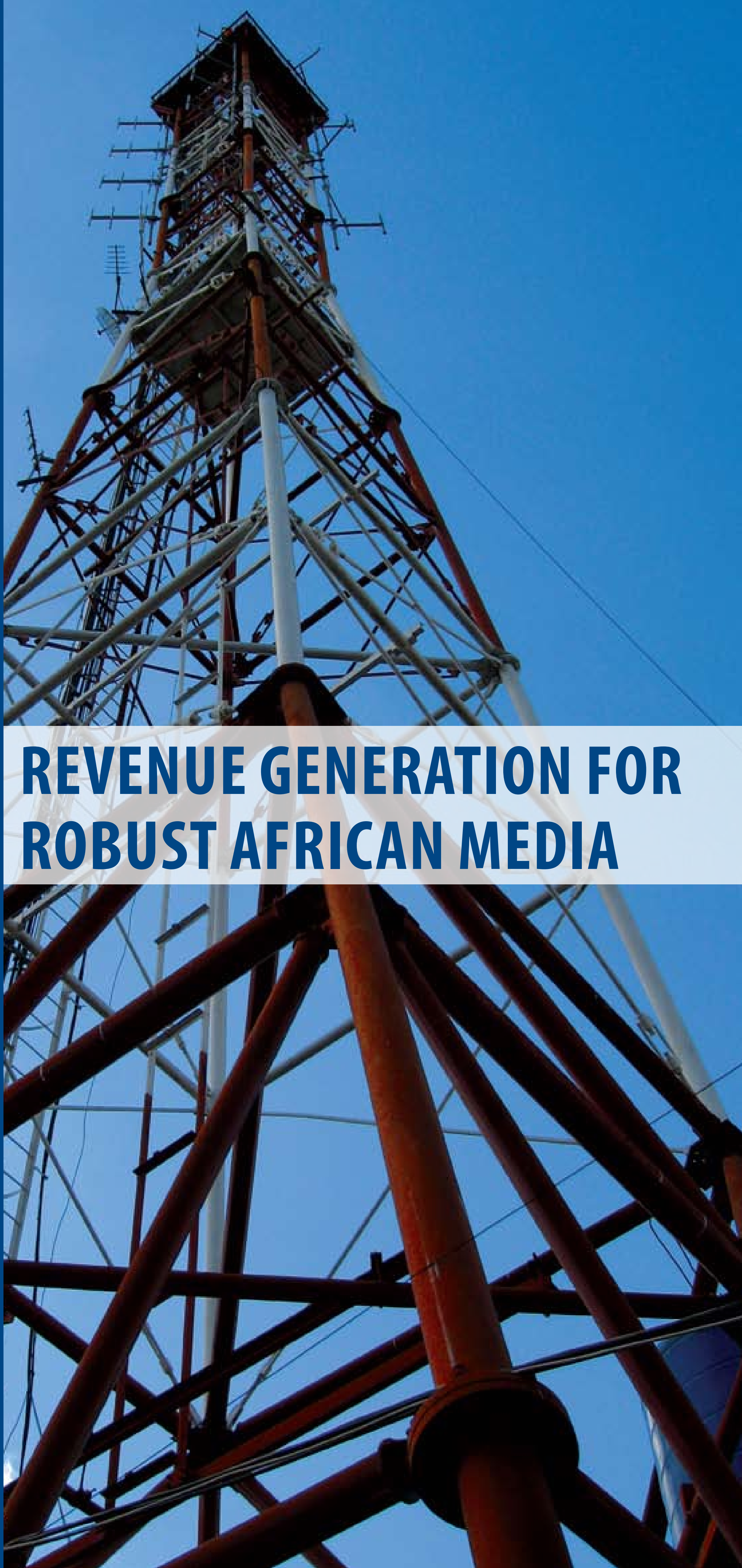

REVENUE GENERATION FOR ROBUST AFRICAN MEDIA

PRACTICAL IDEAS, EXPERIENCES AND INNOVATIONS OF FRONTLINE MANAGERS

Edited by
Francis Mdlongwa

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Revenue Generation for Robust African Media: Practical Ideas, Experiences and Innovations of Frontline Managers

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Published in association with Rhodes University's Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (www.spiml.co.za; www.spiml.com)

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Editor's note

FORGING A NEW AFRICAN MEDIA LEADERSHIP

Francis Mdlongwa

I have been privileged to compile this anthology of essays, stories and testimonies of Africa's top media executives who, through their actions and visionary leadership, are re-shaping and strengthening Africa's fledgling media companies and institutions.

Their touching real-life stories are an inspiration to all who work and desire to see Africa succeed and to have its voice heard above the din of the new digital age.

A financially robust African media that is also independent and pluralistic will serve to give meaning to and strengthen the continent's nascent democracy and contribute to the lifting of its people out of grinding under-development, poverty and related ills.

These media leaders, in sharing their stories with the rest of Africa and the world, show that the real test of what works and does not work in managing and leading a successful media firm too often lies in the field and at times does not necessarily follow orthodoxy.

This compilation has been culled from nearly 30 presentations made at the Africa Media Leadership Summit held in Cape Town from August 19 to 22, 2007. The summit, hosted by Rhodes University's Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, was the sixth since the annual series was launched in 2002.

Forty African media chiefs from 15 countries – stretching from North, East, Central and Southern Africa – attended the conference, whose theme was "Revenue Generation for Robust African Media".

These conferences have become a critical platform for top editors and chief executive officers of African media not only to network and find practical solutions to pressing and common challenges at the highest level but have been instrumental in linking some of these leaders to forge new media business opportunities.

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Foreword

WORKING TO STRENGTHEN A VIBRANT AND FREE AFRICAN MEDIA

Frank Windeck

For over 40 years now, the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) has been engaged with Africa. Named after Germany´s first democratic chancellor after World War II, the foundation has worked at its many offices around Africa to strengthen democracy, build good political governance and buttress a free and independent news media. To reach these goals, KAS runs offices in over 100 countries around the world.

Since 2002 the foundation has added a regional media programme for sub-Sahara Africa, which is based in Johannesburg. The major task of this programme has been the building and strengthening of a free and independent media in the region. To achieve this goal, KAS offers a variety of courses, training workshops and conferences.

Since its launch, the programme has focused on Media Law, Investigative Journalism and Media Management. So it's not surprising that with the financial support of the foundation, the Africa Media Leadership Conference series was launched in conjunction with Rhodes University's Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) in 2002 – an event that has become an annual fixture on the calendars of African media leaders.

Successful media management has many faces. Media Law plays a significant role in this; Media Ethics and how these are applied on a daily basis in a media company are crucial. A media firm's ability to accurately analyze the needs, wants and aspirations of its audiences, as well its management of its human resources, are equally important. And at the end of the day, the media enterprise must achieve economic stability and sustainability.

The economic stability of media companies depends on several factors. A media firm needs a balanced in-house human resources management but crucially it must serve its audiences with the right content: relevant news stories presented accurately, fairly and impartially to win the trust of the public. New technologies also need to be considered because they are increasingly impacting on entire markets and changing the behaviour of consumers.

In Sub-Saharan Africa there exists another very important influence on economic stability – governments and the role that they play. In many cases economic pressures on media houses come from this side, particularly the widely used withdrawal of key advertising money from "unfriendly" media by governments. In the last few months, we have heard of a threat to do this even in South Africa, often considered as the bastion of democracy on the continent.

Several other factors do indeed impact on the economic health of a media enterprise, and it is important that African media is strengthened so that it becomes financially robust and less vulnerable to economic blackmail by those with power, influence and money.

In this regard, I am grateful that KAS, together with its partner, the SPI, was able to host a conference this year that specifically focused on these issues.

I would like to thank all the people who made this book possible – editor Francis Mdlongwa as well as the authors – and I hope that the content adds useful ideas and knowledge which advance the cause of a vibrant and independent African media.

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Chapter 1

AN OVERVIEW OF KEY PAN-AFRICAN MEDIA DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES: PROBLEMS & PROSPECTS

by Fackson Banda

INTRODUCTION

This paper is an analysis of the key 'media development' initiatives that have unfolded since the report of the Commission for Africa was issued in March 2005. Although the concept of *media development* is certainly not new, it has attracted much attention in the last couple of years, resulting in the formation of such entities as the *African Media Development Initiative* (AMDI), the *Global Forum for Media Development,* etc. The AMDI has since merged with the Strengthening African Media (STREAM) consultative process to create an *African Media Initiative (AMI).* AMI is in its inchoate stages, with the express brief of consolidating the AMDI and STREAM media development recommendations into a bankable technical report that can be used to lobby governments, donors and the private sector to support the growth of media institutions across Africa.

It can be recalled, however, that there already existed the *Media Development* and Diversity Agency (MDDA) in South Africa, clearly demonstrating that this concept is not new to Africa. But it is evident that the *meanings* attached to the concept are not fixed. In some instances, the term is used to connote the *intellectual* and *spiritual* growth of the media, as when the World Association for Christian Communication calls its journal *Media Development;* in other cases, it is used to refer to the economic-infrastructural development of the media, as when donors pour huge sums of money into purchasing new computer technology for media houses, especially during election times.

But, as I seek to show, the recent findings of the Strengthening African Media (STREAM) consultative process indicate that the concept of media development is much more than all the above. It must be viewed as the totality of all support mechanisms for the growth of media institutions into vibrant agents of social and political change in democratic and undemocratic polities. Against this background, this paper is structured as follows: firstly, I look at the recent historical trajectory of media development. Secondly, I analyse the concept of media development within this historical trajectory. Thirdly, I reproduce the findings of the STREAM consultative process. Finally, I offer some forward-looking thoughts on the direction of media development in Africa.

LOCATING MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

It is generally conceded that all the media development initiatives currently in vogue had their impetus in the report of the Commission for Africa (2005). The commission was set up in 2004 by British Prime Minister Tony Blair. But it would be a mistake to stop there; the media and communications landscape in Africa has been undergoing major changes, signalling the need and presenting opportunities for a concerted initiative to take advantage of such changes in favour of strengthening media institutions.

Contemporary efforts at media development in Africa

At least within the specific context of Africa, it would not be far-fetched to argue that the beginnings of an international support mechanism for the media is traceable to Windhoek, Namibia. In 1991, UNESCO called for a gathering of media practitioners and press freedom organisations in Namibia on May 3. This conference culminated in the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press. The Declaration set the background for the proclamation by the UN General Assembly of May 3 as 'World Press Freedom Day'. The Declaration repudiated state ownership of media institutions and justified the doctrine of media liberalisation and privatisation.

Beyond the Windhoek Declaration, there is clear evidence of more engagement with the discourse of media development in various African documents generated since Windhoek. For example, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, in Article 9, echoes the rights in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has elaborated this in its Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa. The declaration is important because it elaborates in considerable detail what is meant by freedom of expression. This includes a number of other points of particular relevance for the development of broadcasting services in Africa such as (i) the need to encourage the development of private broadcasting, (ii) the need to transform state or government broadcasters into genuine public broadcasters, and (iii) the need for independent broadcasting regulatory bodies. These points are, in turn, reinforced by the African Charter on Broadcasting, adopted in 2001 on the tenth anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration.

Yet, as noted above, the defining moment in the discourse of media development was associated with the establishment of the Commission for Africa in early 2004 by the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair. The Commission report, released on 11 March 2005, marked a milestone in British engagement with Africa on issues of media and communication. Although the Commission's preoccupation was with much more than media issues, it was clear that there was some attention paid to the potential role of media in the development of the continent. While there is, in some quarters, unrelenting criticism of the Commission's, it is undeniable that it ignited much of the debate about creating support for the development of the media in Africa. Out of that report, it can be argued, emerged a number of initiatives that are performing specific tasks to keep alive the discourse of media development. I now turn to describe some of the initiatives.

The Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)

The American-based Internews, in conjunction with several media-support organisations in Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia, organised the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) held in Amman, Jordan, towards the end of 2005. The gathering was attended by many of the well-established media support organisations in Africa, including some media owners and practitioners. One of the main aims of the GFMD as a media development implementers' collaboration body was a parallel movement by media development donors to share information among themselves about best practices, present priorities, and ways of measuring success – what we might characterise as donors' 'bureaucratic' ideology of harmonising their support to the media sector.

Apart from this, the goals of the GFMD are to:

- Attract the broad but currently disparate community of media assistance organisations and share experiences and information across the media aid sector;
- Improve the quality of technical assistance of the sector and develop common monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- Offer an extensive web-based platform of resources for media professionals;
- Disseminate research on the role of the media in economic growth democratisation and institutional reform process;
- Establish an ongoing donor-implementer dialogue that would enable media assistance organisations to contribute to the formulation of media development policies that enhance the impact of the media assistance sector and the long-term sustainability of independent media; and
- Advocate for the higher-level, strategic policy linkages between media support and existing human and economic development instruments and frameworks (e.g. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs); Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]) (GFMD 2005).

One particularly relevant recommendation emerging from the Amman conference was the possible formation of an African Forum for Media Development (GFMD). While the principle of a continental forum was generally welcome, there was some uncertainty about its workability.

The point to underscore is that the GFMD is serving to further animate the notion of a global or international support mechanism for media in Africa.

The African Media Development Initiative (AMDI)

The AMDI was instigated by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service Trust, in association with two African universities, including Rhodes University of South Africa and Amadu Bello University of Nigeria. The main activity underpinning the initiative was a research project aimed at (i) collecting media statistics in 17 African countries in order to determine what changes have occurred in the media landscape between 2000 and 2005; and (ii) conducting in-depth interviews with key informants (media owners, government officials, NGO leaders, religious authorities, etc.) about their perceptions of media development in each of the 17 countries (BBC WST 2006b: 13-15).

Among other things, the study revealed the following:

- Despite the wealth of valuable insights available from other published research, systematic and reliable data on the media sector in Africa is underdeveloped or non-existent. There is a lack of robust research, on a continental scale, demonstrating what is and is not working in the attempts by many players to strengthen African media.
- In the countries surveyed, media are

serving populations that are growing, primarily among young, rural and non-literate demographic groups. Radio dominates the mass media spectrum, with state-controlled radio services still commanding the biggest audiences in most countries but regional (within country) commercial stations demonstrating the largest consistent increases in numbers, followed by community radio, where growth, although significant in certain countries, has been inconsistent. Newspapers remain concentrated in urban centres with varying growth patterns across the countries. In the new media sector, the adoption of mobile telephony has been the most spectacular, far exceeding uptake of the Internet.

- There is need for a holistic approach to strengthening the media sector, encapsulating community media; state-owned media, especially broadcasting services; and private media. There was consensus that each sector has a unique yet complementary role to play in a pluralistic media landscape.
- There were areas of strategic importance to the strengthening of the media sector where views were muted, and where the strategic awareness of the sector as a whole might be characterised as low. The impact of new technologies on information and knowledge transfer, for example, creates huge opportunities and threats for every newspaper, magazine, radio and TV channel. Mobile telephony and the rapid roll-out of satellite sports channels, especially of football, have changed the way even very poor people consume information in Africa.
- The media sector's priority as an agent of change within the development debate is surprisingly undervalued by the international community. This may be because the sector is politically sensitive.
- There are not enough efforts in Africa to develop holistic donor strategies (in relation to funding, capacity building or training), apart from a few notable exceptions. There is a collection of *ad hoc* programmes of varying quality.

The STREAM consultative process

Alongside the developments charted above, there was unfolding yet another process, under the aegis of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). More specifically, this process started with a meeting of selected media and communications experts in March 2006 in Addis Ababa at the invitation of UNECA. This process, like the AMDI research, was supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). UNECA was seen as a 'neutral' broker of the dialogue that would ensue among media players in Africa, and would, given its strategic position, provide the best route possible for recommendations to reach the Africa Union and other stakeholders. The key recommendation emerging out of the Addis Ababa meeting was to 'root' the consultation process within the different geographic and linguistic regions of Africa.

Underpinned by this theme of African ownership, the STREAM process spelt out three key objectives, namely to:

- Arrive at a shared understanding of the state of the media and communication sector in Africa;
- Explore the extent to which different actors in Africa could develop a common framework of action based on a shared agenda for media development; and
- Inform the design and implementation of a consultation process towards a coherent and inclusive set of interventions to strengthen media institutions in Africa (UNECA 2006).

To achieve these objectives, the process employed the following methods of data collection: (i) expert reference group; (ii) online discussion; and (iii) geo-linguistically representative physical consultations.

As noted above, the AMDI and STREAM processes have since merged to set up the African Media Initiative (AMI). At the time of writing, the AMI, coordinated from the offices of the BBC WST, had put together a team of experts to develop concrete proposals for media development in Africa across a range of issues – media and policy, professionalisation and training, business and investment, etc.

THE PROBLEM OF MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

The concept of media development is not unproblematic. The initiatives charted above have not attempted to define it in very specific terms, but what they emphasise might belie their institutional-discursive inclination. Indeed, the STREAM consultative process attempted a definition. As suggested, this has become a discursive matter, reflecting the institutional and membership frameworks of such initiatives. For example, on the one hand, the AMDI seeks to 'mobilise a range of African and international stakeholders to significantly boost support for the development of the *state, public and private sector media*' (italics added) (BBC WST 2006a). On the other hand, the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) seems to emphasise the aspect of 'independent' media. For example, the inaugural conference held by the GFMD threw up points of disagreement about whether 'media development' should concern itself with 'development of the media' or 'development communications'. A significant number of participants felt that the media should not consider it their job to be social advocates and take up the agenda of development and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Even the term 'independent' media is not fully unpacked, but there are allusions to privately owned commercial media as constituting 'independent' media (GFMD 2005). This would contrast somewhat with the BBC WST initiative's emphasis on public/state media systems.

For its part, the STREAM consultative process seems to have adopted a more hybrid approach, echoed by the AMDI study report's call for a 'holistic approach to strengthening the sector' (BBC WST 2006b: 14) and drawing on the discourses of several international and continental documents, not least the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, the African Charter on Broadcasting and the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa.

The Declaration of Principles seems clear about the content of media development. It calls, among other things, for (i) the need to encourage the development of private broadcasting, (ii) the need to transform state or government broadcasters into genuine public broadcasters, and (iii) the need for independent broadcasting regulatory bodies.

The African Charter on Broadcasting extends this, and declares that 'the legal framework for broadcasting should include a clear statement of the principles underpinning broadcast regulation, including promoting respect for freedom of expression, diversity, and the free flow of information and ideas, as well as a three-tier system for broadcasting: *public service, commercial and community* (italics added) (MISA 2004)'.

For its part, the Windhoek Declaration outlines the key components of media development as consisting, among other things, in the:

- Identification of economic barriers to the establishment of news media outlets, including restrictive import duties, tariffs and quotas for such things as newsprint, printing equipment, and typesetting and word processing machinery, and taxes on the sale of newspapers, as a prelude to their removal;
- Training of journalists and managers and the availability of professional training institutions and courses;
- Removing legal barriers to the recognition and effective operation of trade unions or association of journalists, editors and publishers; and
- Developing and maintaining a register of available funding from development and other agencies, the conditions attaching to the release of such funds, and the methods of applying for them; and the state of press freedom, country by country, in Africa… (Eurasian Media Forum 2006).

Clearly, it would seem, from the above, that the STREAM consultation has endorsed these documents, and re-interpreted them in terms of the particular experiences of each of the countries consulted. *Media development* is clearly much more than the economic and infrastructural growth of media institutions; it also embraces such human-developmental factors as freedom, gender equity, democracy, ethics, etc. The media types emphasised include public, commercial and community media. Added to this are the newer forms of electronic media, all of which are valued in terms of their actual and/or potential contribution to expanding the boundaries of democratic expression, accountability, participation, etc.

A SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STREAM CONSULTATION

This section provides a pan-African synthesis of the findings of the STREAM consultation, incorporating the online discussions as well. The analytical categories under which the analysis is undertaken reflect the broad themes emerging from the regional consultation meetings and the online discussions.

Media regulation

The findings suggest that media regulation must be treated as an important component of any efforts at strengthening the media, highlighting its centrality in media performance. All the countries consulted have concerns about how the media are regulated. In North Africa, the concern is about what seems to be a heavily state-centred regulatory regime, clearly supported by a regimen of constitutional and legal provisions. This is true of several other countries, in East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa.

This is not to suggest that there are no differences. The findings suggest that some countries have registered positive changes, including having in place constitutional guarantees of independent media regulation. Examples include South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi, etc. The findings also suggest the emergence of more repressive state-centric media regulatory regimes in countries like Zimbabwe, Tunisia and Egypt. In Egypt, for example, legislation is underway to make it even more difficult for anyone to bring litigation against the state challenging the constitutionality of legislation impinging upon media freedom. In part, the boldness with which some countries such as Egypt and Uganda can enact such new laws against freedom of access to information is a result of the anti-terror fight waged by western countries, especially the US and UK.

A related finding here is about the meaning ascribed to the nature of media regulation. There is consensus on the need for self-regulatory or independent regulation. There are concerns, however, about the extent to which self-regulation can be applied. For example, in East Africa, the question is posed as to 'who watches over the watchdogs?' There is an increasingly significant recognition, therefore, that media self-regulation should be bolstered by strong ethics-enforcement mechanisms that ensure that the media operate in the public interest. This is particularly important in light of the emerging trend towards media over-commercialisation which may compromise the editorial quality of media content.

A key finding here is the need for the transformation of state broadcasting institutions into true public service broadcasting institutions, endowing them with sufficient editorial independence to operate in the public interest.

A synthesis of the recommendations suggested for enhancing self-regulation can be outlined as follows:

Supportive political environment

There is unanimity that the media in all the countries need a stable and supportive political environment in order for them to thrive. This requires continued national, regional and international advocacy, preferably within existing campaign/advocacy and other structures, to bring about the necessary political changes, such as political tolerance, political will, etc. – all of which are necessary towards getting the political elites to embrace media policy and law reforms.

Supportive legal environment

There is agreement that all countries need a constitutional and legal regime that supports the growth and development of media institutions. To this end, greater efforts at advocacy and campaigning are required, particularly for the enactment of freedom of information legislation. Such advocacy must be pitched nationally, regionally and internationally, taking advantage of different platforms.

