DOING DIGITAL MEDIA IN AFRICA

PROSPECTS, PROMISES AND PROBLEMS

Edited by

Francis Mdlongwa

Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung

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African media plots future in digital era

Media management all over the world faces new challenges every day. For the last few years in particular, one media disaster news headline has followed another. Newspaper circulations have dropped sharply and, in some instances, collapsed altogether; newspaper readers have suddenly deserted in droves and migrated online and advertisers have taken their money elsewhere as the media industry faces a moment of truth.

The more difficult the situation today's media has faced, the more important it has become for the industry to have a proper analysis on what's going on so that adequate solutions for survival can be found.

Which is why the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's (KAS) Media Programme and Rhodes University's Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) decided to focus on "Doing Digital Media in Africa" during their latest Africa Media Leadership Conference held in Uganda's capital Kampala in May 2008.

Embracing digital media by newspapers and other 'old media' might not provide all the solutions to all the problems faced by media managers these days, but the new platforms certainly provide opportunities that could help the media's financial bottom lines. If managed well, digital media can create additional income, more customers and new ways of distribution which could contribute to extended media freedom.

Unfortunately, some of Africa's media leaders have already been left behind by the digital media technologies. The leaders face a plethora of challenges: slow internet connections, if any at all; weak technological equipment; and low multimedia skills among their workforces. And all this is happening when other parts of the world are racing ahead with the faced-paced and ever-changing digital media landscape.

But this inter-continental digital divide has advantages as well. First, African media leaders have the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others and thus avoid repeating them themselves. Second, they can try and use what is already working in other parts of the world and develop this further. And third, they can compare the useful methods other successful African media have already adopted and introduce these into their own environments.

All these and other wide-ranging digital media elements and their impact on traditional media were the focus of the Kampala Conference. They have now been collated into this book. Examples of a converged newsroom from Germany show the potential of what can be achieved, but they also highlight the limitations of concepts from overseas. Working models from African newspapers' online editions and achievements in the field of social media provide useful tips and tricks for other African countries. And last but not least, this publication broadly examines where the digital media landscape is headed.

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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Digital era unleashes ambiguity and uncertainty

Media leaders across the globe are frantically seeking solutions to the challenges of managing ambiguity and uncertainty triggered by the digital era, which threatens to decimate their profitable companies anchored in the old business school.

The digital media, dramatised by mobile and online platforms, is increasingly taking away huge audiences and some sizeable advertisers from the 'old' media. It is signalling a possible end to an era where media prospered phenomenally through selling eyeballs to advertisers.

In some instances, the new technology has even allowed advertisers to by-pass the media altogether to reach audiences directly, thus compounding the survival of newspapers, television stations and radio businesses as we know them today.

So the scramble is now on – the scramble to rapidly find new ways of doing business in a media-scape that also offers unprecedented opportunities to those who embrace change. And to do this quickly and without certainty or compass.

A selection of Africa's top media leaders gathered in Uganda's capital Kampala in early 2008 to try to find answers to a tide that is not only challenging the business model for media, but also re-drawing the very foundations of journalism – journalism's meaning, purpose and identity in a fast-changing world.

Thanks to the sponsorship of Germany's Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), the leaders exchanged views, ideas and experiences on "Doing Digital Media in Africa: Prospects, Promises and Problems".

This was the eighth annual media summit for Africa hosted by KAS and Rhodes University's Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) since 2002.

This wide-ranging and informative anthology is culled from that conference, and it brings out diverse and unique ways that these African media chiefs and their teams are experimenting and innovating to meet tomorrow's challenges today.

This is the second year running that KAS has generously commissioned and published such an anthology in collaboration with the SPI – Africa's premier media management and leadership institution.

I would like to thank all the contributors for their time and critical insights and wisdom. Their compelling stories are an invaluable resource to students, teachers and trainers of media management and journalism, and others who want to track the unfolding march of the new media.

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THE CHANGING MEDIA ECOSYSTEM: WHAT AFRICAN MEDIA LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

01

There is a yawning international divide between Africa and developed countries, but that's no signal for sleepiness! By understanding trends in the USA in particular, media leaders in Africa can prepare for the changes that will come to the continent and pre-empt some of the negative consequences for the industry. In particular, this means grasping how the traditional business models for media are breaking up within the context of the Information Society's new emerging architecture. The shift of the Web into 2.0 mode, and new news production implications this entails, should be registered. Finally, the Internet will find its way into the Africa media environment via mobile wireless devices like cellphones, and African media leaders should be preparing for this already emerging scenario.

By Guy Berger

Introduction

There is a yawning international divide between Africa and developed countries, but that's no signal for sleepiness! By understanding trends in the USA in particular, media leaders in Africa can prepare for the changes that will come to the continent and pre-empt some of the negative consequences for the industry. In particular, this means grasping how the traditional business models for media are breaking up within the context of the Information Society's new emerging architecture. The shift of the Web into 2.0 mode, and new news production implications this entails, should be registered. Finally, the Internet will find its way into the Africa media environment via mobile wireless devices like cellphones, and African media leaders should be preparing for this already emerging scenario.

Trends in the USA

At a recent conference in the USA called NewsTools2008, participants contributed to a wiki list of the "top 10 disruptions reshaping journalism". First was "trust and quality measurement" – in a context of growing question marks over the mainstream media and competition by bloggers and websites by various institutions and hosts of "user generated content" (UGC). Other points mentioned were: gaming networks, data mashups, aggregation, tagging, geocoding, widgets and feeds, open mobile, identity and authentication.

These terms are not only alien to most African media players, but to most of the world's counterparts as well. Yet they need to be learnt because a disruption by whatever name can turn your world upside down.

At two other (linked) conferences in the USA earlier in 2008, the following agenda constituted the programme:

- E-Commerce Revenue Solutions
- Great Interactive Ideas
- Social Networking – How to Build it, Grow it and Bring in the Bucks
- Serving Readers & Advertisers through Search Marketing
- Managing Citizen Commentary and Contributions
- 5 Things You Should Do in 2008 to Immediately Improve Your Web Site

Who convened the events with this focus? The answer: the Suburban Newspapers of America trade association and the print industry publication Editor & Publisher. As is obvious, there was nothing in the proceedings about increasing circulation, better page design, selling ads into special supplements in the local paper, etc. Print was as good as dead, the interest was in new things that could be grown from the corpse.

So why the obsession with online? The reason is in the facts outlined in a report, the State of the News Media 2008, by the Project for Excellence in Journalism:

- Newspapers in USA ended 2007 with 8.4% less circulation daily, 11.4% less Sunday than 2001.
- Print newspaper ad revenues experienced their worst drop in more than 50 years.

It wasn't much better in television. Network TV news programs averaged 23.1 million viewers a night, a drop of 5%, on 2006.

And the trends began to hit staffing levels during 2008. In the first seven months of 2008, an estimated 4500 jobs were cut at US newspapers (http://snurl.com/3047y). Layoffs like this do not amount to a business model, however, and some papers realise that. Thus the Wall Street Journal did an "editorial reorganisation" with 50 redundancies and 95 new hires. Expansion like this goes into web operations. In general, according to "The Changing Newsroom" report of July 2008, the cuts affected sub-editing positions and photographers for the paper, and the expansion was in videographers and web-only editing.

These changes reflect transforming audience habits in the USA. Increasing numbers of people there now get their news online. In fact, there are more people than ever before reading content generated by US newspapers, but this is not via newsprint. And meanwhile, the revenues from the paper product are falling.

Old business meets a new era

What this signals is that the long-standing business model of the media is breaking up. That process is due to the digitalisation of the media, which has untied the link between content and particular physical formats. It is all data now, and it can be played out (even converted – eg. from text to audio) in full or in part, and upon numerous platforms. The traditional industry entailed a horizontal integration of processes largely under the control of each single media company. For instance, a newspaper would own most of its information-gathering operation, its editing and packaging processes, its dissemination operation, and even a loyal audience. Today, in the USA, this is being unbundled, disarticulated and dispersed.

- Information gathering: this is now distributed, in the sense of including UGC (like the online Mail & Guardian's Thoughtleader platform which is said to attract more web traffic than the news site). Via embedded links in a media house's own site, information can be sourced and published that comes from sources like YouTube.
- Editing: there is increasingly global outsourcing (Reuter's UK now gets subbed in India), and there is user editing (eg. via wiki format) and user ranking (showing audience, rather than editor, prioritisation choices).
- Packaging: this is now spread across several outlet platforms, and there are also numerous third party aggregators – meaning that much content is consumed outside of its original packaging (eg. a search engine takes a consumer direct to a story without any entry through the front door of the site).
- Distribution: through technologies like RSS feeds, the dissemination is broken into discreet items (eg. headlines only). There is increasingly a trend to get content out via other people's platforms, and to get users to re-circulate it as well.
- Consumption: Instead of a consistent audience, the bulk of consumption is through links, and especially through search engines and recommendations.

This profound change means that although audiences in the USA are moving away from traditional print, and towards online, the same model and relationships are far from being replicated in that environment. In old media economics, subscription and advertising pay the content generation bills. On the internet, subscription revenue has proved very difficult to get, and the problem is that advertising for newspapers online is not on a par as it has been in print.

There are several reasons for this: in some cases, the advertising is slower to migrate than the audiences; in more cases, the defined audience that a newspaper could previously deliver to advertisers is now much more fragmented, transient, promiscuous and geographically dispersed. In addition, the web means a fundamental reversal of the model of advertisers seeking out consumers. Online, it is much more a case of consumers seeking out advertisements on their own terms, and avoiding them on their own terms as well. This is most apparent in search-term related advertising – and here news content has been eclipsed by Google in terms of its utility to bring advertisers and consumers together. Summed up by the Project for Excellence in Journalism:

> *"The crisis in journalism may not strictly be loss of audience. It may, more fundamentally, be the decoupling of news and advertising."*

Expanded architecture of public information

What lies behind all this is a much bigger picture of change in the architecture of the Information Society. Two interrelated dynamics have meant an exponential explosion of the number of players who traffic in public information: internet-isation and media-tisation. As Buzzmachine.com blogger Jeff Jarvis points out, this creates a new "me-sphere" where the individual consumer is now surrounded by thousands of information choices – and the person's news consumption is no longer mediated by a few media institutions. In this environment, professional journalistic content is devalued by the enormous supply of content from other quarters. It is an architecture where the ease of coming on board increases by the day, and the culture in this space is one of free content – with many contributors prepared precisely to give away content for a range of reasons, and to cover their costs through other means. Whereas the old media dispensation gave journalists a monopoly on a scarce commodity, what is scarce now is human attention. Competition for this is unprecedented.

Part of the dawning of a digital day is the rise in recent years of Web 2.0, and its dimensions of social networks and the semantic web:

The individual consumer is now increasingly able to access communities of like-minded people, meaning that instead of isolated searching or surfing, the model is now to get content surfaced to you through the recommendations of others. A focus group study of young Americans reported one young woman as saying, in response to the question of how she finds out what's going on: "If the news is important enough, it will find me". Indeed, through her online networks, it does.

- From the Internet of separate documents to the Internet as a database. What contributes to social networking, but is much wider than it, is the evolving structure of online data heralded by blogs. The beauty of this is that content is

accompanied by meta-data, which highlights keywords and provides categories as well. This allows unprecedented linkages to be made between content items that were formerly disconnected – for instance, there can be a feed for all content contributions online that get tagged with the same keyword (eg. "African media"). It is this trend that enables meanings to be mined, and the Internet to appear to be more intelligent – in a word, the emerging "semantic" web. There are software systems (like OpenCalais) which seek to automate an amount of taxonomy by extracting and categorising names, facts and events from unstructured text, but content producers still have to decide on more abstract labels (like whether a picture symbolises flight, or a particular story is about racism).

- The value-add in a Web 2.0 world also comes from user contributions (often from users within particular online social networks and communities). It is not just the "old suspects" who are putting content into cyberspace.
- In the old days, the mantra used to be "content is king". As Cory Doctorow has observed, nowadays it is "conversation is king". The challenge for traditional media houses therefore is not just to enable conversation (eg. by offering readers a blog platform); but how to get their content to be the substance of the conversation.

Certainly, in this vibrant environment, responsiveness and openness replaces the old notion of publishing as giving a lecture or a sermon. Rather it is an ongoing conversation of elaborating and discussing stories as they unfold. The Project for Excellence in Journalism has declared that there is no single or finished news product anymore. In their view, news is shifting from being a product – today's newspaper, Web site or newscast – to becoming a service focusing on how you can help me, or even empower me.

New news production

Many newsrooms deal with the new opportunities by adopting a model similar to that of a news agency. The Associated Press agency itself has formalised a three-step flow (although there is no inevitable progression in the case of every story; some stop right at after the first stage). The model is:

- Step 1: news alert headline for breaking news, and possibly then:
- Step 2: short present-tense story mainly for web & broadcast, and then:
- Step 3: details and format the content for different news platforms – eg. possibly as a textual news analysis, multi-media

This has been further elaborated by blogger Paul Bradshaw in terms of the tensions between speed and depth. Speed treatments of content in a digital era lend themselves to the forms of: Alert (mobile, email); a draft (blog); an article/package (print, audio, video forms). Depth can be covered more slowly through:

- Context (hyperlinks, embedded content – widgets)
- Analysis/reflection (article/package in various formats)
- Interactivity (flash, chats, forums, wikis)

- Customisation (RSS, ratings, social networking)
  (http://onlinejournalismblog.wordpress.com/2007/09/17/a-model-for-the-21st-
  century-newsroom-pt1-the-news-diamond/)

Some people might argue that it is not even conversation that is king, but the
Content Management System (CMS) that is used by a media house because it is this
functionality that enables the news diamond to be delivered. Drupal (an Open Source
system) is an increasingly popular CMS, being used by Al Quds, Die Welt, Die Ziet,
New York Observer, etc. It has been said that it can give 90% of the power of a high-end
proprietary service.

Then again, the people operating a CMS need to be in charge. Content needs
to be input with meta-data, and that requires producers to know and understanding
"taxonomy". According to Paul Bradshaw (http://onlinejournalismblog.com/2007/10/08/
online-journalism-job-of-the-week-keyword-manager/) The Guardian newspaper last
year advertised for a Keyword Manager "to look after the labelling of our content".
The job was working across text, cartoons, video and podcasts. At the Telegraph,
there is a position called "head of comment and community". At the NewsTools2008
conference, an organogram had titles like "beat blogger" and "community weaver". The
term "community gardener" can sometimes be found. Then there are "mojo's" – mobile
journalists often filing instant information (in various formats, including video) direct
from a cellphone.

Mobile future calls for media to get moving

Although cellphones are just one kind of mobile devices, they are the most common –
and the most ubiquitous. According to a Reuters report last year, some 3.3-billion people
used cellphones, even more than watched television. Of course, especially around Africa,
most of this is for interpersonal communication, rather than to receive or send content
on a mass communication basis. Cameras are becoming standard in many cellphones,
and in due course, the functionality of these devices will include capacities such as WiFi
access, the ability to receive digital broadcasts, and even built-in miniaturised data
projectors.

What this means is that the "form factor", the small size of cellphones, is not a
long-term deterrent to such gadgets being used for media purposes. As it is, many young
people do not seem put off by small screen size or poorer quality audio on their ring
tones. Another obstacle that will be temporary is the different software that operates
different makes of cellphones. Initiatives like Android, a Linux-based operating system
by Google, will in time overcome inter-operability blockages.

People's habits are also likely to change. The advent in November 2008 of digital
broadcasting in South Africa will encourage consumers to invest in handsets that can
receive DVB-H transmissions which will give them audio and video without the same
costs of service and congestion that are associated with similar content being distributed
via 3G. Those who follow football will be especially encouraged to upgrade by 2010.

However, cell phones will no longer be devices meant to merely receive content

on, but they will also increasingly be sources of video being posted online. Much of this content may be very amateurish, but even that will be competition for traditional media, including newspapers, who seek to put professional video online. The challenge will be whether the traditional media can integrate and host such user generated contributions.

What is also a challenge to the traditional media is that mobile opens a whole new market for *location-based services.* Imagine a potential media consumer entering a new city and looking for information. Drawing on its archives, a media house is well placed to provide information about crime spots, information, entertainment, traffic, etc.

What may constitute a lesser challenge is the business model for online mobile media. Cellphone consumers are accustomed to paying, and will probably continue to do so. Even though they will be able to access some content that is free to them, and paid for by advertising, or circulated just as UGC. The media players will make their profits out of a mix of advertising and subscription, although in this they will find themselves fighting with the cellphone providers, and even hand set manufacturers, about who gets what dividend from producing and distributing content on this platform.

Conclusion

As indicated at the outset, there is a yawning digital divide in international terms. But the tsunami of digital content will not pass Africa by. The time for creative responses is now. Don't wait to see what the cost of fuel does to the economics of newsprint and distribution. By doing business as usual will simply see the continent's media industry decline as other players, with their different agendas and social roles, seize the opportunities. New investments and reorientations, experiments (often small) with digital dreams, re-thinking relations with audiences and competitors, getting up to speed with new technology – all these are the new order in the changing ecology of media worldwide.

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MOBILE MEDIA
FOR AFRICA

02

The digital revolution has disrupted the media industry to an extent that journalists and media managers have been forced to adapt their processes for story-telling and to rethink business strategies if they are to remain competitive. First to arrive was the Internet and then the mobile phone followed in quickly, spreading at a pace of a bush fire. The mobile phone story in Africa is a breath-taking one. Just 20 years ago, there was hardly any mobile telephone network on the continent, save for South Africa and Mauritius. Despite Africa being second only to Asia in terms of continental population, it was last in terms of telephone connectivity. In 1990, the continent had registered only 8.6 million telephone subscribers. Norway had more telephone users than all of sub-Saharan Africa. In the same manner, the Internet was still a dream. The snail mail was a darling of all and the telegraph was just magic. The total sum is that the processes in media houses were mostly manual and audiences preferred to consume media products in a non-digital way. Then the mid-1990s came and there was a dramatic shift. The mobile phone arrived in Africa and, in just five years, fast overtook fixed lines in terms of penetration.

By Churchill Otieno

Introduction

The digital revolution has disrupted the media industry to an extent that journalists and media managers have been forced to adapt their processes for story-telling and to rethink business strategies if they are to remain competitive. First to arrive was the Internet and then the mobile phone followed in quickly, spreading at a pace of a bush fire.

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In the same manner, the Internet was still a dream. The snail mail was a darling of all and the telegraph was just magic. The total sum is that the processes in media houses were mostly manual and audiences preferred to consume media products in a non-digital way. Then the mid-1990s came and there was a dramatic shift. The mobile phone arrived in Africa and, in just five years, fast overtook fixed lines in terms of penetration.

**Telephone subscribers per 100 inhabitants
Africa 1995 – 2004**
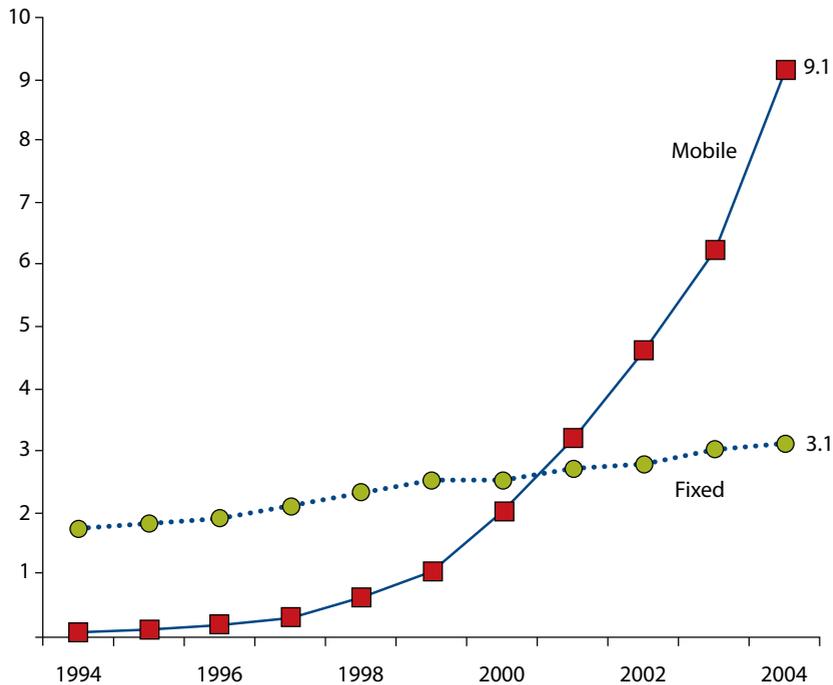
Source:ITU World Telecomunication Indicators Database

More users, varied services

Several factors have come into play to create an environment that is likely to cause a further spread of mobile telephony and mobile Internet in Africa, as in the rest of the world:

- First, while fixed telephone services on the continent were mostly provided by firms fully or majority owned by governments, mobile networks are nearly all run by companies where the government has nil or minority shares. Statistics from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) show that while State operators still remain dominant in the provision of fixed line telephony, the realms of mobile services and Internet services is mostly competitive (see graph below). This fact alone makes the mobile firms nimble and hastens the pace of competition.

Level of competition in Africa – 2006

	Monopoly	Partial competition	Full competition
Internet services	9.8	11.8	68.6
Mobile services	8.7	41.2	43.1
Main (fixed) line local services	55.3	23.5	25.5
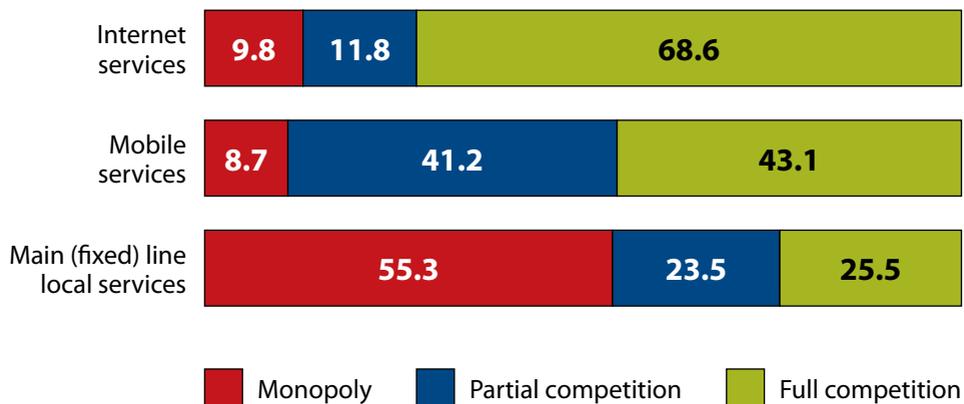
- Second, arising out of the first factor above, high competition amongst the mobile networks has seen to lower costs both of handsets and airtime, hence affording more people access.
- Third, because of the reduced airtime pricing, mobile telephone companies have been forced to be more innovative to remain profitable. This has seen them rolling our creative non-voice services such as encouraging more texting, upgrade of their infrastructure to support transfer of rich media such as pictures, audio and video files, and venturing into mobile TV in some countries.

For the media, this means all platforms in which it offers information to audiences now has a corresponding channel through the mobile networks, be it text, audio or visual (video).

New audiences

The rural environment continues to be home to a huge chunk of the African population, despite decades of rural-to-urban migration. Providing telephony services to this population has historically been an expensive affair until the mobile phone came to be (see the ITU graph below).

Today, it is believed about half of this population has access to the same quality of mobile services that its urban counterparts enjoy. This means that there are people who may be cut off from traditional media channels such as newspapers and television, but thanks to the mobile, have access to the Internet and mobile media.

The media would widen their reach by using mobile channels to target this group.

