Through these platforms, users can interact with others, exchange ideas, opinions, and life experiences, and take part in a variety of communication, teamwork, and community-building activities. Social media platforms have the advantage of global reach, enabling users to share information with a vast audience. This global connectivity allows social media to break news that may not have been reported by mainstream media outlets.

According to Kim et al. (2014), social media refers to the operational platforms that allow users to create, share, and interact with content, information, or other users in a virtual environment. Social Media, as social instruments of communication, encourage participation, connectedness, opportunity to disseminate information across geographical boundaries and the fostering of relationships and interactions among people. Commonly used social media are Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Imo, YouTube, and Telegram among others.

Furthermore, social media has revolutionized the way people communicate, interact, and share information including live updates from different parts of the world. It has become an integral part of modern life, with billions of people around the world using social media platforms every day (Wiggins & Sawyer, 2012). The platforms often provide real-time updates, allowing users to stay informed about current events, news, and trends.

Journalism is a noble profession that features very prominently in covers events, government functions and happenings around the world. Journalism activities involve news, information sourcing, processing and dissemination. Nwanne (2016) notes that Journalism is the systematic process in which media contents are gathered, processed and disseminated for the consumption of the general public.

In Nigeria, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) is a leading public service broadcast media that has numerous audiences across the country and beyond. NTA Jalingo, a regional station of the NTA, has a significant presence on social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The station uses these platforms to share live news updates, breaking news, and real-time information with its audience. But the challenge is that citizen journalists without formal journalistic trainings seem to break news events or happenings of public interest ahead of the traditional media stations – NTA Jalingo inclusive.

The phenomenon of social media breaking news ahead of traditional media has become increasingly common in recent years. This trend can be attributed to several factors, including the real-time nature of social media, the democratization of journalism, and the global connectivity of social media platforms (Bonilla&Rosa,2015). Social media platforms have fewer or no bureaucratic hurdles to clear before publishing news.

This allows social media to break news faster than mainstream media outlets, which often have to go through editorial approval, fact-checking and balancing processes before breaking their news. This has posted a threat to the mainstream media, in the sense that if social media keep breaking news ahead of the conventional media, they will gain more credibility and attention than the conventional media. It is against this background that the researcher sought to investigate the strategies NTA-Jalingo employs to overcome the said threat post by the social media.

Statement of the Problem.

Despite the growing importance of modern journalism in Nigeria, aided by new media technologies that facilitate news gathering, editing, production and credible content dissemination. There is a problem of social media always breaking the news ahead of the conventional media. Kim et al (2014) note that social media are faster in live news updates than the mainstream media outlets.

The advent of social media has revolutionized the way news is gathered, disseminated, and consumed. Social media platforms have become a go-to source for breaking news, often leaving mainstream media outlets scrambling to catch up (Khan&Ahmed,2018). The Nigerian Television Authority – NTA Jalingo, is no exception. Despite its efforts to provide timely and accurate news, the station often finds itself playing catch-up to social media platforms.

Hence, the station's struggles to keep up with social media's breaking news are compounded by the fact that social media platforms are often more agile and responsive to developing stories. As noted by Kalogeropoulos et al. (2019), "social media platforms are able to break news faster than traditional media outlets because they are not bound by the same editorial and production constraints."

Furthermore, the NTA-Jalingo's traditional news gathering and dissemination processes may not be well-suited to the fast-paced and dynamic nature of social media. According to a study by the Pew Research Center, "traditional news organizations are often slow to adapt to changes in the media landscape, which can make it difficult for them to compete with social media platforms" (Pew Research Center, 2020). In light of these challenges, this study aims to investigate the strategies that the NTA can employ to meet up with social media's breaking news ahead of mainstream media.

Research Questions

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

    i.   Do social media break news stories to the public faster compare to NTA Jalingo?

    ii.   What are the challenges hindering NTA Jalingo from breaking news stories ahead of the social media?

    iii.   How can NTA Jalingo leverage modern technologies to break news stories faster than social media?

Literature Review

Concept of Social Media

Social media is not really new. While, it has only recently become part of mainstream culture and the business world, people have been using digital media for networking, socializing, and gathering of information. Social media started as a concept many years ago but has evolved into sophisticated technology. According to Kim and Lee (2018), the concept of social media can be dated back to the use of the analogue telephone for social interactions.