There is already sufficient declarative commitment to the ideals of media-friendly legislation, at the level of the African Union (AU) as well as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)'s African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Such advocacy and lobbying, therefore, must be based on declarations and commitments made by African governments and civil society. They must live what they preach.

Enabling economic environment

There is also consensus that self-regulation is better served when economic policies encourage the growth of independent media institutions by, among other things;

- Reviewing economic policies, including considering tax incentives for media institutions, so that they become more supportive of media growth and development.
- Establishing an African media and communication support fund, whose mandate must clearly be to support the development of media institutions in terms of their investment opportunities, training and in-service mechanisms, business partnerships, content distribution, etc. Such a fund should have a strong stamp of African leadership, drawing upon an analysis of existing media development funds, including Zambia's Media Trust Fund (MTF), South Africa's Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA), as well as the regional SAMDEF and SAIMED. To be sustainable, such a fund needs to draw upon a multiplicity of financial and other resources, especially those from within African nations themselves. Therefore, there is need to get support from national governments, the private sector, as well as from continental bodies like NEPAD. In addition, such a fund can learn from the experiences of the Investment Climate Facility for Africa (ICF), also formed as a consequence of the Commission for Africa.
- Supporting training in media management, and other business-related components of media development.
- Inclusion of aid to the media in all bilateral and multilateral donor agreements entered into by African governments.

Enhanced associational infrastructure

There is also agreement that media institutions require the support of professional bodies such as journalists' unions. To this end, the findings suggest the need to:

- Build the financial, human and other capacity of professional associations.
- Establish stronger links between such professional associations and the other adjunct media support organisations.
- Encourage greater synergies between the media institutions themselves and the professional bodies.

- Develop and/or entrench strong ethical codes of conduct, and attendant enforcement mechanisms.

Media production

There is recognition of the need for the media to align their production in the public interest. Of particular concern is the quality of media content. A related issue here is the fact that media production has become increasingly implicated in wider processes of commercialisation and privatisation, threatening to further compromise editorial independence.

Some specific proposals include the following:

- Enhanced enforcement of journalism ethics through the self-regulatory mechanisms devised by the professional bodies.
- Strengthening professional bodies so that they can provide such enhanced self-regulation.
- Establishment of more stringent media content quality control measures, including (i) focus on gender, development, the environment, conflict and other such issues; and (ii) subscribing to some external quality management systems such as CERTIMEDIA.[1]
- Greater and more focused education and training, at different levels of certification, in media management, entrepreneurship, etc.
- Increased remuneration to encourage greater heights of innovation among journalists.
- Support on-going acquisition of multimedia skills to enable journalists become versatile and work seamlessly in a technologically converged media environment.

Media education and training

Education and training are key to media development. There is consensus that *education* is a much broader process of developing the critical thinking abilities of journalists, while *training* emphasises the skills base of media practitioners. Both sets of skills are required to enable journalists in their roles as producers, gatherers, packagers and disseminators of news and information.

There is broad agreement that media education and training institutions require strengthening. Such support must be extended to university, tertiary and other institutions. More specifically, the following proposals are suggested:

- National, regional and continental advocacy among ministries of higher and vocational education must be stepped up in order to ensure a minimum level of common assessment of educational and training programmes in Africa. This action, apart from facilitating student mobility and exchange, could significantly improve the teaching of journalism and media studies.
- Strengthen and use existing media education and training networks to support increased exchanges among media educators and trainers, as well as among media students.
- Lobby African governments to increase budgetary allocations to higher and vocational education in general and to media education and training in particular.
- Ensure that any support fund established for media ring-fences a sufficiently high proportion of its budget for media education and training.
- Use the soon-to-be-launched UNESCO databank on African journalism educational institutions to further research into journalism education in Africa.[2]

Towards an 'African media development facility'?

An explicit suggestion in the CfA report was the establishment of an African media development facility. While the consultations did not set out to explicitly enlist proposals for this, there were clear allusions to some form of continent-wide media and communication support fund.

In almost all cases, such a fund is seen as an African-led initiative which could draw upon existing national, regional and continental media development initiatives.

It is clear that the consultants, in some regions, are aware of existing media support mechanisms. This is especially evident in southern Africa, where initiatives like the MTF, the MDDA, SAMDEF and SAIMED are located. In addition, the Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF) is piloting a project involving the establishing of country or regional offices in

1 CERTIMEDIA is a quality-management system designed to foster quality in the media industry – that is to enhance professional standards and practices at managerial, editorial, production and programming levels. It provides a methodology and tools for self-evaluation and self-improvement. It helps media companies formulate their Quality Policy – that is to design their own system of quality measurement and improvement. More details are available at http://www.certimedia.org.

2 Here one can also cite the Knight Foundation-supported Global Census of Journalism Education, being conducted by the University of Oklahoma in the United States. This should provide invaluable data on the state of world journalism education, including Africa. Any efforts launched to support journalism education and training should, therefore, take this particular research initiative into account.

Africa, as well as in Asia. This could prove useful in any further discussions about the model such a fund as is proposed above could adopt. It is understandable, therefore, that respondents in all regions are particularly concerned that the proposed media and communication support fund must take cognizance of all these existing initiatives.

There are also clear concerns that any such continental initiative must be underpinned by the principles of (i) plurality; (ii) diversity; (iii) editorial independence; (iv) participation; (v) accountability; and (vi) African leadership.

The consultants are not concerned, it would seem, about where such a body should be located. But it is important to point out here that the proposal for such a fund is treated co-equally with the other issues listed above. Therefore, it is safe to view the proposal for a fund as supplementing the equally important processes of policy-cum-legal reforms, media freedom, political will, enabling economic policies, media education and training, etc.

CONCLUSION: WHITHER MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA?

There is clearly concern about what *new* evidence such media development initiatives are adducing to make the case for greater donor involvement in supporting the media. Clearly, this is a legitimate critique. However, it does not take away from the integrity and legitimacy of the *process* of *consultation* of the STREAM process, nor does it imperil the AMDI research project.

The redundancy of some of the arguments could be said to have reinforced what was already known. It was clear, from the start of the processes, that there was no illusion or pretension about a 'magic-bullet' solution. If anything, this was a *political* process designed to enable Africans to take leadership of the media development agenda, and define it on their own terms. Such issues have recurred before, but the consultation provided an opportunity for Africans to reiterate their position on these issues.

To the extent that the discussions, both during physical meetings and online consultations, allowed for free-ranging debate, it can be argued that the findings here are indicative of what is possible. While the findings suggest that there is a shared analysis and understanding of the media development dynamics in Africa, they also show that there is scope for more focused work of a technical nature, drawing upon the wealth of information presented here as well as in the individual reports of the online and physical consultations.

Perhaps one can isolate some specific trajectories for the future, namely:

- The need to *further problematise* the concept of media development so that it becomes patently clear what it means for Africa. This must take into account the diversity of cultures across Africa. Of a necessity, this means that there will be no singular definition, but multiple ones, which nevertheless encapsulate the fundamental principles that are at the core of democratic media and communications.
- The need for *African ownership* must be clearly embedded throughout any evolving media development initiative. While the Commission for Africa had African representation, the point must be made that Africa's involvement must go beyond *representation.* The structures and processes of media development must be truly *African*. This does not assume any African homogeneity – it assumes that Africans, in all their geo-cultural diversity, must unite around the conceptualisation, implementation and evaluation of any media development initiative. Although somewhat politically controversial, the involvement of the African Union, at least at the level of general endorsement of the initiative, might be called for. As part of the media development discourse, there is need to invest confidence in the capacity of African institutions of governance, at various levels, to deliver upon the promises of media development.
- The need for a *multi-stakeholder approach* to media development needs to be emphasised. The temptation almost always is to *institutionalise* media development initiatives, often because of the promise of donor funding. I have already indicated how each of the initiatives above seems to be associated with *institutions.* While institutions must be valued for their role in initiating and coordinating such initiatives, it is necessary to de-institutionalise the initiatives and hand them over to organically generated platforms of action. Such platforms of action should be all-embracing, representing a multi-stakeholder approach to the problem and solution of media development. Institutions can provide such platforms of action, without necessarily rendering them prisoner to institutional strictures. It is clear, from the findings, that donors, governments, civil society organisations, ordinary citizens, businesses, etc. are important ingredients of a successful media development initiative. As such, their deep participation must be built into any such platform of action as emerges.

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He has taught subjects in mass communication at the University of Zambia's Department of Mass Communication. A published scholar, Prof. Banda is currently involved in teaching courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, focusing on media policy and institutions as well as mass media theory and society. His research interests include the political economy of communication, media and human rights, media policy, African media debates, African political thought and media, development communication, etc.

He had this to say about the Africa Media Leadership Conference held in Cape Town in August 2007: "The value of this conference lies in the diversity of experiences brought to bear upon the question of media sustainability. Its emphasis on a range of activities, including those pursued by community newspapers, is likely to enrich the debate about how to strengthen media in Africa."


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LAST NIGHT'S DRAW
10 LIFE SENTE
THE STAN
OUTSTANDING EVERY DAY
FROM RAGS
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For News You Can Trust
'I didn't like the reaction by the minister'
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Tutu urges Zuma to quit race for power

Chapter 2

STRATEGIES FOR NEWSPAPER COMPANIES IN SATURATED MEDIA MARKETS: WHAT AFRICA COULD LEARN FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF NORTHERN MEDIA

by Christian Zabel

INTRODUCTION

As in Africa, media companies in Western Europe and America (which for convenience I will call Northern media) face one central question: how can traditional revenue models of mass media be enhanced and adapted to the changing marketplace? In Northern media markets, the main thrust behind this consideration comes from digitalisation, which has changed from a distant future scenario to current day-to-day-business in only a few years' time. Today, media companies are struggling with the adoption of new technologies and marvel how to respond to significant changes in consumers' needs. Even if several fundamental factors are different between Northern media and Africa (i.e. in terms of household income and media equipment, media offers and level of advertising revenue), developments in the North might be interesting for African media managers as they reveal major threads of strategic considerations that might also hold true in the African environment. In this paper, I will focus on the core trends of Northern media market development. Where necessary, a reference to the special marketplace is included, but in general I will try to keep to more relevant general facts.

First, I will review the main drivers of change and point out how media firms have responded to these. The second part will focus on print and especially newspapers as they seem to offer the greatest relevance to the African market, but the analysis may also be applied to other media too.

OVERALL MARKET TRENDS – HOW IS THE MARKETPLACE EVOLVING?

Rising Overall Revenues & Going Digital

The good news for the Media industry is that monetary budgets are still expanding. According to the Global Entertainment & Media Outlook from PriceWaterhouseCoopers for 2007-2011, the overall market will grow by 6.4 % annually to reach $2 trillion in 2011.

- Strong growth will come both from digital and mobile media: the authors expect that in 2011 entertainment and media on convergent platforms (that is home computer, wireless handsets, television) will account for 50% of global spending.
- Revenues from internet will also increase significantly by 18.3% a year to reach $73 billion in 2011, which will represent 14% of the global advertising market.
- Television distribution will make a significant contribution, going up by 9.1% annually to reach $251 billion in 2011.
- By contrast, the oldest electronic medium will attain only sluggish growth: radio revenues are expected to increase by only 3.6% a year, far below the income from outdoor media such as billboards, which will net more than 6.3% a year.

When the future developments are broken down by regions, it becomes clear that strongest dynamic can be found in the Asia-Pacific and the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China). In Africa, most growth will emanate from South Africa, which can hope for a compound aggregate growth rate of 8.5% over the next few years, mostly coming from TV distribution, Internet access and advertising as well as video games.

- Whereas the "traditional" print media in Europe and the US can only muster incremental growth, the increase mostly stems from the transition to digital, with new forms of broadband entertainment becoming available such as videos on Youtube.com, but also from the convergent entertainment offers that use devices like Microsoft's xbox or the iconic iPod. But even if all media forms are considered, a great increase in the future is unlikely given the high level of media consumption already reached: on average, the European citizen consumes more than 50.9 hours of media per week (according to the EIAA Europe Online 2006 study), making it the most time-consuming activity after sleeping. And the level of consumption is even higher in the US. The most astonishing feature of these markets is that consumers manage to increase their astounding media time budget – even if it's only a paltry three or four minutes a year.

Therefore the main concern for managers of traditional media companies is whether the increasing use of new media and especially the Internet will crowd out established media. That fear primarily stems from the rapid rise in the use of the internet, which attains the highest growth rates regarding the media time budget. Newest research shows that:

- On one hand, there is indeed a replacement effect. Especially television and print suffer from the competition through the internet. The British regulator Ofcom estimated in 2007 – based on an international review of studies on the effects of broadband take-up – that in the medium term linear television consumption could be reduced by as much as 30 percent. For print, the decline in time budgets has been evident for several years. Especially among the young, print products could obtain only a constantly decreasing time budget in European countries, though that recently has been partly reversed with the distribution of free sheets.
- On the other hand, background media (read radio here) are less affected by the rise of the internet. This is due to the fact that there is no simple crowding out but also reorganisation of media use: audiences learn to juggle the different media forms and develop new skills in simultaneously absorbing larger chunks of the ever increasing media budget. Especially with the advent of broadband internet, intensive media meshing also becomes some sort of background medium (cf. Fig. 1). A substantial part of the internet audience listens to radio and watches television as they surf the web – some even read newspapers and magazines. These forms of simultaneous media use show a marked increase among the young. Media tsar Rupert Murdoch coined the current generation of 16 to 24 years old "digital natives": having grown up with digital media, they use the new offers more intensely and naturally than the older "digital immigrants" who experienced mostly analogue media during their adolescence.

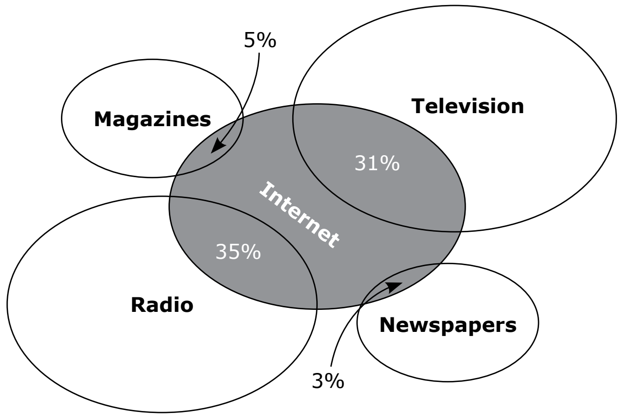

Fig. 1: Media Meshing: Activities while using the Internet.
Source: EIAA European Media Consumption Study

Northern Media: Strategy Challenges in Saturated Markets

These trends raise four central challenges for media companies to compete in these markets of attention:

- First, for new products finding the gap becomes crucial. There are no "unmet demands", as W. Russell Neumann put it 16 years ago: at least in the mass media market, the main propositions are already there. Therefore a very astute definition of who really constitutes the audience should be at the heart of every new product launch. In addition, the combination of content and convenience is nowadays key to product success: the new offer cannot just focus on the content, but has to become a "lifestyle proposition". Examples for this include the launch of interactive TV services (i.e. set top box-based applications) that serve to bridge the "micro boredom" most viewers experience during commercial breaks when watching TV. In Japan, "mobile books" have become a runaway success, creating a turnover of about US$80 million in 2007. These short novels can be read on the mobile phone while commuting. Finally, European news publishers have been highly successful in distributing free sheets at the "points-of-mobility" (opposed to point-of-sale) of the young, urban population such as metro stations and coffee bars.
- Second, brand expansion is a central strategic alternative. The "normal" offer of a stand-alone mass media product has only limited potential of generating income. Since overall consumption will not grow strongly, and with increasing competition there will be fragmentation, the main marketing challenge is not for people to consume more brands, but to pay more per brand.
- Third, media have to reach out to consumers in new ways. The era of classical mass media may be coming to an end in the sense that participatory elements are on the rise, especially when it comes to internet-based services.
- Fourth, media offers have to be increasingly conceptualized as dynamic: creating events that set a rhythm and assure at least punctual visibility in the target groups.

RESPONSES FROM PRINT COMPANIES

When it comes to print publications, the aforementioned four key trends translate rather well into the print sphere. For years, publishing houses have relied on shedding jobs to preserve their high profitability. This becomes clear when one considers that the average profit margin for US newspaper companies floated on the stock exchange in a relatively bad year as 2003 was 17.8 percent, according to the Columbia Journalism Review. But lately, there have been alternative routes that are explored.

Follow the Free, On- and offline

The first lesson learned is that the advertising-based business model is well alive and thriving. More exactly, the print companies were able to profit by exploiting the model to the fullest. According to data from the World Association of Newspaper Publishers (WAN), 30% of total circulation in Europe now comes from "free sheets" publications. These publications often cater to younger audiences with a reduced information load, more intensive utilisation of graphics and images and a smaller page count.

"Follow the free" is especially promising in the environment of online media. There, the original expectations of print companies – that the internet is just a mere additional way of distributing paid content turns – out to be wrong. For example, if you consider the German market, then almost every newspaper publication now has a paid-content e-paper on offer. But sales are minuscule: whereas newspapers sell about 29 million copies daily in Germany, e-paper subscriptions just reach 150,000 – and the largest parts of these are not even paid! This not only holds true for relatively small publications that can only attract a regional following or do not represent a strong media brand. Even world class publications find it difficult to exploit their world-class content:

- The New York Times, arguably the world's leading newspaper, announced in the summer 2007 that it will in future publish its content for free. Although the "Times Select" service attracted 224,500 clients by July 2007, the generated revenue from this offer amounted "only" to US$10 million. By contrast, the advertising revenue on the site already had brought in US$271 Million, (though for the whole company and not only from the NYT).
- Even for the more business-skewed Wall Street Journal, its new owner Rupert Murdoch is pondering the same option: The US$65 Million the newspaper is earning a year with its subscription-only content is relatively small if compared to the total readership of 2.8 million. The WSJ is already getting more money from advertising, so it might be an option to leverage the large visibility of the brand instead of limiting its reach artificially by becoming a closed-shop offer.

The trend that can be observed when print companies go online is also true for pure online services. For example, there has been a marked shift away from the subscription-based business-network service "linked in" towards the more juvenile and cheaper services such as Facebook. Even there – in a business environment with a service exclusively aimed at managers – connectivity and being free are the key arguments.

These developments point to a new conundrum that media companies have to think about: whereas in the old, analogue world visibility was relatively assured and media companies could profit from creating scarcity, in the "new era" of digital media visibility and easy access is key. Or as Jeff Jarvis, a prominent blogger who writes on buzzmachine.com, put it: "It's no content until it's linked." The issue of visibility in the new attention economy is central as the experience of online newspapers shows. The top 30 US newspapers reach 100 million page impressions a month – the combined total is as much as Microsoft, Yahoo or Google each reach in the same time.

A central position in the network of attention gets even more important with the latest trend in online advertising: behaviourial targeted advertising promises to carve out more meaningful target groups not by aggregating socio-demographic criteria or past purchase decisions, but by analysing the individual "surf history" of every single user. In this model, a large network of cooperating websites collect the data gathered on every single user and aggregate them to an individual profile. There is a significant difference to the more common targeting methods of displaying ads matched to the specific content of an individual page or to all users in general. With behaviour targeting, two people could see vastly different ads when viewing the identical webpage at the same time. But to exploit these opportunities, the content in question where the ad is going to be placed has to have extensive links to other webpages, thus providing it with the necessary data.

Expand your Brand

The second main lesson newspapers seem to have learned is that the extension of the media brand is crucial. In the old, analogue times, newspapers often enjoyed a regional monopoly and did not need to compete with other media for attention. This has changed completely and now managers are trying to use the established brand to launch new and related products.

A very good example for this strategy is the case of the German "Süddeutsche Zeitung". With a circulation of about 440,000 and a position slightly left of centre, it is seen as one of the leading national quality dailies. In fact, it was recently (2007) named as the most influential newspaper in the country by a survey of decision-makers. The paper found a unique answer to the threats of digitisation by extending its product line. Copying the success of fellow news publishers in the Italian market, Süddeutsche Zeitung edited "50 große Romane" (50 great novels), a library of the best all-time fiction novels. The selection was launched in March 2004, marketed as a "standard library" which everyone and especially the culturally aware readers of the newspapers should own. Encompassing a mix of bestsellers and longsellers (which come with cheap licences), the first book was given away for free, the rest sold at a relatively low retail price of five euro a book. Each week, a new book of the library would be published, with advertisements and editorial content reviewing the book. The books were also sold at newsstands and at other points of sale such as gas stations throughout Germany. The initiative was a tremendous success: In addition to many single sales, 80,000 complete series were bought, which translates to a total of 10 million books! The newspaper earned extra income worth 26 million euros in that year alone and profited from the marketing effect of having numerous households with parts of the library.

The initiative was then expanded. In October 2004, the company published "Klavier Kaiser", a 20 CD-edition of classical music, of which 75,000 of the complete series were sold. In March of the following year, the SZ-Cinemathek (best all-time movies) sold over 600,000 DVDs. Further initiatives included pop music ("SZ-Diskothek"), novels for youngsters ("Junge Bibliothek") and crime novels ("SZ-Kriminalbibliothek"). Most importantly, the publisher managed to stay true to the company's core strengths as perceived by the audience throughout the numerous brand extensions: the commentary of the current cultural and political debate.

In subsequent years, the idea has been copied in many ways:

- The Guardian publishes cityguides, posters and even historical speeches in special editions, each with a huge success.
- The business-oriented German edition of the Financial Times (Financial Times Deutschland) publishes abstracts of all-time classic books.
- Germany's leading tabloid "BILD", which caters to the audience with a genuine mixture of spicy content and old-fashioned prudery, even managed to publish the "People's Bible". The newspaper then teamed up with supermarket chains and ebay to sell selected goods such as the "People's PC", all of which carried the tabloid's signature.

Development of Hybrid Business Models

Whereas online media is the "on" thing, the significant income is still generated by print and television media. For print companies, the threat from the changing uses of media is evident: ever fewer consumers spend less time with newspapers and magazines. Consultants across the globe speak of an endgame-scenario, where newspaper publishers only can choose between external growth or quitting the industry altogether. But aside from these strategies which focus more on competitive strategy, there are also potentials of refining existing products and business models.