Villages with access to telecommunication services, Sub-Saharan Africa, 2006
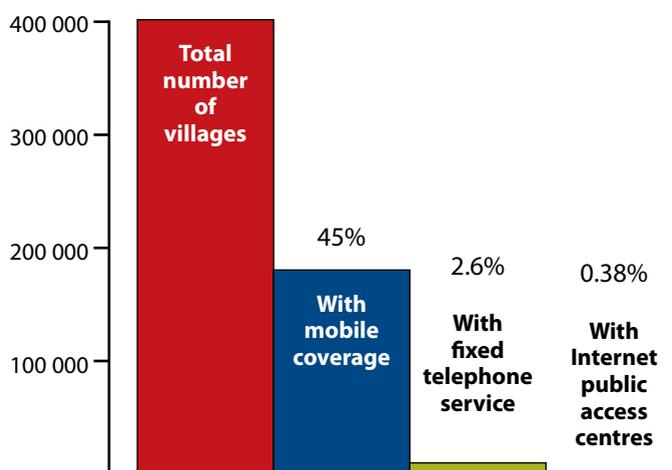
Africa has registered the fastest growth in mobiles over the last three years. In 2007, the continent saw more than 65 million new users, taking the average penetration to 30 per cent. All African countries today have mobile networks and Internet connectivity. Mobile subscribers are now more evenly distributed and they account for 90 per cent of telephone users.

In 2000, South Africa accounted for over half of the continent's mobile subscribers, but this reduced to about 15 per cent by 2007. Competition between mobile networks and availability of better handsets is expected to push an even faster spread of mobile Internet. However, mobile Internet costs remain steep, with average monthly subscription being almost US$50, close to 70 per cent of average per capita income.

Steep costs remain a barrier to many people who would want to enjoy the products, people who are potential audiences to the media houses on the continent and

beyond. But this scenario is not likely to hold for long. Experts are telling us that faster, less costly is the promise that fibre optic cable laid on the sea bed would deliver. Africa's entire shoreline is now connected via this cable, save the east coast where the cable is expected to land anytime from mid 2009.
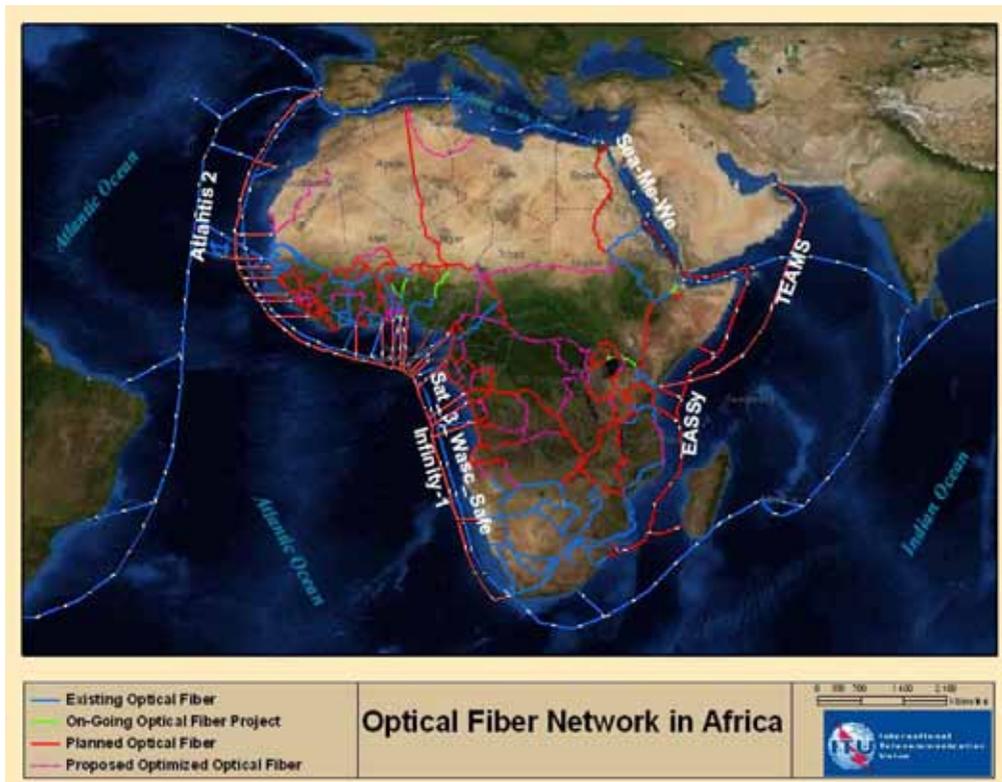
As the Internet gets mobile and more easily available, more people are choosing to consume their information through it. With their audiences changing their ways of consuming information, we in the media have to keep pace if our outlets are to remain relevant.

Turning mobiles into audiences

There are millions of mobile sets all over Africa today. This number keeps on growing and the consumer knowledge of how to use the handset keeps getting better. The question is: how do the media houses on the continent harness these people into audiences?

Four things are clear – consumer's hunger for knowledge is driving information consumption; how they prefer to consume information has changed, thanks to

advancement in technology; media houses remain the experts in organising and quickly disseminating credible information to large audiences; and the Internet has largely removed the barrier to entry, and more or less anybody can become a publisher, in minutes.

Today, it is accepted that the largest manufacturer of computers is not any of the traditional brands, but Nokia, a firm known for its mobile phones. This is because the gadget called the mobile handset so evolved so much that it is no longer a tool just for talking through. If you take this with the fact that the spread of the Personal Computer or the laptop on the continent has been greatly undermined by poverty, then it begins to become clear that in the fullness of time, many in Africa will make their debut on the Internet via their mobile phones. Nearly everybody with a mobile phone in Africa can text, a fact that has already made the SMS very popular and a key driver of the mobile networks' revenues.

Naturally, it has followed that a lot of value-add services have been structured around the SMS, the same channel that most media houses have used to launch their mobile publishing initiatives. Hence the emergence of SMS-based news and information alerts driving services such as breaking news, news headlines, sports fixtures and scores, stock prices, weather, traffic and horoscopes, among others.

As better phones become more available, and as the competition between the networks make non-voice services more accessible, opportunities begin to open up for media houses to push rich media such as longer and/or enriched text, photographs, audio and video content. The mobile phone has also enabled innovative media houses to

Convergence
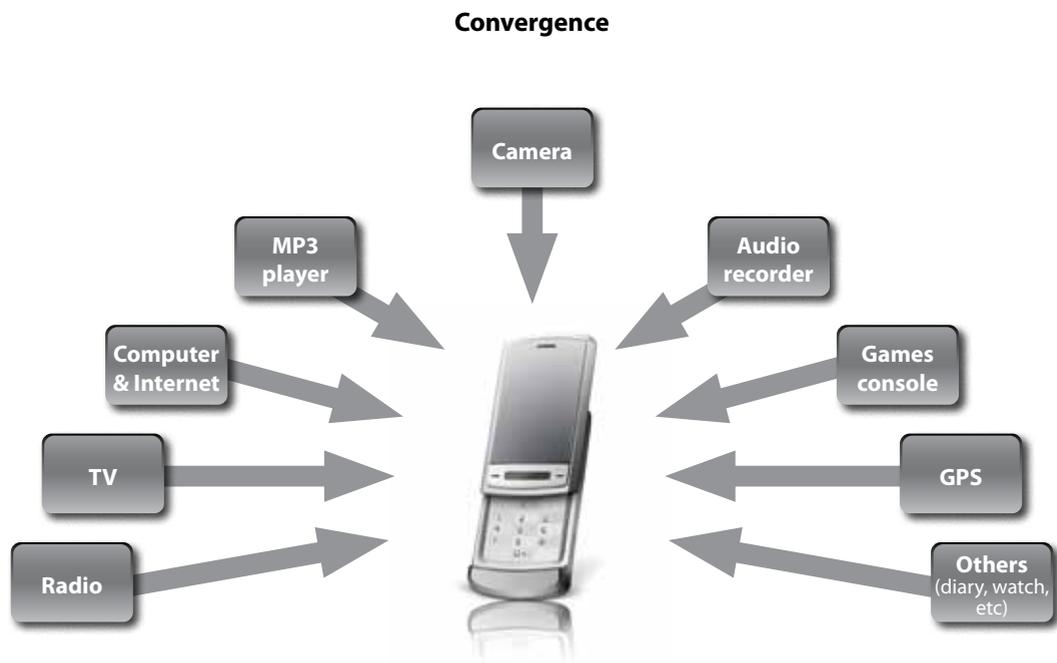
and encouraging them to 'do something' after consuming information pushed through the traditional media outlets. These vary from readers, viewers and listeners sending back their views, voting in opinion polls to sending song requests.

The new media consumer is no longer a passive participant in the mass communication process. They find value in information that gives them a chance to do something, but above all, they also want their views known. They want to see themselves published – be it their pictures or their opinion.

Possibilities broaden when you take this fact in the context of the mobile phone as a gadget that has converged many other personal tools and equipment. The new mobile handset is not only a phone, but also a camera, a radio receiver, a voice recorder, a video and still camera and many more (see diagram on page 20). So, a farmer in Southern Sudan can take video using his mobile and that clip ends up being broadcast worldwide on CNN through I-Report, no wonder the term 'user-generated content' today never misses in content strategies rolled out by media houses lately.

What does the new media consumer want?

We in the media exist to tell stories. We must tell these stories in an interesting manner and serve them in a plate that the consumer is willing to eat from. So, the big question: What does the new consumer need/want?

Globally, estimates say teenagers account for a third of mobile Internet users. This is the group that is growing up with the mobile. This is also your consumer tomorrow. They would rather text, than write a letter. They are big on email and generally live off the internet. What better place to serve them your products than in these highways?

The challenge is to find unique ways to provide meaning for this group, and others, by ensuring their interests (see diagram below) are covered.
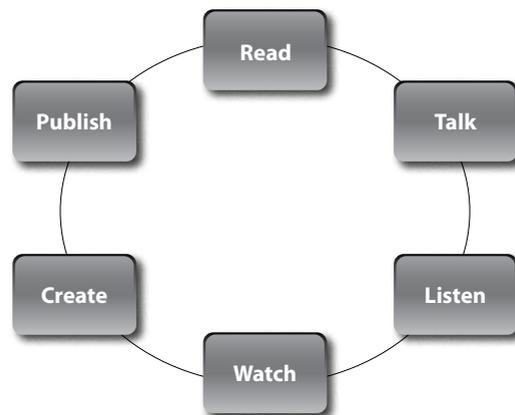
The opportunity

It is clear that an opportunity exists in mobile platforms for media houses to take advantage of. This opportunity is two-pronged for the media; first, they can use it to enhance intimacy with their existing audiences and to recruit new audiences, and second, to boost revenues while at it. It would take quick innovation and flexibility for us in the media to drink the sweet waters of either spring.

However, a caution is in order. This opportunity is tempered by the reality of widespread poverty, language barrier and cost issues across the continent. It therefore follows that not all who carry mobile handsets are able to fully enjoy their capabilities; thanks to cases of functional illiteracy.

In the final analysis, what is crystal clear is that the media must take advantage of the new platforms to follow the audience, or the audience will publish for itself.

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responsibilities include publishing to websites and mobiles.
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HOW AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MEDIA CAN TAP INTO NEW SOCIAL MEDIA AND BLOGS

03

What is special about the web as a medium? Traditional media organizations often treat the web as if it was the same as print, simply reproducing print articles online. The web can handle content differently though. Through hyperlinks, each article can be a footnote to another article, multimedia can bring content alive, and the cost of reproducing content online tends towards zero at a large scale. I and millions of others have taken to using the internet as our primary source of news and information. And we don't just consume content online – we produce it too. So it is becoming increasingly difficult for traditional media organizations to gain and hold onto our attention. This radical shift in the way we consume content has only just begun though. In the next decade it is going to affect almost every aspect of traditional media. Even if only a small percentage of the African population is currently connected to the internet, people are finding new ways to become connected, notably via mobile devices.

By Dave Duarte

Introduction

What is special about the web as a medium? Traditional media organizations often treat the web as if it was the same as print, simply reproducing print articles online. The web can handle content differently though. Through hyperlinks, each article can be a footnote to another article, multimedia can bring content alive, and the cost of reproducing content online tends towards zero at a large scale.

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This radical shift in the way we consume content has only just begun though. In the next decade it is going to affect almost every aspect of traditional media. Even if only a small percentage of the African population is currently connected to the internet, people are finding new ways to become connected, notably via mobile devices. As Bill Gates once said:

> *"We overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years, and underestimate the change that will occur in the next 10 years. Don't let yourself be lulled into inaction."*

Web 2.0, social media and social computing

One of the most promising developments on the web is the empowerment of the consumer of content to become a producer too – the rise of the "Prosumer". This is driven by a host of web-based software which is built for participation. This type of web-based software is the foundation for what is known as "Web 2.0", which in turn is the foundation for what is known as "Social Media" – probably the most significant form of media to emerge in the last decade.

Web 2.0

The term "**Web 2.0**″ is derived from a naming convention in software, where upgrades that are released in the market get numbered (like Version 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 etc). This seems to suggest that the software of the internet has been upgraded, which isn't entirely correct. However, the term is still useful if you look at it as a massive shift in the way the web is being used. Essentially, "Web 2.0″ refers to the functionality built into websites that allows people to more easily put their own information on them, to share it with others, and collaborate with them. These websites, then, shift from being simply "websites" to being tools or "applications".

Web 2.0 software tends to work better the more people use it. These people tend to share information with each other, which is where much of the utility comes in. Thus, the product of the interactions on Web 2.0 sites is often referred to as Social Media.

Social media

Social media, simply put, is a form of media created by people who post information (be that pictures, articles, videos, comments or votes) using Web 2.0 applications (such

as blogs etc.). It is primarily driven by amateurs, although big media companies have started integrating social media into their traditional offerings too. This is part of what makes social media special: it can incorporate other forms of media, increase its reach into niche communities of interest that are inter-connected on social-media platforms, and enhance its impact and effect by allowing interaction. So in social media, the audience can become collaborators.

For this reason, the flow and process of creating social media is often likened to a conversation, which happens even if no-one actually speaks directly to any person in particular! Social media depends on interactions between people as the discussion and integration of words, images, and sounds around a multitude of subjects and feelings builds shared meaning around topics and experiences. For example, if a number of people who attend the same event post their own pictures, blog posts, and videos of it online, then by looking at the array of media around this event anyone will have a better understanding of it than if they just read one newspaper report on it.

Social computing
Social computing is a broader term, which incorporates social media. It refers specifically to the "sense-making" effect of all the interactions that are carried out by groups of people online. This is an idea that has been popularized in James Surowiecki's book, *The Wisdom of Crowds*. Examples of social computing in this sense include social bookmarking, collaborative filtering (such as on Muti.co.za), online auctions, prediction markets, tagging, and verification games (A great example is Google's Image Labeler game).

A paper on Social Computing by market research company Forrester Research states:

> *Easy connections brought about by cheap devices, modular content, and shared computing resources are having a profound impact on our global economy and social structure. Individuals increasingly take cues from one another rather than from institutional sources like corporations, media outlets, religions, and political bodies. To thrive in an era of Social Computing, companies must abandon top-down management and communication tactics, weave communities into their products and services, use employees and partners as marketers, and become part of a living fabric of brand loyalists.*

Although these applications are easy to engage with and use, they can be potentially destructive, and costly to organizations and individuals who don't have a strategy and an understanding about what they hope to achieve by engaging with other people on the web in this way.

The term "Social computing" is often used interchangeably with the term "Web 2.0", although as the Forrester report points out:

> *Web 2.0 is about specific technologies (blogs, podcasts, wikis, etc) that are relatively easy to adopt and master. Social Computing is about the new*

relationships and power structures that will result. Think of it another way:
Web 2.0 is the building of the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s; Social
Computing is everything that resulted next (for better or worse): suburban
sprawl, energy dependency, efficient commerce, Americans' lust for cheap and
easy travel

Significance in Africa

After explaining these concepts I often get asked whether this participatory media is a
fad or a novelty. Media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, who paid $580 million for MySpace in
2005, presumably doesn't think it is. He said of online social media:

"To find something comparable, you have to go back 500 years to the printing
press, the birth of mass media – which, incidentally, is what really destroyed
the old world of kings and aristocracies. Technology is shifting power away
from the editors, the publishers, the establishment, the media elite. Now it's
the people who are taking control."

In Africa, however, only a tiny percentage of people are connected to the internet – 5.3%
of the population, according to the 2008 *Internet World Stats* website. Furthermore,
Arthur Goldstuck, a South African internet statistics researcher, has pointed out that
the growth in numbers of internet users in South Africa is slowing down significantly.
Importantly though, internet usage among those already connected is increasing, thanks
to better access on ADSL and 3G/HSDPA replacing dial-up. There is also an increase
in our level of experience online. In other words, even though a person in South Africa
might have been connected to the internet for a few years, it's likely that she's using it a
lot more each year as her experience and confidence online increases along with that of
her peers.

If participatory media is considered a fairly advanced way to use the web, then
a quick look at what the most popular sites in South Africa are confirms that the
experience level of the typical web user is increasing. Below are the top 10 most visited
in July 2008, the sites in bold are social-media sites:

1. Facebook.com
2. Google.co.za
3. Google.com
4. Yahoo.com
5. YouTube.com
6. Live.com (Windows Live)
7. Wikipedia
8. Blogger.com
9. MSN.com
10. News24.com

(Source: Alexa Top Sites, South Africa, July 2008, LINK http://www.alexa.com/
site/ds/top_sites?cc=ZA&ts_mode=country&lang=none)

This reflects a less utilitarian approach to the internet – previously internet banking and traditional news dominated. Now you'll see more social media sites such as Facebook, Blogger, and even the bandwidth intensive YouTube among the most popular sites in the country. The first traditional news site, news24.com, only comes in at 10th on the list.

Internet penetration in Africa may only be at 5.3%, but that is still a significant number of 51 000 000 people. If the trend for social media sites to dominate African web traffic continues, then traditional news organizations may be in trouble unless they adapt and respond to this demand for richer, more participatory, social media online.

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

Charles Darwin

Attention economics

In the old print and broadcast media world there was a cost to reaching more people with content, so the previous round of wealth in this economy was built on selling precious copies. Our wealth online now sits upon a very large device that copies promiscuously and constantly. When copies are super abundant, they become worthless. When copies are super abundant, stuff which can't be copied becomes scarce and valuable. Content and distribution are no longer as scarce, so we need to make money from whatever it is that can't be copied infinitely online – things like Ethics, Reputation, Authenticity, and Trust. Information is free, but credible, well-written interpretation of it is not.

In the online world, economic value needs to be reconsidered. Nowhere else does so much information compete for our attention than on the internet. Economic value accrues to sites that are able to consistently attract and maintain attention. And it is very real – Mark Zuckerberg, 24 years old, became a dollar billionaire within five years of launching Facebook – the value being in the large share of attention it has gained through his web-based software that helps people digitally connect with each other and share their content.

With the huge sums that are being paid for web startups that have nothing else other than a large audience, some commentators have started using the term "Attention Economy" to describe the exchange of value on the internet. To understand this term better, I quote Nobel Laureate economist Herbert Simon:

"...in an information-rich world, the wealth of information means a dearth of something else: a scarcity of whatever it is that information consumes. What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it."

However, we have yet to mine the depths of the human attention resource. The

equilibrium price for content seems to rise even as supply explodes. This may be because demand for content increases within the multitude of content niches online.

A quick look at a bar graph reflecting the traffic levels of the 50 most popular blogs in South Africa will reveal that few blogs have outstanding amounts of readers, most have a similarly low level of readership – perhaps reflecting the niche nature of blog content.

Shape of the long tail (top 50 reads over 7 days)
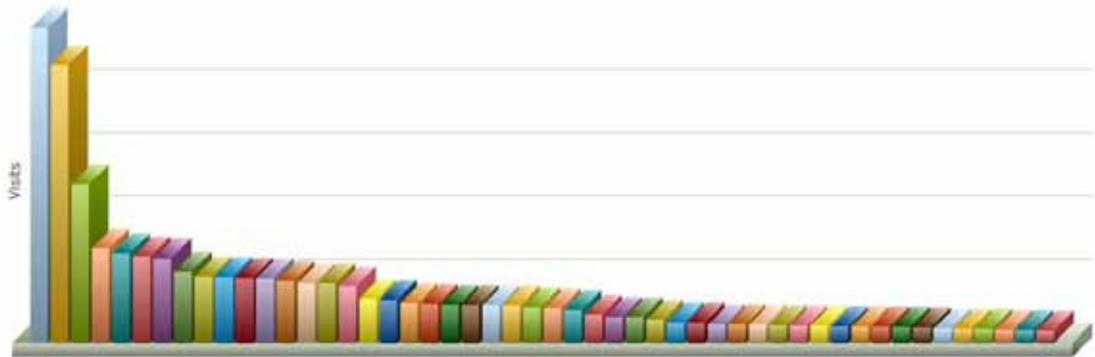
The blogosphere is driven by engagement and relevance around niche topics of interest, not high levels of traffic on each article. This long tail of micro-niches is an outward shifting demand curve. Not every production online is a block-buster, so the key to success and income in the blogosphere seems to be having small amounts of traffic across a large volume of interlinked articles.

Most bloggers are more interested in building relationships than getting high volumes of traffic. This can lend them a high level of credibility with their readership community. This credibility, trust and niche focus can yield phenomenal results for advertisers. The problem is, though, that despite the potential value it can add, advertising rates are still determined along the lines of traditional media metrics – circulation or traffic. Thus, in the blogosphere, and social media generally, a new set of metrics should be used – metrics of engagement. While it is important to pay attention to how many people visit your site, it is perhaps more important to track how long they stay there, how many comment on the content, how often they return, whether they subscribe by RSS or email, and so on.

The true essence of blogging, I believe, remains with the amateur enthusiast who writes about the subject she believes in and participates in a community of other amateur bloggers who have a similar interest in the subject.

Social Media Optimization
For professional bloggers, however, playtime is over. With all the new blogs and

other forms of social media that are appearing every day, competition for attention is definitely getting stronger. Many people are finding that having great content alone isn't enough to guarantee success online anymore. American "A-list blogger" Jason Calcanis confirmed this when he announced his 2008 retirement from blogging:

> *"Bloggers spend more time digging, tweeting, and SEOing their posts than they do on the posts themselves. In the early days of blogging Peter Rojas, who was my blog professor, told me what was required to win at blogging: "Show up every day." In 2003 and 2004 that was the case. Today? What's required is a team of social marketers to get your message out there, and a second one to manage the fall-out from whatever you've said."*

The battles for new, loyal audiences are no longer just fought on your own home page. They are fought where the people are – on Google, blogs, social-networks, email, aggregators, Twitter, Muti and anywhere else that content is shared and distributed. It is difficult to get the attention of these people except through referrals of friends or other trusted sources, so it makes sense to enable your content to be shared and passed along as easily as possible.

Brian Fetherstonhaugh, chairman and CEO of OgilvyOne Worldwide, sums it up nicely:

> *"The truth we are seeing in markets around the globe: the more you share, the more you win."*

Conclusion

Social media and blogging success online is increasingly becoming about great brand management and marketing. In concluding I would like to share a concept which memorably contains much of what I have written in this chapter.

In 2001 Idris Mootee devised 4 Ps for Web 2.0 marketers to always remember. They are *Personalization, Participation, Peer-to-Peer* and *Predictive modeling*. I will explain each briefly:

Personalization

This refers to customisation of products and services through the use of the Internet. Early examples include Dell on-line and Amazon.com, but this concept is further extended with emerging social media and advanced algorithms. Emerging technologies will continue to push this idea forward. Also Tags, RSS, etc.

Personalization of news is important, and there are many ways – for example by letting people create profiles on your site, save articles to them, and filter out irrelevant content.

Participation

This is to allow customers to participate in what the brand should stand for; what should be the product directions and even which ads to run. This concept is laying the foundation for disruptive change through democratization of information. Ratings,

tagging and comments are some participatory features which are proving very popular among social media consumers.