Social media therefore, refers to online platforms or tools that allow users to create, share, and interact with content, information, or other users in a virtual environment, it relies on users to create and share contents (Chen, Zhang & Liu, 2019). Social media has become an integral part of modern life, with billions of people around the world using social media platforms every day (Statista, 2022).

Social media platforms can be categorized into several types, including social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), content-sharing sites (e.g., YouTube, Instagram, TikTok), blogging and microblogging sites (e.g., WordPress, Tumblr, Twitter), and forums and discussion boards (e.g., Reddit, Quora, online forums) (Chen et al, 2019).

Social Media and News Updates.

Having established the concept of social media as online platforms that provide users the opportunity to generate, share and access information from different parts of the globe. News updates according to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2014), are reports or announcements that provide the recent information on a particular development, event or news story.

News updates are typically brief, concise and intended to keep audience informed about the latest development around them (Mencher, 2011). The news updates are ideally the job of trained journalists who break it via conventional media. But with the aid of the social media in recent decades, every social media user has assumed the role of journalist thereby breaking the news on social media as they happen without thorough checking and conformity of such stories to the journalistic principles of balance, fairness and accuracy.

Social media has transformed the way information is disseminated, enabling immediate sharing and spreading of information to a global audience, it has both positive and negative effects on its users (Kiraly et al., 2019). Social media platforms provide real-time updates, allowing users to share information as it happens (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2017).

This has transformed the way news is gathered, disseminated, and consumed, with social media becoming a major source of news and information (Newman et al., 2019). According to a study by the Pew Research Center, "social media platforms are increasingly being used as a source of news, with 70% of adults in the United States using social media to get news" (Pew Research Center, 2020).

Concept and Nature of Modern Journalism

Modern journalism refers to the practice of gathering, processing, and disseminating news and information in the digital age (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014). Modern journalism is characterized by the use of digital technologies, such as social media, online news platforms, and mobile devices, to gather and disseminate news (Newman et al., 2019). Modern journalism also emphasizes the importance of interactivity, engagement, and participation, with journalists and audiences interacting and collaborating in the news process (Pavlik, 2013).

According to a study by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, "modern journalism is characterized by a shift from a broadcast model to a more interactive and participatory model" (Newman et al., 2019). It follows the formal processes of news production before transmission to the general public. This involves the job of sourcing and or gathering, writing, editing and processing as well as disseminating news and views about the society through the mass media.

With these processes inherent in modern journalism practice, they seem to delay the fastness of news break, i.e. breaking the news ahead of social media. These processes are necessary because journalism is a profession with professional code of ethics which must reflect on their contents. The major challenge here is, the fact that social media beat them I breaking the news due to the nature of the job. How then could journalists leverage to overcome this? This is a question that needs to be answered.

Problems of Social Media's News Update

While social media has many advantages in the circulation of information, it also has several disadvantages. One of the main disadvantages is the spread of misinformation and disinformation (Allcott& Gentile, 2019). Social media platforms often lack editorial control and fact-checking processes, making it easy for false information to spread quickly (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014).

Additionally, social media can also perpetuate echo chambers and filter bubbles, where users are only exposed to information that confirms their existing biases (Pariser, 2011). Furthermore, social media can also be used to manipulate public opinion and spread propaganda (Benkler et al., 2018). Specifically, issues posed by social media in times of breaking news ahead of mainstream media include and not limited to: social media is not quotable, Lack of gatekeepers, Lack of interpretation, Privacy Concern and Information Overload.

Review of Empirical Studies.

Social Media and Live News Updates: A Study of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) was conducted by Aliyu, N. et al. in (2020). The study surveyed 100 journalists and 200 audience members who are addend audience of NTA and users of social media. The study compared social media's news update and that of NTA. The study found out that social media has become a major source of live news updates for audience members as well as the Nigerian Television Authority - NTA, with 80% of journalists using social media to gather and disseminate news. This study concentrated on the NTA as a whole, while the study at hand focuses on the branch of NTA in Jalingo, Taraba State.

Hembadoon, A. (2013) carried out a study on Impact of Social Media on Modern Journalism; A Study of Journalists in Makurdi Metropolis.The aim of this study was to determine the impact of social media on modern journalism in Makurdi metropolis. The survey research method and chi-square were used. Subjects were drawn from journalists in Makurdi metropolis in Benue State, using the purposive sampling technique.