First of all, newspaper publishers have to think of new ways of income generation not only in terms of free sheets or line extensions, but also by cooperating with new partners. A good example is the proliferation of distribution partnerships. Whereas traditionally print products were primarily sold at newsstands, in future alternative distribution circuits will gain in importance, especially to reach the elusive target group of young media users. One extraordinary initiative in this regard is the German project "Mercury", which was set to launch at the end of October 2007. A free youth publication of the traditional, Catholic Church-financed quality weekly "Rheinischer Merkur", the managers don't even try to combine this new offer with the existing somewhat aged core publication. Instead, the 300,000-odd circulation will be distributed through the extensive networks of youth organisations of the Catholic Church as well as sending the paper directly to schools. There, the publisher hopes, the high-quality product and the brand name of the mother publication will help to open doors. The second major element will be an extensive online community which will draw on the print content and encompass social web elements.

Second, newspapers increasingly reinvent themselves as multi-media products, centered on the core competence of the newspaper such as authoritative reporting or local content. For example, the above mentioned Süddeutsche Zeitung set up a branded block on one of the largest free-to-air-channels in Germany, VOX. The slot "Süddeutsche Zeitung TV" is broadcast Mondays at 11 pm and focuses on high quality documentaries, thereby replicating one of the strengths of the newspaper. This approach has proved to be highly successful, even surpassing other branded blocks in the same time slot such as "BBC exklusiv". In addition, its documentaries have proved popular DVD-fare; sales in 2006 amounted to 15,000 DVDs – not too bad for a company not primarily involved in television distribution.

Print goes TV, Online

As the Süddeutsche Zeitung has shown, audiovisual content has significant opportunities. Television is often referred to as the "king media" in Northern media markets – no other media can muster comparably far-reaching simultaneous communicative exposure and richness of media experience. With the transition of the internet – which can in fact be seen as a distribution template for old media forms – towards broadband and audiovisual content, the strategic distance between the two markets decreases significantly, with newspaper publishers becoming more similar to classic television companies.

This perspective of audiovisual strategies of course seeks to take advantage of the internet. The number of broadband households is rising fast in Europe, Asia and the US. With it comes a transformation from previously text-based to more audiovisual content. This is not only obvious when thinking of Youtube, which totals 100 million visits per day. Also newspaper sites are increasingly incorporating videos as part of their offerings. Up to now, there have been four different approaches in the market:

The cheap way is to rely on the audiovisual content provided by news agencies such as Reuters. This approach does not require substantial investments, but is mostly limited to current events and thus there is not much potential to differentiate the offer. This has been a viable strategy for first movers in Northern media markets, but with the multiplication of newspapers, TV and radio stations offering the same, the competitors risk duplicating the image problem newspapers regularly get when relying mostly on non-specific news items provided by news agencies.

Second, newspapers can enrich their online presences by focusing on their core strength: local news. This is the sphere where newspapers can excel, as proven by the success of different ultra-local media offerings. Larger metropolitan newspapers provide daily newscasts, based on the stories of the newspaper but which are also a result of genuine research. These often 30-minute long studio-based news magazines then can be downloaded or be watched as a video stream. The reasoning is not only focused on trying to win over new customers and increase their loyalty. Offers like these can also broaden the local advertising base and provide existing customers with the opportunity to book audiovisual spots. There the technological development can be positively felt. It is nowadays possible to create an advertising spot even for a small, local company with a tiny production budget.

Third, given the high level of attractiveness of social websites, there is a large focus on user-generated content. The main problem of course is that the number of working social networks is limited. And the number of would-be MySpaces is enormous: specialists in the field such as Pete Cashmore list six or seven new services on a regular day! Therefore becoming the new Facebook sounds like a good idea, but normally pays off only for the fast first mover. Newspaper companies try to tap the potential of user-generated content by embracing citizen journalism, where "normal people" enrich the online news sites by reporting on events that otherwise go unnoticed. Digital publications like the German "Myheimat.de" excel in this sense. Their online users cover an area that is more or less entirely neglected by traditional print media because the region is thinly populated. The results of this online-reporting is then published online, but also in a freesheet publication (that bears the potential of selling print ads).

For regional newspapers, which often can't compete with the large internet outfits head-on, the strategy is to exploit their core asset on the net: their local competence. For instance, regional newspaper "Rheinische Post" announced it would launch a social web platform that will be open to the associations in its region, therefore providing a useful and carefully delineated offer that has meaning to its local constituency.

A very popular option is to motivate the readers to furnish photos of current events. Since the London bombings of 2005, the mobile videos and photos have shown that the loss in quality is more than compensated by the direct and live character of the events that are being covered. BILD, Germany's leading tabloid, went further by institutionalising this concept by publishing fake "BILD press cards" that every reader of the tabloid could use to upload photos of celebrities or events to the BILD website. The photos are then selected, published and paid for – a model that aroused severe criticism from professional photographers (because the citizen journalists are paid more for their images than their professional counterparts) as well as celebrities (who complain about the intensification of the paparazzi photo terror).

Fourth, pushing this reasoning a bit further, it can be expected that newspapers also have to invest in genuine made-for-online-productions if they want to compete with other media companies head on, since there is a desire and strong demand for professional content. This becomes clear if one looks at the most popular videos on Youtube.com: videos depicting one's cat in the garden falling into the pool only constitute a small portion of the sought-after content (see Table 1).

Though newspapers will not be able to re-finance this content in the same way as broadcasters do (through one-time broadcast that reaches a massive audience), these productions – mostly magazines, talk shows or short comedy series – can be re-financed by wagging the long tail. As Chris Andersen pointed out in his book "The long tail", the internet is now facing a complete overhaul. With the cost of distribution and storage of content closing in to zero, there is much more room to distribute everything. A special program or article might only attract a dozen of readers or viewers, but it costs virtually nothing to distribute it. Unlike in the mass media era, the distribution of small circulation content becomes – if one aggregates the hundreds of thousands items thus provided – a viable income stream when these small parts of attention are aggregated and then commercialized. This model of course needs a form of presentation: easy to find, easy to access and easy to use. But it also relies on the very low production costs involved. As the CEO of the leading German outfit for online productions, Sevenload, pointed out at trade fair Cologne Conference in October 2007 a magazine format or "late night" format on the net costs less than 1000 euros, which is only sufficient to produce 10 seconds of a classic TV series.

OUTLOOK

In his book "The Vanishing Newspaper" Philip Meyer calculated that the last newspaper will be printed in April 2040. He concedes that "journalism is in trouble" given that most of the authoritative reporting still comes from newspapers – as the yearly "State of the news media" surveys attest. The competitive landscape is changing rapidly and products are becoming more of a lifestyle proposition than a unique and irreplaceable "must have" offer that sells itself. At the same time, there is enormous potential that digital media will open up several avenues of generating the necessary income and strengthen the core brand without compromising the core content of journalism. So newspapers have their work cut out for them as they confront these major challenges of our time.

Table 1: Top 100 Videos on Youtube.com

Category	No of Videos
Excerpts from TV-Programs	32
Advertising Clips	19
Professional User Generated Content (i.e. professionally edited, but not from established media outfits)	20
User Generated Content	12
Music Videos	10
Video Games	5
Total	**100**

Source: HMR International, February 2007

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At HMR, Zabel's work focuses on different aspects of media strategy and technological change, mainly in the field of the TV industry. He also contributes to scientific and trade publications and works as a visiting lecturer at several German universities. He is currently finishing his doctoral thesis focusing on innovation and competition in the TV production sector. He can be reached at Christian.zabel@hmr-international.de.

His comments on how to improve revenue generation by African media?

"It is not like in Europe, where newspapers are a lucrative business. It is necessary and it makes sense as a commercial media organisation to

orientate the business according to the market. To keep the balance is difficult, but in essence possible. The best way is to facilitate research and to find out what to offer advertising clients. Skilled personnel is needed to do that. The smaller media organisations should work together in order to have a better chance to generate revenue."

What should KAS's programmes focus on in this regard?

"The media focus is important because the media is a link and provides, by its very nature, a starting point where quite a lot can be achieved with relatively little input. Therefore training is essential, not only for journalists, but for managers to enable them to translate something into action. It is good that a network (like the Africa Media Leadership Conference) already exists among them so that they can learn from each other and perform solidarity. The transfer of knowledge could be an incentive as well to focus on, not only on transformation of media organisations from within but also from outside."


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Chapter 3

VETERAN JOURNALIST ESTABLISHES MODEL RADIO STATION IN 'MIDDLE OF NOWHERE'

by Mike Daka

INTRODUCTION

At the end of September 2002, I gave up my job as the Director and Chief Executive of the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication (ZAMCOM), a training institution for working journalists, and relocated to my home town where I established a radio station.

The radio station, Breeze FM, is privately-owned and therefore a commercial radio station. However, it operates in a rural community and has a public service mission.

The location of the station, Chipata, the provincial capital of the Eastern province of Zambia, cannot be found on most maps. It is 600 kilometres from the Zambian capital Lusaka, and 20 kilometres to the border with Malawi.

It is therefore not surprising that many people – professional colleagues and my own family members – thought I had gone crazy to give up a safe and reasonably well paying job in Lusaka and to relocate to a place in the middle of nowhere and try to establish a business enterprise, a commercial radio station.

So why did I choose to establish a commercial radio station in a rural area of Africa at a time when my country's economy was not doing well at all? I had several reasons for setting up my own little centre of the universe in Chipata, eastern Zambia.

My reasons were that:

- I was fed up of my job and of living in Lusaka. (*I had been in the same position for 13 years and had transformed the organization from a small government training department to a parastatal organization and, finally, a self-financing educational trust. There was little else for me to do and I had lived in Lusaka most of my life.*)
- I did not think I could work well in a big organization. (*I had been more or less my own boss for more than 10 years and knew that I would find it difficult to report to someone in a large hierarchical organization.*)
- The Zambian government had opened up the broadcasting sector to other players other than the national broadcaster, the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC). (*The liberalization of the airwaves in 1994 was one of the most important developments that had taken place in the media sector in Zambia in a very long time. The new scenario presented a wonderful opportunity for anyone wishing to move on to a new professional challenge.*)
- In my work I had helped some communities to set up community radio stations. (*I and my organization had worked with the UNESCO regional office in Namibia in planning for the setting up as well as the provision of training to community radio stations in central and southern regions of Zambia.*)
- I had had training in broadcasting and had been in charge of a training Institute offering print and broadcasting training to working journalists. (*I had previously undergone radio production and radio training of trainers' courses at the BBC radio training centre at Grafton House in London. I had also spent training attachments with the BBC World Service in London and BBC Birmingham.*)
- And Chipata was the hometown I had never known because my father had migrated to town, 57 years earlier. (*I was born and socialized in Lusaka and as I grew older I longed to visit and to know my home and to establish my traditional roots.*)

So for professional and sentimental reasons, I found the challenge of establishing a hybrid station – a commercial station with a public service mission – an exciting professional challenge. I was also determined to reclaim my heritage while contributing to the development of my traditional home area.

Five years later, I have not regretted that decision and Breeze FM has become the most effective channel of communication in eastern Zambia.

THE STATION – BREEZE 99.6 FM

Breeze FM started its test transmissions in October 2002 and got its full broadcasting license in January 2003. The station broadcasts for 16 hours a day from 06.00am to 10.00pm.

The station has an average radius of 120 kilometres and covers two thirds of eastern Zambia. Its signal is also received in parts of two other provinces of Zambia, Central and Northern provinces.

The station's transmitter output power is 1 kilowatt and its signal also spills over into north-west Malawi and the Tete province of Mozambique.

In eastern Zambia the station's radius captures a population of about 800,000 people, which is about 61 per cent of the regional population. About 70 per cent of the population in the coverage area live in rural areas while 30 per cent are in the urban zones.

Breeze FM broadcasts in Chinyanja (or Chewa) and English languages. Two thirds of programming is in the Chinyanja language and one third in English. The Chinyanja language is widely spoken in Malawi and the Tete Province of Mozambique.

The target audience is trans-generational and combines people in the age groups 10 to 70 and includes peasant farmers and villagers, small-scale traders, commercial farmers, businessmen and members of the general public.

The station broadcasts a uniquely focused service for the local community, a mix of interesting local programmes, music and news. Emphasis is placed on the most critical areas of development and issues concerning people's livelihood.

The vision of the station is to pioneer the establishment of viable people-centred and development-focused local/regional commercial radio stations.

FUNDING CHALLENGES

The station faced many challenges in raising start-up capital as well as operational funding.

The first challenge came when trying to get support from local and regional funding institutions.

Efforts to get a grant for a transmitter from the Zambian Media Trust Fund (MTF) at the critical start-up stage did not succeed. Fortunately, UNESCO came through with equipment support which included a transmitter. This enabled the station to commence test transmissions on schedule.

MTF did come through with a transmitter eventually. However, because of the delay in supplying the equipment it had been agreed that the transmitter would be utilized for the station's geographical expansion programme and would need to be augmented with receiver and relay components.

But when the transmitter was finally delivered – four years late – it had no accessories and it has therefore not been utilized for its intended purpose. And as it turned out, government rejected the station's application to extend its coverage area.

Attempts to get a loan from the major regional media funding organisation SAMDEF (the Southern African Media Development Fund) were also not successful. Delays in considering the request meant that the critical period at which the loan was needed was missed. Apparently SAMDEF were not considering applications at the time they were approached for support. It was latter learnt that the organization was undergoing an evaluation exercise.

Meanwhile pressure was building up as I had tendered notice to the Board of my organization, ZAMCOM, to retire from my position at the end of a new three-year contract. I had already served the organization for 10 years. And so when my contract ended, I did not seek a renewal but stopped work and relocated as I had planned.

Luckily I had accumulated leave days totaling six months, after working for a period of six years without going on vacation.

My Board allowed me to use the leave days during the three-year contract period. I therefore regularly travelled to Chipata to carry out preparations for establishing the station.

Finding a secure and centrally located building for the radio station was not easy. In fact, most of my leave days were spent on searching for either a piece of land where to construct a station building or finding a suitable building which was available for rent or sale.

The search for a good location was made difficult by the fact that I was new to the town and local businessmen, like most small town business people, were suspicious of this. They regarded me as a Lusaka fellow and were unconvinced of my plans to set up a commercial radio station in what they felt was their territory.

Fortunately, I had a colleague in Lusaka who owned a guest house in Chipata and regularly visited the town. During my early visits, he was instrumental in introducing me around and showing me various places.

And so I made trip after trip to Chipata on a bad pot-holed road but did not give up. Each visit lasted for about three to four weeks and it was becoming costly to travel 1,200 kilometres each trip and to pay for accommodation and food while there.

The local municipal council kept making promises to allocate a piece of land to the project but did not deliver. Many of the buildings offered to me were unsuitable because they were either too small or not centrally located or the owners demanded too much money in rentals.

At about this time, I was beginning to get frustrated as the financial resources dwindled and little progress was being made. I decided to enroll for a 'Dynamics of Goal Setting' programme organized in Zambia by a good friend of mine who was a representative of Success Motivation International, Inc of Waco, Texas, United States.

The programme helped me to draw up an exit plan from my employers, along with a project implementation plan for the radio station.

Armed with two sets of goals and clear work plans, I now had a road map for walking out of my job and moving on through the processes of setting up the radio station.

I therefore proceeded to apply for the various licenses from the government and the Chipata Municipal Council.

Zambian regulations require one to get a broadcasting license from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services and a frequency permit from the Communications Authority, which falls under the Ministry of Transport and Communications. Both licenses are renewable annually at an equivalent of US$500 and US$300 respectively.

It was while I was in this buoyant frame of mind that on a visit to Chipata a local businessman took me to the building that had housed an agricultural bank for small-scale farmers which was then under liquidation. The building was up for sale but local businessmen were trying to negotiate the price down.

I walked in and around the building, at the time occupied by a dozen small businesses, and knew instantly that it was exactly what the station needed. The room arrangement fitted almost perfectly with the floor plan I had drawn up with the assistance of a broadcasting engineer for the radio station.

More importantly, the building was not only located at the heart of the Chipata central business district (CBD) but had line-of-site congruence with the telecommunications tower where the transmitter and antenna were to be sited. The tower is 60 metres high and is situated on the highest point in Chipata – Kanjala Hill. It attracts a rental fee of about US$800 per annum.

The money is well spent because the simple criteria for locating the transmitter and antenna are height and security.

On my return to Lusaka, I made an offer to the liquidators of the agricultural bank, negotiated with my family and quickly arranged for the sale of the family house which had been under construction and was nearing completion.

A technical assessment of the Chipata building was carried out and designs and improvements required to convert it into a radio station facility were carefully drawn up and worked out.

Special provision was made for the on-air studio, talk studio, control room, newsroom, library and a marketing and sales office, among other facilities.

It was then time to apply to the local authority for the re-zoning of the building from a bank to a communications facility.

After approval was secured, a mast for the Studio-to-Transmitter link (STL) was fabricated and erected and, soon after, the studio equipment was installed.

The construction and other preparations were completed several months before I was due to retire and so instead of retiring at the end of October 2002, I left office a month earlier, at the end of September 2002. And on October 1st I headed east to Chipata. Exactly five days later, on 5th October 2002, the station commenced its test transmissions.

The licensing arrangements in Zambia forbid radio stations from earning income through advertising or programme sponsorship during the 'test transmission' phase.

During this period, which can last up to 18 months, stations are only allowed to announce the station's name, play music and tell listeners that they are carrying out a test transmission.

While this is going on the station is incurring costs. It needs to pay rentals, salaries and/or allowances. It needs to pay for its telephones, water and other services.

Unfortunately, the location of the station in rural Zambia created the impression that Breeze FM was a community radio station and, therefore, members of the community, government departments, private companies and civil society organizations expected either free services or very low charges.

Actually the idea of 'paying for radio' was completely new to people and institutions in the coverage area. Everyone had been used to receiving free broadcasts from the national broadcaster or the local Roman Catholic station.

Another challenge arose from the attitude of government towards the station. Apparently, the central government was and still is uncomfortable with the existence of a strong independent radio station outside their sphere of influence in one of the country's regions.

The government's displeasure was made known in several ways but the most categorical indication was the rejection of an application for the expansion of the station's geographical coverage area.

This was so and yet several other stations in Lusaka and other parts of the country, including the Catholic station based in Chipata, were allowed to extend their coverage areas.

Apart from limiting the station's listenership, the government decision effectively undermined the station's advertising base.

The government also stopped the station from broadcasting live British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) programmes. Breeze FM is a partner station of the BBC and had for a limited time been allowed to broadcast BBC programmes during its night drive, from 10.00pm to 06.00am.

The national broadcaster, ZNBC, is allowed to broadcast news and other programmes as it chooses. The government has also allowed the BBC to have 24-hour FM relay facilities in the country's two major cities, Lusaka and Kitwe.

Written appeals and face-to-face meetings with the Permanent Secretary and Minister at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services to get these decisions rescinded have all failed.

The Zambian government continues to superintend over the operations of private and community radio stations despite the enactment of two media laws which were intended to free the broadcasting sector. The two laws were supposed to pave the way for the transformation of the state broadcaster into a public broadcaster and to establish an independent broadcasting authority.

Efforts by media associations to get government to implement genuine media reforms, including the introduction of a Freedom of Information Act, have not succeeded. And so our station has to operate within the confines and severe limitations set by the government.

Another serious challenge to the station is the unreliable power supply by the national power company, the Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation (ZESCO).

Power outages, which sometimes last an entire day, and low and high surges are frequent occurrences and disrupt the station's operations from time to time and damage equipment.

Equally challenging has been the issue of staffing at the station. Although I had worked for 13 years at the head of a media training institution, my station was not in a position to recruit some of the people I had helped to train.

This was because a conscious decision was made to employ local individuals who lived in the community, understood and empathized with local issues and the people. The decision to employ local people was also necessitated by the fact that it would be difficult for the station to meet the unrealistic salary expectations of those recruited from Lusaka.

BREEZE FM BUSINESS MODEL – DEVELOPMENT AT HEART AND BUSINESS IN MIND

The station got around the challenges of raising start-up capital and generating operational funding by preparing well before establishing the station.

Audience Survey

The first task was to establish whether the area, in fact, needed a new radio station – and a commercial one at that.

A comprehensive audience survey was carried out, with support from the Danish development agency Danida, to establish listeners' demographics as well as people's radio ownership patterns, listening habits, preferred programmes as well as programmes which they wanted and needed but were not receiving from existing stations.

The audience survey findings were very useful when deciding to go ahead and establish the station and in determining the station's mission and programming format and schedule.

The station's mission is:
to stimulate prosperity in the coverage area by creating access to useful, relevant and up-to-date information that gives growth at personal, family and community levels.

Feasibility Study

The second task was to establish whether the coverage area had the capacity to financially support the existence and operations of a commercial radio station. A feasibility study was undertaken focusing on businesses, government entities and civil society organisations.

This exercise showed that there was willingness, even if initially cautious, for various organizations to pay for advertising and/or to sponsor programmes, if the service was found to be useful and meaningful by and to the local community.

Start-up Arrangements

Armed with the findings of the two studies, I and my colleagues developed a realistic business plan and got started with arrangements for setting up and starting the operations of the station.

The initial core funding for acquiring the station building and equipment was obtained from the sale of my family house in Lusaka. Other funding was drawn from my retirement benefits.

Critical equipment, comprising some basic studio facilities and a transmitter, was received from UNESCO (the United Nations' Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), through its regional office in Windhoek, Namibia.

I then entered into a contract with the state broadcaster ZNBC to engage the services of their technical department to carry out the technical designs and installations at the station. As indicated earlier, work was completed within schedule.

Test transmissions commenced and were carried out for a period of three months before the station was granted what is referred to as a 'Confirmed Broadcasting License'. The community was delighted and so were the local organizations.

And it was not long before national institutions and some regional ones came on board too.

Support was sought to deal with the problem of power outages and surges and to ensure uninterrupted operations. Free Voice of the Netherlands assisted with standby transmission facilities, a transmitter and a power generator while the Johannesburg-based Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) provided a second generator to support operations at the station building. OSISA also assisted with field recording equipment and computers.