Peer-to-Peer
This refers to customer networks and communities where advocacy happens. The historical problem with marketing is that it is "interruptive" in nature, trying to impose a brand on the customer. This is most apparent in TV advertising. These "passive customer bases" will ultimately be replaced by the "active customer communities". Brand engagement happens within those conversations. Consider ways to enable people to share and discuss your content. For example, have buttons to help them share the article on a social bookmarking site like del.icio.us, Digg.com or Muti.co.za

Predictive modeling
This refers to ways that your site can learn about a particular user based on their past interactions with it. Amazon.com applies this well by recommending other books that a buyer might find interesting based on their previous purchases. Similarly, a media site like YouTube might refer viewers of a particular video to other similar videos. This drives people down into the long tail of your content and increases the amount of attention that they give you.

> *A powerful global conversation has begun. Through the Internet, people are discovering and inventing new ways to share relevant knowledge with blinding speed. As a direct result, markets are getting smarter – and getting smarter faster than most companies. If you only have time for one clue this year, this is the one to get... We are not seats, or eyeballs, or end-users, or consumers. We are human beings – and our reach exceeds your grasp. Deal with it.*
>
> *The Cluetrain Manifesto, Cluetrain.com*

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THE MONEY GAME: A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

04

The *Mail&Guardian* newspaper is respected as South Africa's premier weekly source of investigative news and in-depth comment and analysis. Equally famous in South Africa, on the continent and abroad, is the Mail & Guardian Online, one of the first news websites on the African continent. It was born in 1994 and since then has evolved into a one-stop destination for breaking news, quality blogs, comment, analysis and more. A completely redesigned M&G Online was launched in June 2008 to keep up with international web design trends, incorporate more user interactivity than before, and enable the use of more multimedia on the site. At the time of writing, in July 2008, the newspaper was enjoying record circulation numbers of more than 50 000 copies a week; the M&G Online, too, had increased its local readership to its highest levels yet. Still, despite their obvious success, both publications are part of a small, independent media house, M&G Media. The circumstances (and budgets) are much different from those found at other South Africa newspapers, or those at the world's big newspaper dynasties such as the *Guardian* in the United Kingdom or the *New York Times*.

By Riaan Wolmarans

Introduction

The *Mail&Guardian* newspaper is respected as South Africa's premier weekly source of investigative news and in-depth comment and analysis.

Equally famous in South Africa, on the continent and abroad is the *Mail & Guardian Online*, one of the first news websites on the African continent. It was born in 1994 and since then has evolved into a one-stop destination for breaking news, quality blogs, comment, analysis and more.

A completely redesigned *M&G Online* was launched in June 2008 to keep up with international web design trends, incorporate more user interactivity than before, and enable the use of more multimedia on the site.

At the time of writing, in July 2008, the newspaper was enjoying record circulation numbers of more than 50 000 copies a week; the *M&G Online*, too, had increased its local readership to its highest levels yet – part of a sizeable overall monthly online readership of about 500 000 unique readers (and more than four million page impressions).

Still, despite their obvious success, both publications are part of a small, independent media house, M&G Media. The circumstances (and budgets) are much different from those found at the massive Media24 and Independent Newspapers in South Africa (each encompassing many newspapers and other media products), or those at the world's big newspaper dynasties such as the *Guardian* in the United Kingdom or the *New York Times*.

Where those organisations often cross-subsidise their web operations from the profits made on their other products, at M&G Media every leg of the business has to justify its existence. So, especially in the past five years, the *M&G Online* has worked hard to ensure that readers enjoy quality news and other online offerings, while keeping a very strict eye on the bottom line.

Of course, when one talks about the *M&G Online*, it's no longer a matter of a single news website. The *M&G Online* "family" has grown to incorporate several other websites:

- *Thought Leader* (www.thoughtleader.co.za), an exclusive, invitation-only blogging site where activists, writers, journalists, politicians and all kinds of interesting people get their own blogging space (edited for quality) to share their views. *Thought Leader* has resulted in two niche spin-offs: *Sports Leader* (www.sportsleader.co.za) and *Tech Leader* (www.techleader.co.za).
- *News in Photos* (photos.mg.co.za) is the *M&G Online*'s photo site with photo galleries and a space for readers' photographs.
- *The Guide* (www.theguide.co.za) is the *M&G Online*'s entertainment listings site with the latest in music, visual arts, theatre, TV and movies.
- *Amagama* (www.amagama.com) is a free-for-all blogging site.
- *Amatomu* (www.amatomu.com) is a crafty South African blog aggregator.
- *JobConnection* (www.jobconnection.co.za) is the *M&G Online*'s job advertisements website, where employers can advertise opportunities and job seekers can search and apply for jobs.

- Several mobile sites have been launched, including ones for the *M&G Online* (m.mg.co.za), *Thought Leader* and *The Guide*.

Making money

As explained already, in a small media house every cent counts. The online growth detailed above is impressive, but none of it happened overnight; every decision to expand a current service or launch another website was made carefully and with profit in mind.

South Africa still enjoys internet penetration of only about 10% – a low share, but it does equate to four million potential readers. This audience is growing, too, with soaring internet access and the availability of broadband speed at low prices.

In this environment, the *M&G Online* now manages to contribute 15% to 18% of company revenue, and this is set to increase in future.

How was this achieved?

Up to about five years ago, online advertising was not sold by a dedicated online team. It was an add-on to newspaper advertising, a "second thought" in many instances, and even sold by third parties. Hence, low revenues, low customer satisfaction and little interest from advertisers.

Then the *M&G Online* appointed its own online advertising manager, and within a year the results were astounding. The focused, expert approach saw advertising income soar – and this only due to the efforts of a single dedicated person.

Online advertising staff need to know their product intimately. Selling online is different from selling for a newspaper: the terms, the sales pitch, the technology and the pricing are all medium-specific. Online sales executives need to become brand champions for the medium and for the product they are selling.

Also, as the online manager shares an office with the online editorial staff, communication is quick and efficient, and "shared" projects (such as sponsored special reports on big news events) are much easier to plan and run.

The *M&G Online* advertising manager has appointed three more sales executives under him – each position carefully timed to coincide with growth brought by new websites in the *M&G Online* group and by rising readership figures.

Once the online advertising department is working efficiently, it is worth going back to print advertising staff to start some cross-selling strategies.

Be careful not to alienate the print advertising executives – just like print journalists, they may be afraid of what "online" means. Start on smaller cross-selling projects and keep it simple: sell package advertising deals on supplements, for example, but reserve the big-budget online ad campaigns for the online advertising department.

Then, it doesn't help to have the right staff in place without knowing one's readers. It is crucial to analyse the audience in detail – successful advertising campaigns target audience interest.

Use industry-approved measurement tools such as those provided by Nielsen// Netratings or Google Analytics to monitor and analyse web traffic. This provides key statistics such as readers' location, income, education and so forth, and allows for

more targeted advertising. Also, don't be afraid to try different approaches in order to find an advertising strategy that works for your readers – don't just copy that of other newspapers or websites. When doing this, respond to audience feedback. Act on complaints about the quality of ads or annoying ads such as the much-dreaded pop-ups (blocked by many browsers anyway) and other online ad formats that intrude visually.

What to sell?

Keep up with trends in the online publishing industry to see what formats are in vogue.

Currently the move is to fewer but bigger ads on websites. These bring in the same or more revenue but have benefits such as a less cluttered layout, meaning readers feel less "bombarded" by ads.

Move ads from peripheral spots into readers' view. Plan advertising layout around editorial and advertising concerns: find those spots where ads are most obvious to readers (for example, somewhere in the middle of copy) but – importantly – not too irritating or distracting. Sometimes limiting the design of ads in obvious spots helps to make them less annoying to readers: don't allow bright colours or flashing images, for example.

At times one has to put up with some reader complaints in order to appease a valuable advertiser: just be extremely careful not to alienate readers too much in such situations.

Don't forget to allow for smaller advertisements scattered around your website. A service like Brabys serves small ads with no intervention needed. One could also list "online services" – paid links to useful services on the web such as accommodation and travel services, or insurance quotes – that are quick to sell and place. The same goes for one-line text ads that could be displayed almost like Google Ads.

Google Ads can be served in a variety of places and are extremely easy to run. They are efficient and relevant (most of the time – do keep an eye on what they are offering when served alongside content of a sensitive nature). However, Google takes an undisclosed but big percentage of earnings, so keep these advertisements for areas that are difficult to sell – such as ad spots below the screen "fold" – and save the premium spots for your own advertising.

A handy tip is always to have quality house ads as back-ups to avoid embarrassing empty spaces popping up when the standard advertising fails for whatever reason.

Of course one can fit only so many advertising spots on to a website before it starts resembling a patchwork quilt. Therefore, try to expand your web offering – this creates more advertising space to sell.

Look at your website and see which of its elements could exist on their own. For the *M&G Online*, this was true for blogs, entertainment listings and photo galleries, hence *Amagama*, *Thought Leader*, *Sports Leader*, *Tech Leader*, *The Guide* and *News in Photos*.

Set up a range of email newsletters – daily or weekly, and highlighting different parts or aspects of your websites. Readers love these, they drive traffic to your websites and they are a useful tool to keep readers informed about special events, competitions

and the like.

It's also the age of multimedia, so if you start offering podcasts or video, it's time to look at selling what may classically be seen as "radio ads" or "TV ads". These can be incorporated into any audio or video offering you may have, and can be anything from a simple read of an advertising line to a full "TV ad" displaying before or after a video clip. Sponsorships for such services also help finance their roll-out.

Lastly, don't forget that content "gathering dust" in your online archive can make you money. Use a service like Google AdSense to serve ads on that content.

Going mobile

The strategy explained above has served the *M&G Online* well – but this in South Africa, which has higher internet penetration than most African countries. Ubiquitous on the continent, however, are cellphones: the future is set to be mobile, not PC-based. Therefore one cannot ignore mobile in any sound advertising strategy.

Reuters (2008) has estimated that there are already 3,3-billion mobile users worldwide (compared with only 1,5-billion TV viewers and 1,1-billion people accessing the web through desktop computers). In Japan, as usual ahead of the rest of the world, more than 70% of web access already happens via cellphone.

It's clear that mobile is poised to be a key medium in Africa too. BBC figures state that 61% of the continent's WAP traffic comes from Nigeria, and 19% from South Africa.

Mobile has a bigger reach and brings a much broader audience that enjoys relatively cheap access to telephonic and web services.

One does not need a whole mobile division to test the waters here. Editorial content, for example, can be automatically taken from one's website and displayed on mobile – no human intervention needed. Screen technology to ease the use of the full text of articles is rapidly evolving and advanced yet affordable mobile handsets are launched almost daily.

So what can be sold on cellphones? The *M&G Online* has kept it simple as a start: a small and basic ad running on its free mobile breaking news site using a service called AdMob. (Google is also entering the market with Ad Words.)

There is plenty of opportunity for growth, though. Remember that cellphone users are used to paying for services received on their phones, so it's not hard to implement affordable subscription services: readers can subscribe to SMS news alerts, for example, enter competitions or submit comments on content – all at a very low price, which, when seen in terms of mass volume, becomes revenue.

Sponsor it

As briefly mentioned above, advertising should not only involve selling actual ads. Sponsorships are another crucial way of generating income – and these help one offer services or products that would otherwise be unaffordable.

Plan special editorial reports and projects well ahead of big news events, such as the announcement of the national budget, the 2010 World Cup and so forth. The advertising and editorial staff can work together to sell these products to sponsors,

whose money in turn help improve the products. Other products that may benefit from sponsorships are multimedia such as podcasts – accommodate "radio ads" and live reads; video advertising; and even photo galleries. Also, regular competitions with good prizes attract higher web traffic and keep readers and advertisers happy.

What not to sell

Be very, very careful when trying to sell content online.

The *M&G Online* for a long time had an online subscription-only content model for content from the weekly newspaper (not the daily breaking news, which was free to access), but there was no meaningful increase in circulation. Web users are used to getting content for free, and not many would pay to read a news item on one website if they can get similar news elsewhere for free.

Hence the *M&G Online* dropped its online subscription model (as have other publications such as the *New York Times*). Now quality newspaper content gets more exposure online, while record circulation for newspaper and record readership online have been recorded since – allaying fears by editorial staff that readers would stop buying the newspaper.

However, do note the changing role of newspapers: especially daily publications have to accept that breaking news now happens online, and newspapers have to find new ways to add value to news that was already presented (perhaps brief and factually) to online readers.

What about reader registration, though? The relaunched *M&G Online* requires readers to register (a process that is quick, easy and free) before they can comment on articles or save article clippings, for example, or subscribe to and manage their newsletters. This is of course another way to learn more about your readers and their reading patterns – valuable information for advertising staff.

The message

Be bold and creative. Try new ideas and new ad campaigns, but monitor your success carefully and don't be afraid to go back and start over.

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NEW MEDIA: WHERE IS RADIO GOING IN AFRICA?

05

It used to be fairly easy to set up a radio station in even the most remote parts of Africa. That is, providing one had the right equipment. Equipment usually meant an FM transmitter, a studio desk, editing equipment, CD and cassette players, and a generator to keep the operation going. The resulting radio station often instantly became the main link between the community and the outside world, its main source of information, as well as a sort of community billboard, post office and newspaper all rolled into one. As rapidly as technology is developing in the rest of the world, in Africa things have moved at a slower pace, and, until recently, one could still count on the relatively widespread availability of cheap battery-powered transistor radios in virtually every rural market – no matter how remote. The playing field has changed dramatically since the days of transistor radios and journalists who grew up splicing together bits of quarter inch audio tape. In most cases, the changes are positive and welcome; perhaps the most significant and most positive innovation is the rapid proliferation of cell phones and the extension of cell phone coverage, which has greatly enhanced the free-flow of information.

By David Smith

Introduction

It used to be fairly easy to set up a radio station in even the most remote parts of Africa. That is, providing one had the right equipment. Equipment usually meant an FM transmitter, a studio desk, editing equipment, CD and cassette players, and a generator to keep the operation going.

The resulting radio station often instantly became the main link between the community and the outside world, its main source of information, as well as a sort of community billboard, post office and newspaper all rolled into one.

As rapidly as technology is developing in the rest of the world, in Africa things have moved at a slower pace, and, until recently, one could still count on the relatively widespread availability of cheap battery-powered transistor radios in virtually every rural market – no matter how remote.

The playing field has changed dramatically since the days of transistor radios and journalists who grew up splicing together bits of quarter inch audio tape. This paper outlines a few aspects of the changing landscape and considers their value. In most cases, the changes are positive and welcome; perhaps the most significant and most positive innovation is the rapid proliferation of cell phones and the extension of cell phone coverage, which has greatly enhanced the free-flow of information.

Effects of the digital revolution

The digital revolution has attempted to change radio itself, with only marginal results. Ten years ago the first of two AfriStar satellites was launched from French Guiana, beginning the somewhat ill-fated WorldSpace experiment in Africa. A noble idea with good intentions, WorldSpace aimed to introduce digital audio radio reception to parts of the continent where reception was poor.

All might have worked had the listener not had to first purchase a specialised new receiver as well as a subscription fee for receiving the content – content which remains, for the most part, anything but local. Even in the wealthy European and North American markets, satellite radio struggles to survive, while FM and, to a lesser extent Medium Wave, broadcasts continue to remain popular with listeners. WorldSpace's relatively limited success is a very good example of the importance of market research.

A consortium of international broadcasters is at an advanced stage in the development of digital short wave. Digital Radio Mondiale, or DRM as it is known, allows shortwave broadcasters to send their signals over great distances, as is the case with traditional shortwave, however at almost FM quality rather than the scratchy, static-filled sound SW listeners are accustomed to.

It sounds like a good plan and it is, except for an important catch not dissimilar to the WorldSpace dilemma – receiving digital shortwave signals also requires the purchase of a new radio. At the moment, these radios are still very much in the experimental stage, and are priced well out of reach of the average African listener.

Traditional shortwave therefore remains an important broadcast platform in Africa, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Apart from audio quality, the other weakness of shortwave is the delivery of local content; shortwave, by its nature, covers

large areas and hence provides more general content than radios broadcasting on FM only.

So where does radio go from here if new media is having trouble re-inventing the receiver? The answer is not in the radio itself, but in the cell phone. It may surprise many to learn that the largest manufacturer of radios is not Sony or Philips or any other similar international manufacturer – it is Nokia. That's simply because Nokia includes a radio on most of its handsets.

Africa now counts more than a quarter of a billion cell phones; that number is growing faster on this continent than on any other. These days most of those cell phones are no longer confined to South Africa and the Maghreb, the richest areas of the continent. Nomads in the Chadian desert speak to politicians in the capital N'Djamena while riding their camels. River boat captains on the Congo River use cell phones to check on conditions upstream at their next port of call.

Easier access to information doesn't necessarily mean consumers are going to take advantage of it. University professors in the USA have found that many technically savvy students tend to have less general knowledge about world affairs than their parents did. In much of Africa, however, a hunger for news from outside the local community as well as the opportunities presented by leap-frogging over old analogue and fixed-line communications is having quite the opposite effect. The cell phone is taking on the "*master's voice*" of the state broadcaster in what could be a battle to the death!

Not so long ago state broadcasters provided the only locally-generated information available to the vast majority of people living outside the relatively sophisticated media landscape of the capital city. Any viewpoints from sources other than those approved by *the President's Office* were usually provided by international broadcasters, notably the BBC and RFI. In these same areas, newspapers were, and often remain, too expensive, unavailable due to distribution and transport infrastructure problems, or inaccessible due to low literacy rates.

Kenya's December 2007 elections showed the world that heavy-handed attempts to control the dissemination of information over traditional radio services, in this case by banning live news bulletins, failed due to the proliferation of cell phones in rural areas and people's ability to send and receive text messages. Political parties, election observers and concerned citizens all used this means to ensure that messages reached target audiences in real time, despite restrictions placed on radio broadcasts.

Convergence

This phenomena leads to the subject of convergence. Is a cell phone still a telephone, or is the mobile phone going the way of the dodo, to be replaced by a new instrument that does much more, *including* making and receiving phone calls? Spend a day with teenagers, or even pre-teenagers with cell phones virtually anywhere in Africa and what becomes obvious is that the device most of us call a cell phone is being used predominantly for purposes other than telephoning. Chatting, listening to music, taking photographs and even listening to the radio is taking precedence over actual speaking.

The ability to send text messages is also helping to turn radio into a much more interactive form of media. There are numerous examples of how this is happening across

the continent. One of the quickest ways to check the pulse of what Africans are thinking about just about any big story in the news is to listen to current affairs radio programmes where SMSs from listeners are read out over the air. The BBC's morning programme to Africa, Network Africa, is bombarded by text messages on a daily basis instantly after running stories or interviews ranging from elections in Zimbabwe to peacekeeping in Sudan to the distribution of oil wealth in Nigeria, and everything in between. The text messages read out on the radio provide a sort of pressure release for the millions of people who previously felt they had no public outlet for frustrations with politics at home.

This outlet is not confined to international broadcasters located off-shore. South Africa's public broadcaster, the SABC, reads text messages from listeners on air on all of its language services. Community radio stations from Sierra Leone to Kenya do the same. Prior to the arrival of the cell phone, the only way for listeners to interact with radio studios and listeners was for the listener to physically visit the studio, for the studio to send reporters to the field, or for listeners to rely on the post office. None of these methods are ideal, as they require a lot of time, considerable expense, and, in the case of the post office, a greater than average chance that the letter will not reach its destination.

The flow of information sent by SMS also has its uses when travelling in the opposite direction – that is back to the individual cell phone owners. Several projects have been set up to help small-scale farmers get the best prices for their crops when sending produce to market in the urban areas. In Senegal, for example, cell phone companies have teamed up with development agencies and local unions to survey trends and prices in Dakar markets on a daily basis. This information, stored on pocket computers with a mobile application, is sent free to farmers, traders, hoteliers and others via SMS. The information is also posted on the internet. Similar programmes exist elsewhere and are helping rural farmers better understand how to do business with the city.

While this new access to information is certainly welcome, there are caveats. At a recent conference in Kampala sponsored by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership at Rhodes University, there was much discussion about whether today's cell phone owners are potentially also new information providers. Is this ability to send a text message to a radio station or a newspaper an easy means of creating a network of citizen journalists?

The short answer is no. Text messages should carry no more weight in a newsroom than a letter or word of mouth. One of the greatest concerns this author has regarding convergence and new media is *credibility*.

The temptation for a news editor to use information coming in from a previously under-reported area in a distant and poorly-accessible region is great. In this world of rapidly developing technology which is enabling individuals to extend the reach of their personal opinions and unsolicited comment, there is a place for such unsubstantiated comment – the internet and blogs.

Newsrooms, notably radio newsrooms, where the ability to turn around information quickly is paramount, must beware. Credibility will be the first casualty of any newsroom not verifying information received from the general public. Cell phone owners are not immune to personal agendas.

The issue of verification and credibility almost seamlessly leads to the topic of censorship. The internet and text messaging – as once again was seen during the presidential elections in Kenya – demonstrate how information can continue to flow when authorities place restrictions on traditional electronic media.

There are few people on this continent who have not, at one time or another, found that the radio station they normally listen to has temporarily gone off the air. At times of political unrest or military instability, radio stations tend to be early victims of government insecurity. When France or the United Kingdom have done something to offend an African government, local relays of RFI and BBC tend to fall silent. Rwanda comes to mind as a good example of such action. It is no secret that relations between Rwandan President Paul Kagame and the French government are cool at best. The Kigali relay of Radio France Internationale was one of the first victims of Mr Kagame's administration.

In Chad's capital N'Djamena, a local community station often critical of the government, Radio Liberté, is occasionally closed by official orders. In Sudan, non-government radio stations are not allowed to produce their own news bulletins. In Angola, only the state broadcaster is allowed to operate beyond the capital, Luanda. Zimbabweans are quite familiar with restrictions placed upon the use of text messaging, while cell phone coverage is sometimes interrupted over large swathes of African territory when presidents are on the move or military operations are underway. Chadians and Sudanese always know something is up when the network is down! Kenya's president allegedly tried to stop SMS traffic during the 2007 election, but he was convinced not to pursue that plan.

The list of restrictions is long, and certainly not confined to the countries listed above. The advent of the internet has to some extent helped circumvent these restrictions, whether it is through on-line newspapers, streamed radio programmes, or content from special interest groups. This is certainly important, especially in countries such as Zimbabwe and Eritrea, where access to information from sources other than those controlled by the government is limited. The weakness of these media is, of course, accessibility, which remains low and is likely to remain so throughout large parts of the continent for some time. Cost also remains a factor. Internet connection time, even in some rural areas, is sometimes calculated in dollars rather than in local currency.

Fragile platforms

These examples merely serve to illustrate that the freedoms and facilities offered by new media continue to rest on fragile platforms. Not so long ago a newspaper, radio or TV station could be shut down simply by putting a padlock on the door. Today, cutting the electricity supply or denying access to microwave relays or links to satellites can achieve the same ends. To some extent, the more things change, the more they remain the same.

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FROM "NOW" TO "NEXT" IN AFRICAN NEWSROOMS' USE OF ICTS: THE CASE OF NIKA

06

While much media in developed countries is beyond debating convergence and already embracing Web 2.0, much African media is still very limited in terms of ICT use and Internet presence. However, the potential exists to exploit low-cost content management systems that can enable African newsrooms to enter the changing information universe at an advanced level but which are also relevant to the ICT landscape around the continent (especially via cellphone articulation possibilities). Against this background, the Nika software project currently under development can play a central role. The experience of its evolution also holds valuable lessons for the adoption and innovation of ICT for African media.

By Guy Berger

Introduction

In Senegal 2008, the Panos Institute runs a workshop to teach journalists advanced Internet searching. Many of the (male) participants have never actually operated a computer: in their newsrooms, they hand-write the stories which are inputted into computers by (women) typists. At *Grocott's Mail* in South Africa, reporters till recently were saving stories in folders on the Windows desktop – a system that led to duplication and lost files, while the erratically saved stories and pictures did not constitute an electronic archive. In Kenya, already three years ago, *The Nation* was already utilising an expensive high-end work-flow management system called Digital Technologies International. In Zambia, the newsroom of *The Post* is moving towards a wireless-enabled Apple laptop for each of its reporters. At the Mail & Guardian in South Africa, an aggregator for African blogs by invitation has been built, and there are scores of thematised expert blogs being rolled out under the banner of "Thoughtleader".