Research findings showed that great number of journalists in Makurdi metropolis have access to internet and are exposed to social media networking tools. Majority of journalists in Makurdi metropolis prefer Facebook and Twitter as their networking tools for a number of reasons, one of which was its wide

coverage. This study focused on the adoption of the social media by the journalists; while the study at hand compares the fastness in giving news updates between the social media and conventional media with a particular reference to NTA Jalingo.

An investigation on, The Impact of Social Media on Modern Journalism; A Study Comparative of NTA-Jalingo and BBC London, was conducted by Oyediran, O., & Adesina, A. (2019). The research was a content analysis of news stories on NTA Jalingo and BBC websites and social media platforms.

The findings of the study are that NTA Jalingo's use of social media for live news updates is more extensive than BBC's, but BBC's social media engagement is higher than that of NTA Jalingo. This study was a content analysis while the study at hand is a qualitative study. Again, the study at hand considers who breaks news ahead of the other between social media and NTA Jalingo. while the reviewed study focused on their use of social media and engagements.

Umar, A., & Suleiman, M. O. (2016) conducted a study on; The Role of Social Media in Modern Journalism; A Study of Nigerian Television Authority's Live Update. The study considered how social media has enhanced modern journalism with reference to NTA. The study which was quantitative in nature surveyed 150 journalists and 200 audience members to collect data.

Findings showed that social media has become a major source of live news updates for NTA, with 75% of journalists using social media to gather and disseminate news. Gap exists in the sense that the study did not take into consideration how conventional media can leverage social media to break news stories faster than social media. The study at hand will fill the gap.

Theoretical Framework

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Fred Davis in 1989, has become a cornerstone in the study of user acceptance of various technologies including social media, online services and mobile devices. According to Davis (1989), the model explains how users form attitudes and intentions towards using a new technology. It predicts how users come to accept and use technologies based on their perceptions of its usefulness and ease of use.

The model has been extended and modified to include additional factors, such as social influence, facilitating conditions and habits (Venkatesh& Davis 2000). This model is widely applied across various domains, including information systems, education, healthcare, and media, making it particularly relevant for examining how modern technologies are adopted in news production. TAM is built upon two primary factors that influence technology adoption:

Perceived Usefulness (PU) – This refers to the degree to which an individual believes that using a specific technology will enhance their job performance (Davis, 1989).

Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) – This refers to the degree to which an individual believes that using a particular technology will be free from efforts and difficulty (Davis, 1989).

TAM maintained that the stronger the positive attitudes toward the usefulness and ease of use of a technology, the greater the intention to use it, and consequently, the higher the likelihood of its actual use in daily activities (Anaeto et al, 2008).

The adoption of technology in media organizations is essential for maintaining competitive advantage, improving productivity, and adapting to new forms of media consumption. In newsrooms, technology has dramatically transformed how news is produced, reported, and consumed. From content creation to distribution, digital tools and platforms have become indispensable (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

The model also helps identify potential barriers to adoption. For example, if journalists believe that a new software is too complex or requires significant training (low Perceived Ease of Use), or if they see little tangible benefit in adopting the technology (low Perceived Usefulness), they are less likely to incorporate these tools into their work routine. This presents valuable insights into the predicament media organizations may face in integrating modern technology into their operations.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research approach which collect data through interview guide. The population of this study comprise the 20 professional Journalists who currently working in Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Jalingo. Using purposive sampling, the study sampled 12 Journalists out of the 20 trained Journalists of the station.

Purposive sampling according to Tyavbe and Igomu cited in Anthony et al., (2024) is a sampling method in which the researcher uses their judgement to choose respondents and selects those that best meet the purpose of the study. The data collected will be analyzed in form of narration to proffer answers to the research questions.

Results and Discussion.

Do social media break news stories to the public faster compare to NTA Jalingo?

This research question seeks to discover whether social media breaks news updates ahead of NTA Jalingo. The research question was attained, the study found out that social media have the advantage of breaking the news faster than the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Jalingo.

"It is actually a sad reality that social media break news ahead of NTA Jalingo. Our news casting time here are 6;30am, 7pm and 10pm. Also, the process of news production starts from reporter to writing the report, to editor, visual editor, chief editor and subsequently transmission. However, if any news event happen in-between the news casting times the station has to wait for the news time before transmitting it. All these has given social media upper hand to break news ahead of us" [Respondent 4].