The first two computers at the station had comprised a going-away gift from my old employers ZAMCOM, and the family computer which I had promised and, in fact, managed to return.

OSISA also supports the station's training activities involving community stations in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. The training project is known as SACRADE, Southern African Community Radio Attachments for Development and Education.

The SACRADE project also involves Bush Radio of Cape Town, South Africa, which trains staff from community radio stations drawn from Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland.

Meanwhile local staff were recruited and given comprehensive broadcasting orientation. Of course, the decision to recruit local people meant that instead of employing trained journalists or the most well suited people, except in the editorial department, the station had to make do with those available and then invest into their continuous training – mostly on the job. However, only those with at least diploma level education, in any field, were considered.

Intensive radio broadcasting orientation and training was carried out – in two phases – before and during the time of commencing test transmissions. The first phase involved conducting selection interviews, carrying out auditions and introducing staff to studio equipment and presentation skills.

I was assisted by a veteran Danish broadcaster/trainer, Jens Troense, who had practical experience in organizing the start-up of a radio station in Denmark.

Jens was introduced to me by a long-time colleague and associate, Professor Lisbet Ravn of the Danish School of Journalism, who worked with me on various media projects in Zambia.

The second phase comprised a fully-fledged radio broadcasting course conducted by two internationally respected broadcasting trainers, Ian Masters and Derek Woodcock of the Thomson Foundation, a leading Commonwealth media training institution based in Cardiff, Wales, in the United Kingdom.

I have had a long association with the Thomson Foundation. I undertook graduate studies in Cardiff at the University of Wales in the 1980s.

In the 90s, the Thomson Foundation conducted a very successful annual regional broadcasting course for east and southern Africa at ZAMCOM for several years. Ian Masters, who was then Head of Broadcasting, is a dear friend. He and senior trainer Derek Woodcock were delighted to come over and prepare my staff for the launch of the station. On their annual visit to Zambia they opted out of going to ZAMCOM and instead came to Chipata to help me out.

The course dealt with radio news gathering, writing and presentation as well as advanced studio presentation skills and techniques.

Additional training has been arranged by bringing trainers into the station or by participating in training workshops held by various organizations in Zambia, in east and southern Africa or overseas.

This recruitment and training approach was and still is time consuming and costly, both in monetary and operational terms.

However, the investment in training has yielded good results and the station today has an establishment of 24 members of staff comprising accomplished presenters, producers and reporters who are providing an informative and exciting service to the public.

What is really special about the station is its way of interacting with its listeners.

Through the station's agony uncle, 'Gogo Breeze', Breeze FM is charting a new and exciting course for African journalism.

A retired teacher-turned-broadcaster, Gogo (grandfather) Breeze is pioneering a new type of journalism which practically addresses the needs of the downtrodden.

Every day he travels on his bicycle from township to township meeting and talking to ordinary people, office to office following up on people's complaints and grievances, village to village interviewing the real people about their real issues and problems and recording their long-ignored folklore and music.

He covers long distances of up to 70 kilometres responding to the requests from villagers to visit their areas. When he is at the station he spends a lot of time receiving ordinary folk who come into Chipata town for other business but will not return to their villages until they have visited the radio station and 'seen him with their eyes'. He features all those who visit the station, and have the chance to find him, on a programme aptly titled, 'Landilani Alendo' (Welcome Our Visitors).

His other programmes include the most popular 'Makalata ao Mvela' (Letters from Our Listeners) in which people – young and old – ask for his assistance in resolving a very wide range of issues – from family and community conflicts to poor governance and poor service delivery at local and provincial levels.

Gogo Breeze does not only read the letters and provide his most sought after counsel and opinions but cycles all over the place to find and interview the local or provincial government official, traditional leader, civil society representative and anyone involved or able to shed some light on the issues raised by the listeners.

Gogo Breeze is also helping to revive the use of the African idiom and traditional story-telling through his programmes 'Miyambi Mu Umoyo Wathu' (Metaphors), 'Mau Okuluwika' (Proverbs), and 'Zotigwera' (Fireside stories).

All his programmes are in the Chinyanja/Chewa language which is spoken in eastern Zambia, most parts of Malawi and the Tete Province of Mozambique. As the signal of the station spills over into Malawi and Mozambique, Gogo Breeze and the station have a following in these countries too.

The station has, meanwhile, also worked tirelessly to create an advertising and programme sponsorship attitude and culture in the coverage area. The greatest asset that the station has is the community from which it has developed a committed, captive, loyal and participatory audience.

As a result of the overwhelming public support, the station has been able to develop six areas of income generation. These are:

- Community announcements
- Small business advertisements
- Commercial advertisements
- National advertisements; and
- Programme sponsorships.
- The station also earns income from training of community radio staff from stations in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia.

And so today Breeze FM, while not completely out of the woods, is able to operate without serious financial difficulties

As Breeze FM marks its fifth financial year in 2007, the station is planning towards building for growth, maturity and consolidation of operations.

Over the past five years, the station has positioned itself as the most effective channel of communication for individuals and all types of organizations wishing to communicate with people in eastern Zambia.

Breeze FM has three main roles:

1. providing a voice explicitly for vulnerable groups to communicate their perspectives in the public domain;
2. providing a space for such groups to engage in public dialogue and debate on issues that affect them; and
3. providing a channel to communicate information on development issues to people most affected, and to communicate perspectives from these people to those in authority.

The station has additional roles. It acts as the go-between for listeners and advertisers and brings information on goods and services to the people.

The station is currently exploring innovative ideas and opportunities for helping to chart a viable and profitable future.

It is widely accepted that most start-up companies fold up shortly after birth or within the first five years of operation. For Breeze FM, failure is not an option because the community has embraced the station as their own making: it an important institution in the community.

And in any case I, as the founder of the station, am well aware that I also have to answer to my family whose house I sold to start the station.

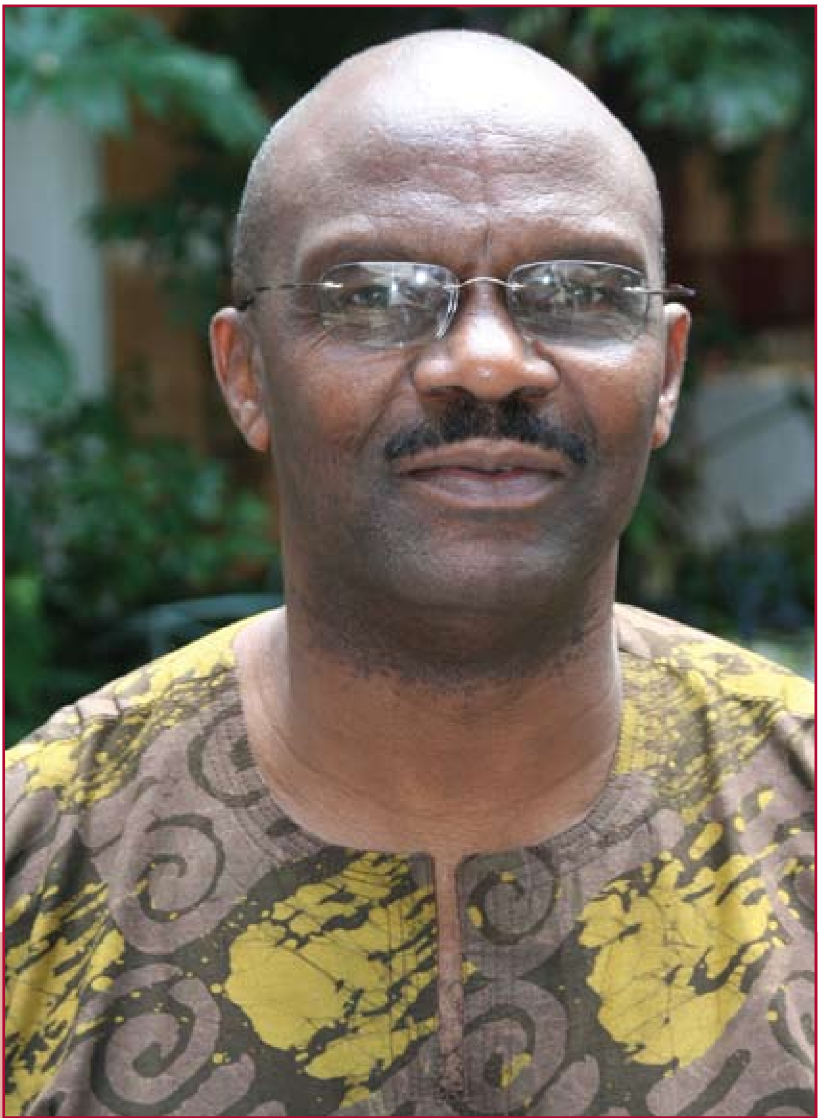
MIKE DAKA is the owner and managing director of Breeze 99.6 FM, a privately owned radio station in Chipata, Eastern Zambia. He has over 30 years media experience, having worked as a reporter, editor and director of a media training institute. He holds a master's degree in journalism studies. He can be contacted at breezefm@zamtel.zm.

What are obstacles to generating revenue for newspapers and broadcasters in Southern Africa?

"The problem with print media is that they are centred around urban areas (if they hope to make a reasonable income), but for smaller grassroots newspapers the operating costs are much lower. Broadcasting is cheaper than print. Another challenge is that we do not have enough knowledge on technology because it is moving so fast."

In your view, how should revenue be generated?

"It is important to network in order to access finance. We also have to focus now on local (financial) institutions to give loans and make finances available. We need to engage with SAMDEF (Southern Africa Media Development Fund) and channel (media) money through such organisations. We need to provide training for journalists, more in-house training as well,



for them to perform better. Another possibility, where KAS could get involved, is to get retired experts from Germany to work as mediators and help to change technicians. At Breeze radio station in Zambia, for example, we use retired executives to help consolidating. There must be a buy-in from management too (who) must be convinced that there is room to improve."

What lessons do you take away from the 2007 Africa Media Leadership Conference?

"There is a need for audience measurements! (So often) assumptions are made by advertisers in capitals (without adequate and accurate information). They should not only go to national stations, rather to community stations, they have to have an ear on the ground. With proper research, we would also be clearer where we are at. The debate at the conference was dominated by South African media, but we need more African debates!"

Chapter 4

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES FOR BROADCAST MEDIA: LESSONS FROM EAST AFRICA

by Linus Gitahi

INTRODUCTION

Like elsewhere in Africa, independent broadcast media in most of East Africa is barely 10 years old. In that sense, it hasn't matured to a point where we can begin to speak of significant trends that we can see persisting in the long term.

While the industry is still in transition, we can say that there are definitely four forces and one **tragic event** which have had a tremendous impact on the broadcast media in Africa, especially in the last 15 years. The impact has been negative in some cases, but trends in East Africa tell us that broadcasters who were able to sense an opportunity in these developments have thrived and have a future in the business.

I will highlight these trends and catastrophe briefly and return to them in some detail later.

The hand of aids

The first is the ravage of Aids, which by 2000 looked like it could wipe out entire African communities. Countries like Uganda, which put together some of Africa's best anti-Aids strategies, bringing infection rates down to 5% from a record 33% in ten years, and lately Kenya which has managed 6%, did so in part because of aggressive information campaigns. The war against Aids engendered a whole new generation of innovative use of public affairs information and collaboration of health groups with media, which created and energized large audiences.

Globalisation begets localisation

Secondly, the march of globalization and its attendant cultural homogenization via media platforms such as DStv and MTV created a counter "localisation" movement. This movement sparked off nostalgia for the old simple and familiar artistic and cultural offerings (especially TV drama), and a hankering for "things African".

Democracy everywhere, not just in politics

Thirdly, the democracy winds that swept Africa from the late 1980s, also democratised various social spaces. It was no longer acceptable that audiences would be passive consumers of news and programmes, especially on broadcast media. The radio stations that started up early in the era of the liberalisation of the airwaves, unlike the old state-owned ones, could only demonstrate that they were different partly by opening their lines to call-ins on all subjects, although politics became the most popular. In the past, listeners called in mostly to send greetings or condolences (which was very big in countries like Uganda).

Technology opens new frontiers

Fourthly, the impact of the new information technologies that allowed newsrooms to network in ways they hadn't been able to in the past has eased communication with field reporters and allowed media to work simultaneously with text, audio and video from the same platform. Beyond the new forms of information sharing, the new technologies overall helped reduce costs, making it possible for small broadcasters with modest budgets to do interesting things.

The tragegy – Rwanda genocide

Fifth was the catastrophe – the Rwanda genocide of 1994 in which nearly one million people were slaughtered. This tragic event, in the most negative way, reminded the world about the power of radio in developing and peasant societies where the oral tradition is still dominant. The genocidaires rallied the killers and mobilised the country to carry out the killings using radio in a way that the continent had never witnessed.

HOW EVERYTHING CAME TOGETHER IN EAST AFRICA

How did the various actors in media in East Africa respond to the four factors and the Rwanda genocide? Not everyone recognised and seized the opportunity presented by new technologies and the emerging democratic sensibilities. To be sure, as I shall show later, some of them like the genocide-produced long-term negative fall-outs. For today, we shall concentrate mostly on the successes because we never hear enough of these good stories in Africa.

The aids pandemic

As I mentioned briefly already, brought about innovative ways of creating and packaging public health information. One of the most interesting examples in East Africa is the work that is being done by the *Straight Talk* Foundation. It began by developing colourful, user-friendly newspaper pullouts which taught adolescents about safe sex, Aids and how to negotiate their sexuality. These hugely popular pullouts spread to newspapers in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda.

Now *Straight Talk* has graduated to a studio that produces programmes. These programmes have become the mainstay of many FM stations, and in Uganda, for example, a significant part of the advertising that keeps smaller FM stations afloat and the core of their largest audiences are built around the *Straight Talk* programmes.

- It is good economics for stations because they don't pay for the programmes. In several cases, in fact, *Straight Talk* pays stations to run the programmes. It is a triple blessing for many a broadcaster because businesses (in the health sector and the NGOs) know that there is a specific audience focusing on these programmes so they are clamouring to have their adverts aired at these specific times.
- Secondly, it has journalistic value. Because of the toll of Aids, it has come to be accepted in East Africa that education programmes on the disease are not public relations material, or something that is heavily vested with the narrow interests of the sponsors. So it doesn't hurt the credibility of broadcasters when they use it. On the contrary, it is considered good corporate citizenship as the stations can, with a clear conscience, say they air these programmes at rates that are reduced by about 10-15% off the regular rates.

Globalisation

I have argued that globalisation has bred localisation and nostalgia for things past and African. To broadcasters, this has been a boon. In Kenya, it has opened avenues for the return of old dramas and new plays based on local themes. Ironically in Kenya, the biggest beneficiary in this regard has been the state broadcaster, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). True, it might be a niche market but a very lucrative one.

The newer broadcasters have cashed in, as is the case of Nation Television (NTV), by launching irreverent satirical acts like *Red Korna*. This need to listen to local voices in an MTV world has brought many talented local musicians and dramatists to radios as presenters and wooed over many new eyes and ears for broadcasters. This has given East African broadcasters social authenticity and has been good businesses because advertisers find that they get better value for their money when they sponsor or buy space on programmes with local faces. This is in sharp contrast to programmes bought from the US or UK, which don't give their brand much extension. So a popular comedian in town who presents a show on radio sponsored by a drinks company carries on that association when he goes to the supermarket or to church.

The issue of localisation brings us to how the march of democracy, even when it is halting, has forced broadcasters to open up to greater public participation. One of the most popular forms of social participation in broadcast platforms comes from Uganda in the form of what they call *Ebimeeza* (people's parliament). Uganda's FM stations go out at the weekend and set up debating sessions in bars and town halls. As they pass out the microphones, a furious and unfettered discussion – very many times on the very edge – starts on matters political.

This is yet again a great way to connect with audiences and make oneself a reference point. However, broadcasters have costs and salaries to pay, and in reality this is a very inexpensive way (almost cost free) to make programmes that attract large audiences. In Tanzania, this formula has worked very well for East African TV, this time focusing mostly on music and more mundane issues of urban living, and in Kenya TV stations have exploited it to great effect around talkshows.

Technology

Perhaps multimedia companies like Nation Media Group have enjoyed the benefits of this more than others. Three years ago we established a "convergence" desk in our newsroom in Nairobi and Kampala at *The Monitor*. They are not yet where we want them to be, but in Nairobi our Internet editors and newspaper editors sit together at this desk.

This allows us to break news as it comes into the NationMobile news alert service; to update our website with breaking news quickly and ahead of our competitors. Again, the economics of this comes from the fact that we don't need three teams for online, mobile and the newspaper. We use the same set of reporters.

On the big assignments, we are able to liaise and share resources (like transport), even reporters between print and TV. Not only do we use the same copy in Kenya, but across our platforms in Tanzania and Uganda. The savings are incredible if you spread the costs across the group, allowing us to cover events live when others rely on agency wire. For example, we are one of the very few African media companies to cover the recent Nigerian elections, the World

Economic Forum in South Africa, the African Union summit in Accra, the constitutional crisis in Malawi, the Africa Games in Algiers, the World Cup in Germany, just to name a few recent events, using our own troops.

When we take our digital media and convergence initiatives to the next stage – as we are currently doing – we think we shall be able to cover more stories in Africa and in East Africa – particularly on TV – not only better but also at far lower cost. This form of journalism has brought us fresh credibility with our communities and won the commercial interest of multinational companies which are increasingly operating regionally in East Africa.

Technological advances have also allowed us refine our public affairs role. For example, in the referendum on the constitution in Kenya, we set up a vote tally centre using the combination of cellphones, satellite phones, the Internet and our own intranet that was so much ahead of that of the Electoral Commission of Kenya that the Commission would actually call us for results! This puts a lot of responsibility on one to be accurate as the risks of error can be far-reaching.

The tallies that we ran on TV 24 hours kept hundreds of thousands of Kenyans up all night and on our website brought us over four million hits in the space of a few hours! A similar experiment in Uganda's presidential elections in 2006 was met with a more testy response from the government. The transmission of our FM station that was doing the tally was turned down and the security forces visited our newsroom.

The good news about this is that in both the Kenyan and Ugandan cases, though the official responses were different, it showed that the media is still influential and can lead society on the important issues of the day. In Kenya, the outcome of the referendum was not in doubt, in part due to the transparency we brought to the coverage; in Uganda, the opposition rejected the outcome and it ended up in court where the judges ruled that the election had been rigged, but not enough to affect the outcome.

Rwanda genocide

Finally, the lethal use of radio in Rwanda does not present any commercial opportunity. Rather, it gave us a lesson in just how dangerous radio can be in cynical and destructive hands. The by-product of this is that more serious broadcasters all over the Greater Eastern Africa region saw the necessity to have very high quality assurance on their platforms, which generally resulted in better products. In that sense, we should pay special tribute to the victims of the genocide. To the wiser ones among us, their death was not in vain.

At the regulatory level, however, the genocide has become a compelling argument for media control by government. In Uganda, one of the first countries on the continent to liberalise the airwaves and might be the first to turn it back, it is the main argument that has been frequently been used to justify the shutting down of several stations, including briefly our own KFM.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

So what does the future look like? Like all other media, the signs are that the Internet will be a threat to our businesses, or force the hand of the adapters to change the way they work much quicker than they would have.

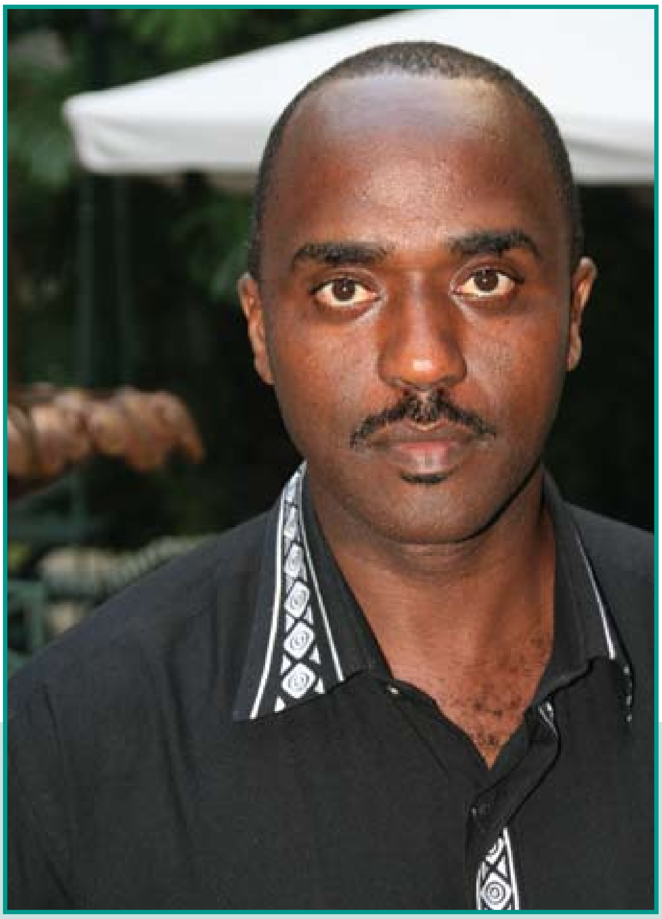
The opportunity that has immediately opened for broadcasters in East Africa, like in many other parts of the world, is that the Internet and Mobile phones have improved audience participation by making it easier to vote in opinion polls, send in questions and answer quiz questions, thus also making it possible to build greater loyalty among audiences.

These new media platforms are a promising revenue source. In Kenya radios and TVs actually are making money because the SMSs are sent into the stations at a premium and the margin is shared between the stations and cellphone companies. Developments like these suggest to me that the spread of mobile telephony should be seen as a great friend of broadcasters.

The flip side of this is that these new technologies, much like radio in Rwanda, allow for the mobilization of extreme nationalist ideologies that are harmful to media groups such as mine which seek to spread in Africa. Even in the East African region, we have found that the mobilisation of nationalism (through xenophobic websites and inflammatory talkshows) has made some countries there hostile to "outsiders" entering the market.