These cameos represent the range of newsroom technology around the continent. The median, however, is made up of those media houses working with systems that are very far from advanced workflow management, content repurposing, and multi-platform delivery. By way of contrast, the Editor & Publisher conference in Las Vegas in May 2008 barely mentioned printed newspaper products. The focus was not even on debating multi-skilling. It was, instead, primarily on producing content for the internet, relating to online social networking, citizen journalists and digital community participation, and data mining electronic information about audiences. The exhibition stalls were mainly displays of high-end content management systems that can make all this happen. From the point of view of small-scale African media, the international digital divide seems to get wider by the day.

Spelling out the issues

It has been at least two decades since computer power first started to be integrated into mainstream newsrooms anywhere in the world – for example, in the Atex system. Back then, however, there were no searchable electronic archives. Text input and editing and setting was a separate system to analogue photo processing and editing, and there was no fully-fledged DTP initially. The process in many places is now primarily digital and, although different software programmes may still be used to perform different functions, they have become compatible.

It is with the rise of the Internet that these systems have further evolved to become comprehensive and more seamless, and have also come to be called "content management systems" (CMS). The term can cover more or less scope, as will be evident in what follows.

Firstly, the nomenclature of "**content**" reflects the change from the word "copy", which historically meant words to be published in a newspaper. The same information is now viewed at a more general level as a "platform-agnostic" asset that can go out on many devices and in a variety of forms. For instance, words may now go to a publication or to the web (in flexible designs), or appear as an email message, and even be converted from words to audio. In regard to broadcasting, "content" is sometimes separated into

different components, called "assets" which are stored, retrieved and combined through a Media Asset Management (MAM) system (Hans, nd) This is a different sense of "asset" to that mentioned below.

Secondly, the notion of a CMS also goes hand-in-hand with the storage of information in **databases**, and thence according to defined fields (eg. headline, byline, associated picture) which contribute towards the metadata about the content. As such, content becomes easily searchable (one of the most popular facilities for the web, and also for reporters doing background for an article). In addition, content can also be sent out in segments (eg. headlines can go to cellphones; headlines and intros can go out as RSS feeds). Accordingly, one observer has defined content management as the separation of information (text, graphics, audio and/or video) from its representation on a device (such as computer, TV, PDA, newsprint, etc.) (Gunnarson, 2000).

In recent years, a CMS database worth its salt also provides for two more facilities: categories and tags/keywords. Accordingly, content can be classified as sport, and its particular tags would be the names of the teams and/or key players and/or coach, and even more abstract descriptors (appropriate to the story) – eg. fans, nationalism, fashion, etc. which could be relevant to searchability and semantic linkages to other content. All this is also stored in formats conducive to Search Engine Optimisation so that the content shows up in search engines. You can begin to see how powerful all this is, in terms of publishing potential, and targeting different information needs. Finally, a contemporary CMS database functionality will incorporate features related to Web 2.0: the incorporation of audience news and comment, citizen journalism submissions, polls, and social networking tools (eg. so a user can see what a community of readers is most interested in).

Thirdly, what can also be noted is that the phrase "CMS" is most often used mainly to describe how content can be digitally distributed *after* it is created, reflecting thereby the interest of the newspaper industry in converting its print content to online. However, it should not be assumed that there are no implications for *prior* phases of media production by employees – the input, rather than the output, side of the equation. Categorising and tagging, for instance, become new tasks for the content creators. And the whole workflow and editing can take on new significances.

What this brings us to is the functionality of **workflow management**. This is about the planning, tracking and flow of a story for one or more platforms. That this is complex is shown by the information that, apparently, to map workflows at CNN, 300 to 400 scenarios were produced that in turn generated 2,500 requirements to be translated back into individual pieces of software and hardware.

Workflow management systems cover the circuit of routines and technologies that move raw data (press releases, interview notes, reports, photo images, etc.) through stages of processing until they reach the target audience. For example, they need to incorporate much or all of the range of software programmes for email, telephony records and/or recording, wordprocessing, image-editing, layout and design, and publishing in various data forms.

Version control is one dimension of workflow management, for instance for

quality purposes, or where content that is shortened for print does not result in wasted content – the extra can still find a useful home online. Another dimension is business process analysis: it becomes feasible via a CMS to monitor the progress of production and whether a crisis is likely to arise due to some stories not materialising. Remote transmission capacities are also important in an age of mobile journalism. In other words, workflow issues are very much implicated in a CMS.

Closely linked to workflow management, but not necessarily in every system to this end, is performance management functionality. It is also possible to electronically monitor which reporters have continuing trouble meeting their deadlines. Performance management systems include: who misses deadlines; is the whole paper heading to be late; whose copy needs the most subbing; who forgets to spell-check their work; whose stories consistently score in excellence or make page one?

Fourthly, knowledge management can also be a key part of a CMS (Quinn 2002). This surfaces and organises intuitive or private knowledge held by individuals such as news contacts and their numbers, making it available more broadly. Knowledge Management can incorporate easy access to the media house's style guide, editorial policies, an electronic roster of duties, and who has what equipment out of the store (Edwards, 2004). One newspaper editor has been described as seeing knowledge management in terms of getting everyone in his newsroom to use a networked scheduling calendar, a networked contact manager, a networked database of story assignments, and a networked news discussion forum (Kerry Northrup, 2001). What really revolutionises newsrooms, however, is a deeper understanding of knowledge management as covering the cycle of the generation of knowledge, and also its recognition and codification (eg, by means of categories and tags as mentioned above) and storage. Then, understanding that retrieval, refinement (eg. using software to further analyse the knowledge), and transmission are also included in the scope of the concept. (Ruggles, 1998).

Knowledge management often goes hand-in-hand with an intranet. An intranet requires effective capture, storage, retrieval and use of information in such a way that it can be used as knowledge to enrich the organisation. The BBC, for instance, even offers internal online training (compulsory in some subjects) on its intranet. The existence of an intranet has been described as being the factor that "converts a CMS from a glorified workflow system into a good knowledge management system" (Garman, 2006).

Fifthly, DRM – **digital rights management** – can be part of a CMS. This entails treating content as potential capital assets. What can be valorised, i.e.: used for commercial transactions to generate money? Archived? Original full-length documents or interviews? Photographs? Syndicatable stories? Can agency copy be included on a website? Do freelancers get paid more for repurposed content? Digital rights management, covering questions of intellectual property and copyright, can certainly be part of a CMS.

Sixthly, in some respects, **enterprise management** issues can also be implicated in a CMS. From switchboard services to circulation figures, from advertising click-throughs to audience metrics, all this data can be aggregated and analysed by an

over-arching CMS. Likewise CRM – customer relationship management, and VRM – vendor relationship management where audiences drive the relationship.

A CMS can cover all or only some of the above six functionalities. For instance, you can have an engine to publish to the web, but it may not necessarily include a DRM system for managing permissions, rights or assets. You can also have a workflow system that doesn't provide for content repurposing. There is no God-given requirement that a CMS should cover the entire waterfront. However, it is helpful to have a comprehensive and holistic understanding that does not restrict this understanding of a CMS to just one area of impact.

Technology as a means, not an end

According to Northrup (2000), smart newsrooms are needed to replace the following set-ups in many media houses:

- Enormous volumes of raw news material are generated, but only the little bit that is published gets saved.
- Crowds of trained journalists are hired, but then tapped for only a fraction of their collective news judgment and expertise.
- Poor communication so that it is common to have two desks chasing the same story and not know it, or to have a photographer show up for an assignment that has been cancelled, or to have an important message ignored on the desk of someone who is on holiday.
- A new reporter taking over for someone who suddenly left has to reinvent the beat almost from scratch because most of the newsroom's detailed knowledge of the topic and sources went out the door with the departing staff member.
- It is difficult to find anyone who has a complete overview of what stories are going where in the next edition, what the priorities are, in case of redirecting human resources to maximize efforts.

For Northrup, a smart newsroom does not only manage the movement of information around the newsroom, but also manages what is known about the story.

What is implicit in all the above is the overall strategic understanding of the media business. CMS software (and hardware) depend on how much a newspaper begins to see itself as a digital age news business more generally. As an example of this, Paul Bradshaw has come up with the notion of a news diamond. www.editorsweblog.org/newsrooms_and_journalism/2007/09/the_revolution_in_online_journ.php

He describes the different kinds of content that a media house can generate today:

The News Diamond

Speed

Alert
Draft
Article/Package
Analysis/Reflection
Context
Interactivity
Customisation

Depth   *Depth*

User control
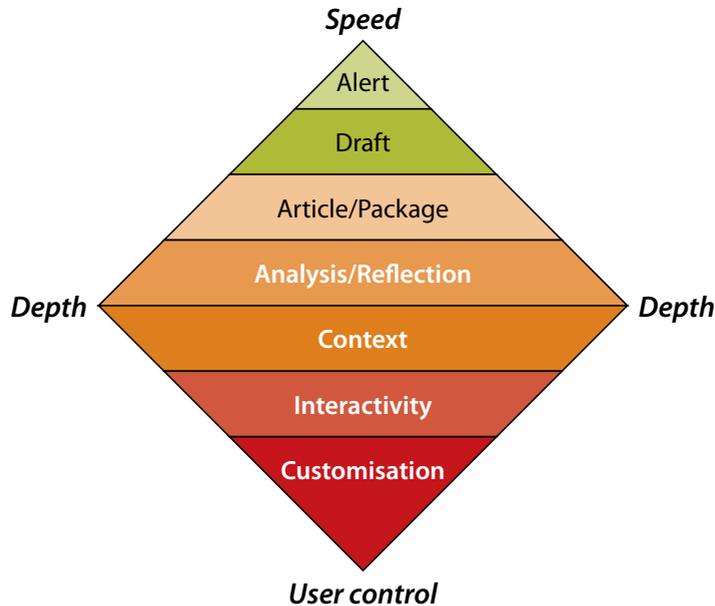
After: Paul Bradshaw, onlinejournalismblog.wordpress.com

In more detail, he suggests using contemporary technology for the following outputs:

> *Speed*
> Alert (mobile, email)
> Draft (blog)
> Article/package (print, audio, video forms)
> > *Depth*
> > Context (hyperlinks, embedded content - widgets)
> > Analysis/reflection (article/package in various formats)
> > Interactivity (flash, chats, forums, wikis)
> > Customisation (rss, ratings, social networking)

With good management and a good CMS, these outputs can be done in parallel, or progressively; in parts or (if it's a really big story) in full. Some of them can be automated. As Campbell (2004) notes, the change is about a new way of working, building the system around the story rather than just using the technology to help find and keep track of information. The system almost is the story, in the sense that everything that happens in relation to a particular story is immediately accessible by everyone involved, in real time. It's about collaboration and communication, but happening as work progresses rather than after the fact. Or, as Goteborgs-Posten's Per-

Arne Fernsund put it: "It's all about getting away from the premise of most traditional editorial systems, i.e. that we are producing a printed paper once a day." (IFRA Expo 2004, Gazette; peccatte.karefil.com/software/IfraExpo04_GazetteWednesday.pdf).

What also becomes important in understanding a CMS in context is the whole policy of a media organisation about rights. Accordingly, whether all pictures are made available, and in high resolution, is a "political" decision, rather than a technical one. Whether pdf versions of a paper's print editions will be offered online is similarly not a technical matter in the first instance. Naturally, if a site is going to offer premium content or subscriptions, that too will inform the CMS design.

A CMS is also implicated in new jobs. Multiskilling is one area. Another is the speed and focus of journalism and whether fast technical turn-around means a focus on meeting deadlines at the expense of fact-checking. A CMS also has to be seen in the context of occupational culture. *CommunicationsWeek* 1995 cites a Delphi Consulting Group survey of 400 users and 38 vendors to the effect that cultural resistance is considered by the biggest single sub group (22% of the total) as the No. 1 obstacle to putting a workflow system in place.

Open source software (OSS)

One of the significant developments for Africa in recent years has been the rise of OSS. This is not necessarily *free* software, although it often is. Rather, it is software which makes its code available so that geeks are free to tinker with it. That makes it different to what is called "proprietary" software like that sold by Microsoft. Most Internet servers around the world now operate on the basis of customised Apache OSS software. Likewise, many people today use the OSS Mozilla Firefox browser instead of (the arguably inferior) Internet explorer to surf the web. At the Grocott's Mail, reporters use the Open Office suite of tools, rather than Microsoft Office – thereby saving the company some R3000 per workstation. Another advantage of OSS is that it is possible to modify the coding so as to change the language used – for example from English to kiSwahili. It is also possible to call on the support of a global community of computer scientists.

From a CMS perspective, increasing numbers of newspapers (and others) are resorting to an OSS software known as Drupal. Drupal's self-stated goals are to support and enhance the potential of the Internet as a medium where diverse and geographically-separated individuals and groups can collectively produce, discuss, and share information and ideas. "With a central interest in and focus on communities and collaboration, Drupal's flexibility allows the collaborative production of online information systems and communities". (http://www.drupal.org/mission)

Through this culture of sharing, it is possible to get an enormous amount of wisdom and experience – for example on the drupal.org/newspapers. For instance, in a commentary on the New York Observer's use of Drupal, one person wrote: "First of all, great job guys! I'm definitely using this as an example to show clients the power of Drupal. This site has 90% of the functionality of NYTimes.com, but I'm guessing at less than 10% of the cost of development (probably a conservative estimate). http://drupal.org/node/141187

Other Drupal-based media sites are www.shfwire.com and the radio station www. kpsu.org. In Denmark, national news sites such as Information.dk, as well as media sites Mediawatch.dk and Journalisten.dk have swapped their use of expensive and often complicated CMS for the free open-source software.

It is worth noting, however, that even though there is global experience sharing, as one observer puts it: "The price of Drupal is an in-house developer. You get some good building blocks, but you have to think of Drupal as a framework rather than as plug and play: you have to discover everything for yourself." (Nikolai Thyssen, head of new media for Information.dk). http://blogs.journalism.co.uk/editors/2008/02/29/online-journalism-scandinavia-danish-news-sites-benefit-from-doing-things-%e2%80%98the-drupal-way%e2%80%99/

Using Drupal for a print-to-web site, you can exploit the functionality, for example, to:

- Customise what kind of data you wish to have in an article. You can, for example, have not only header-teaser-body, but also newspaper section, editor, issue number, publishing date, links, etc.
- Automatically create article lists according to selected criteria, showing latest sports articles, highest rated article during this week, all articles written by a chosen reporter, or the three latest comments on your newspaper site. These lists may be presented as frontpages in different sections of your site.
- Set end-dates for articles, to unpublish them automatically.
- Allow a group of users to access only some articles or only parts of articles, while another group of users may access more content on your website.
- Use different layout themes on different parts of your website, for example to make your Lifestyle section of your web site look different than the Sports section.
- Automatically display recommended reading to a user, based on how that user rated previously read articles.
- Create RSS-feeds to alert users when new content has been published.
- Allow comments from readers to be published instantly, or after approval.
- Allow editors, reporters and other selected users to add, edit or delete selected types of content, including comments from readers.
- See statistics of how readers navigate your site, and where your readers come from. http://groups.drupal.org/node/5790

Steve Yelvington, a leading media strategist in community sites for newspapers, describes Drupal as "an extremely powerful, flexible content and community management platform." That some geek support is needed to set it up, however, is evident in his remark that a site needs to use the right Drupal modules: front page, image, img_assist, nodequeue, views, buddylist, tagadelic, htmlcorrector, mysite and a couple of custom modules for integrating with our proprietary registration and photo blogging systems.

Although, he adds that these modules can work in terms of "Drop. Click.

Configure". http://www.newspapernext.org/2005/09/report_availability_1.htm

Nika genesis

Meaning "to give" in southern Africa's Nguni languages, Nika was a project initiated by Vincent Maher at the New Media Lab in the Rhodes School of Journalism and Media Studies. He wrote a prototype version, covering mainly workflow and automated web-publishing, in 2005, using a mix of OSS and proprietary software (Coldfusion in his case). This was for use by students covering the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. Two outcomes followed: research, and thoroughgoing software development and trials. In more detail:

Research

With support from Freevoice, a Dutch foundation, a major research project was conducted into the state of CMS development in selected media houses around Africa, and undertaken mainly by MA students at Rhodes during 2005 and 2006. The study into eight newsrooms (see Berger and Mgwili-Sibanda, 2006) showed a widespread lack of exploitation of technology in operations. In most cases, information was not efficiently archived or made searchable, nor was it being extensively or easily repurposed. The result was newsrooms were unable to utilise their own knowledge capital (such as an online library archive, including of digital photos), and websites that were erratic and superficial. Only one newsroom (*The Namibian*) used Open Source applications in one of its operations. On the other hand, smaller African newsrooms generally had less expensive proprietary software in place, meaning they were not overly invested in legacy systems keeping them to the past. On the whole, the findings highlighted the potential value of an OSS system and the published study further elaborated on the optimum components and character of such a CMS. All this helped shape and motivate what then happened.

Development

In 2007, support from Dutch Foundation NiZa was obtained to develop the project on a fully OSS basis, and with the potential to replicate it elsewhere. This support was based on the recognition that there were no similar OSS products positioned within the scope of newsroom automation and CMS services for small scale newspapers.

Nika was motivated to NiZa not as an technology end in itself, but as a way to radically lower the threshold for journalistic entrepreneurs to set up new publications, and as a way to improve effectiveness and reach, and therefore viability, of existing small-scale papers.

The idea was a "golden database" for publishing, along the lines of the graphic on page 56:
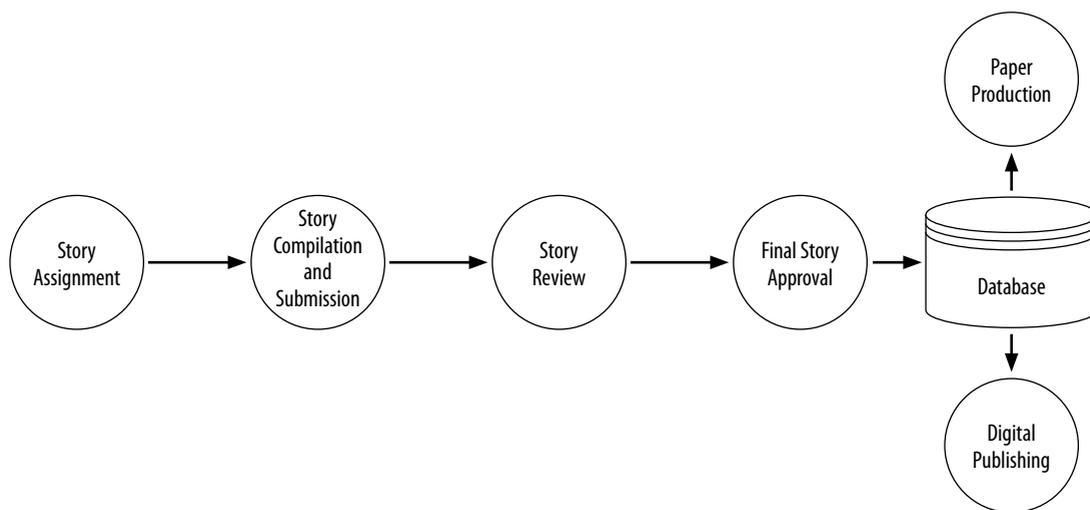
The Nika project proposal summed up the envisaged benefits of the system as:

- Increased business efficiency via process automation
- Increased asset integrity via digital storage, automatic archiving, etc
- Automated website and features like email feeds to ensure that newspaper's content is disseminated more widely
- Increased preparedness for media convergence and content repurposing for new media platforms like SMS and 3G technology
- *Grocotts' Mail* as a test bed will be able to offer real-world training examples for organisations interested in using the system.

An initial version was produced and piloted on *Cue*, a nine-day newspaper produced by the Rhodes University's School of Journalism and Media Studies during the 2007 National Arts Festival. Out of that, several lessons were drawn. First, that a CMS needs timeous introduction so that users can be properly trained and become accustomed it.

Second, that it is better to begin with a simple set of functionalities, rather than go the whole hog and seek to provide all the technical possibilities. Third, that the articulation with external software such as word processing or picture editing can pose problems. Fourth, that ultimately audio and video should also be accommodated in a Nika database (see Veweij, 2008).

A new version of Nika was then generated, this time using Drupal, with the work now being done by Prof Peter Wentworth of Seven Fountains Consulting. The specific application destination this time was the *Grocott's Mail*, which up till this point had been using an inefficient folder based system, and manually copying stories onto CDs for physical cut-and-paste onto the website.

The value of Nika to this environment has been underlined by the existing system at *Grocott's*. As elaborated by Garman (2006) and Dogu (2008), stories and pictures at the paper were stored in an incoherent variety of folders in the server, but this folder

system seems incoherent. As well as there being a plethora of seemingly unstructured and unrelated folders on the server, a lot of material was saved in various local drives. The structure and naming conventions of these varied depending on whose PC these are created. While it was relatively easy to navigate to the core saved content on the network, it took at least five mouse clicks to get there. Unfinished stories were saved in a variety of places such as desktops and various removable storage devices.

This "system" often caused confusion and there have been some instances when incorrect versions of some stories were picked up for lay-out. Files accumulated and different versions of stories could appear in the same folder, often leading to confusion. In addition, sub-edited stories were saved over the original versions, and subbing usually happened in the absence of an accurate page grid, so the sub-editors had little idea of the actual size of stories. Thus, those sub-editing the stories tended not to cut them sufficiently, and so they are usually too long for the space available on the page. This means that the stories have to be subbed directly on the pages.

The Wentworth version of Nika was developed in an iterative process, and started with a database-anchored workflow that allows for clear and easy movement of stories. OpenOffice wordprocessing continues to be the text programme, and its documents are saved in Nika in html format. This instance of Nika was installed on the paper's server and a couple of workstations initially, and is now being gradually expanded to other workstations.

A similar progression is expected to happen with additional features to be rolled out. One is its articulation to image-management software. Here it has been decided to use a different OSS software set, Gallery2, see http://gallery.menalto.com, to edit and archive images separately. Nika is home for the text story and the association to the images. Gallery2 integrates with Drupal. Image policy (eg. a limit on the number of digital pictures stored) needs to be decided.

Between July and September 2008, Nika will enter Phase 2, which concentrates on the articulation of Grocott's Digital (the website) with the paper. As part of this is to take information from the Nika database and automate its publication online, the phase has been dubbed "Thatha" – the Nguni word for "take". This is where the Drupal engine of Nika will be exploited much more than the current deployment.

The eventual evolution will be a phase which entails Web 2.0 functionality, with reverse publishing potential from the site to the paper, and facilities such as tag clouds, RSS, and blogging. Alongside the "Thatha" phase there will also be work on a mobile software module, that should conclude at the end of the year. This leg of Nika should be able to send out ("Thumela") content streams (eg. soccer news, or political news, etc.) in various formats to cellphones, and also to receive text, audio and video sent from cellphones. The incoming content (from audience participation) can be further disseminated to the mobile-publishing mass platform, as well as posted on the website and printed in the paper. To these ends, the mobile dimension of Nika may entail partnerships with community radio stations, and with the content generated by radio and television students at Rhodes.

Issues

Several substantive issues and learnings have arisen out of the Nika experience.

First, is process. In working with developers over the years, it became clear that dedicated service is needed, and also that firm leadership and management be given if there is to be progress. Reliance on part-time and volunteer development brings major problems, notwithstanding the open character of the software development and its global collaborative potential.

It is also clear that that the various stakeholders be consulted from early on – newspaper editor, website editor, photo editor, chief sub, for instance. This is not automatic, given developers' expertise is in programming and not necessarily in strategy and human relations.