The respondents further revealed that the stations' time frame for news casting and the stages of news production is bureaucratic and before news could pass those stages social media must have broken the same news story. This according to respondents mounts pressure on the station to meet up with the social media advent because when they keep breaking the news ahead of the station, they will have more viewership, credibility and acceptance than the station.

These findings corroborate the findings of Khan and Ahmed (2018) which unveiled that the dawn of social media has reformed the way news is gathered, disseminated, and consumed. Social media platforms have become a go-to source for breaking news, often leaving conventional media stations struggling to meet up.

There is a need for the station and of course all the mainstream media to move with digital in order to overcome the challenge post by the social medial. When one considers the primary role of the social media which is to inform, educate and to entertain, the social media equally fulfilled such roles though unprofessionally.

When you look at the entertainment aspect for instance, social media do credibly well. In their study, Olusegun et al (2021), they discovered that the emergence of social media has produced diverse changes especially in the entertainment function. Uses and Gratification theory identify entertainment as one of the needs that motivates the audience to prefer a particular media over others. It is obvious that people's attention is more shifted to the social media in terms of entertainment than the conventional media.

What are the challenges hindering NTA Jalingo from breaking news stories ahead of the social media?

The above research question seeks answer about challenges hindering Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Jalingo from breaking news ahead of social media. The aim of the question was achieved. The study discovered that NTA Jalingo station faces numerous challenges that hinder it from breaking news stories ahead of social media. One of the primary challenges is according to respondents is the structural nature of the station.

Traditional TV stations have a more rigid structure, with multiple layers of approval and editing, which can slow down the news-breaking process. Furthermore, NTA Jalingo station do not have the same level of resources as larger news organizations or social media platforms. This limitation can impact its ability to cover breaking news events in real-time. Additionally, it has fixed broadcast schedules, which can limit their ability to break news as it happens.

Social media platforms also pose a significant challenge to conventional TV stations (NTA Jalingo inclusive). These platforms have algorithms and features that prioritize real-time content, making it harder for TV stations to compete. Moreover, social media platforms have become the go-to source for breaking news, further eroding the ability of TV stations to break news first. Also, TV stations have stricter verification processes to ensure accuracy, which can slow down the news-breaking process. Traditional broadcast formats, such as 30-minute news programs, can also make it harder to break news in real-time.

The findings confirmed assertion of Papacharissi (2015) which argues that traditional news outlets face challenges in adapting to the changing media landscape, particularly with regards to breaking news. She notes that social media platforms have become a primary source of real-time information, making it difficult for traditional news outlets to compete (Papacharissi, 2015).

Furthermore, Bardoel (2014) discusses the challenges faced by traditional journalists in adapting to the digital age. He notes that the rise of social media has led to a 24/7 news cycle, making it difficult for traditional journalists to keep up with breaking news. He also argues that traditional journalists need to develop new skills and strategies to remain relevant in the digital age (Bardoel, 2014).

How can NTA Jalingo leverage modern technologies to break news stories ahead of social media?

The above research question tries to explore strategies NTA Jalingo could employ with the aid of new technologies to order to remain relevant in news profession. The objective was achieved in that the study uncovers that social media can be used to tremendously enhance news dissemination among others. The respondents said that social media have helped the station to face away paper-pen form of production. It has made the Journalists in NTA to do multi-tasking.

"With the impact of social media, NTA Jalingo now livestream its news and programmes worldwide to be accessed globally. The stations' news is accessed on *ntajalingo channel 6 news on facebook*" [Respondent 6].

Respondents revealed that Journalists in NTA Jalingo use the social media to burst their information, enhance the stations' mode of operation. Also, the station can leverage these to meet up with the social media in breaking timely news by updating headlines with catchy videos on their page before the details can come up in news time belt. This to be specific aligned with Technological Acceptance Model as posits by Davis (1989) which holds that the more likely an application or new technology, in this case social media will be considered useful for the user(s), the more likely it is that it will stimulate the acceptance of the technology.

This result here equally tallies with the study of Marwan Walid Muhammed on traditional medial versus social media: challenges and opportunities. Marwan (2022) found out that social media is crucial to both our everyday lives and the operations of organizations, especially media enterprises and organizations.

As a result, established media enterprises in modern days must continue to adapt to technological change brought about by the development of the Internet, smartphones, and other distribution technologies, which has led many businesses to embrace new media outlets. Obviously, a social media strategy is necessary for any media organization (Moellinger, 2012).