My more private parting thoughts are about something bigger than journalism or broadcast revenues. I have been asking myself: what will this generation of people who are growing with the Internet, enjoying the freedoms and sovereignty that mobile phones give them to interact with all broadcast media, think of the many journalists in Africa who paid a high price for the freedoms that some of them are already taking for granted? My hope is that it will allow for a fresh appreciation of their sacrifices.

I hope it will help clarify how far we have come and to finally give honour of place to those journalists and democrats who had the courage and dream to seek the freedom which is so ordinary for us today, at a time when they surely knew they would pay a high price for trying.



LINUS GITAHI has been the Nation Media Group's chief executive officer since November 2006. He joined Nation Media after a long career as a senior executive with pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline in East and West Africa, the Middle East and Europe. He has been managing director of GlaxoSmithKline for West Africa since 2003, based in Lagos; and served the company previously in Nairobi as general manager for Consumer Healthcare for East Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands. He was also head of African Consumer Marketing and has held other marketing posts in the company, which he joined in 1989.

Gitahi graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Nairobi and earned a diploma in management from the Kenya Institute of Management. He also holds an MBA from the United States International University. Gitahi is a non-executive director of Equity Bank Limited and has been active in community affairs, including at Huhoini Secondary School, the Tumaini Clinics and the Africa Leadership Initiative. He is also a board member of Federation of Kenya Employers.

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Gitahi does not think that by joining the Nation Media he changed his career to journalism. "I haven't changed to journalism", he says emphatically. "I've changed to media rather. I'm running a (media) company.

"I've been running a company for the last eight years. I started my career in advertising and that is how I got interested in media. So when the opportunity came along, I took it and I am thoroughly enjoying it." And he is aware of the challenges facing him. "The media industry moves very, very fast – if by ten o'clock a newspaper has not been sold, the chance is that it is not going to sell. At Nation Media Group we have the electronic media and we have the digital media, which is even faster and takes a fraction of seconds to break news. And you have to make sense of it to be competitive. It is challenging, but also exciting."

And where does the traditional media stand?

"The traditional media itself is threatened by new media – that is online business, digital business… Both of the latter are coming up very, very fast and I think they are new to most parts of this continent -- even to South Africa. People should put their minds together and see beyond the content in the new media. It is all about how we make money? I think this is the big question. I think this is probably one of the biggest questions facing our businesses today.

What would be the right approach to get an answer?

"The right approach would be to sort out the way we manage advertising on the web. We constantly stick to the traditional way, but we need to break away from that approach. We need to have a look at the audience and then do the advertising according to the audience' needs." Also, says Gitahi, sticking to traditional advertising won't bring the media more viewers or customers.


Khosolo RDA
CULTURAL PRACTICES
Panasonic
MADE IN JAPAN
AUTO REVERSE
S-XBS

Chapter 5

CHALLENGES OF AUDIENCE MEASUREMENT IN AFRICAN BROADCASTING AND HOW TO TURN AUDIENCE MEASUREMENT INTO MONEY

by Nanzala Mwaura

INTRODUCTION

The growth in the media industry across the African continent has been phenomenal, especially in the last few years. The wave of change in the democratic space in the continent also saw the liberalization of the airwaves. In many countries this led to a growth in the media industry in terms of number of stations and subsequently the media content.

This paper seeks to address the importance of audience measurement and its challenges, and to demonstrate how this information can be made available and used to make African broadcasting more profitable.

What is audience measurement? It is simply a measure of the media usage patterns. It has information on the audience profiles, their favourite programmes, stations watched or listened to, viewing or listening times and, in some situations, it also includes brand usage. It is basically the consumer media consumption patterns. In many parts of the world it is called the All Media and Products Survey (AMPS). This data is collected using various research tools.

Before we delve further into audience measurement, it is important to understand its purpose. In the old times there were very few broadcasters and this made media buying very easy. If there was only one television station in the country, then naturally the advertiser would place all the advertising on this station. The programming created specific target groups and was generally easy to make a media plan without any additional information.

The explosion in the industry increased the number of television stations across Africa, with an even bigger explosion in radio. Table 1 demonstrates the growth in number terms in three countries.

Table 1. Growth of media in some East African countries

Country	Year	Radio stations	TV stations	Year	Radio stations	TV stations
Kenya	1990	3	2	2006	43	9
Tanzania	1996	8	4	2006	47	29
Uganda	2000	37	7	2006	120	13

Source: The Steadman Group

This explosion saw the various stations trying to differentiate themselves and carve out a niche audience. There was an increase in the variety of content, and in the level of interaction between the media houses and their audiences. This saw the advent of news shows, reality TV programmes, business reports, talk shows, as opposed to the traditional News and soaps.

The advertising expenditure also increased. As much as this can be attributed to the increase in the rate card, there was certainly a growth in the number of actual spots and therefore number of messages targeted at the consumers. Imagine how many adverts are targeted at the 18-49 year-old woman today compared to twenty years ago. It is also clear that there are many other activities that compete with the media – work, social events and every day chores as the social setup today becomes more complex with much more on offer. See Table 2 on the following page showing an increase in advertising expenditure over a specific period for four countries.

All the above factors make the media buying process quite complicated. The audience is split across the ever increasing number of stations and the variety of programs aired. The increase in number of messages targeted at the same consumer meant one had to do much more to be heard. An effective media campaign could no longer be planned on gut feel.

Audience measurement provides the much needed data for all the players in the industry. For the advertiser, it would be to assess the efficiency and cost effectiveness of media expenditure among the target audience. For the media owner, it would be used for rate card setting, programming and content scheduling. For the advertising agency, it would be for media planning and buying.

Audience measurement would provide the industry currency for selling and buying advertising 'space'. It is a tool for evaluating performance in terms of effectiveness, impact and reach. It allows the industry to know that each cent spent has some financial logic. There is therefore a definite need for a research-based currency between key stakeholders who are the media owners, advertising agencies and the advertisers.

This data would provide strategic insights for the effective measure of current media levels and product and brand consumption. When the two pieces of information are put together it creates a powerful planning tool to target audiences with specific products.

Using media diaries, the data would provides invaluable depth by providing an actual measure of audience by time of day for broadcast media. This would be in 15-minute segments. This way the actual media consumption trends for the day can be seen. A typical example would look like the one in Figure 1 below.

Table 2. Growth of advertising expenditure in four countries

Country	Year	Advertising expen-diture (millions)	Year	Advertising expen-diture (millions)
Kenya	2003	Kshs. 6,641	2006	Kshs. 13,584
Tanzania	2003	Tshs. 26,789	2006	Tshs. 40,426
Uganda	2003	Ushs. 75,999	2006	Ushs. 110,009
Ghana	2003	¢ 231,538	2006	¢ 640,062

Source: The Steadman Group

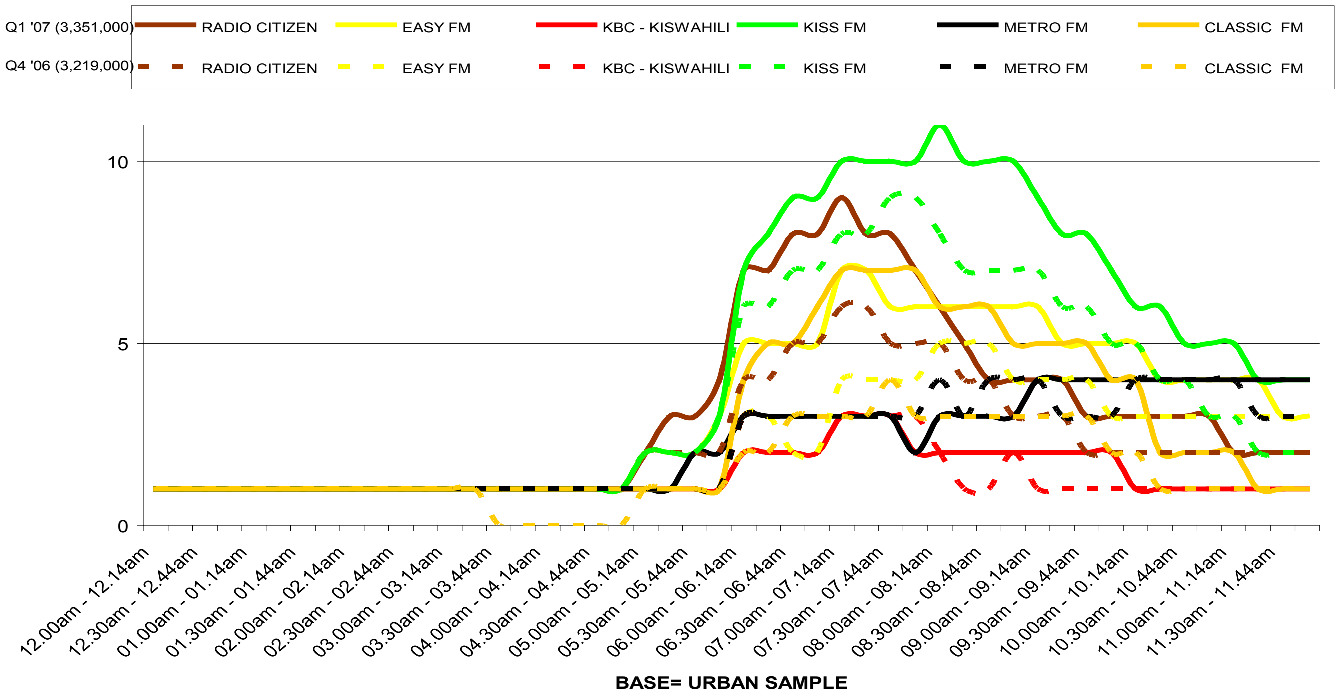

Figure 1. Radio trends in urban areas – Monday am

Source: The Steadman Group

Audience measurement would also provide information and an understanding of the differences in media and product use by demographics, psychographics and lifestyles. It also provides information on the programs and stations that have viewers/listeners with distinct product consumption habits.

In general the data would provide the following information:

- Reach: This is the percentage or number of people who viewed or listened to a particular medium (station) at least once in the past 7 days
- Average Quarter Hour Audience: Proportion of viewers or listeners tuning to a particular station during an average quarter hour (15 Minutes)
- Share of Eye/Ear: Based on the number of hours spent watching or listening to each station by the total number of television or radio hours.
- Time Spent Watching/Listening: Proportion of people watching or listening to a particular station in terms of hours by demographics and television or radio station.
- Loyalty: Level of viewing or listening commitment to a station (Loyals, Frequents, Favourites, Trialists, Just Aware and Unaware)
- Coverage: The geographical area within

which a medium can be accessed.

- Solus Reach: The percentage of a medium/ channel's audience that did not listen to or view any other medium/channel on comparison.

In sub-Saharan Africa audience measurement data is available on a consistent and regular basis in Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Ghana. These are just five countries out of a possible 41 countries. The general unavailability is as a result of two main problems: lack of understanding of the need and use of this data and the lack of financial resources required to invest in the collection and dissemination of such data.

The challenges of audience measurement are a factor of cost. In countries where the audience measurement is funded by the industry, these challenges are reduced. Some of the key challenges are as listed below:

- Sample selection: this is the choice between the Survey versus Panel samples. Panel samples are better but more expensive.
- Data collection instruments: The instruments used are questionnaires and day- after Diaries, though this does not work well when the respondents are illiterate. It is time consuming and calls for many interviewer visits to ensure the diary is filled.
- Diary Recall: This has reliance on memory and this means the accuracy levels may not be as high as would be preferred.
- Interpretation of findings: The analysis of special groups is also a challenge. The sample size may not be large enough to enable this analysis. The sample size choice beyond the minimum required is a cost issue. On some occasions there has been inconsistent data between the information gathered from the Face-to-Face as opposed to the Diary Information.
- Investment: Since the industry does not finance the survey (except in South Africa and Zimbabwe where there are joint industry committees) then many audience researches are financed by private research houses. The return on investment is low and therefore they cannot finance very robust or regular surveys.

All these challenges can be minimized with adequate investment. This means that investment is the true challenge of audience measurement. Immense resources are required to carry out a comprehensive survey. The use of technology, like the portable people meters, increases the accuracy level of the data. Adequate resources would also ensure the survey is done regularly to take care of the ever-changing media scene.

In order to tackle some of the issues arising from the lack of perceived need for audience and media research data in most African countries, PAMRO was founded in 1999 with a clear vision to collect research data on media and product usage behaviour of Africans, to facilitate informed decisions about how and when to reach target audiences and how to most effectively communicate with them. Since its inception, PAMRO's mission has been the creation of a uniform audience measurement research infrastructure across

African countries to achieve a single currency for the trading of media air-time, to inform cross country media planning and buying plans and for continental audience behaviour comparisons.

PAMRO has achieved the following towards this noble course:

1. Harmonized audience measurement methodologies
2. Harmonized a core audience measurement questionnaire
3. Published audience research user guidelines
4. Helped to establish, advocate and promote the formation of Joint Industry Committees (JICs)
5. Shared considerable knowledge on audience media research through its annual conferences
6. Established a network of audience and media research practitioners and providers in Africa
7. Formulated a concept note on how audience measurement can be conducted on an on-going basis across Africa
8. Centralized the access of available audience and media research databases in Africa.

But this is not enough. The question of investment still stands out. From markets like South Africa (South Africa Audience Research Foundation) and Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Audience Research Foundation) and many other northern countries, it is clear that the solution lies in forming the Joint industry committee (JIC). This would get the industry together to finance a study that would be used by all in the industry.

Globalization has seen the advent of global brands and global media buying agencies. Media planners and buyers are consistently under pressure to justify their choice of media, especially where audience research is not available. It is therefore obvious that audience measurement is the key to having a more robust and profitable media in Africa. It would make media buying across Africa painless!

A joint industry committee (JIC) would ensure there would be resources for rigorous, sound research methodology and timely and accurate data. It would give an opportunity to continuously improve methodology. The media is getting more and more fragmented, and with technology there are new aspects and dimensions to the media consumptions patterns.

Some quotes from certain Joint Industry Committees further justify this.

Dutch Advertisers Association (BVA) is in favour of JIC's for media currency research. World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) and European Association of Communication Agencies (eaca), 2001:

"The WFA and EACA view JICs as the most effective method of organisation for the management of television audience research. JICs ensure all users some control of the technical specification and operation, and equality of data access, whilst minimizing and controlling costs."

Source: Presentation made at the SAARF symposium: National Onderzoek Multimedia – Netherland Joint Indutstry Committee

"The view from abroad – despite numerous structural permutations, JICs do work. Joint Industry Committee (JIC) customers tend to be satisfied with their audience measurement providers. Surprisingly, many contend that a JIC model promotes competition instead of stifling it. This runs contrary to the argument put forth by JIC opponents in the U.S. that an industry committee suppresses market forces. Significant drawbacks do exist, however, including slow decision-making processes and ongoing debates about funding."

Source: Accountability of Audience Measurement, A Global Examination, A Special Meeting of The ARF, January 31, 2005

"As the panelists demonstrated throughout the day, numerous structural permutations exist among JICs and MOCS. Yet, nearly everyone pointed to the same handful of benefits:

- *Balance conflicting interests of the media companies and advertisers and agencies.*
- *Enable regular review of service, linked to contractual cycle*
- *Ensure competition between candidate suppliers*
- *Concentrate total marketplace financial resources on a medium operation, optimizing its effectiveness.*
- *Promote a single common currency for buying/selling of media."*

Source: Accountability of Audience Measurement, A Global Examination, A Special Meeting of The ARF, January 31, 2005

Turning audience measurement into money can only be done through the industry working together. The data would be credible and accepted by all. This would mean the media buyers would get value for money in terms of the audience they are targeting. The media owners would also get value out of the content they have developed or purchased and the media buyers would have a much easier time planning the media.

An ideal situation would be to have a single source of well researched data across Africa. This can be achieved through an organisation like PAMRO, working alongside all other efforts in the continent like those of the African Union of Broadcasters (AUB).

To date PAMRO has established industry-accepted ground rules on the methodology, instrument design and the formulation of a sound concept to make audience measurement data available on an on-going basis. The implementation of a continent-wide, regular audience measurement system remains elusive. This is largely due to the lack of availability of resources for:

1. Engaging experienced and knowledgeable consultants to undertake stakeholder sensitization and training
2. Effectively mobilizing the formation of JICs in most countries in Africa. As of today only five countries have functional or near functional JICs i.e. South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.
3. Seed-funding JICs to get the initial audience measurement surveys underway in each country.
4. Establishing a strong PAMRO secretariat to move the project forward with the degree of focus and urgency that is now required.

In order to overcome some of the challenges articulated above, PAMRO has invited like minded organizations, both commercial and social, to come together under the PAMRO banner to create an effective pool of resources that can be used to accomplish the stated objectives. The bringing together of expertise and effort is considered fundamental to the success of this ambitious project and collective like-minded individuals and organisations will deliver more impactful results.

PAMRO would be charged with the following roles as per its stated objectives:

1. Increased harmonization of audience research methodologies and questionnaires
2. Stakeholder engagement through effective

communication and mobilization.
3. Training on the use and application of audience research, together with the network of member consultants.
4. Through its secretariat ensure that audience research is conducted within the published guidelines and ethics.
5. Provision of audience research through it network members.
6. Provision of technical advice through its member consultants.
7. Ensure sustainable establishment of JICs

And that the role of the collaborating partners would be:
1. Primarily the provision of financial resources both for the establishment of a full PAMRO secretariat, funding for sensitization and training workshops of the various stakeholders in different countries and also for marketing the initiative.
2. Provision of technical advisory capacity (where available).
3. Monitoring the project implementation and its impact, including aligning it to emerging continental needs.
4. Allocation of financial resources.

Initially, once the seed funding has been provided, the following road map is envisaged:
1. Formation of JICs in each country.
2. Sensitization and training of stakeholders in each country.
3. Seed-funding for the initial audience measurement surveys in each country with a JIC using PAMRO recommended methodologies and survey instruments.
4. Data from the seed funded surveys to be shared for a fee to the JIC members, this money will be used thereafter to fund continuous audience research.

In assessing the performance of PAMRO and its collaborating partners on this initiative, the following would be considered as the key performance indicators:
a. Existence of JICs in the all the nominated countries.
b. Conducting of regular (minimum bi-annual) audience research surveys.
c. Adoption of use of audience and media research by three main stakeholders i.e. advertisers (both social and commercial), advertising agencies and media owners.
d. Other specific indicators would include evidence of use of audience research to improve revenues and investment in media houses and more effective social communication.

This would probably begin the journey of a thousand miles. As was said at the KAS/SPI Africa Media Leadership Conference in Cape Town in August 2007, if content is king, then audience measurement is queen.

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She had this to say about the conference: "Having been trained as a journalist, but not practising as one, it was a great opportunity to sit among media leaders from across the continent and to understand the issues they grapple with, especially when it comes to revenue generation. The focus of the conference was great, especially if Africans want to tell their story or stories from their own perspective. As a researcher, I seemed (all along) to have a one-fits-all solution – provide accurate, timely audience research data and the advertisers will come to the party!"


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Chapter 6

CHALLENGES OF AUDIENCE RESEARCH IN AFRICAN PRINT MEDIA: HOW TO TURN AUDIENCE MEASUREMENT INTO MONEY

by Chaacha Mwita

INTRODUCTION

"Three thousand years from now, when keen minds review the past, … our ancient time here at the cusp of the Third Millennium will be seen as the start of a major new historical epoch. In the years roughly coincidental to (the first major ICT-related IPOs), humans began animating inert objects with tiny slivers of intelligence, connecting them into a global field, and linking their own minds into a single thing. This will be recognised as the largest, most complex and most surprising event on the planet. Weaving nerves out of glass and radio waves, our species began wiring up all regions, all processes, all facts and notions into a grand network. From this embryonic neutral net was born a collaborative (media) interface for our civilisation."[1]

What is described here is part of a continuing narrative that began many years ago – definitively in 1895 when Guglielmo Marconi first experimented with radio signals opening up our world to what became known as wireless technology, which has since then set the pace for media development worldwide, including Kenya.

Then, wireless technology could only transmit sound (voice). Today, more than a century later, not only has wireless technology advanced enough to transmit text, it transmits pictures – motion and static – as well in various formats and dimensions in real time. What has made this revolution – one that has not spared even the poor Third World – possible is commonly referred to as convergence.

In his enlightening book *The World is Flat,* Thomas L. Friedman captures this phenomenon thus:

> *The flat world platform is the product of the convergence of the personal computer (which allowed every individual suddenly to become the author of his or her own content in digital form) with fibre optic cable (which suddenly allowed all those individuals to access more and more digital content around the world for next to nothing) with the rise of work flow software (which enabled individuals all over the world to collaborate on that same digital content from anywhere, regardless of the distances between them.)*[2]

Hand-in-hand with convergence has been the multiplicity of media. While the former gave consumers of media the power to decide, the latter gave them the power to share. Thus, raising mobiles aloft, they did not just talk and text, they snapped, shared and reported the world around them.[3]

Not only has this demystified the media, it has made the media more responsive to customer demands. And how do you ascertain what customer demands really are: you conduct audience measurement through research. Thus new media technologies have dramatically ended the era of business as usual. They have made sure that audience research is part and parcel of media business today. From New York to Hong Kong, Beijing to Cape Town, Nairobi to London, Dubai to Sydney, Auckland to Harare, some form of audience understanding is necessary for media houses to remain competitive.

Through audience research you discover the centrality of user-generated content – the African print media is no exception. Through audience research you discover that the attention span of the average person is scarce and hence the need to capture it vividly and create a desire to return. Through audience research, you discover that the user has a greater choice as to how and when to receive his or her information, you discover that it is not enough to have the highest circulation figures in town, it matters how your readers interact with your paper for you to rake in those

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1 Kelly, Kevin, Wired, August 2005 issue.

2 Friedman L.T, The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century, 2006, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, USA.

3 BBC NEWS: http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/technology/4566712.stm. Published: 2006/01/02 00:05:59 GMT

advertising millions. If content then is king, audience measurement is queen!

KENYA'S CASE

Two decades ago when Kenya had only two national newspapers, one national broadcaster and there were no FM stations or the Internet to think about, there was a feeling that we had all the news we needed to keep abreast of events around us.

So when the airwaves were liberalised and FM stations sprung up, coupled with the advent of the Internet and mobile telephony, there was excitement and panic. This was largely manifested two-fold.