Second, what also emerged was a tension between trying to develop Nika as a generic system initially, and at the same time meeting the needs of a specific client – in this case *Grocott's Mail*. The Nika experience revealed was the need to shift focus towards the latter as a specific incarnation – meaning that the replicability is reduced, although the product remains customisable because it is open source.

Third, policy decisions need to drive the CMS architecture. For instance in Nika, there was a fix facing development as a result of editorial indecision on what Nika would treat as its final archived version. In short, would this archive the sub-edited stories *before* they were laid out for the paper (and subjected to further edits and headline changes there), or whether it would be the version prior to print design. This was impacted on by the difficulty that the output from the layout programme, InDesign, did not easily reverse export into the database in separate and appropriate format. To the extent that this could be resolved, the issue then was whether this "final word" was what should go to the website, or rather a particular version that had been sub-edited before going to be laid out? In the end, it was agreed that the latter option would be taken, and the final version of what would appear in the print product was also archived in PDF form online. Another issue where policy decisions were (and still are) required is in limit on the numbers and content types of digital images to be archived.

Fourth, there is a question of how much automated functionality is desirable. In the 2005 prototype of Nika, journalists and editors were completely unconscious of the fact that pressing buttons in the newsroom also had an immediate effect on the structure and formatting of the web site. As a result, according to Maher (2006) significant time was saved for the web team who were spared some basic reworking of content. However, as mentioned below, the decision was subsequently made to allow for more manual control of the web publishing dimension in order to customise the stories for the Internet.

Another question around automation has been signalled by Zavoina and Reichert (2000), who found that 72% of their sample of US online publications, specifically recropped photographs in order to fit the online medium. Because of online size limitations in comparison to hard copy size requirements, photographs are cropped tighter. Just 28% did not recrop for the online format. However, for those relying on recropping, it emerges that there was little or no communication between the

online photo editor or Web editor, or staff member, hard copy photo editor, or staff photographer. Recropping – especially without the photographer's input – can allow for loss of content that may be essential to accurate visual reporting.

Fifth, is an issue to consider about the number of clicks. Kevin Anderson has described a proprietary CMS that requires 18 clicks for a reporter to publish. strange. **corante**.com/archives/2008/01/31/why_reinvent_the_cms_wheel.php. If a system is too elaborate and cumbersome, it begins to defeat the purpose. In this regard, general experience reports that many journalists faced with an over-demanding CMS seek out short cuts by paying very light lip service as regards giving genuine responses to requirements that they have to complete all the necessary fields required. Staff in some cases are known to short-circuit or "gypo" the system by entering garbage, blank fields or mindless repeats of earlier choices.

Sixth, and probably the biggest issue, concerns the static versus dynamic conceptualisations and designs of a CMS. Maher (2006) has elaborated on this in depth. His starting point is the way that many digital workflow systems are based on a mapping of scenarios based on a long-standing print analogue process. The result is the further institutionalisation of systems that either do not work efficiently, or which are limited by notions that fail to recognise new potentials such as the integration of external content elements, and even editorial ranking judgements, by third party users.

Going further, says Maher, it becomes very important to choose between a model which essentially attempts to minimise deviation from a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), and one that attempts to empower knowledge workers, in this case journalists, to make more decisions themselves. The static standardisation of news flow is relatively inflexible for the users. This guarantees that all journalists follow the same procedures thereby limiting the possibility of error. The disadvantage, however, is the likelihood of bottlenecks in the system such as when particular people are away from their desks or when situations arise that do not fit the predefined procedures encoded into the workflow logic.

This was the experience of Nika in 2007 in its *Cue* pilot period. The rigidity of the workflow process that caused substantial frustration for both the journalists and editors working under deadline pressure. The first problem emerged when unregistered contributors arrived late at night to file stories and could not log in because they did not have existing user accounts on the system. Rather than getting new accounts created, they logged in using other journalists' accounts but could not submit their stories because there were no corresponding story assignments connected to the user profile that they were using to access the system.

Taking a different view, Maher proposed that if one sees the workflow process as a procedural knowledge management function, it follows that the workflow system in principle can also actively collect and collate new procedural knowledge based on the actual processes in the newsroom. With such a dynamic SOP workflow process, the journalist would be able to choose between a set of SOPs or have the option to create a new procedure based on their particular circumstances.

In Maher's vision, if the new procedure is successful, it is recorded and can become part of the SOP options when such a situation re-occurs. As an example, one journalist

may have found a better method for fact-checking a certain type of story than those used by the other journalists in the organisation.

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                                                    ┌─── No ───┐
                                                    ↓          │
                    ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
               ┌───→│    Normal    │──→│  Define new  │──→│ Did it work? │
               │    │   situation  │   │  procedure   │   │              │
               │    └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐                             │
│   Current    │──→│ What to do   │                            Yes
│   workflow   │   │    now?      │                             ↓
│   position   │   │              │                      ┌──────────────┐
└──────────────┘   └──────────────┘                      │ Insert into  │
               │                                          │ SOP with     │
               │    ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   │ metadata     │
               └───→│   Abnormal   │──→│  Follow SOP  │   └──────────────┘
                    │   situation  │   │              │
                    └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
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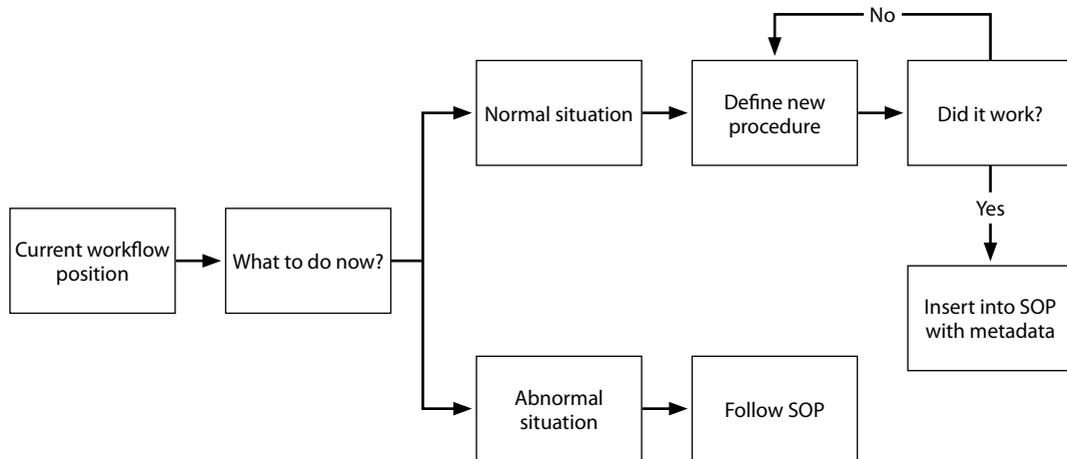
Or perhaps, a formula for trawling targeted online sources. The journalist may not always want to share this method with his or her co-workers which is nevertheless recorded for management to assess. If desired, however, this new process can become available to everyone else in a completely transparent, and replicable, manner.

The point to make about this conceptualisation of a CMS is to aim for easy inclusion of new processes as news digital publishing platforms are added. This accords with a dynamic learning process for the individuals in an organisation that allows them to actively contribute their procedural knowledge to the broader sphere of operational knowledge in the organisation. In addition, successful SOP additions become a permanent part of the organisational process, even after the person who set them up leaves the organisation. A further benefit is that this can be adapted to any newsroom situation because the SOPs are recorded by the newsroom management and staff, as opposed to being pre-programmed by outsourced developers. Such a system may appear to be futuristic, but technically it is not. It is, instead, a way to provide a degree of future-proofing.

In an effort to overcome some of the rigidity, a more open version of the Nika CMS was evolved by Maher. This allowed everyone to do everything, meaning that a writer could by-pass an editor, that a designer could delete a story and that a photographer could delete another photographer's images.

Maher continues: "To our astonishment the system worked more efficiently than the previous one. The editorial staff had established the workflow procedures outside of the system, during a series of planning meetings, and were happier to have the extra flexibility. In parallel, we had decided to publish content from the system manually to the web site and established a separate editorial process for the web content to

repackage stories for a mobile platform. This introduced several new tasks into the web production process, but also allowed us to exert more control over the length of content published on the web site. The writer concludes in favour of a lighter approach to rule enforcement for a CMS.

What is important to underline in Maher's account is the use of the system by people in a collective and subject to authority and discipline there. This liberal approach would probably not be suitable in terms of managing participation from outside. Apart from spam and abuse, there are also business issues. For instance, the Bakersfield Californian has an online system with self-serve tools that allow a user to post a classified advert and pay for it (see http://www.bakotopia.com/home/PostClassified). It would not be appropriate to allow too much leeway in this arena.

Conclusion.

Where all this finally comes into play from the point of view of African media is in regard to how a CMS can intersect with mobile. Cellphones around the continent are being used for various purposes besides personal conversation, but their usage by people to receive and send media content is still in its infancy. Questions around audience behaviour and workable business models account for this, but one inhibitor has also been the lack of a suitable software system. To the extent that Nika can alter this, it could play a part in assisting African media to greatly expand their distribution of content, and widen the pool for increased amateur content (views and news). As cellphone devices become more powerful (eg. in terms of audio and video), and as digital broadcast to the handheld (DVB-H) starts rolling out, so will it likely mean that media armed with cutting-edge software can be at the forefront of expanding information and communication loops into the realm of mobile.

Another item on the horizon concerns a holistic Enterprise Content Integration (ECI) (see Bill Rosenblatt, 2003, in the Seybold Report, cited by Maher, 2006). The ECI notion serves as a kind of meta-CMS type of thinking. It emphasises the centrality of knowledge management at the centre in the relationship between core business functionalities like workflow systems and data/content management systems used in the newsroom.

The ECI approach advocates the use of technologies that tie together all existing business software and repositories. This is by software that adapts to each of these, and enables universal access between different and discrete products. This approach enables organisations to retain specialist software already in place rather than attempt to implement systems that do everything, thus enabling businesses to continue to benefit from past technological investment if that hardware and software is still fulfilling its requirements. (Rosenblatt, 2003). The ECI model is particularly relevant for African newsrooms because of its emphasis on interoperability, the ability for software products to interact with each other, and its emphasis on metadata (information in the form of data about data) as the core mechanism for establishing relationships between data.

However, a growing tendency queries whether a media house even needs to aim for an ECI-style operation under its own roof. The alternative is to locate it in what

is called the "cloud" of dispersed computing on the Internet. This means, for instance, accessing functionalities and content that do not reside within one's own CMS. For instance, programmes like Twitter and Wordpress blogs can also feed into one's own website without you having to develop your own CMS components in this regard. Another example is putting (or getting) video content on/from youtube.com, and using a simple software "widget" to embed it (back) onto one's own site. It has also been suggested that media houses could use Skype to do live podcast two-ways, and use Gmail to send files. In one case, The *Boulder Camera* is reported to have recently shut down its bespoke community software and shifted to Ning, which is a site providing free social networking tools that can be branded under your own title. A representative of *Camera*, Matt Flood, has been quoted as saying the reason for shifting was that the paper's own social network tools had become paralysed: "The developer that built it is no longer with the company so we couldn't fix anything or create anything new." This is a situation that afflicts many institutions, so that one can therefore easily see the temptation of relying on (free) outside functionality on an opportunistic basis.

Blogger Kevin Anderson has written:

"The difference between the late 1990s and now is that cost of editorial experimentation has dropped almost to zero in some cases. Creative use of freely available web tools can achieve most editorial goals, and it can be used as a guide for future development. Out of all of the things you could do, it will help you understand what you must do."

http://strange.corante.com/archives/2008/05/07/the_future_of_ newspapers.php

The whole idea of a distributed CMS does depend of course on reliable and cheap broadband internet access – something not available to most African media. There is also a question in that the "free services" out there work on a business model which monetises some of your audience – and in some cases you may find it difficult to access the complete data of who consumes your content, how and when. On the other hand, the resort to such "outsourced" CMS capacity does obviate the need to invest in software development and updating, and even data storage.

By way of summing up, this article has argued for a wider view of CMS than is often encountered, saying that editorial has to drive the technology, rather than vice versa. The issues of OSS, a dynamic and "learning" CMS with some open-ended and flexible patterning possible were raised around the evolution of Nika. Also covered have been issues around interactive and social network functionality. All are critical for media entrepreneurs to grasp in the face of ever-intensifying competition and other challenges.

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EXOTIC MAURITIUS CATCHES UP ON NEW MEDIA…
AS DEFI MEDIA GROUP LEAP-FROGS INTO DIGITAL AGE

07

The first newspaper in Mauritius was published in 1773. The island was then a French colony called Isle de France. The British took over the French possession in 1810. Ever since 1773, Mauritius has boasted an almost uninterrupted tradition of free print media, though the state controlled the electronic media until 2002 when the first privately-owned radio stations started broadcasting. Free-to-air broadcast television is still a state monopoly, though subscription to paid satellite services is allowed.

By Subash Gobine

Small Island, Big Issues

The first newspaper in Mauritius was published in 1773. The island was then a French colony called Isle de France. The British took over the French possession in 1810. Ever since 1773, Mauritius has boasted an almost uninterrupted tradition of free print media, though the state controlled the electronic media until 2002 when the first privately-owned radio stations started broadcasting. Free-to-air broadcast television is still a state monopoly, though subscription to paid satellite services is allowed.

Despite a century and a half of British rule in Mauritius until independence in 1968, the country's media has kept a distinct French cachet. The French language is dominant and French culture has profoundly influenced the Mauritian way of life, though 70% of the population, of Indian ancestry, professes Hinduism or Islam. The rest of the population, besides the tiny communities of Chinese and French Whites, is described as Creole, resulting from the métissage (mixing) of Africans, Indians and Whites.

The French colonists made a deal with the British invaders in 1810. Under the deal, they were allowed to keep their sugar plantations, their African slaves, the French language and French law. French Whites still control in a substantial way the Mauritian economy. They have been instrumental in giving the edge to French culture and traditions in Mauritius – this despite the official status of English and the presence of a host of Asian languages, predominantly Hindustani. The main spoken language of Mauritius is Creole, derived mainly from French. It is only with globalisation and the emergence of the New Media that, since the turn of the century, English is leaving some mark in Mauritian newspapers, websites and blogs.

In a plural society like Mauritius, ownership of the media can hardly be dissociated from the issue of ethnicity. The French White elite of Mauritius has dominated the media scene for a long period in Mauritian history. Over time, however, the cultured class of the Coloured (Mauritians of mixed origin but light-skinned and French-speaking) came to successfully challenge the Whites in the print media business.

Since the 1960s until the beginning of the new millennium, the print media environment in Mauritius was largely dominated by two Coloured media houses publishing the mainly French-language broadsheet dailies, the evening *Le Mauricien* and the morning *L'Express*. Launched almost a century ago by French Whites, *Le Mauricien* came under the control of a Coloured family during the 1920s. *L'Express* is 40 years old. Both papers were involved, at one time or another, in political advocacy. In the 1960s while *Le Mauricien* supported the French White elite opposed to the independence of the colony, *L'Express* espoused the opposing tendency spearheaded by the Labour Party that drew its strength from the majority Hindu community.

Since the 1980s, however, both *Le Mauricien* and *L'Express* have moved into mainstream, non-partisan journalism. Newspapers, weeklies and dailies are often published by political lobbies but they all invariably fail to pass the test of sustainable existence.

The Mauricien media house started a highly successful Sunday paper, Week-End, in the 1960s. Week-End is the leading weekly of Mauritius. In the 1980s, a new

weekly, 5-Plus, hit the newsstand. At first, 5-Plus looked like a risky media venture by a Chinese-owned printing company. The 48-page glossy tabloid soon became a Sunday best-seller, just after Week-End. 5-Plus specialised in people stories and controversies relating to ethnicity.

Before the full impact of the electronics-driven new media was felt in the country, the Mauricien and *L'Express* media houses, along with 5-Plus, controlled a massive chunk of the print media market, leaving but a marginal share to smaller partisan or special groups affiliated papers.

Out of the box

A new player professing investigative journalism, the *Le Défi Plus* weekly, joined the market in March 1996. The 32-page tabloid took the strategic decision of appearing on Saturdays because the Sunday market was too crowded. *Le Défi Plus* chose a new style of journalism, exposing corruption and other vices of politicians and office-holders but also investing heavily on people stories. In style, it looked like a combination of the British *News of the World* (without its overt sex!) and the French satirical *Le Canard Enchaîné* that regularly exposes the ruling elite.

Politicians and celebrities were consistently exposed for their wrongdoings. One Saturday, *Le Défi Plus* ran a story on how a married judge and a woman were talking on the phone, obviously having an extramarital affair. The judge was hearing the woman's divorce petition. The woman was even calling the judge on his private phone. The following Saturday, the paper came out with more salacious details of the exchange between the judge and the woman. The paper had had access to itemised phone bills to support its story. Before an expected third Saturday instalment on the saga, the judge had resigned. It was a first such sex scandal at the highest level of the judiciary in Mauritius. A magistrate's philandering too was subsequently exposed.

In its short history, the *Défi Plus* had uncovered several scandals involving politicians and decision-makers in state agencies. The paper ran a report in 2005 on how a cabinet minister had had his office refurbished. A picture showed the minister enjoying his new surroundings. The paper revealed that the contract for the refurbishment had been allocated even before the proper tender exercise had been launched. The politician, voted out of power, is still under investigation from an anti-corruption agency.

Le Défi Plus also exposed dealings between the national airline, Air Mauritius, and tiny Air Seychelles. A secret code-sharing agreement between the two airlines was exposed as a sweet-heart deal that provided for Air Mauritius to pay an extra premium to Air Seychelles on the Mauritius-London route. This agreement allowed Air Seychelles to reap benefits to the tune of $7.5 million at the expense of Air Mauritius. *Le Défi* even published a photostat of the secret agreement.

Le Défi Plus also investigated a case where the chairman of a government agency had employed his own children and nephews in his own organisation. The anti-corruption agency took up the case.

In early 2008, *Le Défi* revealed that the foreign minister was having secret talks with the leader of the opposition. In the Mauritian political system, such an event was

tantamount to a gross act of disloyalty to the head of government. The minister was subsequently removed from office.

In a small island society where a maze of family and informal relationships develop, *Le Défi Plus*, thinking out of the box, became a best seller, ranking next to *Week-End* in circulation. The paper also offered the best coverage of crime. Selling 60 000 copies, *Le Défi* now appears in 80 pages, with racy texts and hilarious cartoons. The Défi media house also publishes a Sunday paper, *L'Hebdo*, and the only mainstream English weekly, *News on Sunday*, besides a weekly on Bollywood cinema – the only such publication in French in the world – and several sports and racing magazines.

The media scene in Mauritius has for decades reflected characteristics of European society, with absolute freedom for the print media, and traditions of the Third World where the state controls radio and television. The Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), set up in 1964, still monopolises free-to-air television and it was only in December 2001 that the first private radio stations were licensed to broadcast.

The contrast between the content of the print media, especially with the investigative reporting style of *Le Défi Plus*, and the state propaganda dispensed by the MBC became a matter of passionate debate and political controversy. The call to end the government's tight control on the electronic media became persistent. Government bent under the pressure and allowed a broadcasting regulator, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) similar to that set up by South Africa in the early 1990s, to be established.

The IBA called for proposals from prospective private radio service operators. The regulator then heard applications from several Mauritian and foreign interested parties. Two applications were filed by companies affiliated to the *Défi* and *L'Express* media houses. The IBA law limited cross-media ownership to a 20% stake in the shareholding of private radios. A 20% limitation was also put on foreign ownership of private radio stations. Political parties and religious organisations were barred from owning radio stations in Mauritius.

The *Défi* and *L'Express* groups were successful in their applications. Both respected the 20% limitations but could rely on the support of friendly shareholders. A third licence was granted to a radio station already operating in Britain.

As the news services of the MBC could hardly escape the charge of pro-government bias, the new privately-owned radio stations created an immediate impact on the landscape. *Le Mauricien* media house, despite the track record of its daily and *Week-End*, showed no interest at all in venturing out of the print media and into radio broadcasting.

Paradigm shift

The Mauritian media witnessed a paradigm shift in 2002, with two newspaper-publishing companies henceforth involved in radio broadcasting. The *L'Express* group had a head start on its competitors, launching Radio One in mid-March 2002. Radio Plus belonging to the Défi media house started broadcasting two weeks later while the third licensee, Top FM, joined the market in December 2002.

The private radio stations created an immediate impact. The contrast in reporting between the private radios and the state-controlled MBC was spectacular. The normal MBC news bulletin was mainly an exercise in on-diary journalism. Reporters profusely covered the daily activities of the prime minister and other ministers. In contrast, the private radio stations had a free hand in running their news broadcasts and features. They were limited only by the law on libel and sedition. Radio One and Radio Plus were soon reaching a larger audience than the MBC channels. However, for having long been the only radio outlets of the country, MBC radio channels have not collapsed overnight. A few channels have shown a degree of resilience, benefiting from residual customer loyalty, if not inertia.

How come Mauritius allowed private radio stations in 2002 but still kept a tight monopoly on free-to-air television? At the time of liberalisation in 2002, the MBC was running three analogue TV channels. The political alliance that won the 2000 general election and set about dismantling the MBC monopoly had undertaken in its electoral manifesto to privatise one TV channel. However, government back-pedalled on this issue when it realised that the MBC needed all its three channels to respond to the cultural needs of the mosaic of communities that constitute Mauritius. In fact, the MBC runs programmes in a multitude of Asian languages besides English, French and Creole. Indian immigrants introduced Hindi, Bhojpuri, Urdu, Tamil, Marathi, Telugu and Gujarati in Mauritius. The ancestors of Mauritians of Chinese origin spoke Cantonese or Hakka and Mandarin is taught in schools.

Government was sensitive to the politically-correct need to give as much coverage to all the languages spoken in Mauritius, though French is predominant in the media. The decision not to privatise one MBC TV channel was also influenced by an unprecedented political event in Mauritius. For the first time in Mauritian history, a French White was scheduled to become prime minister under a power-sharing agreement with a mainly Hindu-supported party. Given the weight of ethnicity in the Mauritian political system, the prospect of a White becoming the prime minister in October 2003 in an overwhelmingly non-White country was raising some question marks. Government therefore wanted to avoid at all costs the perception that the language policy of the public broadcaster was being revisited, with a scaling-back of Asian languages broadcasts.

Though the MBC has substantially increased its bouquet of channels to a dozen since 2002, the no-private-television government stance has been maintained. The MBC has gone digital since the end of 2005, though it is keeping its three analogue channels.

In spite of so many TV channels being operated by the MBC, the policymaker is still not contemplating the liberalisation of free-to-air television. Since the private radio stations were licensed, what is described as the Hindu power elite of Mauritius has had second thoughts about liberalisation of the electronic media. Government leaders systematically assail the print media and private radio stations for giving prominence to anti-Establishment news. They believe a private TV operator would completely upset the media landscape to the detriment of government.

Six years after the advent of private radio channels, the trend points to an

overwhelming domination of private radios on the audio platform.

A survey conducted by the Mauritian polling company Synthèses shows that Radio Plus and Radio One control a sizeable share of the audience. Radio Plus alone was being accessed by 51.2% of radio listeners during the months of May-July 2008. (http://www.defimedia.info/articles/3600/1/Sondage-sur-lecoute-des-radios--Radio-Plus-a-elle-seule-controle-51-de-laudience/Page1.html. Accessed on September 5, 2008)

Radio Plus commanded twice the audience of Radio One, its closest rival. MBC's Radio Mauritius comes out third, followed by Top FM. MBC's other radio channels have a relatively limited impact. Radio Plus has systematically led in surveys during the past years, followed by Radio One. Top FM has been on a slow upward trend.