Conclusion

The study compares real-time news breaks between social media and Nigerian Television Authority (NTA Jalingo). Social media has grown rapidly, allowing it to break news ahead of mainstream media. Although, NTA Jalingo now livestreams its news globally, but needs to fully go digital and update their social media pages to maintain audience and acceptance. This will help break the news time belt and improve journalism practices.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

i.   NTA Jalingo should equip its journalists with mobile journalism apps and devices to enable them gather and transmit news stories in real-time.

ii. NTA Jalingo should create website and functional social media accounts, and should regularly update them with fresh contents.

iii. NTA Jalingo should review its news gathering, editing and production processes to ensure that they are efficient and adaptable to the changing media landscape.

References

Allcott, H. V., & Gentile, B. (2019). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives,* 33(3), 211-236.

Anaeto, S. G., Onabanjo, O. S., &Osifeso, J. B. (2008). *Models and theories of communication.* African Renaissance Books.

Anthony, G., Solomon., & Umar, A. (2024). Strategies of achieving work-life balance among married female journalists of Taraba State Broadcasting Service (TSBS) Jalingo. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences,* 2 (3), 319-331.

Bardoel, J. (2014). The changing role of journalists in the digital age. *Journalism Practice,* 8(1), 1-15.

Benkler, Y., Faris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). *Network propaganda: Manipulation, disinformation, and radicalization in American politics.* Oxford University Press.

Bonilla, Y., & Rosa, J. (2015). Ferguson: Digital protest, hashtag ethnography, and the racial politics of social media in the United States. *American Ethnologist,* 42(1), 4-17.

Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication,* 13(1), 210-230.

Bruns, A. (2005). *Gate watching: Collaborative online news production.* Peter Lang Publishing.

Castells, M. (2007). Communication, power and counter-power in the network society. *International Journal of Communication,* 1(1), 238-266.

Chen, Y., Zhang, Y., & Liu, J. (2019). Understanding user-generated content on social media: A systematic review. *Computers in Human Behavior,* 91, 245-255.

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly,* 13(3), 319-339.

Kalogeropoulos, A., Newman, N., & Levy, D. A. L. (2017). Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017. *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.*

Kalogeropoulos, A., Newman, N., & Levy, D. A. L. (2019). Reuters institute digital news report. *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.*

Khan, M. A., & Ahmed, S. (2018). Impact of social media on academic performance of students. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Computer Science,* 9(2), 234-238.

Kim, J., Lee, Y., & Kim, B. (2014). The impact of social media on consumer behavior. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness,* 8(2), 235-245.

Kim, S., & Lee, Y. (2018). The impact of social media on consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Research,* 85, 341-348.

Király, O., Potenza, M. N., Stein, D. J., King, D. L., Hodgins, D. C., Saunders, J. B., ... & Demetrovics, Z. (2019). Mental health and addictive behaviors in young people: A systematic review of clinical and neurobiological findings. *Journal of Behavioral Addictions,* 8(3), 537-553.

Kovach, B., & Rosenstiel, T. (2014). *The elements of journalism: What news people should know and the public should expect.* Three Rivers Press.

Marwan, W. (2022). Traditional media versus social media; challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies,* 14(2), 1-10.

Mencher, M. (2011). *News reporting and writing.* McGraw-Hill.

Moellinger, T. (2012). Traditional Media companies in the US and social media, "what is the strategy?" *Journal of Applied Business Research,* 28(5), 751-758.

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A., & Nielsen, R. K. (2019). Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2019. *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*.

Ojomo, O., & Andewumi, O. (2021). Social media skits: Reshaping the entertainment experience of broadcast audiences. *International Journal of Communication and Media Studies,* 5(1),1-15.

Papacharissi, Z. (2015). *Affective publics: Sentiment, technology, and politics.* Oxford University Press.

Pariser, E. (2011). *The filter bubble:* What the Internet is hiding from you.

Pavlik, J. V. (2013). Innovative journalism: Conversations with digital leaders. *Peter Lang.*

Pew Research Center. (2020). *News use across social media platforms 2019.*

Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A theoretical extension of the technological acceptance model: Four longitudinal field studies. *Management Science,* 46(2), 186-204.

Wiggins, B. E., & Sawyer, S. C. (2012). Social media and the workplace: A study of employee perceptions. *Journal of Workplace Learning,* 24(5), 347-361.