First were sceptics, who wondered whether there was enough news, audience and advertising for the growing number of players. Then there were those who saw the end of the newspapers, saying nobody would read the papers after listening to *all* the news on radio or watching TV.

Among them are those who posited that all media consumption would soon be on the screen. Screen time would be everything. There would be the big screen (the television), the middle-sized screen (the laptop or PC), and the tiny screen (the mobile phone). Nothing else would matter.

They were right and wrong. Right in the sense that the rapid growth of the electronic media has resulted in shotgun dissemination of news, where breaking news is only breaking for a second.

It also heralded multi-platform advertisement and brought newspapers in direct competition with FM and TV stations for adverts. The result has been aggressive strategies to woo listeners, readers and viewers, with content as the driving force; packaged according to, at least to some extent, audience demands as revealed by audience research.

They were wrong because they underestimated the ability of the print media to reinvent itself and adopt new ideas –like audience research – and fight to remain relevant, but that is a story for another day.

Today, the leading media houses in Kenya and East and Central Africa are multimedia, with stables for radio, TV and newspapers. The competition for audience and advertisers that the sceptics warned about has become in-house, and surprise, surprise, none has cannibalised the other.

In fact, the shareholders are smiling more to the bank. The profits of the Nation Media Group (NMG) have risen almost four-fold in the last five years to hit the billion-shilling mark. The Standard Group Limited has grown from losses to post KSh340 million profits last year, and this year looks even rosier. What's the secret? As Bill Clinton would have said, it is the strategy, stupid. Media owners have learnt that success comes more from *knowing* rather than simply *doing* the mundane. Thus there is more investment in audience measurement which enables media houses to convert a quantifiable approximation of audience size – readers, viewers and listeners – into money from advertisers. Little wonder that media monitoring and the attendant audience research are continually being regarded as worthwhile investments rather than costs.

This realisation has also led to the increase of the major market research and media tracking companies from one in 2004 to five now: Steadman Group, Research International, Strategic Public Relations and Research, Infotrak and Harris International and Global Edge International.

THE STANDARD CASE

Our experience at the Standard Group Limited has taught us that gaining a competitive edge in the market revolves around having the right ideas and matching up our products to the demands of our audience.

We have effected this in four ways:

1. **Relaunches:** In 2004, following a deep-stick survey, *The Standard* was re-launched complete with a new masthead to make it more friendly to the eye and enhance the overall design. This was informed by the fact that ideas drive growth, enhance efficiency and increase returns on investment.
2. **New products:** One of our enduring strategies has been flexibility in implementing strategies that enhance our products and serve the audience better. Although we are committed to giving our readers the best, we are frank enough to accept it when the products are not meeting expectations and bold enough to explore new frontiers. This has seen the Group score several firsts in the industry and still counting. For instance, we redefined financial journalism in the region in the late 1990s with the launch of the *Financial Standard* pullout which became the bible for business and industry. And just last year we proved that a daily business paper was viable by launching the *Blue Paper* on Tuesday, with unlimited coverage of business news. Mondays are no longer boring, thanks to *Crazy Monday*, the industry's first no-frills light read. Then there is *Pulse* magazine, which redefined entertainment journalism in the region. All these changes were informed by intensive market research, and other media houses have taken cue. We are proud

that we used the power of information in our possession to grow journalism in Kenya.

3. **Embellish the existing products:** We have also relaunched and stitched the *Instinct* magazine inside the *Saturday Standard* specifically tailored for the reading pleasure of our female audience. And the response is encouraging. *Pulse* magazine was also stitched early this year. The readers love it and the competition rues its popularity.
4. **Import a new printing press:** Despite everything we have done, audience research has told us that the Number One newspaper in Kenya wallops us everyday on account of its superiority with regard to reproduction quality and pagination. Therefore to enhance the quality of our paper and increase pagination for colour, we resolved to ship in a new printer. Soon, it will be roaring and producing high-quality print products with various stitch options and great versatility with regard to colour, pagination and newspaper formats.

CHALLENGES

These intervention measures make it sound easy, but it has not been all that rosy. Competition in the last decade has moved from circulation to content, thanks to more discerning consumers who know what they want – and want it at their own terms. In fact, they are so obstinate that if they don't get the content they desire, they create it themselves and ignore you altogether!

This has piled pressure on the editor, who has not only to give the best story of the day but also produce a unique and authoritative paper that will clinch advertisement and push copy on the streets; a paper that adheres to the basic fundamentals of sound journalism but one which to a certain extent panders to the often fragile ego of the modern newspaper reader.

a. **Too dependent on advertising:** Perhaps the biggest challenge now facing the media in terms of wooing advertisers is the emerging trends in media buying. Unlike in the past when circulation tilted the scales, today's advertisers are developing new paradigms for getting their money's worth. And nothing brings this point closer home than a 2005 study by a US university on the amount of time consumers spend using media. While in early 1900 people on average were spending about an hour a week with media, then largely newspapers, by the end of the 1930s the radio had increased the time spent with media to about five hours a week. When television became accessible to half the population in the world in the 1960s people were spending 35 hours a week with media. By 2005, an average person was spending 63 hours weekly with media.

   This means that media is now the leading life activity.

   The tragedy for us in the media is that instead of this becoming our Eureka moment, it has set forth a new trend among media buyers, according to a senior manager at Ogilvy & Mather Advertising.

   Naturally people spending more time with media means more money to spend on media? Wrong. Advertisers no longer fancy spending money to make people spend money and circulation share is not important. They want to know the portion of daily time people spend with all media, and which people interact with which ad.

   Information obtained on market research is increasingly being scrutinised by media buyers in order to make prudent decisions on whether it is worth the while buying space in certain media at certain times in order to reach the target audience. This means media owners also have to take note of what media buyers are looking for in order to meet their needs. This increases the danger of clogging up space with advertisement at the expense of providing information.
b. **Innovation:** With the ever-changing sophistication of media audiences and the ICT revolution, particularly the development of the Internet, innovation seems to be the way out. Today media consumers can read updated news on the Internet, listen to music on pod casts or MP3 players and get information via their mobile phones. All this calls for the innovation on the part of media owners. More than ever there is an increasing need to engage audiences online, which is largely neglected. The problem is nobody wants to advertise on the Internet. Our online editions are yet to tick with advertisers, hence the need for even more sophisticated audience research for Africa's print media.
c. **What readers really want:** Most people complain that our papers are too political; that they want human-interest stories and more prominence for social issues. Believe them, and you will close shop. Another media house, based on a similar but separate audience research, recently decided to launch *Nairobi Star*, which they claimed would give very little coverage to politics. But after just the second issue the headlines of the *Nairobi Star* have been dominated by politics. This only confirmed what the

Standard and Nation groups have realised all along: that politics sells, at least in Kenya!

However, human-interest stories covered by the *Standard* newspapers continue to attract good readership and numerous reactions from our readers, meaning that so far our balance of coverage of various issues is appreciated by our audience. At the same time we continue to monitor our audience in order to suit any of their needs.

d. **Political reality/hostility:** Those of you who monitor Africa's media scene closely must be aware that in March last year the Kenya government raided our media house, disabled our press, burnt newspapers and switched off-air our TV broadcasts. As a media house, this brought home the fragility of many media houses in Africa. What do you do when, for instance, research says that intrinsic to good financial performance, a good newspaper must play the critical watchdog role properly – something authorities often interpret to mean a leaning towards the political opposition to sell your paper; indeed something that prompts the authorities to think you are sabotaging them by deliberately articulating the agenda of the opposition? What do you do if they stop advertising with you on account of this? What do you do when they raid you and take away critical equipment for more than a year? That has been our dilemma at the Standard Group Limited for sometime now.

e. **Investment:** Although audience research is increasingly becoming a pertinent yardstick in media development, it is not institutionalised in most media houses. Investing in research is not recurrent and largely depends on the whims of the management. This is particularly so in small media outfits. But even in bigger ones, at times the research findings are not disseminated on time or discussed at all with the relevant desks, making the investment a waste of time and money.

Presently, it costs between KSh150,000 (about US$2,200) and KSh4 million (about US$57,000) to commission research in Kenya.

We are still at the rudimentary level of carrying out research and investing in manpower and software that guarantee more accurate information. For instance, all the media buyers we spoke to rely heavily on the media surveillance department, whose primary duty is to track advertisements.

Viewer preference is gauged through spontaneous interviews, and the analysis is mainly cumulative, meaning that there is no depth and the information cannot be relied upon for intense analyses by media owners.

We need a specialised research organisation that has the intellectual and management capacity to appraise the media, advise on strategy and become a one-stop reference centre for anything media. I am sure the same situation pertains in a larger part of Africa.

CONCLUSION

In September last year, *The Economist* of London carried a story on the death of the newspapers. Generally, circulation figures have not been going up for many 'proud' newspapers and magazines. Consumers are increasingly doing it on their own. But a few innovative and responsive papers are registering growth – both on and offline.

Around the world, as the *Economist* revealed, ICT trends are making the newspaper business difficult. It says:

> *Of all the 'old' media, newspapers have the most to lose from the Internet. Circulation has been falling in America, Western Europe, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand for decades (elsewhere, sales are rising). But in the past few years the web has hastened the decline. In his book The Vanishing Newspaper, Philip Meyer calculates that the first quarter of 2043 will be the moment when newsprint dies in America as the last exhausted reader tosses aside the last crumbled edition.*[4]

The same is happening to advertising revenues. They are also shifting online. In the West in the last 10 years, newspaper advertising revenues have dropped by 6 percentage points while it is increasing on the Internet. People generally spend less time on the newspaper than before and newspapers are employing ever fewer people.[5]

Since media is business and has to survive and possibly thrive, what do media companies have to do to survive the twin demands of convergence and multiplicity of media devices?

The answer lies in *The New Market Leaders* by Fred Wiersema:

(They should) give much greater weight to the one success factor absolutely critical in

4 The Economist Newspaper Ltd, The Economist: Who Killed The Newspaper?, Volume 380 Number 8492, September 2006, London, UK.

5 ibid

the New Economy: an organisation's ability to attract valuable customers both now and in future. This is vital because today's most serious business challenge doesn't involve implementing new management techniques, raising capital, or any of the familiar bugaboos of recent decades (all has been done – TQM, restructuring, benchmarking, mergers and so on). Today's most serious business challenge is a scarcity of customers.

As we have seen, the media – especially print media in Africa where distribution costs are high, infrastructure poor, literacy levels low and so on – is not spared this scarcity. As we try to resolve these myriad problems, we have only one way out in the meantime: understanding our audiences better, capturing their scarce attention for as long as possible and only continuous audience research can guarantee this.

CHACHA MWITA was born in Kenya in 1973. He is the immediate former Group Managing Editor of the Standard Group Limited, the second largest media house in East and Central Africa. He has extensive experience in media management and research in Kenya and abroad, having worked in various capacities for several media organisations, including the Nation Media Group (Kenya); Mwananchi Communications (Tanzania); Siemens AG (Switzerland) and East African Educational Publishers (Kenya). Chaacha has also taught communication studies at Strathmore University, Kenya. He holds a B.Ed (Kenya), PgD (Kenya) and an MBA (Switzerland), among other qualifications. He has recently plunged into the treacherous waters of Kenyan politics.

He had this to say about the conference: "Many media houses in Africa fail because of an inability to generate enough money to sustain themselves. This conference was useful because its theme – Revenue Generation for the African Media – was spot on for the continent's media. More importantly though, the lessons gained, deliberations held and opportunities shared enriched my own media management experiences, and I am sure formed part of the critical take-aways for many of my colleagues from other countries. Ultimately, I thought the conference was useful because it brought together media leaders from across Africa to confront common problems and seek common solutions. The calibre of participants and presentations made it a worthy event and I look forward to another similar opportunity in the future."

Chapter 7

EXPLOITING TRADITIONAL CONTENT THROUGH ONLINE PLATFORMS

by Felicity Duncan

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, media worked in fairly predictable ways. A media corporation would own a media asset, for example a printing press, or a license to use a particular broadcast frequency and a high-tech studio to do so. That asset would be filled up with traditional content like news stories, radio plays, TV sitcoms and so on, which would then be piped out to audiences. Given the high barriers to entry, there were generally limited media and content options available to audiences. Thus most media assets would generally capture a fair slice of the audience, and then sell that audience to advertisers, who were hoping to flog toothpaste and motor cars to those rapt listeners, viewers and readers.

This system chugged along pretty smoothly for a long time. Granted, those media companies which owned printing presses were put out by the advent of radio; cinema owners were distressed by the rise of television; television companies were unhappy about the upstart cable and satellite TV companies and so on. Nevertheless, the basics remained intact. A company needed a large, juicy pile of capital to buy the assets necessary to produce and disseminate media content. Media was an industry with high barriers to entry, like shipbuilding or mining. And like other industries with high barriers to entry, large fortunes were made by media moguls. William Randolph Hearst, Rupert Murdoch, Joseph Pulitzer, Oprah Winfrey and Ted Turner are all familiar household names who made fortunes in the media business.

But things change. In the last few decades, media have been thoroughly destabilised by a revolution in the structure, creation, dissemination and economics of content. The internet has completely altered our understanding of, and relationship to, mass audience content.

It's not just that the internet itself represents a new distribution mechanism for traditional content, although that is a part of it, and will be addressed below.

It's also that the whole spirit of the internet is about individually tailored content, it's about audiences finding and selecting what they want to read or listen to rather than having content chosen for them by old media channels. The internet is boundless; there are few limitations on how large a particular piece of content can be. While newspapers have word counts and inches to contend with, and radio stations must ration the seconds, the internet has virtually unlimited space and time at its disposal. This opens up the possibility of new forms of content. For example, the *New York Times* now often includes a photographic slideshow and voiceover as extras attached to news articles. TV stations blend online streaming video clips with user forums and short written articles to tell news stories in a variety of new and creative ways. Traditional content, which rigidly separated written, audio and audio-visual elements, is being replaced by hybrid content forms and integrated media experiences.

Furthermore, thanks to the internet, the barriers to entry into the media business have crumbled. Just about anyone with an internet connection and some basic skills can start a media enterprise. The technology for recording and editing high quality digital film footage gets cheaper every year, and a cheap plug-in device can make your iPod into a broadcast-quality digital recorder. And disseminating content is easy too; all that's needed is a web hosting service, which can cost less than R100 a month, and a little technical know-how.

This is the new media landscape, a terrain in which creating and disseminating both traditional and hybrid content has become cheap and easy. Although Africa lags behind the rest of the world in terms of broadband access, African media cannot afford to ignore the threats and opportunities posed by the transforming media landscape.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

It's easy to see what the challenges are for media owners. If content is becoming cheap and easily available, how does the media owner retain market share? How do newspapers, which can only report yesterday's news, compete with the immediacy of the online environment? What will happen to TV stations when Internet television catches on? How do radio stations compete, now more then ever, with stations from all over the world, which are freely available online?

One thing is clear: media owners can no longer rely on content delivery system monopolies to ensure their dominance. Yesterday, owning the printing presses guaranteed you control of the print media. Today, anyone can be a publisher. And as broadband rolls out, soon anyone will be able to broadcast audio and video too.

It is tempting, when eyeing these seemingly insurmountable challenges, to say that Africa is different, that we do not need to worry about the power of the internet. Indeed, in many parts of Africa internet penetration is extremely low.

However, media owners need to acknowledge the plain fact that the digital revolution *is* coming. Whether it happens in the next year, or the next ten years, these are issues that *must* be faced by every media organisation that plans to survive for the long-term. This gives African media owners a unique advantage. While media in the rest of the world are firmly in reaction mode, trying to deal with the advent of online, we in Africa have a breathing period, a chance to think carefully and plan intelligently to deal with the coming transformation. With proper planning, online doesn't only present a threat to media organisations, it also represents a significant opportunity.

Why an opportunity? Because despite the proliferation of media, despite the explosion in content, there will always be a market for quality, and strong news and media brands will command audiences. Consider YouTube, the online video sharing site. Anyone and everyone can, and does, post video clips on the site. Yet the top-rated videos are almost always professionally produced clips, made either by mainstream media organisations or by small professional videography boutiques. Similarly, despite the explosion of news blogs, the top ranked online news sites are the *New York Times, Guardian Unlimited*, *Washington Post*, *Associated Press*, *Forbes* and *Bloomberg*, all traditional news organisations that have learned to embrace the online environment.

The opportunities are there, all that media owners have to do is figure out how to take advantage of them.

PLANNING FOR THE NEW WORLD

When planning for the new media environment and figuring out how to leverage traditional content in an online environment, there are several things media owners must think deeply about.

First, the core product of any media organisation is the content it produces. Newspapers produce their unique style of news and opinions, radio stations have their unique DJs and playlists, TV stations have their unique voices and shows. Media organisations need to stop thinking about themselves in terms of the delivery platforms they use, and start thinking about themselves in terms of the type of content they produce.

The *New York Times* is no longer a newspaper, it is a news organisation focused on covering the major events of the day in a detailed, unbiased way, using words, images, video and sound, disseminated through print and online systems. The *Guardian* is not a newspaper, it is a news organisation focused on covering UK and global events from a leftist perspective. What matters is not *how* your content is delivered but *what* your content is. This mindset change is the first step in leveraging your content through new channels. It is a mindset that also demands investment in content.

When media owners think of their companies primarily as content producers, they will be hesitant to cut staff from the content producing arm of the business. They will be more likely to look for cost cuts elsewhere, for example by outsourcing non-core functions like technical support or accounting.

This is positive, as it means that content quality will be maintained even when cost cutting exercises are undertaken. And ultimately, in the new media environment, media companies will live and die by the quality of their content. Audiences will no longer be forced to accept mediocre content because that is all they can access at their local newsstand or on their local TV station. They will be able to source content from anyone, anywhere in the world. Thus, what will matter is content quality above all else.

The second thing media owners must develop clear ideas about is audience. To whom is your content directed? It is not enough to produce content and hope that it is suitable. In an environment in which audiences have the power and can choose from a cornucopia of content, media must be more responsive to audience preferences and needs. African media need to understand their audiences, and serve them better. Audiences around the world value local content.

People in Johannesburg want to know what is happening in their city, in their neighbourhood, and so do people in rural Chad. African media that truly understand this, understand the local interests of their audiences, will be able to hold off the onslaught of foreign-produced material by serving their audiences' deepest needs.

It is only when armed with a deep understanding of an organisation's content and audience that proper planning can be done for leveraging content in new platforms.

GOING ONLINE

Traditional content can be effectively leveraged online. This has been proven time and again by media organisations around the world. By putting content online, media organisations create new distribution channels, draw in new audiences, create new advertising opportunities and open up new creative opportunities for content producers in the organisation.

However, this should not be taken to mean that content can be spooned directly online. Online content is, by definition, different to print. It is being accessed by a different medium, with unique qualities. Just like a TV news story will be different from a radio one, so too online content must differ from traditional content.

First, online stories can, and should, integrate different elements. They should contain a written element, like a newspaper, but can also use images, video and audio clips to enhance the storytelling.

CNN.com is an excellent example of the melding of video and written content to create a blend of storytelling suitable for the web. The *New York Times* website, www.nytimes.com, is another example of clever integration of audio, visual and written elements.

Second, online stories must contain depth. By this is meant that they can include links to other stories, or to explanatory information. For example, when writing a story about a particular business organisation, the online version of the story can carry a link to the company's homepage. This interlinking functionality is one of the advantages of the web because it means that media companies can use their content to point audiences to other items of content that they have produced. It also adds clarity to stories, when used appropriately.

Third, a key part of the internet is interactivity. It is very easy to make communication a two-way street online. Many sites, for example, allow comments on the bottom of all its news stories. Furthermore, readers are often invited to submit their own articles, which are, depending on the site, often published in a special community blog environment.

Although there are dangers in allowing audiences to post content to a site, the benefits are great. It helps build relationships with the audience, lets the media owner see what audiences are thinking about and what they are saying, and adds richness and depth to your content at no additional cost. Online sites should have some sort of interactive capacity built into them, something like the newspapers' letter to the editor section, only larger and more open.

On a practical level, there are some limitations to the online environment. Studies have shown that people read online material more slowly than they do regular printed material. Thus, consider making your stories as easy to read as possible, using short sentences, clean fonts and simple vocabulary.

Generally, the quality of video online is lower than the quality of TV or DVD, although this is changing rapidly. Nevertheless, for now, remember this fact and try to keep the visuals you use in your online video clean and elegant.

When going online, media owners need to consider the purpose of their online site. For example, the BBC site is a news site, it is updated dozens of times a day to ensure that only the freshest news appears on the homepage. Some sites, however, are not as time sensitive. Magazines generally update their sites more infrequently, and people primarily use those sites as archives, to search for old articles.

News media owners must decide whether their sites will focus on up-to-the-minute news or in-depth, analytical quality reporting, or a hybrid of both, and plan staff and site layout accordingly.

One concern that media owners may have is how to develop multimedia content. For example, a radio station may be wary of going online because its staff lacks the needed writing skills or ability to use images.

There is no simple answer to this problem. Essentially, media organisations need to start developing multi-skilled content producers, through training and mentorship. As media increasingly converge in an online environment, media organisations will be less and less able to focus on a single storytelling method. Improved skills will be necessary in the new media environment.

However, for companies that have limited resources, one option that can work very well is partnership. So, for example, a community radio station could partner with a community newspaper to form a website, with both partners bringing different skill sets to the partnership.

Likewise, small companies with limited capital such as recording studios or TV camera equipment can partner with large broadcasters. The smaller partner can produce the content using the bigger partner's equipment, and revenues generated can be split between the two. There are infinite permutations possible; the key point is that partnerships can be an effective way of overcoming internal skill and capital limitations.

MAKING MONEY FROM ONLINE

Of course, all this talk of the brave new media world and of ways to thrive in it is meaningless without a discussion of the bottom line. While a few state-sponsored media organisations may be able to ignore the financial models of the online environment, most media need to pay their staff *and* make a profit. Can this be done online?