Leapfrogging into new media

While Radio Plus turned out to be an enormous asset in the Défi Media properties, the group was hesitant in adopting other tools of the new media. The Défi media house launched its website only in September 2007, well after other major media outlets. (http://www.defimedia.info/)

Selected items of *Le Mauricien* and *Week-End* have been posted online since the end of 1996. *L'Express* designed its first website in 1999 and revamped it in 2003. The Alexa monitor of the top websites of Mauritius credits *L'Express* as hosting the 19th most consulted website in the country in September 2008. (http://www.alexa.com/site/ds/top_sites?cc=MU&ts_mode=country&lang=none Accessed on September 27, 2008)

L'Express is the first Mauritian news media to achieve that rank after international sites that attract Mauritian hits. *Le Mauricien* ranked 63rd on the Alexa index.

The Défi Media website, launched in September 2007, was ranked number 51, systematically gaining in popularity and overtaking both the MBC (90th), the national TV and radio broadcaster and *Le Mauricien*. (http://www.alexa.com/data/details/traffic_details/defimedia.info. Accessed on September 27, 2008)

The relatively weaker ranking of a major news organisation like MBC operating so many television and radio channels well behind the three private media houses reflects on the credibility of the public broadcaster.

Coming late in the new media, the Défi Group leapfrogged into the latest technology, surpassing all other media outlets of the country. The event was hailed by Ms Christina Chan-Meetoo, a lecturer in media and communication at the University of Mauritius, as a major event. (http://christinameetoo.wordpress.com/page/2/. Accessed on September 5, 2008)

Ms Chan-Meetoo pointed out that the website was "long overdue as oddly enough, none of the print media titles it owns (*Le Défi Plus*, *L'Hebdo*, *News on Sunday*, etc.) had a website up to now". Indeed, the Défi media house became the first news organization in Mauritius to adopt the Web 2.0 technology, opening a large platform for services not available in competing sites.

The Défi site introduced live news and blogs. For the first time in the history of the

Mauritian media, website visitors were given the opportunity to post comments and rate content. The completely browser-based administration can handle thousands of content items.

The site is search engine optimised (SEO), allowing links to categories, articles, news, blogs and pages in search engine friendly format. Visitors are allowed to create author accounts, write articles and submit blogs.

The Défi site control panel displays statistics on different features of the site – namely the most popular, the most discussed and the most e-mailed articles and also the most popular authors. A site map is automatically generated, helping search spiders crawl and find any new pages added to the site, even those hidden below several layers of links. Search of any new content is made easier and faster.

The Défi site offers automated syndication with an RSS option. Other webmasters can link directly to the Défi top 10 articles, blogs or even Live News items in seconds. Ordinary users too are offered the opportunity to subscribe to the feeds of the site which also features Radio Plus podcasts and a photo gallery.

The popularity of the Défi website has grown exponentially. In its early days in September 2007, the site received 800 to 1 000 hits per day. After the soft launch, the group newspapers started advertising the new product. Soon, the site attracted around 2 000 unique visitors per day.

Then on May 24, 2008, the Défi website published a report supported by a dramatic video clip on a case of corporal punishment in a school. A teacher had beaten up a student and the incident had been recorded on the phone camera of another student.
(http://www.defimedia.info/articles/2218/1/La-video-qui-choque--Agression-dans-une-salle-de-classe/Page1.html)

Following the report, the site attracted an all-time record of 10 000 visitors in a day. It was a significant event in an island with a population of just one million. The hits levelled off to 2 500 per day. Then, on 19 September 2008, the site posted a clip showing the brutal killing of a racehorse by some youngsters.
(http://www.defimedia.info/articles/3830/1/Acte-de-barbarie-sur-un-cheval--la-video-qui-choque/Page1.html accessed on September 27, 2008)

The response was overwhelming. The site registered a peak of 12 000 hits when it crashed under a heavy server load. At the end of September 2008, the site was attracting 6 000 hits per day.

The Défi Media site continuously carries updated news reports in French as a daily feature. The average reader gets an idea of what is happening in Mauritius and in the world by consulting the site. Just as the only evening paper is facing competition in breaking news from radio stations, the other dailies too stand to be increasingly challenged by web-based information outlets.

The Kampala eye-opener
The Défi Media is gearing up to emerge as the leading multimedia house, mainly by converging its print, broadcast and web-based platforms. After attending the Africa

Media Leadership Conference on emerging digital platforms held in Kampala in May 2008, I flew back to Mauritius with countless ideas but with three major projects coming into sharp focus.

It is quite human not to question a system that one believes is working. But once we are exposed to new ideas, we realise how wrong we have been in our assumptions. The Kampala meeting came as an eye-opener.

First, I realised that my media house was wasting valuable resources and time in running no less than four different newsrooms, three of them housed in the same building.

Second, after listening to African experts describe the role of different applications of mobile telephony in the new media, I came to the conclusion that though Mauritius has one of the highest rates of mobile phone density in Africa, end-users in my island were not being offered opportunities to interact significantly with digital platforms.

Third, I came back convinced that whatever be the technology or the delivery platform, content is the clinching factor, making the difference between media outlets.

The three papers of the group, *Le Défi Plus*, *L'Hebdo* and *News on Sunday*, and Radio Plus have maintained their separate newsrooms. It often happens that two units despatch reporters and photographers to cover the same event. In a converged newsroom, resources could be more efficiently deployed. Departing from the content delivered by just one reporting crew, sub-editors could potentially redirect material to either one or more of the three weeklies by taking different angles, creating content for the radio as well as posting reports on the website. By streamlining and optimising reporting resources, the group will enhance its potential to create even more content for all its units.

The new converged newsroom is expected not only to post frequent updates on the website and on the radio but launch news alerts to add buoyancy to the new environment.

The Kampala meeting allowed me to take full measure of the new media potentiality of the cell phone. Indeed, a recent report of the Mauritian Central Statistical Office indicated that in 2007 the country, with a population of 1.2 million, had 928, 600 mobile phone subscribers – that is a mobidensity of 73.4% .
(http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/cso/ei714/toc.htm. Accessed on September 5, 2008)

However, only 13.1% of Mauritians had subscribed to an Internet service. Nevertheless, in terms of the Digital Opportunity Index (DOI), Mauritius ranked first in Africa, according to International Telecommunication Union figures released for the year 2006.

Internet access is relatively limited but with such a huge rate of mobidensity, Mauritian traditional media have overlooked the potential to create interacting opportunities with mobile subscribers. The Défi Media Group will soon be offering users the opportunity to comment via SMS on the content of our papers, the website and the radio. At the same time, a news alert service will be launched to break news of popular interest and invite phone users to read full stories in the papers, listen to the radio or visit the website. Such a service will certainly increase traffic, allowing us to increase

our reach. The revenue from advertising is set to benefit from an expanding audience.

As our papers and radio specialise in exposing public scandals, we intend to encourage potential whistleblowers to use electronic media, namely SMS, to alert the newsroom on possible investigative pieces.

The adoption of new media resources and the establishment of a converged newsroom stand to multiply opportunities for the generation of content. A converged operation will also allow the group to produce more English content with specially dedicated staff posting English versions of reports originally written in French. As pointed out by Alexa, the Défi Media Group reaches an international audience, mainly in the United Kingdom, France, South Africa and Canada. (http://www.alexa.com/data/details/traffic_details/defimedia.info. Accessed on September 5, 2008).

An island sitting in the middle of an ocean, Mauritius imports almost all of its commodities. Newsprint is sourced from Sweden and China. In a small market like ours, the advertising revenue potential is limited. And the cost of newsprint, a major component in operating costs, has always been on an upward trend. In the new world environment where sustainable development and the preservation of the environment tend to influence policymakers, the cost of importing newsprint will certainly add to the burden of traditional publishing enterprises. The new media, if efficiently harnessed, will help Mauritian media houses overcome the obstacles of geography and the ever increasing cost of newsprint. The new media will make us reach an ever increasing international audience while creating added advertising revenue.

The paperless challenge, though daunting, should be addressed head on. It is a question of survival.

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WHAT NEWS? UGANDA'S MEDIA STRUGGLE TO STAY RELEVANT

08

It is common on the continent to notice the greatest displays of luxury in an environment of poverty and squalor, most particularly in urban areas. Magnificent mansions sit square in the middle of slum areas. Gleaming white limousines make their way down dank and filthy alleys. Prosperously rotund businessmen mingle readily with dishevelled and dirty children … Wealth thus revealed is a symbol of their *collective prominence.* Uganda is a good case study of such contrasts. The country is certainly no longer the despotic hellhole of the days of Idi Amin, or a complete economic shambles. Indeed, Uganda has been impressive at almost every front since 1986, when Yoweri K. Museveni became president. Today, Kampala is routinely lionised for its positive outlook on inflation, governance, liberalisation, anti-corruption crusades, economic growth and, most impressively, its fight against HIV/Aids – a strategy regarded as the best in the world.

By Sim Kyazze

In his masterpiece *Democracy In America*, Alexis Tocqueville (1945) simultaneously spotted the potency of public disenchantment with politics; and the potency of the press in ensuring that democracy works.

As he saw it:

Equality sets men apart and weakens them; but the press places a powerful weapon within each man's reach, which the weakest and the loneliest of them all may use. Equality deprives a man of the support of his connections, but the press enables him to summon all his fellow countrymen and all his fellow men to his assistance. Printing has accelerated the progress of equality, and it is one of its best correctives

(Tocqueville 1945: 343).

By insisting that all men are born free and equal, the French scholar forces us all to acknowledge that everyone is indeed free and equal. Of course some people will obviously always be better at the game of life than others, through natural ability, circumstances, and so on. Even with this rider, a free society assumes that even the weakest can be heard. The news media is their voice.

However, as news has increased in quantity and variety, its interpretation by the journalists before a fragmented global audience has become the preserve of "experts" of all sorts, testing their knowledge of events in newspapers, radio television and the Internet; there have been fears that this proliferation would create a mass culture and an obsession with entertainment and infotainment. Hollywood, MTV and tabloid journalism, which translate easily into popular culture, are apparently shaping the global media diet (Fallows 1996).

There is no doubt, either, that we live in a radically different world from that of even five years ago. From the consolidation of economic and political ties in Europe (the European Union now has 27 countries, compared to just six at its inception in 1957); the re-awakening of an economic behemoth in China (the consensus view is that it's the world's second largest economy after USA); to the hunger for raw materials that has made mineral-rich Africa relevant again (Fukuyama 1992 98-107). Yet Africa retains its unique contradictions which have been captured so succinctly:

It is common on the continent to notice the greatest displays of luxury in an environment of poverty and squalor, most particularly in urban areas. Magnificent mansions sit square in the middle of slum areas. Gleaming white limousines make their way down dank and filthy alleys. Prosperously rotund businessmen mingle readily with dishevelled and dirty children…Wealth thus revealed is a symbol of their *collective prominence*, according to a process which we identify as 'vertical symbolic redistribution' (Chabal and Daloz 1999:42)

Uganda is a good case study of such contrasts. The country is certainly no longer the despotic hellhole of the days of Idi Amin (Lamb 1990:78), or a complete economic shambles (Hansen and Twaddle 1991:21).

Indeed, Uganda has been impressive at almost every front since 1986, when Yoweri K. Museveni became president. Today, Kampala is routinely lionised for its

positive outlook on inflation, governance, liberalisation, anti-corruption crusades, economic growth and, most impressively, its fight against HIV/Aids – a strategy regarded as the best in the world (UNDP 2006:215)

However, Uganda has also taken some knocks in the recent past, with accusations that the governing political elites hog the public sphere (Mamdani 1995: 121), and behave like they have a divine right to forever set the political and socio-economic agenda in Uganda (Oloka-Onyango 2000: 43), with all the attendant problems of nepotism, corruption and intolerance.

In addition, northern Uganda has endured a vicious, if low-level, civil war since 1986; a war that has caused widespread loss of life and sapped the country's meagre resources.

Even with these contradictions, however, Uganda's media landscape has been dizzying in its growth and amazing in its diversity. Uganda is unique among African countries for having a vibrant and profitable media operating within a semi-democratic state (Ogoso, 2004).

While the print media (dailies like the state-owned *The New Vision;* the privately-owned *The Red Pepper* and *Daily Monitor;* the privately-owned weeklies like *The Weekly Observer;* and *The Independent*, a new and exciting political news magazine), hog the spotlight, Uganda's media landscape has been described as 'fluid' (Kayanja 2002: 163) because of the on-off-on again founding, foundering, founding and foundering.

Media penetration is particularly high in urban areas, with some putting radio ownership at around 25 percent of all homesteads, and listenership at 92 percent in the capital Kampala (Steadman and Associates, 2002).

This situation has left radio as an ubiquitous and all-powerful tool of communication in Uganda (Mwesige, 2003; Kayanja, 2002). By January 2008, the number of private FM frequencies issued had risen to 200, with 173 of them already operational. Another 27 FM stations have been assigned frequencies but are yet to start broadcasting. Some 44 TV stations have been assigned frequencies, 26 of which are on air. Additionally, the Uganda Communications Commission has issued 640 two-way radio licenses and 49 VSAT authorisations (UCC 2008).

Because Uganda's population is mostly illiterate and ethnically fragmented; because it has limited urbanisation and obsolete communication structures that cannot fully support the new Information and Communication Technology; and because there has been minimal government intervention, the Internet age has yet to dawn.

The most recent statistics indicate that there are just 182,000 computers for 30 million Ugandans, a dismal 0.7% penetration (*The New Vision*, 2005).

The ubiquity of the media landscape is not matched by the variety in programming or articles. Uganda's media landscape is dominated by entertainment and "pseudo-news" events.

The reality of too much bad news coming out of Uganda combined with a very young audience – 50 percent of the population is below 15 years (The Population Secretariat 1999) – has made media consumers, especially in urban areas, to increasingly desert traditional news media for "new media" genres, as well as pop music,

sit-coms, and reality television like Big Brother Africa and Survivor.

With the audience firmly embracing soft news, even Uganda's supposedly serious media houses have been forced to weigh in into this area – often at the expense of traditionally serious news.

The New Vision, The Weekly Observer and *Daily Monitor*, for example, have gossip pages, while the down-market *The Red Pepper serves* up a sizeable amount of sleaze and soft-porn.

Almost all Ugandan media are obsessed with the Barclays Premier League from England, which is broadcast to Uganda via Global Television (GTV) and SuperSport, one of 80 odd channels beamed from South Africa by the pay television company MultiChoice.

The local subsidiary MultiChoice Uganda has a particularly high return on capital premised on a direct South Africa-to-Uganda satellite rebroadcast model. It was established in 1995 and its advanced technology quickly positioned its flagship carrier, DSTv, as the only signal with countrywide reach (MultiChoice Africa 2003) – an enviable position it enjoyed until very recently. Between pay television, the soft news pages of the country's main newspapers, as well as the servings from local television and the FM stations, there is little time for people who were born in 1986 when President Museveni came to power to think about the more political dimensions of their country.

Instead, they will spend the weekend poring over a typical Saturday gossip page in *The New Vision*:

Daddy Stand Up – Museveni To Amos

There was father and son drama at the wedding of Nowomugisha Nzeire Kaguta, the younger half brother to President Museveni in Rwakitura last Saturday.

When President Museveni emerged from his house and took his seat next to his father Amos Kaguta, everybody stood up save for a few elderly ladies and Amos himself. That was understandable. However, 10 minutes later when the national anthem was being played, Amos still sat rooted to his chair. Slightly agitated, Museveni politely tapped him twice across the arm, beckoning him to stand up. Without reservation, the older Kaguta duly obeyed his son's instructions.

What Did Muhoozi Say?

There was fracas at the birthday party of Cedrick Babu, son of Capt. Babu, the State Minister for Housing, three weeks ago. At the party, a Kenyan invitee apparently did the unthinkable and sought to attack Major Muhoozi Kainerugaba for claiming that a cow is man's best friend when it is said that the dog is. The Kenyan called Muhoozi very un-serious and stupid, which did not go down well with him. Muhoozi then assured the Kenyan asking him to step outside "just to talk".

Cedrick and Humphrey Nzeyi of Nandos intervened, pleading with Muhoozi to let the matter rest – a plea which fell on deaf ears. The two went outside and talked, returning five minutes later with a smile. No one though knows what was said.

Wedding Bells

Little has been seen of former MP for Sheema North and World Bank Executive Alternate Director Richard 'Sir Rich' Kaijuka. However, eagle-eyed scouts spotted him and his wife last Sunday afternoon at Highway Take Away in Nyendo, Masaka, where they had stopped off for a bite to eat. Scouts also say Sir Rich's family will host a lavish wedding at Munyonyo in January.

Muhwezi Kids In Retreat

There is much more to Susan Muhwezi than being a senior adviser to President Museveni on AGOA. Over the weekend, Susan ditched her job as an adviser and treated her children who were here on vacation from school in Turi to a retreat at Speke Resort Munyonyo. On the last day of their stay on Tuesday night, the whole group had dinner at The Stables Restaurant and were overseen by senior management of the resort who ensured all went well.

Onapito Chokes In Silk

Judging from his performance last Friday in Silk Royale, presidential press assistant Onapito-Ekomoloit doesn't know how to handle himself in a club. In the company of a number of babes, Ekomoloit took to the floor until modern technology stepped in.

As the DJ let out a plume of smoke (dry ice) onto the dance floor, choking and gasping for breath Ekomoloit was forced to abandon his dance strokes and seek safety by the bar while struggling to contain his coughing fit!

Bukenya Sings On Capital

It appears that Vice President Gilbert Bukenya is a man of many talents. During a recording for his appearance on Capital FM's Desert Island Discs programme this Sunday at 7:00pm, when asked to pick his second song which was Katonda Yebale, Bukenya instead choose to sing the song. "He really can sing!" said Romeo Akiki, who is the producer of the show.

Entebbe Pros Hike Their Service Fee

Entebbe has been swarmed by sex workers from Kampala since the DRC-bound peacekeepers hit town. The pros have set up camp in Kitooro and roam the big hotels targeting the soldiers who dish out between $50 and $200 for relief.

One pro who used to work in Kampala said a soldier gave her $190 (380 000 Uganda shillings) for the one-hour she spent with him in a major Entebbe hotel.

Bro For 1st Daughters

Impeccable sources tell us that the first daughters are deeply into Big Brother.
The trio – Natasha, Patience and Diana – get together every Sunday at one of their homes to watch the eviction and nomination. Patience likes Cherise because she is a typical African and is well behaved.

Our own Gae is also well liked by the trio but only because he is Ugandan and not because of the way he behaves in the house.

Saleh given 'kiboko'

At St. Emmanuel Cathedral in Rushere during the wedding of Nowomugisha Nzeire Kaguta last Saturday, Lt. Gen. Salim Saleh and myself were reprimanded for smoking within the church grounds! As we banged kaboozi over cigarettes, a reverend appeared from nowhere and in a hushed but firm voice told us to get out.

"Sinners can't smoke in the church grounds. Take yourselves and your cigarettes outside the boundary fence," the irate Rev told us. "Feeling guilty, Saleh and I took to the bushes to finish off our puffs."

Kabaka snubs FRELIMO

The whispers from Mengo are not encouraging. No sooner had Sylvia Nagginda, who has been out of the country on a four week sojourn, returned home than her husband, Kabaka Mutebi, swiftly packed his bags and flew out under the cover of darkness which left one of his guests in a lurch. Kabaka was due to have met FRELIMO Secretary General Armando Guebuza for lunch last Tuesday, but was abruptly told "Kabaka is out." Hmm! (*The New Vision* 2003: 11)

The above servings show a newspaper that would hold its own in England where the Royal Family, David Beckham and wife Victoria 'Posh Spice' Adams, and music and movie celebrities are national obsessions.

But there is something else going on. While in England, David Beckham and his wife get equal treatment as subjects of celebrity gossip, making moot the point of gender discrimination, media in Third World countries generally, and in this specific case in Uganda, are still dominated by men, both as newsmakers and as captains of the media industry.

The 'Have You Heard?' page above has 10 stories, all largely showing men "doing" things, and women being "passive watchers" of things – a reproduction of a patriarchy that is replicated in most other countries.

According to Chabal and Daloz (1999), African media are not yet structurally ready to be more representative. "…despite the current political 'democratic transitions' on the continent, there has been no modification in the notion of representation – firmly anchored as it is in the patrimonial system" (1999: 39). However, we can also see the disconnect between the political establishment, and Uganda's youth (16-35 year olds), who are the target and consumers of much of these symbolic goods.

Much of what is happening to media around the world is a rebellion by young people against the constraining lifestyles favoured by their older and more traditional parent/guardians/leaders (McRobbie 2003:238).

As McRobbie sees things, "commercial leisure enterprises with their illusion of freedom have, then, an attraction for youth" (2003: 239). Young people are often excluded from political discourse through age restrictions (most countries set 18 as the minimum age at which one can stand for and vote in an election); they are excluded from the media (many countries have laws that bar children, i.e. those under 18 from seeking employment); and from starting a family (in most countries anyone younger than 16 cannot get married, let alone have sex).

Youth often find creative ways of making themselves heard – from smoking trash, dressing badly and being a nuisance at shopping malls. Media executives who are eager to cash in on this 'rebellion' are often only too happy to help out.

The more affluent of Uganda's youth have turned to the Internet (Facebook and You-Tube), but the great majority have only FM stations that have the latest servings of Beyonce and Ludacris (R&B and Hip-Hop star respectively).

The anti-intellectualism that appears to have afflicted Uganda's media consumers has begun to take a toll on political discourse, mostly because people lack both the relevant social knowledge or the ability to make their voices heard in the decision-making process.

This tendency of the most significant contemporary communication systems to produce audiences without capacity; the tendencies for audiences to remain simply audiences has helped sever media consumers from reciprocal production to social knowledge and engagement in decision-making (Angus 1994: 233).

So, while the Ugandan media landscape has significantly improved over the last few years, the message in across the terrain is terrifyingly beret of much value. It's as if Ugandans have decided to join the Americans, and the British and the Irish that they do not want to engage in politics but would rather be obsessed with the on-off-on-again marriage of pop icon Madonna and Guy Ritchie.

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HOW MEDIA CONVERGENCE IS TRANSFORMING NEWSMAKING

09

The face of broadcast journalism has changed dramatically in the past two decades. Just 15 years ago, broadcasting a breaking news story live from a foreign location, via satellite, represented a major breakthrough. Quickly, it became the expectation of news consumers that any major story, local or foreign, had to be broadcast live. Another innovation was the advent of 24-hour news channels dedicated solely to the provision of news. Today, technology is again turning broadcasting on its head. "Triple and quad play", "on-line", "non-linear" and "multi-platforms" are the latest buzz words used to describe an ever-expanding convergent landscape. Where we currently use discrete network systems for receiving television, Internet and phone services, convergent technologies allow for these to be bundled into single digital packages.

By Jimi Matthews

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Today, technology is again turning broadcasting on its head. "Triple and quad play", "on-line", "non-linear" and "multi-platforms" are the latest buzz words used to describe an ever-expanding convergent landscape. Where we currently use discrete network systems for receiving television, Internet and phone services, convergent technologies allow for these to be bundled into single digital packages.

It is now possible for telephone calls and television programmes to be delivered over the same broadband digital network. Where before analogue TV was transmitted over the airwaves, now it can be compressed down telephone lines. The boundaries between media, telecommunications and information technology are fast eroding, creating exciting and challenging new possibilities.

Properly managed, converged technologies provide cost-effective ways to aggregate news content to the maximum, and on a variety of platforms. Broadcasters are turning to the online environment as viewers move away from the traditional linear access to programming. No less an authority than Chris Cramer, former head of CNN International, has declared that the future of broadcast news is online.

The desire for "on-demand services" by consumers can be identified as the driving force behind the new revolution. News-on-demand is forcing news managers around the world to rethink how they provide the news. Consumers are no longer willing to wait for news in the traditional way – for scheduled news bulletins on television or radio, or waiting for the newspapers to roll off the presses.

Today, consumers access news in a variety of ways – from the Internet, their mobile phones, any number of 24-hour global television stations or from thousands of web radio stations. The platform (and medium) is the least of their concerns – consumers want to be able to receive news in a format that is convenient and affordable and at a time of their choosing. Digital technology has helped democratise news gathering, encroaching on a domain previously monopolised by the rich and powerful media houses. Broadcast capable cameras and computers are now affordable to ordinary people, giving rise to the phenomenon of "citizen journalism".

Anyone with a cell phone or video camera can now help make the news. An early example was Rodney King, where a bystander armed with a home video camera made a police beating in Los Angeles headline news across the world. Many of the images published in the aftermath of the London bombings in 2005 were also citizen-generated, as were the first images to be broadcast on television of the Asian tsunami.

Given the radical changes in news consumption, it is logical for TV news operations to graduate to 24-hour services. Consumer expectations of how news should be delivered have risen so much that they expect up-to-the-minute updates, no matter what time of day or night it is.

Viewer appetites have also become conditioned to all the technical advancements that enable live broadcasts from remote corners of the world. As a result, news operations are feeling the burden of having to constantly generate fresh news in around-the-clock coverage.

Passive news consumption is also on the way out. More and more consumers want some form of two-way interactivity. One such opportunity is IPTV (Internet Protocol TV) – a more interactive and multi-platformed form of television.

IPTV refers to a digital television service which is delivered using the Internet Protocol over a broadband network, allowing for enhanced television services. IPTV, which has taken hold in places like Hong Kong and Italy, is set up to be "on-demand" – any portion of it being accessible at any time, even after a programme has aired. Viewers have, in effect, complete control of how and when they receive television.

The arrival of technologies enabling telecommunications operators (telcos) to enter the TV arena and provide TV services over telecommunications infrastructure has persuaded global players such as AT&T, BT and Belgacom to embark on multi-billion dollar network upgrades.

This convergence of the telecoms and TV industries is one of the drivers for Telkom Media entering the TV space. Telcos can now operate as content providers for the IPTV, satellite and online environments without having to be run like traditional television stations.

In South Africa, IPTV is a significant advancement in that it acts as a vehicle for accelerating the rollout of broadband, which will have significant knock-on effects economically.

The rolling out of broadband will not be for television *per se* – new media will just be the driver. This won't be an easy task, mainly because of the vast distances that networks would have to traverse in a country like ours. But, given the competitive and other benefits new media offers, South Africa may not have a choice but to take up the challenge.

Jimi Matthews is a former head of news of South Africa's etv and at the South African Broadcasting Corporation. He was brought on board to manage the creation of a 24-hour news channel at Telkom Media, also in South Africa, but Telkom Media was closed down by its parent company in early 2009.

GHANA EYES MOBILE TELEPHONY IN DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

10

Developments in New Media offer mainstream media new opportunities to engage and deliver content to audiences while also opening up additional ways to generate new revenue streams. Ghana's mainstream media largely lags behind in embracing these new tools of the digital age. Low internet penetration is one of the major issues that may be influencing the slow adaptation of these tools, but the Ghanaian media can cash in on its evolving mobile telecoms landscape and reach out to its diasporan population. The author of this piece looked at three Ghanaian media organizations from each media category and how they were embracing New Media and the purposes they were using it for. The organizations included the *Daily Graphic*, Ghana's largest circulating daily, the *Ghanaian Times* and the *Daily Guide* on the print side; and Joy FM, Citi FM and Peace FM for radio and the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), TV3 and Metro TV for television.

By John Yarney

Introduction

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The author of this piece looked at three Ghanaian media organizations from each media category and how they were embracing New Media and the purposes they were using it for. The organizations included the *Daily Graphic*, Ghana's largest circulating daily, the *Ghanaian Times* and the *Daily Guide* on the print side; and Joy FM, Citi FM and Peace FM for radio and the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC), TV3 and Metro TV for television.

Lagging behind

Although mainstream Ghanaian print media are using some New Media formats such as websites, they largely treat these as replicas of their print versions. They have not taken advantage of the web's ability to publish instantaneously to provide regular updates as news stories unfold. For instance, on Saturday, 4 October 2008, the big story of the week in Ghana was unfolding – the biggest opposition party in Ghana, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), was launching its manifesto for the country's December polls, but the *Daily Graphic* did not post or update its website (www.graphicghana.com) on the event. Throughout that weekend, the newspaper had outdated stories from its print edition that had been posted on Friday.

It is not only the *Daily Graphic* that fails to break and update stories with it website. The top half of the Ghanaian Times' website (www.newtimesonline.com) was blank on Tuesday, 7 October 2008, and their most recent posting at the bottom half of their homepage was on 2 October 2008.

The trend was across the board. Apart from Joy FM's site (www.myjoyonline.com) and GBC (www.gbcghana.com), none of the sites that this author checked at 10am Tuesday 7 October 2008 had posted new stories or updates from stories posted the previous day.

It is not only about updates and breaking news. Apart from www.myjoyonline.com, none of the sites had blogs. For instance, the *Daily Graphic* has a good list of columnists that contribute weekly to its print edition, and some of these columnists could also blog and podcast for its site.

From observation, it is apparent that most of the mainstream media in Ghana view the web in a one-dimensional way. They approach it as a replica of the print editions on the web. The print media organizations especially did not venture to publish related content in other formats such as audio or audio visual on their sites. Their websites can be a good entry point for print media to get into multimedia.

Short audio and video clips of the stories can be embedded by the stories that are

posted on their websites. The *Daily Guide*, on the other hand, had made an attempt to add some multi-media to its site: it had links to five YouTube videos. But it was content that a typical Ghanaian would not be interested in: "Best Ads Super Bowl 2007 1st Half", "Humanoid robot REEM-B" and "Spring Cleaning, Décor it Yourself".

GBC's site had a section where videos had been uploaded, especially sports clips. The sites of three radio stations streamed their programming live from their sites.

Again, although the internet gives media outlets the opportunity to engage their audiences with reasonable numbers of photographs that could be posted in photo galleries, most of the sites that this author looked at were very conservative with photographs.

For instance, the *Daily Graphic* site used photographs sparingly; the photographs that accompanied stories that were posted on 3 October had very low resolutions. It had a photo gallery that displaced only one picture per posting. The Ghanaian Times site, on the other hand, was text heavy; it also did not have any photo gallery. Although the *Daily Guide* had a photo gallery, with more recent postings, it was a little cumbersome navigating.

The sites of the TV stations also had galleries but two – TV3 and Metro TV – focused on themselves. TV3 had a gallery of some of its studio shows, while Metro TV had a photo gallery for its reality football programme, "Football Academy", and some of its in-house programmes.

The sites of GBC, Citi FM and Joy FM's galleries were standard and had postings of recent events. Again, all the photo galleries did not allow users to post pictures.

The web offers publishers tools which give the reader an experience beyond what the print, or audio and audio visual formats offer. Some of the tools include info graphics, links, user comments, RSS feeds and meta-tagging.

From the observation of this author, the sites of the nine media organizations listed above did not utilize info graphics and links; and only two of the nine sites allowed user comments; and only one of the sites had the RSS feed tool.

In the area of interactivity, a number of sites had quick polls but these polls were also not regularly updated or tied to front page news.

None of the nine sites that this author looked at had explored or used community elements and social media effectively.

Some media organizations such as TV3 and Metro TV have built strong brands with some of their reality and live shows. TV3, for instance, has reality shows such 'Mentor' – their version of American Idols – and 'Ghana's most beautiful', a beauty pageant series based on the Ghanaian context of beauty which generates huge viewership and audience participation in the form of SMS messages. Metro TV has its reality show, the 'Football Academy", that also generates huge viewing and responses. But both have failed to replicate or generate spin offs using New Media.

The TV stations can ride on the interest they generate from their viewers to create community elements such as forums, chats, and email and user profiles based on their popular programming.

Again, as is happening elsewhere around the world, they can build social sites

as spin offs of their shows. Such sites can, apart from having users creating their own profiles and other community elements, also have content that is not broadcast to their audience such as backstage scenes.

A large chunk of the young audience that watches these shows already subscribes to social networks such as Facebook and YouTube. The station can ride on these social networks to further build their brands, but broadcasting and creating users groups based on their programming.

The mainstream print organizations can also do the same by creating the own community on existing social networks and posting their content on these sites.

Low Internet but high cell phone penetration

Perhaps the lack of emphasis most of mainstream Ghana media places on New Media is linked to the number of people with internet access in the country. A communication policy and report commissioned by the Ghana Internet Services Providers' Association (GISPA), the umbrella body for internet providers in Ghana which is supported by USAID, said in June 2008 that although internet subscribers in the country had grown with time, the level of penetration remained low.

In 2006 it had a penetration rate of 1.0 percent compared to other countries such as Nigeria with 3.1 percent, Senegal 4.9 percent, Tunisia 9.3 percent and South Africa 10.3 percent.

But unlike the internet, the use of cell phones in Ghana is growing. A recent industry report said that 10 million people out of Ghana's population of more than 22 million had access to mobile phones.

And this year there were further developments on Ghana's mobile telephony landscape: Vodafone acquired a 70 percent stake in Ghana incumbent telecommunication provider – Ghana Telecom (GT) – and the regulator, the National Communications Authority (NCA) – granted two additional mobile licenses to two additional operators – Zain and Globacom – bringing the total operators in the mobile space to six. Some of the operators will be offering 3G services.

The growth and access of mobile phones has impacted the formats of radio and television programming; audience contribution and feedback have become an integral part of most radio and television programming in Ghana. Most live radio and television shows are inundated by SMS messages from audiences.

There have been other development in the mobile industry: in May 2008 a local Ghanaian company, Black Star TV, in partnership with South Korea's 2ii Tech, introduced FonTV – the first mobile-enabled TV content in West Africa.

The service is available to subscribers of Onetouch, the subsidiary of Ghana's telecommunications provider Ghana Telecom (GT), and allows subscribers to view audio visual content such movies, news, music videos via Terrestrial Digital Multimedia Broadcasting (T-DMB) technology.

The partnership is not just looking at streaming TV content via mobile phones, but also plans to deploy e-commerce and GPS services using the same platform.

Developments in the mobile industry present new opportunities to the traditional

media to offer content to their audiences and to create new revenue streams.

The new telecoms terrain allows the media to create mobile social networks. Again, mainstream media can position themselves as content providers and partner telcos to deliver content to their subscribers. This requires that mainstream media transform themselves form the one-dimensional manner based on the format in which they publish to being content providers who are not based on the media they publish.

Although internet penetration may be low in Ghana, the country has a huge population in the diaspora, which mainstream media can tap into for both business and audience.

The Ghana-based Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) and radio website www.omanyeonline.com offers some keys in harnessing the diasporan market.

Initially created to offer Ghanaian and African content such as movies, news and talk shows to that market over the internet, it developed unique billing systems to generate revenue from its services. Subscribers could pay for content they viewed through multiple methods such as through mobile money transfers, credit cards and electronic wire transfer.

It is clear that Ghana's mainstream media will need to actively look at the use of mobile telephony to expand and enhance their services and businesses and to capture the large numbers of Ghanaians who live abroad.

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IVORY COAST LAUNCHES E-KIOSK AS IT ENTERS DIGITAL ERA

11

There is no doubt that the world's mainstream media is in a crisis. Media professionals acknowledge this point and some of them try to explain it by pointing out that the rise of the digital media and the Internet are the real threats. Proponents assert that since the rise of the Internet, sales of newspapers have fallen due to the fact that anyone can now access information and news freely via a computer – the same information that is provided by newspapers. In Africa, this option is increasingly spreading, putting an end to an era where the Internet was considered as a credible information provider exclusive to newspapers companies. The argument that the Internet has contributed to the fall of the traditional media's revenue is relevant because in public services and enterprises where access to the Internet is free of charge, the sale of newspapers in surrounding kiosks and bookshops is dropping considerably.

By Barthelemy Kouame

Introduction

There is no doubt that the world's mainstream media is in a crisis. Media professionals acknowledge this point and some of them try to explain it by pointing out that the rise of the digital media and the Internet are the real threats.

Proponents assert that since the rise of the Internet, sales of newspapers have fallen due to the fact that anyone can now access information and news freely via a computer – the same information that is provided by newspapers.

In Africa, this option is increasingly spreading, putting an end to an era where the Internet was considered as a credible information provider exclusive to newspapers companies. The argument that the Internet has contributed to the fall of the traditional media's revenue is relevant because in public services and enterprises where access to the Internet is free of charge, the sale of newspapers in surrounding kiosks and bookshops is dropping
considerably.

But, what would be the economic future for a newspaper that is producing only for 20 million inhabitants whose big majority is located in rural areas? What benefits can media companies make in the economic integration process and globalization in a country like Ivory Cost?

These are two essential questions that have led to the establishment of a digital kiosk for the country by the Ivory Cost Online Professional Media, or, in French, *le Réseau des Professionnels de la Presse en Ligne de Côte d'Ivoire* (REPPRELCI).

What is in fact the REPPRELCI Network?

The digital kiosk of the REPPRELCI Network or e-kiosk is an online bookshop where newspapers published in Ivory Coast can be purchased.

Pages of each publication are digitally recorded and presented as they appear in print. Therefore all daily, weekly and other publications are exposed to the public as they appear in traditional kiosks.

Purchasers choose publications they would like to read and download them immediately – of course after paying to an e-kiosk teller using bank cards such as Mastercad and Visa.

The purchaser may choose to obtain his /her newspaper in the original version. In this case, the role of the digital kiosk is simply to record his/her purchase and the payment. In this case, the physical e-kiosk team therefore only takes the responsibility for delivering all purchased publications. All transactions are made directly into the e-kiosk, through a computer, on a worldwide website open to a larger public.

Potential purchasers may be found beyond the national boundaries and they are anywhere in the world. The digital kiosk opens the window to an electronic commerce in the media domain.

The effectiveness of its implementation requires more skills and financial support. The digital kiosk should be based on a system that is both fluid and credible, a secure system that reassures purchasers and sellers.

What is the outcome?

The digital kiosk in Ivory Coast is the first of its kind to be established in a French-speaking country in Africa. The idea was implemented after the establishment of many digital kiosks in developed countries, including those of France, where *Relay.fr* and *journaux.fr* are digital kiosks well known to the public.

Following the example of these online bookshops, e-kiosk in Ivory Coast sells Ivorian newspapers; it may yet grow and encompass its business to include newspapers from other countries of Africa.

If this happens, it will indeed be a common market for Ivorians and Africans to take advantage of the potential of entering the world market. This would be an important and extra source of income for media companies in Africa. It would enable them to significantly improve their economy and to positively face the challenges of globalisation.

In this project, the focus needs not to be exclusively on financial issues; the editorial component, which is the foundation of a newspaper, should also be considered.

With a digital kiosk, Ivorian and African newspapers gain access to the international market as they can be read by anyone all over the world at any time. This was a privilege that only rich countries enjoyed in the past.

With digital kiosks, journalists from developing countries can now take part in world debates and share their views with their peers from developed countries. Contrary to the traditional media, the digital kiosk offers also the real possibility of interacting with leading personalities from across the world, as publications are exposed to a larger audience.

Conclusion

For the REPPRELCI Network, the digital kiosk is a priority as it gives an accurate response to two fundamental questions raised in my introduction. It is a contribution to the African integration process with the rest of the world. This has been proved by the Dan Moussa Award for the Best Journalist in the promotion of peace and integration in the ECOWAS region. The e-kiosk is also a source of revenue for the REPPRELCI Network.

Considering that the digital media is not yet part of the Ivorian media culture, it is a challenge for the association to get funding for different activities aimed at developing this new media.

The e-kiosk is therefore an opportunity for funding REPPRELCI Network activities. Since 2007, the association has also launched a Directory of Ivory Coast Websites, which is also a source of income. In fact, the major beneficiary of the REPPRELCI Network is the Ivorian media and, of course, the African media in general.

*****Barthélemy Kouame is chairman of** the REPPRELCI Network and can be contacted at barthelek@repprelci.org.*

This article was translated into English by Patrick Kabeya Mwepu from an article written in French by Barthelemy Kouame.

LE KIOSQUE NUMÉRIQUE : POUR CONTRIBUER À UNE ÉCONOMIE DURABLE DES MÉDIAS TRADITIONNELS AFRICAINS

11

La presse traditionnelle mondiale vit une crise. Les professionnels le reconnaissent et certains d'entre eux tentent d'expliquer la situation par l'arrivée du numérique : la presse sur Internet notamment. Pour les tenants de cette thèse, Internet a fait chuter la vente des journaux papier en livrant gratuitement l'information, parfois les mêmes informations. En Afrique, cette opinion s'est répandue largement, passé le temps où être sur Internet était pour les journaux une source de crédibilité. L'argument qu'Internet a fait diminuer les revenus de la presse traditionnelle est sans doute pertinent. D'autant plus que dans les administrations, dans les entreprises où Internet a haut débit est souvent mis gratuitement à la disposition des travailleurs, on achète de moins en moins les journaux dans les kiosques, dans la rue ou à la librairie. Mais quel avenir économique peut avoir un journal qui se vend uniquement parmi une population de 20 millions d'habitants dont la grande majorité est rurale ? Quelle part bénéfique compte prendre les entreprises de presse d'un pays comme la Côte d'Ivoire dans les processus d'intégration économique, et même de mondialisation? Voilà deux questions fondamentales qui ont guidé le Réseau des Professionnels de la Presse en Ligne de Côte d'Ivoire (REPPRELCI) à penser à réaliser un kiosque numérique pour le pays.

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L'argument qu'Internet a fait diminuer les revenus de la presse traditionnelle est sans doute pertinent. D'autant plus que dans les administrations, dans les entreprises où Internet a haut débit est souvent mis gratuitement à la disposition des travailleurs, on achète de moins en moins les journaux dans les kiosques, dans la rue ou à la librairie.

Mais quel avenir économique peut avoir un journal qui se vend uniquement parmi une population de 20 millions d'habitants dont la grande majorité est rurale ? Quelle part bénéfique compte prendre les entreprises de presse d'un pays comme la Côte d'Ivoire dans les processus d'intégration économique, et même de mondialisation ?

Voilà deux questions fondamentales qui ont guidé le Réseau des Professionnels de la Presse en Ligne de Côte d'Ivoire (REPPRELCI) à penser à réaliser un kiosque numérique pour le pays.

De quoi s'agit-il ?

Le kiosque numérique du REPPRELCI ou Ikiosk, est une boutique en ligne où l'on peut acheter tous les journaux édités en Côte d'Ivoire. Les feuilles de chaque publication sont numérisées et disposés comme elles ont été imprimées à l'origine.

Ainsi, tous les jours, les quotidiens, les hebdomadaires et autres périodiques sont exposés comme on le fait dans les kiosques classiques. Les acheteurs choisissent le ou les publications qu'ils souhaitent lire et ils les téléchargent immédiatement. Bien sûr après avoir payé à la caisse de la boutique par carte bancaire, Mastercard ou Visa.

L'acheteur peut également choisir de recevoir sa publication en version originale. Dans ce cas, le rôle du kiosque numérique est d'enregistrer seulement son achat et son paiement. L'équipe physique de Ikiosk se charge plus tard d'expédier la ou les publications payées.

Toutes ces transactions se font directement au kiosque numérique, avec son ordinateur, sur un site Internet accessible à tous. Et les acheteurs potentiels se retrouvent au-delà du territoire national. Ils sont sur toute la planète.

Avec le kiosque numérique, c'est donc la pratique du commerce électronique dans l'univers de la presse. Sa réalisation effective nécessite une combinaison de moyens et de compétences importants. Le kiosque numérique doit être en effet basé sur un système à la fois fluide et fiable. Un système sécurisé qui rassure acheteurs et vendeurs.

Quelles retombées ?

Le kiosque numérique élaboré en Côte d'Ivoire est le premier du genre basé en Afrique francophone. Il a été cependant inspiré de kiosques déjà existant dans des pays dits développés. Notamment en France où il y a Relay.fr et journaux.fr qui sont des

kiosques numériques. A l'instar de ces boutiques en ligne, Ikiosk vend les publications ivoiriennes. Il va se développer par la suite en proposant également les journaux d'autres pays africains.

C'est donc un marché commun pour les journaux ivoiriens et africains qui se crée, avec l'avantage de s'adresser au marché mondial.

Plus que des revenus supplémentaires, c'est un chapitre entier, non négligeable, qui s'ouvre pour doter les entreprises de presse d'une vraie économie, capable de leur permettre de faire face à leurs charges grandissantes et aux défis de la mondialisation.

Il n'y a pas que les finances à regarder dans ce projet. Il y a aussi le volet éditorial qui est à la base de l'existence de tout journal. Avec le kiosque numérique, les journaux de Côte d'Ivoire et des pays en voie de développement en général se donnent désormais un statut mondial parce que leurs publications se lisent dans le monde entier. Et au même moment. Toute chose qui est, dans le système de la distribution classique, réservée aux seuls pays riches. Le kiosque numérique réalisé, les journalistes des pays en voie de développement peuvent désormais prendre part, sans complexe, aux grands débats planétaires et confronter leurs points de vue avec ceux des pays développés. Avec le kiosque numérique, c'est également la possibilité réelle d'avoir désormais accès aux grands acteurs mondiaux, dans tous les domaines. Les publications n'étant plus trop méconnues comme dans le système traditionnel.

Conclusion

Pour le REPPRELCI, Ikiosk est une priorité. Il permet de répondre aux deux questions fondamentales posées dans l'introduction. Il est par exemple, avec le Prix Dan Moussa du meilleur journaliste pour la promotion de la paix et de l'intégration dans l'espace CEDEAO (ECOWAS), une contribution au processus d'intégration africaine. Il est aussi une source de revenus pour le REPPRELCI.

La presse en ligne n'est pas encore rentrée dans les mœurs des Ivoiriens et obtenir des subventions pour les activités de l'association, qui visent justement à développer cette presse, est une chose non aisée. Le kiosque numérique est donc une opportunité de financement du REPPRELCI, comme l'est également l'annuaire des sites Internet de Côte d'Ivoire que l'association a commencé à édité en 2007.

Dans tous les cas, le gagnant demeure la presse ivoirienne dans son ensemble. Toute la presse africaine, pourquoi pas ?

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NO JET SKI, PLEASE
THE CHALLENGES OF NEWSPAPERS IN THE INTERNET AGE

12

There is no doubt that the world's mainstream media is in a crisis. Media professionals acknowledge this point and some of them try to explain it by pointing out that the rise of the digital media and the Internet are the real threats. Proponents assert that since the rise of the Internet, sales of newspapers have fallen due to the fact that anyone can now access information and news freely via a computer – the same information that is provided by newspapers. In Africa, this option is increasingly spreading, putting an end to an era where the Internet was considered as a credible information provider exclusive to newspapers companies. The argument that the Internet has contributed to the fall of the traditional media's revenue is relevant because in public services and enterprises where access to the Internet is free of charge, the sale of newspapers in surrounding kiosks and bookshops is dropping considerably.

By Matthias Hufmann

Antiquated, slow, somehow passive

There have been better times for newspapers. The obituaries of newspapers are already being written by many across the globe. Because, critics argue, the future is the Internet. Differing opinions? These are hardly noticed.

However there are some who think differently. "Once I was a scuba diver in a sea of words", says Nicholas Carr, describing his experience of reading newspapers.

"Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski", so says the US author after years of studying the Internet and the World Wide Web.

"I'd spend hours trawling through long stretches of prose (of newspapers). Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages (of reading the web)."

He asks: "Is Google making us stupid?"

The biggest problem of the Internet is the reverse of its biggest advantage - the excess supply of information.

Whatever you want to know you can get it in just a few clicks. That boon comes at a price. We are increasingly relying on Wikipedia and Google, and search engines now do our research. The mind gets sluggish, the user is directed uninspired.

Hits on the web are ranked by popularity, not necessarily relevance. The Internet gives all but orientation. And this is the biggest opportunity for an old-fashioned medium: the newspaper.