Increasingly, the answer is yes. Online advertising revenue has grown by leaps and bounds in the past few years. A 2005 US study predicted a doubling of online advertising sales between 2005 and 2010, and online advertising seems set to break that level. Double-digit growth has been seen in online advertising for many years, and is likely to continue for years to come as more and more people get connected.

Illustrating this trend, when Rupert Murdoch acquired the *Wall Street Journal* he floated plans to make the content on wsj.com free. The *Wall Street Journal* is one of very few publications to have successfully made its content paid-for subscription only, but Murdoch believes that advertising revenue is likely to be greater than subscription revenue. By making the *Wall Street Journal* online version free, Murdoch hopes to attract bigger audiences and thus more advertising revenue. This is a huge vote of confidence in the strength of the online advertising market.

In South Africa at least, the online advertising market is also growing strongly. According to research by the Online Publishing Association (OPA), online advertising will pass the R200-million mark in 2007, a decent sum of money and one that is growing strongly, up 230% from R60-million in 2003.

And online advertising is not the only possible revenue source on the web. There are other ways to make money, for example, by charging users for premium content such as high quality downloadable videos or special reports on certain issues. In addition, the online environment lends itself to e-commerce – a website devoted to sports news could have a section selling sporting merchandise and so on.

There are many ways to ensure that an online venture is both profitable and successful, all that is required is careful planning and creative thinking.

The next part of this chapter provides an example of the content leveraging strategy employed in one particular, profitable, stock-exchange-listed media company: Moneyweb.

LEVERAGING CONTENT THE MONEYWEB WAY

Moneyweb is a business and financial media company that has, since its inception, focused on using new media platforms to compete with South Africa's established media giants. Its content is business-centered and its audience is the business community of South Africa.

Moneyweb sees itself as primarily an online publication specialising in business and financial news. Moneyweb leverages video, radio and written content across the internet, radio stations, newspapers and TV, using partnerships with old media companies to generate content on a low-cost basis.

The company has built up a highly successful website, www.moneyweb.co.za, and a number of other successful sites and partnerships. However, the core site, the business itself, was built upon the principles of leveraging content.

Consider Moneyweb Radio. In 1997, the company started with a business radio show on national public radio station SAFM. The transcripts from this show were put onto the website, so people could read them. As this show matured, switching from SAFM to 702 to Classic FM to Radio2000, streaming audio and podcasts were added to the website, further enhancing the leveraging of the radio content. Currently, Moneyweb has two hour-long business radio shows in partnership with the South African Broadcasting Corporation; an English show on Radio2000 and an Afrikaans show on RSG. These two shows go live on national terrestrial radio every evening. They are then rebroadcast on the web in on-demand formats. Transcripts from the shows are available online. In addition, Moneyweb writers listen to the show, and often use interview material to source new stories for print and online. The key here is the content itself, the actual radio shows. Once they have been produced, they can be used in a variety of ways. Moneyweb itself has no radio license, but uses partnerships to create radio content which is then leveraged through multiple platforms. Advertisers buy time in the shows on terrestrial radio, sponsor the transcripts and online audio and advertise on the Moneyweb site. In this way, Moneyweb makes all its audio content profitable.

A similar system is at work with Moneyweb's TV venture, the *CNBC Power Lunch with Moneyweb*. The show is broadcast on CNBC, streamed on www.moneyweb.co.za, and transcripts are also published. Moneyweb earns revenue by selling advertising during the show itself, and also by selling sponsorship of the streaming videocasts and transcripts.

Moneyweb journalists are expected to be able to work across media. Journalists are asked to take digital recording equipment to press conferences, to record clips for use online and in the radio shows, as well as writing stories. They are expected to be comfortable telling stories in a variety of ways. The new media environment is going to demand this of all journalists -- the ability to work across platforms, using whatever means are best to convey information.

Moneyweb is a nimble organisation. It is kept deliberately small. The sales function is outsourced; the company focuses heavily on its core competency: business news content. Through partnerships and content leveraging, this small media company is able to both compete and cooperate with the giants that dominate the South African media scene.

Although Moneyweb started life as an internet-focused media group, its successes and struggles contain lessons for all media seeking ways to leverage the power of online. In particular, the company's reliance on partnerships and revenue sharing arrangements is suggestive for other small media organisations throughout Africa.

A WORD ABOUT MOBILE

No discussion of the African media context can be complete without mentioning the phenomenal growth and spread of mobile phone use. The explosion of cellphones across Africa has been staggering, with the market growing in leaps and bounds as people who formerly had no means of communication eagerly adopt the new technology.

According to the International Telecommunications Union, Africa is the only continent in the world in which the number of mobile phones is greater than the number of fixed lines. This is the result of underperforming state-run telecommunications companies which have failed to roll out sufficient telephone capacity. For example, in South Africa, the state telecommunications company Telkom has, like many state-owned African telecoms companies, enjoyed a legal monopoly on the provision of fixed line service. This has resulted in the world's highest telecoms cost, chronic under-delivery of services and a very low penetration of fixed lines.

Thus, when cellphones arrived there was a vast well of untapped demand, and the growth was spectacular. Cellphones are now a popular way of connecting to the internet across Africa. Vodacom's Vodafone Live! site, which features news as well as ringtone and wallpaper downloads, attracts 1,2 million users a month.

Much of what applies to creating content for online applies to modifying that content for mobile access; media owners must consider the advantages and limitations of the medium, allow for interactivity and so on. In addition, mobile internet offers some exciting revenue opportunities as most mobile content works on subscription or download fees.

Although there is much to say about the opportunities in the mobile space, the current discussion will limit itself to these few remarks.

CONCLUSION

The media landscape is changing and media organisations must evolve if they wish to remain relevant. New technologies are driving content in new directions and audiences are taking greater control over their media consumption. Now, more than ever, the quality of content matters more than the delivery platforms used.

Moving online is rapidly becoming an essential step to building a successful media business, and media companies need to upgrade the skills of their content producers in order to create a winning online presence.

Traditional content can be leveraged online. All that is required is planning and smooth execution. Once the process of leveraging content online is established, media companies can experiment with ways to make their online ventures profitable.

The digital revolution is a reality and media owners must take the initiative to position their companies to thrive in the new world.

FELICITY DUNCAN is currently director of content at internet media group Moneyweb Holdings in South Africa. She is responsible for managing the day-to-day quality of the content, as well as contributing to the strategic vision of the company. Felicity earned an undergraduate degree in marketing communications at the University of Johannesburg, and worked for a private education group in a marketing capacity before deciding to retrain as a journalist.

She completed an honours degree in journalism and media studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, then joined Moneyweb's internship programme. Felicity quickly moved into a financial journalist position, and worked at Moneyweb for two years.

She was then awarded a Fulbright grant to complete a master's degree in the United States. Upon her return from the US, she rejoined Moneyweb in her current capacity. She can reached at felicity@moneyweb.co.za.

"Focusing on revenue generation is absolutely critical in the African context. While it is indeed true that a reliance on advertising revenue can create its own complications, a media system that relies on state funding is a system that can never fearlessly report on the activities of the state," she said during the Conference.

"In all modern societies, including those of Africa, the power of the state is significant. It can levy taxes, punish crimes, restrict behaviour, and it has the sole legitimate right to use coercive force. Therefore a courageous independent media is critical to monitoring the state's use of its power. The only way for a media organisation to be truly independent is for that organisation to be self-funding, to manage to pay its bills with revenue generated from non-state sources. In Africa, where states are often not accountable or transparent, this is more critical than ever. Thus, the conference focus on revenue generation for a robust African media is both timeous and wise."

Chapter 8

WEBCASTING, PODCASTING AND MOBILE BROADCASTING

by Pfanani Lishivha

INTRODUCTION

Convergence between broadcasting and telecommunications technologies and services has raised challenges for regulatory frameworks. These challenges have forced regulatory authorities to change the way they regulated broadcasting and telecommunications. Technological changes have also changed the way business and commercial transactions are conducted.

One of the leading examples of convergence is webcasting. Webcasting services use the Internet to deliver content to users in ways that closely resemble other traditional communication services such as broadcasting.

Due to the fact that some webcasting services were, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, regarded by some policy makers as "like services", there was an inclination to regulate them according to criteria stemming from broadcasting and telecommunications markets. It was, however, also acknowledged that new services like webcasting needed to be allowed to develop, without impediments, to facilitate the growth of applications in areas such as electronic commerce, health care and education.

New services such as webcasting, digital downloads, etc have posed and continue to pose challenges with regards to copyright. These services have no frontiers and can be accessed anywhere in the world by anyone with a computer connected to the World Wide Web.

DEFINING BROADCASTING

Section 1 of the Electronic Communications Act, No.36 of 2005, ("the EC Act") defines broadcasting as:

> *"any form of unidirectional electronic communications[1] intended for reception by the public, sections of the public, or subscribers to any broadcasting service, whether conveyed by means of radio frequency spectrum or any electronic communication network or any combination thereof, and broadcast is construed accordingly".*

Broadcasting service is defined as:

> *"any service which consists of broadcasting and which service is conveyed by means of an electronic communications network, but does not include a service which provides no more than data or text, whether with or without associated still images; a service in which the provision of audio-visual material is incidental to the provision of that service, or; a service or a class of service, which the Authority (ICASA) may prescribe as not falling within this definition".*

The definition of broadcasting means that broadcasting is limited to unidirectional (one way) electronic communications. This means that bi-directional electronic communications would not be captured by the definition. Electronic communications, in contrast, is defined in the EC Act as being:

> *"the emission, transmission or reception of information, including without limitation, voice, sound, data, text, video, animation, visual images, moving images and pictures, signals or a combination thereof by means of magnetism, radio or other electromagnetic waves, optical, electro-magnetic systems or any agency of a like nature, whether with or without the aid of tangible conduct, but does not include content service."*

So to the extent that a service being provided by a broadcaster to the public, sections of the public or subscribers does not fall within the definitions of broadcasting and broadcasting service, but does fall within the definition of electronic communication it would constitute an electronic communications service, as defined in the ECA:

> *''electronic communications service'' means any service provided to the public, sections of the public, the State, or the subscribers to such service, which consists wholly or mainly of the conveyance by any means of*

1 Unidirectional communication is point-to-multipoint communication.

electronic communications over an electronic communications network, but excludes broadcasting services;"

One of the questions that need to be addressed is whether webcasting or Internet broadcasting is unidirectional or bi-directional, and if it should be treated as broadcasting.

WEBCASTING AND PODCASTING

Defining Webcasting

Webcasting, sometimes known as netcasting, is the term applied to a group of services that use the Internet to deliver content to users in ways that take on many of the characteristics of other traditional communication services (e.g. print media, audio-visual, telecommunication services). These services range from text and graphic services that are regularly transmitted over the Internet to subscribers (e.g. Pointcast) to so-called 'streaming media' with audio or video content (e.g. Real-audio or Real-video 'broadcasting') to Internet video-conferencing (e.g. Internet telephony and Internet videotelephony).

The major difference between webcasting and browsing the world wide web[2] is that data is pushed[3] or streamed[4] to a user rather than pulled[5]. Nevertheless, with the possible exception of e-mail, a user wishing to receive a webcast service must take some action. This can involve requesting a streaming media service, subscribing to a push service or employing software which carries out these functions on behalf of a user. It is the characteristic of agent autonomy or independence, after the initial action, that leads to parallels with broadcasting. In the same way that a user receives a service after selecting a television or radio station, webcasting does not necessarily entail additional actions by a user to receive an ongoing service.

With respect to interactivity, there is very little interactivity available in webcasting. Beyond selecting the different audio/video streams to receive, much as one might flip channels on the TV, there is relatively little interactivity involved. Webcasting follows the one-to-many (unidirectional) paradigm in which little or nothing is done to make the experience unique for any single user. Also, since the audio and video is being streamed live, again like a broadcast, the transmission is time dependent.

Webcasting is Push media (unidirectional) and Push media fall very close to the line with traditional broadcast practices. First, Push is by definition passive. In many cases, the user has the option of taking an active role to follow up on a particular bit of information (such as an advertisement or news headline), but for the most part is encouraged to just sit back and absorb what the system brings down[6].

One important difference between Push technologies and traditional broadcasting is that Push has a much greater level of personalisation in that the user can configure the system to show only content that he or she is specifically interested in. However, content is still created to be viewed by millions, as opposed to somehow being customised to that particular individual. Push technologies tend to retain much of the time dependency of traditional broadcasting in that if the viewer did not happen to be looking at the screen when a specific headline was displayed, then the viewer misses it. However, because Push technologies actually download the information and store it locally, they certainly have the capability to return the headline (or advertisement) to the screen again and again to ensure that the viewer has a chance to notice it.

But, just like traditional broadcasting, Push technologies rate fairly low with respect to feedback. While one is certainly encouraged to respond to pushed advertisements, the user still has relatively little impact on the content that is shown. As with television, the user can select different channels, but cannot, for the most part, change what is shown on those channels.

Webcasting Services

Categories of webcasting services:

- Providers of digital libraries of audio-visual content as on-demand services. These services take static web pages and build multimedia capabilities into their service offerings using webcast technologies. This enables a user with a suitably equipped PC to download content on demand;
- Webcasters of live events using audio-visual content. These sites concentrate on live

2 The Worldwide Web is a point-to-point communication. Users request information and receive it.

3 Push is the sending of data to a client without the client requesting it. The World Wide Web is based on a pull technology where the client browser must request a Web page before it is sent. Broadcast media, on the other hand, are push technologies because they send information out regardless of whether anyone is tuned in.

4 Streaming refers to the software that delivers the webcast to the user's computer programme over the web.

5 Pull is the requesting of data from another program or computer.

6 http://www.mindspring.com/~cityzoo/mjohnson/papers/webcasting/index.html

webcasts. Special events, such as concerts, are webcast as they occur;

- Providers of subscription-based information services. These services use 'push and pull' methods of delivery. Once users subscribe, content is automatically sent to their desk-top. This category also includes services where the user specifies to a greater extent the content they would like to have pushed to their desk-top either by nominating channels or designated Universal Resource Locators (URLs); and
- Providers of information services using multiple delivery platforms. These services employ multiple technologies in the delivery or reception of service. Technologies used include radio spectrum allocated to paging services to a receiver connected to a user's PC, and traditional broadcasting platforms[7].

Internet Television vs Internet Protocol Television

Internet television is seen, in terms of the Internet model, as being similar to the normal consumer internet experience in that the model is open to any rights holder as it is based on the same publishing model that exists on the World Wide Web – namely that anybody can create a website and publish that on a global basis. In fact, Internet Television operates in the same fashion as it is accessible from any type of computer (or any other consumer device that can access the internet) and connection. It is also not tied to a specific household or Set Top Box ("STB"). In other words, it gives the content publisher the ability to reach consumers anywhere in the world on multiple devices independent of any specific carrier or network operator using streaming technology based on the Moving Pictures Expert Group ("MPEG")[8] compression standard usually. The content publisher may be from the formal media sector or the informal sector (user generated content). The model can be free-access or restricted access subject to payment.

Internet Television is transmitted over the Internet using the Internet Protocol ("IP"), which sometimes results in it being called Internet Protocol Television ("IPTV"). However, most advocates of the open model Internet Television approach reserve the term IPTV for another model, namely the model of marketing video and television-type content through secure and protected IP telecom networks.

IPTV in this context is not television that is broadcast over the internet, but the method of sending information over a secure, private network that is geographically bound. IPTV is generally funded and supported by large telecom providers who intend providing a competitive product for digital cable and satellite broadcasting services. Traditionally, voice and broadband telecommunication networks have been viewed as a way of delivering voice, internet or data type services. However, convergence is leading to broadband networks being seen as a way of delivering a range of data, voice and video services to households. The IPTV service is often provided in conjunction with Video-on-demand and may also include Internet services such as Web access and voice-over-internet protocol, where it may be called Triple Play and is typically supplied by a broadband operator using the same infrastructure.

In businesses, IPTV may be used to deliver television content over corporate local area networks and business networks[9]. IPTV STBs are essentially cut down PCs in their own right and are capable of interacting with other devices such as PDAs, mobile phones, and the Internet to provide a truly flexible solution allowing local information to be tailored to specific regions (e.g. weather and news from a local area).

The nature of Internet television – being based on a global internet model – means that it is not possible for regulatory authorities to regulate this type of service as it usually operates outside the borders of countries in which it is received. IPTV, in contrast, works on the same model as cable and satellite television as it entails the deployment of infrastructure and devices to access it within the borders of a country which are all managed and operated by the broadcasting service and network operator. The fact that the infrastructure deployed is based in regions and in suburbs which are connected to consumer premises (households) makes it possible to subject IPTV to regulation similar to that in place for traditional broadcasting networks.

7 Webcasting and Convergence: policy Implications. OECD, Paris, 1997.

8 MPEG is the name of a family of standards used for coding audio-visual information (e.g. movies, video, music) in a digital compressed format. The major advantage of MPEG compared to other video and audio coding formats is that MPEG files are much smaller for the same quality. The use of MPEG is not restricted to the Internet it is the preferred compression standard on terrestrial and satellite platforms as well.

9 www.mastermedia.org/2005/06/04/iptv_vs_internet_television_key.htm

DEFINING PODCASTING

Podcasting is a term inspired by the Apple Computer Corporation's iPod – a portable digital audio player that allows users to download music from their computer directly to the device for later listening. The term is no longer specifically related to the iPod but refers to any software and hardware combination that permits automatic downloading of audio files for listening at the user's convenience.

Podcasting makes use of the Internet's Real Simple Syndication (RSS) standard. It differs from broadcasting and webcasting in the way that content is published and transmitted via the web. Instead of a central audio stream, podcasting sends audio content directly to an iPod or other MP3 player[10].

Unlike traditional broadcasting or other web-based streaming media, podcasting gives listeners control over when they hear the recording. Podcasting lets users save content digitally, and replay it at their convenience. Listeners can determine the time and the place – meaning that they decide what programming they want to receive and when they want to listen to it. Listeners can retain audio archives to listen to at their leisure. Podcasting is like radio-on-demand.

The difference between podcasting and webcasting is that, with a webcast, the show is broadcast live and cannot be manipulated in any way. The file is not downloaded but merely streamed live. With a podcast, the show is broadcast live but can also be downloaded onto an iPod or any other MP3 type player. This means that the show can be played, rewound, fast-forwarded and further distributed by the end user.

Podcasting Services

Podcasting can be used for:

- Self-guide walking tours – informational content;
- Music – band promotional clips and interviews;
- Talk shows – industry or organisational news, investor news, sportscasts, news coverage and commentaries;
- Training – instructional informational materials; and
- Story – story telling for children or the visually-impaired[11].

MOBILE TELEVISION

Defining Mobile Television

Mobile TV refers to the transmission of audiovisual content to a mobile device[12]. It offers the possibility of viewing any content, any time, anywhere, and also provides for a new world of interactivity, where traditional and on-demand creative content consumption is supplemented by services tailored to the needs and tastes of each consumer.

Mobile TV is at the frontier of high-value, innovative services. Estimates indicate that by 2011 this could be a market between € 7 billion and € 20 billion, reaching between 200 million and 500 million customers wordwide[13].

The Mobile TV market is still in a very early stage. 2006 was a key year in terms of pilots and announcements. In 2007 Italy, Finland, and to a lesser extent Germany and the UK introduced commercial operations. But the take-up is very slow because of technological and regulatory uncertainties.

Mobile TV transmission can take different forms, from live television to time-shifted or on-demand viewing. Transmission of Mobile TV services can take place over various networks including cellular mobile, terrestrial broadcast, satellite and Internet based.

Digital Video Broadcasting-Handheld (DVB-H)

DVB-H is the leading global technology standard for the transmission of digital television to handheld receivers such as mobile telephones and PDAs. DVB-H is a physical layer specification designed to enable the efficient delivery of IP-encapsulated data over terrestrial networks.

DVB-H builds upon the well known Digital Video Broadcasting – Terrestrial (DVB-T) standard and can follow up existing digital broadcast plans. While DVB-T is primarily intended for rooftop antenna reception, a DVB-H network is designed for portable reception with handheld devices, even indoors. DVB-H enables cost-effective implementation of broadcast networks. It has the bandwidth capacity for rich audiovisual content, appealing to content companies and advertisers. It uses the UHF spectrum which is globally reserved for broadcast use.

DVB-H broadcasting is attractive because it makes use of high bandwidth channels with high transmission speeds. This means that high

10 www.educause.edu/eli/

11 www.podcasting-tools.com

12 There are several devices available for receiving mobile TV but the most common one is the mobile phone.

13 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament – Strengthening the Internal Market for Mobile TV.

quality and a wide selection of television services can be made available to mobile users.

DVB-H enables the use of advanced video and audio codecs such as H.264. Using these, up to 50 television or data channels can be broadcast over one DVB-H multiplex. Cellular networks and services can also be used as an advantage with DVB-H broadcast. For example, a DVB-H reception together with GPRS connectivity opens up possibilities for TV-related interactive services such as voting, polls, gaming and e-commerce. Different pay-TV models like subscriptions and pay-per-view can be supported.

Mobile broadcasting services using the DVB-H standard can broadcast to enabled mobile cellular phones, laptops, PDAs and television sets in moving vehicles (e.g. public transport) using the frequencies in the bands traditionally assigned to broadcasting services.

DVB-H is the strongest contender for future terrestrial Mobile TV deployment in Europe and Africa. It is already the most widely-used standard in Europe and is also becoming popular all over the world. Twenty-five trials have been implemented in Europe. Multichoice South Africa has been testing DVB-H in Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town since December 2005.

Regulation

National approaches to the authorisation of Mobile TV services vary considerably. In many EU Member States, Mobile TV is subject to the general regime applying to broadcasting. In some others, there are no specific rules, or the regulatory framework for these new services is still being debated.

Regulations have not been developed in many countries across the world due to the fact that mobile broadcasting is still very much in its infancy, and its roll-out has not yet taken off.