Newspapers are known for reliable information; journalists separate the interesting from petty themes and they uncover, explain and even surprise. This value of the unexpected is cancelled on the Internet by target-oriented reading.

The search engines are simply data aggregators.

Of course, we cannot ignore that the media landscape has changed radically.

Time magazine simply appointed "You" to the person of the year 2006 and dedicated its cover story to the writing, photography and comments of the www-community.

So Web 2.0 has become a reality. Users are gaming, dating and chatting. They spread their knowledge in blogs and portals.

What does all this mean for newspapers? There is no doubt that they are in a crisis. But the traditional media has to meet these challenges head on.

Google and the Internet are not the first, nor will they be the last technologies, to bring about these dramatic changes. Radio and TV also changed the way our business is done and they themselves have had to re-examine and re-invent themselves in the face of change in the past. Thus – and once again – journalism has to re-invent itself.

Millions and millions of bloggers add their views to the Internet, hardly recognised by the masses but well linked in their communities. They are part of a never-ending meta-chitchat, part of the digital bohemian society.

Bloggers enrich the world of media with new and democratic energy. But not to forget: blogs require a professional counterpart. And that is not Google. It does not produce content. There are no correspondents, no editors; Google is just a search engine that generates news – and news is what newspapers can do best.

However, journalists have to learn to keep up with the speed of the Internet; they

have to embrace multimedia without losing reliability. Publishing companies should try new paths but focus on their core competence: quality.

People search for information from trustworthy sources. And they will do so in future. Web 2.0 is affected by anti-authoritarian reflexes, wrote Bernd Kundrun, head of Europe's biggest publishing house "Gruner + Jahr", in an essay.

Web 3.0 is going to develop a structured use. "And the classic media will experience a renaissance – provided that they are prepared," he noted.

Newspapers can be essential gatekeepers and navigators in the new age because they direct the information flow. This profile will prevail on the Internet too. Hence newspaper publishers should stop to imitate the online competitors.

They should ask themselves whether they really need puzzles or picture galleries on homepages just to earn clicks. What is more valuable: comment or crossword?

Another questionable development is likewise linked to the quest by media companies for reputation on the net. Search engine optimization (SEO) is one of the present hypes. SEO simply means this: type as many keywords as possible in your text in order to get top-ranked by Google. "Online first" is a common slogan. "Reader second" is the outcome.

Search engine marketing is even more unmasking. Well-established newspapers buy search items to enhance the hit rate. It seems as if they have lost their self-confidence, although they need it now more than ever.

It is essential to design a newspaper of tomorrow. Newspapers that give thought-provoking news coverage on a range of issues and events, offer analyses, criticize, print profound interviews and editorials.

At the end it does not matter whether this concept is published online or in a traditional way. It could be a mixture. But whatever it is, it will be part of circulating news differently. Readers get informed by summaries in their laptops or mobile phones; they hear pod casts and read newspapers that are printed á la minute at the airport, train station or simply at home.

The best example is The New York Times (NYT). More precisely, it is Michael Rogers who holds a great title. He is the "Futurist in Residence" at the NYT. People are going to read his paper in buses or parks on advanced personal digital assistants like Palm or Blackberry, said Rogers.

In five years' time, there will be at least ten versions of newspapers – for instance, a bendable and glass-free foil which is tested today by experts of the University of Arizona.

No doubt, media houses have to face a lot of challenges. But if they focus on what they know best and if they allow technical innovations to buttress this, there is no need to answer the question "Is Google making us stupid?"

Converged newsrooms: A case study from Europe

What is the experience of my newspaper, the *Schweriner Volkszeitung* (SVZ), after two years working in a converged newsroom and one year after the relaunch of its homepage? The second step would not have been possible without the first. But let me first give details of the newspaper.

SVZ is a daily newspaper in the east of Germany with a print run of up to 110 000 copies. But we are losing readers – up to five percent during the worst years. The reasons: people leave the region due to the poor job prospects there, moving to Hamburg, Berlin or southwards. Some cancel their subscriptions because they cannot afford these any longer. The problems are difficult to answer. Nevertheless we try.

In 2006 we rebuilt the editorial offices. Before we had tiny rooms. The advantage of this was that editors could work undisturbed. But the disadvantage was that reporters only knew about the stories which they were reporting on each day, and not on the broader content of their newspaper. The paper was produced behind closed doors, synchronized in just two meetings and countless telephone calls throughout the day.

Then we planned the newsroom for politics, economy, home and foreign affairs: the core of our newspaper.

Editors work as generalists, each specialized in some subjects. We have designers, photographers and two managing editors - one is in charge of technology and the other is responsible for content.

How do we produce the newspaper?

The day starts at 10am with mail checking, reading other newspapers, calling correspondents and studying previews of the press agencies. At 11am the eleven local offices inform us about their news diaries and how they plan to cover their stories. Thereafter we can plan the paper in detail.

All editors are able to write and produce so that we can change jobs whenever we want. The flexibility ensures that experts can work on their research while the others handle the issue. Next day it is the other way around.

Our production deadline is at 8pm but in order to get the latest news we update the content until midnight. Anyway, the major work is done before then – in just one conference and several meetings.

In 1996 we were the first German newspaper on the Internet. Now it is one year ago since we re-launched our internet edition. Previously, our homepage was in a poor state. It was impossible to earn money. Nobody felt in charge, the last editor left, the page was updated automatically by an online service.

Since the re-launch, we are trying to capture the market back. In July last year only 2 400 users visited our homepage per day, the click number was 17 000.

This year this figure has jumped up to 80,000 - almost 10,000 visitors come to check daily news. They now spend double the amount of time they used browsing our website. Indeed, all the traffic and usage figures are between two and four times higher than a year ago.

What happened?

We got a new web content managing system and employed two junior editors. Their workstations are right in the middle of the newsroom. They do shift work so that the homepage can be updated from early morning till late.

The online editors take part in our news planning conference. They are in permanent contact with editors, they can decide with the managing editor what needs to be published online first. News cannot wait for next day, but details of the story are mainly restricted to the print issue.

We are testing pod casts and how to publish news on mobile phones. We know that everything is possible. But does everything make sense? Can you meet the expectations if a newspaper tries to broadcast TV? We show TV reports as well, though these are produced by external journalists.

Cross media is the magic word these days but you have to plan within reason. Sixty-three per cent of all Germans are online. We cannot run away from this reality. That is why we invest in our Internet edition.

We have designed our online edition with personalized profiles; we offer weather forecasts in detail; we offer the latest local news in the favoured type size and font. That is what we call service.

We do as much as possible to make visitors stay. You can read older articles, we offer RSS feed and from time to time we start a poll asking about politics or sports.

We have also been publishing a daily page for children in the past year and you can find this online too.

Of course, we count the clicks of each article and, of course, we analyze the result in our news planning conferences.

But we realise that this is a separate media platform. We have not stopped from printing the leading article on politics in our hard copy newspaper.

Matthias Hufmann is managing editor of the Zeitungsverlag Schwerin*, a German publishing company with three newspapers: Schweriner Volkszeitung, Der Prignitzer, Norddeutsche Neueste Nachrichten. He can be reached at* hufmann@svz.de*.*

Guy Berger

Professor Guy Berger is head of the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University, South Africa. He teaches and researches in new media, media policy, convergence and journalism education.

For several years he has served as chairperson of the Board of *Grocott's Mail*, a newspaper owned by Rhodes University in Grahamstown, and is also active in the South African National Editors' Forum from which he received the Nat Nakasa Award for media integrity in 2006.

Commenting on the 2008 Africa Media Leadership Conference, which he attended, he said: "It is one of those high-value occasions where the leadership of African media institutions has the opportunity to share knowledge and experience.

"The 2008 conference was no exception, and participants really seemed to have buzzed about the information flow across countries and media platforms.

"For a person like me in the research and teaching arena, the conference was also a great place to make a contribution from the academy, and to keep up to speed with the latest developments in the African media industry."

Professor Berger writes an online column for South Africa's *Mail & Guardian*, and two blogs. He founded the New Media Lab at Rhodes University, as well as the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership.

David Duarte

Dave Duarte believes that better collaboration provides competitive advantage in business today.

He is an internet and mobile marketing consultant, entrepreneur and educator who holds several senior positions in the academic, commercial, and non-profit sectors.

Dave runs Huddlemind Labs, a company which provides corporations with social software to help facilitate and embed organizational learning.

He is founder and programme director of two executive education courses: Nomadic Marketing and Mobile Marketing at the Graduate School of Business (GSB) at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The courses are being run by the UCT GSB's Executive Education unit, which has a global top ten rating from the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Dave co-owns Muti.co.za, Africa's most popular social-bookmarking site, which has grown on virtually

no budget to serving over one million pages a month to over 50 000 users, and has remained an ad-free service.

This is what he had to say about the 2008 Africa Media Leadership Conference in Kampala: "It was a transformational event for me. The organizers of the event created an atmosphere of openness and collaboration, which enhanced the value we got for our time spent engaging with the formal presentations.

"I found that the questions that were raised in response to the presentations also gave a glimpse into the issues we are facing in the media industry today.

"Issues such as the role of journalists, converging newsrooms, monetization of digital media, and the implications for traditional media were particularly poignant at this conference.

"I had never been to Uganda before. The opportunity to travel there with such a group of top media people from around Africa made it an exceptional learning experience.

"Some of the group had been to Kampala before, and could contextualize the city for me – helping me explore it, and understand where it had grown from.\

Many of these people had been journalists or still were journalists, and they certainly knew how to communicate and share their experiences. Their insights and stories fascinated me.

"Having a common context and background of media, it was a superb opportunity to have conversations about all the issues that the media is currently facing, and get the inside edge on some of the issues that the leaders and managers in the industry are facing in their respective institutions.

"I was the newbie media guy in the group. I got involved in the media not as a professional journalist, but as an amateur one – a blogger. Nonetheless, the group was as keen to learn and share with me as I was from them.

"I realized the significance of the New Media world that I'm involved in now, and what it means from the perspective of more traditional media people.

"Before the conference I hadn't really understood how the internet was used in African countries outside of South Africa. As a result of the Kampala conference, I think that all the delegates learned that the internet is an extremely viable and important emerging channel throughout the African continent."
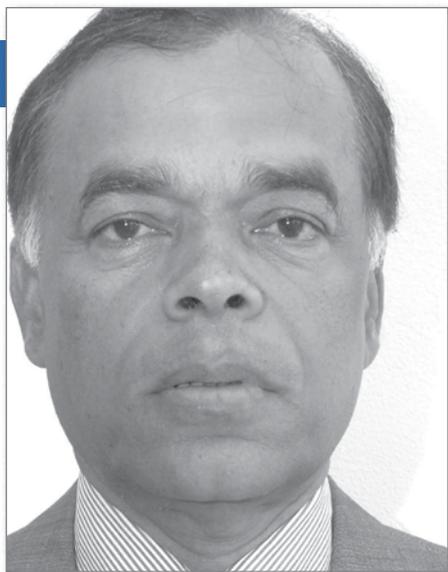
Subash Gobine

Subash Gobine is Senior Editor and Research Development Co-ordinator at Le Défi Media Group, a leading media company in Mauritius which owns the most popular radio station of the island and its second largest weekly.

He had this to say about the 2008 Africa Media Leadership Conference which he attended in Uganda: "The Kampala meeting allowed me to take full measure of the new media potentiality of the cell phone.

"Indeed, a recent report of the Mauritian Central Statistical Office indicated that in 2007 the country, with a population of 1.2 million, had 928, 600 mobile phone subscribers – that is a mobidensity of 73.4% .

"However, only 13.1% of Mauritians had subscribed

to an Internet service. Nevertheless, in terms of the Digital Opportunity Index (DOI), Mauritius ranked first in Africa, according to International Telecommunication Union figures released for the year 2006.

"Internet access is relatively limited but with such a huge rate of mobidensity, Mauritian traditional media have overlooked the potential to create interacting opportunities with mobile subscribers.

"The Défi Media Group will soon be offering users the opportunity to comment via SMS on the content of our papers, the website and the radio. At the same time, a news alert service will be launched to break news of popular interest and invite phone users to read full stories in the papers, listen to the radio or visit the website.

"Such a service will certainly increase traffic, allowing us to increase our reach. The revenue from advertising is set to benefit from an expanding audience."

In his present capacity, Gobine provides story ideas to the media house publications and radio and monitors their performance. He also ensures the continuous training of journalists. Since the website has been launched, he monitors and edits comments and blogs.

Gobine participates in special programmes aired by the radio whenever major political events occur in Mauritius.

Gobine, who holds a master's degree in telecommunications regulation and policy, has undergone training in journalism in the United States and Britain. He has held a series of senior editorial positions in Mauritius, including being senior adviser on information matters to the prime minister.

Gobine has also been closely associated with the liberalisation of broadcasting and the telecommunications sector in Mauritius.

Matthias Hufmann

Matthias Hufmann, the managing editor of the Zeitungsverlag Schwerin, a German publishing company, warns about the risk of newspapers losing sight of their core business in the panic triggered by New Media.

He underscores the importance of online publishing, but says: "In the panic to change, there is a risk that newspapers will lose sight of their core values and business."

"The Internet offers the allure that all information is available anywhere and any time. But for newspapers, what matters at the end of the day is all about authentic news, quality journalism and grasping the opportunities that technology affords."

Hufmann is a political scientist who studied at the universities of Duisburg, London and Hamburg and wrote his thesis about democracy in Africa.

"My conclusion after the Africa Media Leadership Conference in Uganda is that we in both the developed North and Africa all face the same challenges in how best to provide content to our audiences."

Can newspapers survive the competition spawned by the New Media? "Absolutely", he says, stressing the importance of providing analysis and credible content as the main success tools for print.

Sim Kyazze

Sim Kyazze is a Ugandan currently living in South Africa. He makes his home at the Rhodes University's School of Journalism & Media Studies where he is involved with the Writing & Editing specialisation across the whole degree as he simultaneously attempts to complete a PhD in Journalism & Media Studies.

Before coming to South Africa, Sim was a Teaching Assistant, Assistant Lecturer and later Lecturer at the Makerere University's Department of Mass Communication. He received the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to read for an MA in Journalism & Communication Studies at New York University, where he was supervised by the Public Journalism guru Professor Jay Rosen.

Sim also previously worked in various capacities at The Monitor, Uganda's highest circulating independent newspaper.

His interests include Public Affairs, Community Media & Social Capital (he's attempting a PhD in this area), as well as Media and Democracy in Africa. He can be reached at s.kyazze@ru.ac.za.

Jimi Matthews

Jimi Matthews, appointed head of Telkom Media's 24-hour news channel in February 2007, says the Africa Media Leadership Conference series helps African journalists to forge critical networks and to tackle key common challenges.

"African journalists are faced with many challenges, not least being a lack of resources and, often, repressive regimes whose actions impede the career development of many of our colleagues on the continent," he said.

He referred to the 2008 Africa Media Leadership Conference hosted by Rhodes University's Sol Plaatje Institute (SPI) for Media Leadership and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS)in Kampala in May 2008 and said:

"Conferences such as these play an important role by providing African colleagues an opportunity to network and to share ideas and common experiences.

"The topics of these conferences are particularly relevant to the issues that many African journalists have to deal with. Meeting as a collegial group also fosters a sense of solidarity and common purpose.

"Common issues and problems are addressed and solutions offered, or cited, by those who have had the same or similar experiences."

He said the conference series, launched in 2002 and held annually, also helped him to learn challenging and exciting developments on media management and leadership.

"At a personal level, I have enjoyed meeting new colleagues, catching up with some old hands and being privileged to being exposed to the thoughts of my peers from across the continent, often in an exciting and challenging way," he said.

"But most of all, I have come to appreciate the friendships and the professional bonds that have emerged directly from my participation in the conferences."

Matthews' Telkom Media is one of four successful applicants granted a licence to run a cable and satellite television service by South Africa's telecoms regulator ICASA.

The company will start rolling out Internet-based television, IPTV, in the latter half of 2008.

Before joining Telkom Media, Matthews was employed by the international news agency Reuters, where he served as a cameraman, editor and senior producer for South and Central Africa.

In 1998 he became the head of e.tv news and, three years later, turned the channel's half-hour news slot into an hour-long broadcast – the first in South Africa.

Matthews then joined the SABC in 2002 as head of TV news, and in 2005 he moved to become head of Sports Production at the SABC before moving into his present position at Telkom Media.

Churchill Otieno

Churchill Otieno is the Nation Media Group's Online Editor, with responsibilities including overseeing and planning publishing to mobiles and websites. Churchill worked for five years as a reporter for the Nairobi-based *Daily Nation* before taking a career shift into online journalism in 2001.

He took his basic training in journalism at the St. Augustine's University of Tanzania in Mwanza before specializing in online journalism as a Freedom Forum Fellow at the New York University in the United States of America.

An Online Editor for the past three years, he is a member of the Kenya Editors' Guild. His other journalism interests are in the environment, for which he is a board member of the Africa Network for Environmental Journalists and a founder of the Health and Environment Media Network, a caucus of science and environment reporters in Kenya.

This is what he had to say on the 2008 Africa Media Leadership Conference in Kampala: "The conference afforded media leaders from across the continent a chance to seriously interrogate the implications of the digital revolution to the media scene in Africa and to benefit from the experiences of colleagues from different countries.

"It was a good mix, ranging from the truly converted to the hitherto reluctant. But at the end of the conference, most if not all were clear on the need for the media to embrace digital platforms and the opportunities which they open, both in terms of amplifying a channel's voice and improving revenues."

David Smith

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.

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 New Media – the focus of the 2008 Africa Media Leadership Conference hosted by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation (KAS) and the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) in Kampala in May, Smith said:

"Yes, it is hard to teach an old dog new tricks but it's not impossible. In Kampala this year, part of the emphasis was on simplifying new media techniques for some of the old hacks in the business.

"Sometimes when we work in isolation under difficult circumstances, there just doesn't seem to be time to consider new technology and methods in the business that, when understood, can help us to be more efficient and effective.

"KAS and SPI gave me an opportunity to step away from the coal face and give considered thought to how the use of New Media can be applied to my work – work which centres on media strategy and implementation in zones of conflict.

"For me, Kampala was a very clear demonstration of how it is often necessary to step back in order to move forward. The inspiration received from the Uganda conference has already been applied to concrete action in Darfur."

Riaan Wolmarans

Riaan Wolmarans is the editor of the *Mail&Guardian Online*, the website of the weekly investigative *Mail&Guardian* newspaper in South Africa. The M&G Online is the biggest independent news site in South Africa and provides up-to-date breaking news from South Africa and elsewhere.

He is also the editor of Thought Leader, the M&G Online's invitation-only blogging platform where some of society's finest minds share their views. Thought Leader has been named blog of the year at the 2008 South African Blog Awards.

How did he experience the 2008 Africa Media Leadership Conference in Uganda's capital Kampala?

"It was a fascinating meeting of media practitioners from across Africa. I found it to be a very useful sampling of how new media techniques are being used by media houses on the continent, especially mobile technology.

"Though we in South Africa often have more resources at our disposal (and the luxury of a higher internet penetration rate than many other African countries), it was educational to see how our colleagues in other countries are using mobile technology to communicate and interact with their readers, viewers and listeners.

"I think a way to improve on the conference would be to have more practical sessions where delegates can demonstrate and display technology and techniques that they have implemented and which may be useful for the other media workers attending the conference."

John Yarney

John Yarney, an award-winning journalist, is the Editor of CIO Business World, a monthly business technology magazine based in Ghana.

Yarney worked as a staff reporter for the *Public Agenda* newspaper in Ghana until January 2002, when he left the company to concentrate on ICT reporting.

He has edited the Computer and Technology News and worked as a freelancer reporting on emerging ICT trends on the African continent.

Yarney is also a correspondent for the IDG News Services, the world's leading provider of ICT news to more than 250 affiliate publications in over 50 different countries.

He is a winner of several media awards. In 2001 he was

one of recipients of the awards for excellence in environmental reporting, the Ghana Biodiversity Reporting Awards, organized by Conservation International, the International Centre for Journalists and the International federation of Environmental Journalists. He has also won the Ghana Journalists Association's Award for Arts Reporting for the period 2001/2002.

Yarney studied media management at post-graduate level at Rhodes University's Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership in South Africa.

Francis Mdlongwa

Francis Mdlongwa has been head of Rhodes University's Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership since 2004, taking charge of Africa's only university-level institute that specifically trains graduates and editors in media leadership and management.

Mdlongwa distinguished himself as an international desk editor, bureau chief and senior roving international correspondent of *Reuters*, the world's leading news agency, which employed him in several world capitals, including London, Nairobi, Johannesburg and Harare, in the 1980s and 1990s. He also worked for the news agency briefly in the United States, based in Atlanta, Georgia.

He broke the story of the 1991 overthrow of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, covered Africa's civil wars and peace in diverse countries stretching from Sudan and Ethiopia in the North to Angola and Lesotho in the South, and reported on landmark elections in the 1990s which ushered in multi-party democracy in countries such as South Africa, Malawi and Kenya.

Mdlongwa has headed several African media organisations. He has been Group Editor-in-Chief of Associated Newspapers, publishers of Zimbabwe's *Daily News*, which was banned by the government in 2003; for nearly a decade he was Editor-in-Chief of the *Financial Gazette*, an authoritative financial and political newspaper based in Harare; and he was head of news and current affairs at *Channel Africa*, the external news service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

He is an international media consultant who has run journalism and media management training programmes for more than a decade in the former Eastern Bloc nations such as Serbia and Montenegro, and in several African countries such as Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe. His media consultancies have been funded by several international organisations, including the Reuters Foundation, the London-based training arm of *Reuters*; and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), which is headquartered in Washington.

For more than four years, since 2004, he taught practical journalism courses such as news writing; the writing of news features, news analysis and editorial and opinion pieces; and economics, business and financial reporting at the Graduate School of Journalism and Communication at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, working on behalf of the Norway's Gimlekollen University College.

KAS AND SUB-SAHARA AFRICA MEDIA PROGRAMME

For over 40 years now, the German Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (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-Saharan 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 is 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.

SOL PLAATJE INSTITUTE FOR MEDIA LEADERSHIP

Rhodes University's Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership (SPI) is a pioneering institute in Africa offering high-level editorial and business training programmes to both practising and aspirant media leaders.

Established in 2002, the SPI is the only university-level institute in Africa offering professional media management and leadership training programmes and the honours degree-level Post-Graduate Diploma in Media Management (PDMM).

Our training programmes uniquely combine cutting-edge theory and practice and are led by media industry experts and academics, who seek to provide course participants with knowledge and skills of how to lead sustainable media organisations in rapidly changing conditions typified by Africa's socio-economic and political landscape.

We do not claim that we will turn you into a media management expert overnight, but we give you a range of insights which empower you to make direct interventions at your work place.

We offer a range of short-term professional courses such as our popular Essentials of Newspaper Management and the Essentials of Broadcast Management, which are usually taken by practising mid-career media managers who want to sharpen and deepen their understanding of the media sector.

The PDMM, an equivalent of an honours degree, is the only training programme of its kind in Africa which specifically focuses on leadership and management of media institutions – print, broadcast, online and converged – as opposed to offering generalist management to course participants.

We design and stage customised courses for media companies from across Africa, the latest being an innovative leadership newsroom programme run by the SPI for senior editorial members of the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

We also conduct research into key issues, questions and trends that define today's media landscape.

For more details, please visit our website at www.spiml.co.za or at www.spiml.com.
You can also contact us by fax at +27-(0)-46-622-9591 or phone at +27-(0)-46-603-8782.

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Rhodes University's Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership, Africa's pioneering media management school, offers the following:

A Postgraduate Diploma in Media Management

which equips aspirant and practising managers in the media industry with the skills and knowledge required to advance their careers to leadership positions.

A basket of short courses

for editors and professional managers which addresses a range of management skills to help managers succeed in meeting the challenges of an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing industry.

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which can be designed to address specific training needs of media organisations.

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into a broad range of media leadership and management issues impacting on the industry.

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