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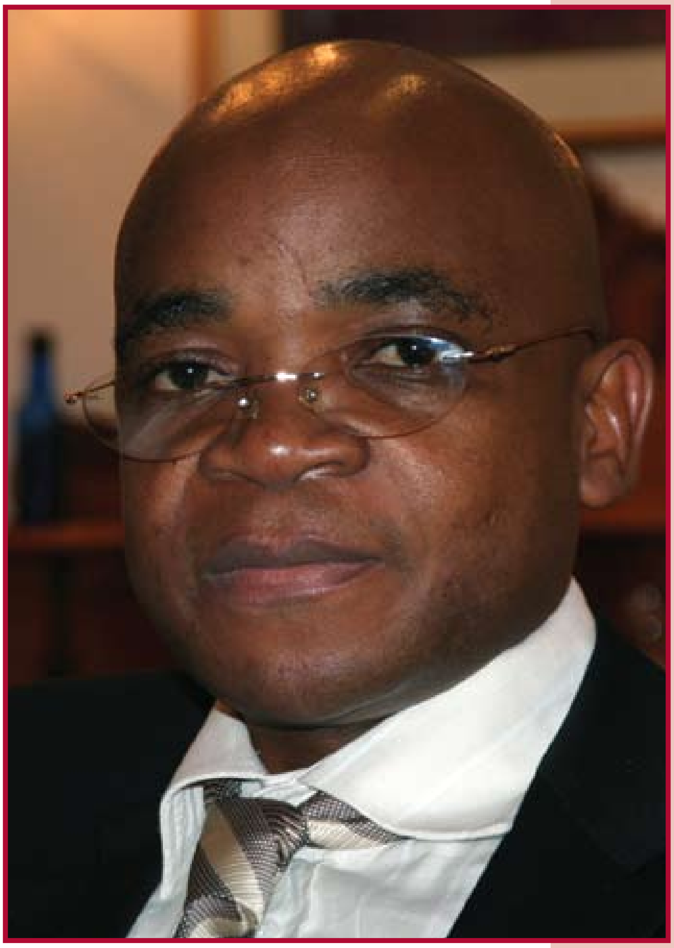

PFANANI LISHIVA joined the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) in 1996 as Researcher at the Broadcasting Policy Development & Research Department. After two years he was promoted to the position of Senior Researcher. When the IBA merged with the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA) in 2000 to form the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) in July 2000, Lishiva was appointed ICASA's Broadcasting Policy Projects Manager. He developed policy and drafted regulations, including that governing the South African content on TV & radio (2002). Lishiva became ICASA's Senior Manager for Broadcasting Policy Development & Research in 2006. He left ICASA one year later. Currently he is working at the Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) as Business Development Manager.

Lishiva holds a Master of Education degree (Policy Development) from the University of the Witwatersrand. He can be contacted at Pfanani.lishivha@samro.org.za

Lishiva finds it exciting to be part of a new era that is defining the transformation of South Africa's broadcasting industry after apartheid.

"Everything has changed, we have achieved quite a lot so far," he says. "We have introduced new broadcasting services. In 1998 etv was the first private broadcaster in South Africa (and now) there are more than 100 community radio stations. We did not have a single community radio station before."

But there are still challenges. "It is still cheaper for us to buy foreign productions, especially from the US. The local content is growing with regards to music and TV, but is still not present enough. We need more creative people in the industry who know how to produce and sell local productions. Our exports are not sufficient as well."

The importance of revenue generation?

"This topic is an important one. As an example, radio stations such as Kaya FM have huge audiences. Millions of people listen to that popular station, but not much money is coming in. It is ignored by advertisers. They (Kaya) should use their tools to measure and compile an audience survey. We also need to look at the balance: how to get the money back but still be able to maintain the independence of stations and other media.

"Newspapers tend to copy each others' style and format these days to get some money and attention. So you find that the Daily Sun, in many ways, has been copied by the Sowetan, printing shorter stories to the benefit of more advertisers. The result? The newspaper landscape is less diverse now."

Is KAS going into the right direction in addressing this topic?

"KAS is doing the right thing! The next Conference should follow-up on this debate around how to generate more revenue for African media. But the sessions should be longer in order to have more time for input. Also we should spend less time on elaboration on our own organisations and how they make money. Rather, let us explain the structures and interact with people to gain knowledge."

Also, says Lishiva, the question of journalistic skills is important to address. "Journalists are not receiving enough training, the standard is not good (and) they don't ask enough critical questions."


DENON
DENON

Chapter 9

POTENTIAL FOR PAN AFRICAN COMMERCIAL RADIO WITHIN EXISTING CONTINENTAL RADIO LANDSCAPE

by David Smith

Radio rules in Africa. Those who know this continent understand very clearly what this statement means. While television faces the hurdles of erratic electricity supply, the cost of the actual television unit, and signal distribution, and newspapers have to overcome the obstacles of illiteracy, distribution and the obligation to charge for their product each time it's published, radio is able to send its signal to every community on the continent, thanks to short-wave signals, cheap radios and batteries.

Because of its power and reach, radio often comes under fire, especially in places where good governance is weak Presidents, ruling parties, opposition parties and businesses use radio as a punching bag when they have something to hide. During times of civil unrest, journalists are arrested, transmitters shut down, and, during times of insurrection, the radio station is usually one of the first targets for hostile takeover. That is because everyone knows that people are listening!

The same powerful people who threaten radio when they themselves feel threatened court the radio when they feel they deserve credit. Again, that's because they know people are listening; and they are listening in large numbers.

Information is a human right. This sounds like a bland statement until you have seen the role radio plays in a humanitarian crisis. A lack of information or bad information can lead to death, chaos, and destruction. Think about the role played by the Hutu government's anti-Tutsi Radio Mille Collines during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. At the opposite end of the spectrum, consider Radio Okapi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the role it played in breaking down the divide created by the front line in that country's five-year war, often referred to as Africa's first World War. There are many other examples of radio playing a positive role during conflict, from Star Radio in Liberia to Radio Ndeke Luka in the Central African Republic.

The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations has recognised the power of radio in Africa, making radio an essential component of all of its peacekeeping operations on the continent. The hybrid United Nations-African Union peacekeeping operation in Darfur knows that in order to effectively reach people in the three countries directly affected by the conflict in Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic, a radio operation is essential.

The Sudanese government has gone to considerable effort to prevent the UN from expanding radio in Darfur, as it understands the power of the medium. Sudan's state broadcaster operates some of the most powerful transmitters in the world. Sudan is also the BBC Arabic service's biggest national audience, with large numbers of Sudanese listening on shortwave.

In a world where television tends to dominate in urban centres, it helps to take a closer look at the radio listening habits in some of Africa's biggest cities, beginning with a question: What do radio listeners in Lagos, Accra, Harare, Nairobi and Khartoum have in common?

In all of these cities, people listen to the same radio station when they want to hear credible news about themselves and about their continent. They listen to the BBC. In the examples cited above, depending on mother tongue, chances are they're listening to the BBC's Africa Service, Arabic Service, Hausa Service or Kiswahili Service.

Let's take the question to Francophone Africa, which makes up about a third of the continent: What do listeners in Abidjan, Bangui, N'Djamena, Dakar and Libreville have in common?

They too are listening to the same radio station when they want to hear credible news about themselves and about their continent. In this case, they are listening to the RFI Africa Service in French. In most cases, RFI has several correspondents in every Francophone African country, and at least one in all the others. Their programme content ranges from new African music to African press reviews, to coverage of local news stories from places as isolated and removed from the beaten path as Goz Beida in South eastern Chad and Goulia in Côte d'Ivoire.

Both the BBC World Service and RFI consider Africa to be home to their core listenership. Both organisations have made important investments in developing an FM relay network in most of the continent's urban areas to compliment their shortwave networks. Yes, shortwave networks. Millions of listeners still listen to shortwave to satisfy their news and information needs on a daily basis. Not because they prefer the sound quality, but simply because it's often the only option available. In some cases, it's the only *credible* option available.

Radio is everywhere. Receivers are everywhere. Does every single person have a radio? The answer to that question is no. Are there enough radios in Africa? No. But the important question is: Do most people have access to a radio? And the answer to that question is quite simply: yes.

In large parts of the continent, especially in rural areas, radio listening is a community effort. The owner of the radio is a modern-day town crier. His -- and it's usually he, as most of the radios on the continent are currently in the hands of males -- radio is probably a very inexpensive model made in China that almost certainly has a shortwave band.

I performed a feasibility study for the UNDP recently in some of the most isolated parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo and one of the findings is that rural Congolese, with virtually no monetary resources, will when they have a little bit of money, first use that money to buy food. Next on the list is clothing, and immediately following that in the list of priorities are batteries for the radio. The most remote markets on this continent, those far off from roads that are accessible by anything but the most robust 4x4 vehicles, sell radios and the batteries necessary to power them. That's because there's a market. As soon as cell phone masts are erected, phone cards are added to the merchandise for the same reason.

TAKING A LOOK AT THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

State broadcasters are everywhere. It's one of the things all African countries have in common. The extreme ends of the state broadcasting spectrum are represented by South Africa and Sierra Leone and Liberia, two African countries that are emerging from years of war. I'll refrain from discussing South Africa in greater detail here simply because it has a strong and well-developed public and private radio sector. Sierra Leone, however, presents a different scenario. In Sierra Leone, almost nothing works at the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service, the oldest state broadcaster on the continent. In the private broadcasting sector, what does exist is confined to the capital Freetown and targets the expatriate community. Community radio provides narrow-cast services to a small number of urban centres in the rest of the country. The BBC Africa Service is available in Freetown and several other urban centres in Sierra Leone on FM. Tune in to Network Africa or Focus on Africa on any given day to get a good idea of how popular such programmes are in Sierra Leone by listening to the number of SMSs read out on the air from that country. Next door in Liberia, the state broadcaster is *only* a radio service, and has no television capabilities. It's hard to believe that the African country with the strongest historical link to the United States does not have a state television service. Former Liberian president Charles Taylor understood the power of radio; he shut down the independent Star Radio service in Monrovia. Star is back on the air now, while Mr. Taylor is in prison at The Hague.

Many of the state broadcasters in Africa are more like the SLBS than the SABC in their ability to reach their constituents; transmitters are often out of commission, studio equipment has broken down and the electricity supply has been interrupted. There is also the question of credibility. Few state broadcasters have the confidence of the local population. They are usually viewed by listeners as His Master's Voice. The voice reflects whoever is in power at any particular time rather than the desires, concerns or interests of the listening public. That's the primary reason why international broadcasters are so popular. Community radio outside of South Africa also tends to have a relatively high listenership because it provides one of the only alternatives to the state broadcaster. Commercial radio stations often add live current affairs programmes from either the BBC or RFI to provide the credibility not found on the state broadcaster.

Non-commercial radio established by the United Nations or international non-governmental organisations tend to have a large listenership because they fill a void that no local provider has been able to successfully fill, usually because of political and financial constraints; some of best examples are Radio Okapi in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Radio Ndeke Luka in the Central African Republic, Star Radio in Liberia, and Radio UNIOSIL in Sierra Leone. These operations are usually located in post-conflict situations and their long-term existence, once political stability has been restored and peacekeeping operations are scaled down or withdrawn, is a subject of much discussion at the UN and amongst the international donor agencies that tend to fund them.

With all the radio currently covering Africa, is there a market for a Pan African commercial operation?

I was at a UN radio conference in Italy recently where some of my peacekeeping colleagues told me that the radio services they were setting up targeted everybody. I'd like to believe that a few of us there were able to point out the flaw in this particular strategy. The commercial world usually understands much better than the non- commercial world that it is important to develop programming for a target audience. You are not required to like the content on the enormously popular Johannesburg radio station Highveld Stereo to know that the marketing department at owners Primedia understand their audience. The BBC and RFI understand their audience too. In the latter two cases, they understand that the people they broadcast to are not receiving the credible information they want from their home services. Imagine if a similar market could be targeted with programming originating entirely from the continent and combining cross-border advertising; a market that is interested in news, current affairs, music and sport from around the continent. That market is out there but it's not being serviced from Africa.

Think of DSTV's Africa service for a moment and imagine a much bigger, wider and diverse target market; one that is certainly not as affluent as the average DSTV subscriber, but this is made up for in numbers. This target audience is already out there, already has receivers and is already listening to radio.

The BBC and RFI are able to survive largely because their budget requirements are covered by governments. But in a world where the bottom line counts now more than ever and pressure mounts from the private sector to cut back on public broadcasting, change is in the air. RFI is already accepting some commercial advertising on its programmes. The same is true with Africa Numéro Un in Gabon.

Programming and advertising flighted on DSTV's Africa service is not the same as what viewers see on their screens in South Africa. A viewer watching DSTV in Darfur will see advertising ranging from Nigerian banks to Ghanaian cloth to Kenyan hotels.

Continent-wide radio should and in fact must follow in similar footsteps. Vodacom's biggest profit margins are not in South Africa, they're in the Democratic Republic of Congo. With virtually no infrastructure available, the Congolese need to use telephones to communicate. But Vodacom has competitors in the DRC -- as all cellphone companies have almost everywhere else on the continent. The cell phone companies have become the biggest advertisers on African radio, TV and in the newspapers. Hotel chains, banks, breweries, insurance companies, fast-food restaurants, bus services, foodstuffs and airlines are all part of the Africa-wide advertising picture. Coca-Cola advertises its product in the most remote parts of the continent. Even the smallest village in Uganda has a shop that sells Coke as well as its local competitor; as the variety of available products expands throughout Africa, so will the need to advertise.

There should be no doubt about the importance of cross-border business in Africa. Flights between the major commercial capitals are almost always fully booked and almost always carry a large number of business travellers. The same is true of luxury hotels popping up in some very non-tourist friendly centres. These luxury oases enjoy high occupancy no matter how high their rates are. Most of their guests are looking for business opportunities.

South Africa makes more money from tourists arriving from Angola than from any other country, including wealthy Western Europe and North America. Unlike the Germans travelling to Cape Town and Kruger Park, the Angolans, like many other African visitors, are heading straight for the shopping malls and discount bulk suppliers. Container loads of material are shipped back to re-sell in places like Angola where prices are high and production of finished goods is extremely limited. This is another important target market for advertisers. The list of potential markets is long and growing.

TRANSMISSION, AUTHORISATION AND LANGUAGES

There's no need to reinvent the wheel with radio. A certain satellite broadcaster has tried to reinvent it with less than limited success. Billboards advertising subscription-based satellite radio can be found all over Gauteng, South Africa, but try to find the necessary satellite radio receiver at Johannesburg airport or Sandton City. There are two obvious problems with this strategy. South Africa, especially Gauteng, is already well served by radio. Other parts of the continent north of the Limpopo are not, however expecting most listeners to buy new, more expensive receivers *and* pay a subscription fee is unrealistic. RFI, BBC, Deutsche Welle, VOA and Africa Number One from Gabon have all understood the value and importance of the word *relay*. From Kisangani to Cotonou to Blantyre, international radio services provide 24-hour FM relays of their services; in some cases, in specifically-targeted languages.

These relays exist because of a business contract between the government and the broadcaster. FM transmitters are usually erected at or near the transmitter farms belonging to the state broadcaster. For a fee, they are usually maintained and serviced locally. No broadcast licence is necessary, as all programming is broadcast from outside the national borders. What is necessary is access to a frequency, granted by the government. This is a much easier undertaking than acquiring a licence. Of course, there are a few exceptions; neither Zimbabwe nor Eritrea currently allows relays of programming from beyond their borders. It should be noted however that neither country has been offered a relay for the transmission of Pan African programming.

LANGUAGE AND CONTENT

There are thousands of languages spoken on this continent; however there are a handful that are understood by the vast majority of Africans. Again, the international broadcasters understood this long ago: English, French, KiSwahili, Portuguese and Arabic are the main languages used in programming for Africa. When thinking about a commercial operation, on the language front, less is better than more. Ask the SABC about staffing for the 11 official language services. The "commercial" services at the SABC help to keep the language services afloat. States or public broadcasters are required to broadcast in certain languages, but commercial services, licence provisions taken into account, are not. A commercial operation decides who is the target market and directs programming content to it.

Pan African radio is neither community nor national radio. It is a tie that binds diverse cultures and ethnicities. To understand how to provide content for a continent, one must understand what people have in common rather than what sets them apart. Of course there are exceptions, but there are general themes that cross borders: news, current affairs, music, sport, culture, education, and governance are a few. International programmes such as Network Africa, Focus on Africa, Afrique Matin and Newshour are a few of many programmes that keep a loyal international audience. The audience is loyal in part because of a regular use of local correspondents and a strong use of presenters who, despite sitting in studios in Europe, are from Africa, sound like Africans, and know the people they're talking to.

Africa is predominantly a rural continent. Transport infrastructure is often bad, non-existent, or deteriorating. Such challenges increase the stature and importance of radio. Rural listeners want most of the same things on radio that urban listeners want, but not necessarily in the same order. News is generally most important, simply because radio is virtually the only source of outside information, apart from word of mouth. Inter-active radio is rising rapidly in rural areas, thanks to cell phones. In societies where the gap between those who govern and the general population is extremely wide, inter-active radio provides a voice to the voiceless. It's also very good for both the radio and the cell phone businesses. Community radio stations rely on messages from listeners as one of their only means of income generation.

In a number of African markets, local content is so bad that listeners will go to great lengths to receive alternative broadcasts. Huts in remote villages in Chad do not have electricity, but they do have electric wires running from the hut rooftops to nearby poles or trees. The wires are attached to battery-operated radios and help to improve reception of shortwave broadcasts from distant lands. It doesn't matter in many cases how bad the signal is. What is important is the content. The Chadian example is not exceptional.

Pan African radio, given the current diversity in the media regulatory scene across the continent, would most easily get off the ground if headquartered in one central location, a sort of African Commercial Bush House, with a network of local, preferably multilingual correspondents native to and stationed in the main urban centres. The diaspora should also be included as both a content-provider and a target market, notably London, Paris, Brussels and New York. Francophone broadcasters RFI and Africa Number One understood the importance of this market years ago and set up relays for the diaspora in France. Radio stations based in Africa with live streaming programmes tend to have large numbers of hits from the diaspora in Europe and North America.

WHAT NOW?

I've been setting up and evaluating radio projects across Africa for years. There are hundreds of radio pieces that work reasonably well on their own but few of the pieces fit together. There are community radio associations and NGOs that specialise in information sharing amongst partner stations, but what's missing is a common voice that attempts to speak for, to, and from this continent.

The recent AU summit in Accra focused on the idea of a United States of Africa. That's not a very likely scenario in the short to medium term. Travelling and working around this continent sadly makes this abundantly clear. But I'm certainly not saying that it's impossible. A good start is talking to each other. Radio does that. Radio helps us to get to know our neighbours. Problems of xenophobia in South Africa would probably not be so acute if people had a clear understanding of the needs, desires and concerns of their neighbours. They don't. Francophone and Anglophone Africa don't know much about each other either, and that's certainly the case with Lusophone Africa as well. Only a small understanding of the conflicts in Chad and Sudan sheds light on the great rift that is the divide between the Arabic-speaking north and Africa South of the Sahara.

There is one language however that the entire continent speaks. In fact, the entire world speaks it: commerce. A commercial radio service provides one of the elements of the dialogue that gets people talking to each other. Mix commerce with credible information and entertaining programming and an instant market for people who are already waiting for the launch of your programme is created.

It is quite surprising how little thought appears to have been given to the prospect of radio on a commercial and continent-wide level. TV, with a much smaller, although generally wealthier audience, gets much more attention; several new satellite television services are hoping to give DSTV some serious competition over the next few years. Commercial radio thus far on the continent has been limited to major urban centres and a relatively small market; the radio services carried on services such as DSTV cater primarily for an expatriate rather than a local market.

For a Pan African service to work, it must be Pan African. That is, it should reflect in content and in sound the diverse cultures and demographics of this continent. Advertising is of vital importance to keep the operation going, but at the end of the day, its content that will keep people listening. Radio is not rocket science, but it does take a certain sensitivity and understanding to recognise who, where and what the market is.

It's very fortunate for this continent that the radio pioneers who worked at Bush House and along the banks of the Seine during the last century were not afraid to go after an African market. In our case, better late than never!

DAVID SMITH is a specialist in media projects in conflict and post-conflict zones. His entry into the media field was in the newsroom of the now defunct Transkei-based Capital Radio in South Africa. After teaching in rural Zimbabwe, a move to Johannesburg for a one-month radio training course turned into a career spanning more than two decades.

After leaving Capital in 1988, Smith entered the world of international radio as a producer at Radio Canada International (RCI) in Montreal. From RCI it was more of the same at Radio Nederland in Hilversum before returning to South Africa as Head of Programmes at Capital Radio in 1993.

A foray into documentaries at the National Film Board of Canada temporarily removed Smith from radio until he was recruited by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations to set up radio for Serbs and Croats in the former Yugoslavia. This initial foray into peacekeeping radio led to similar projects in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, and UN Headquarters in New York.

Smith is a director of Johannesburg-based Okapi Consulting, a media consulting agency working primarily with media projects attached to the UN and the African Union. He can be reached at david@okapi.cc.

A highlight in David Smith's career is the launch of Radio Okapi in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The radio network, now with more than 200 staff members broadcasting in five languages, was one of the principal catalysts which helped to bring down the front line during the war in 2002. Today Radio Okapi remains the only credible national network in the DRC and serves as a model in other post-conflict zones around the world.

Commenting on the role of revenue generation by media organisations – the focus of the Africa Media Leadership Conference hosted by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation and the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership in Cape Town in August 2007, Smith said:

"South Africa is proof that radio is not only news and entertainment; it's also an important business. South Africa is home to some of the most financially successful radio stations in the world. Radio north of the Limpopo plays a more dominant role in most communities than it does in South Africa primarily because competition from print and television is minimal.

"The most listened-to broadcasters in this market however are not from Africa. The BBC and RFI fill a void that no continent-based service has yet attempted to enter. Only when the advertising public realises what market is waiting to be tapped will there likely be a movement to serve it. "

Is KAS going in the right direction by staging such a conference?

"Certainly," he says. "Previous media conferences held in South Africa allegedly to look at the state of broadcasting in Africa tended to focus on South African radio and used experts from the USA for ideas on increasing revenue generation.

"While there is nothing inherently wrong with this, the rest of the continent tends to be ignored, including not only potential but talent as well. KAS organised a gathering that was representative of the needs and abilities of media practitioners from the Sahara to Cape Town; it was a true exchange of ideas."